

The Midsummer Marriage

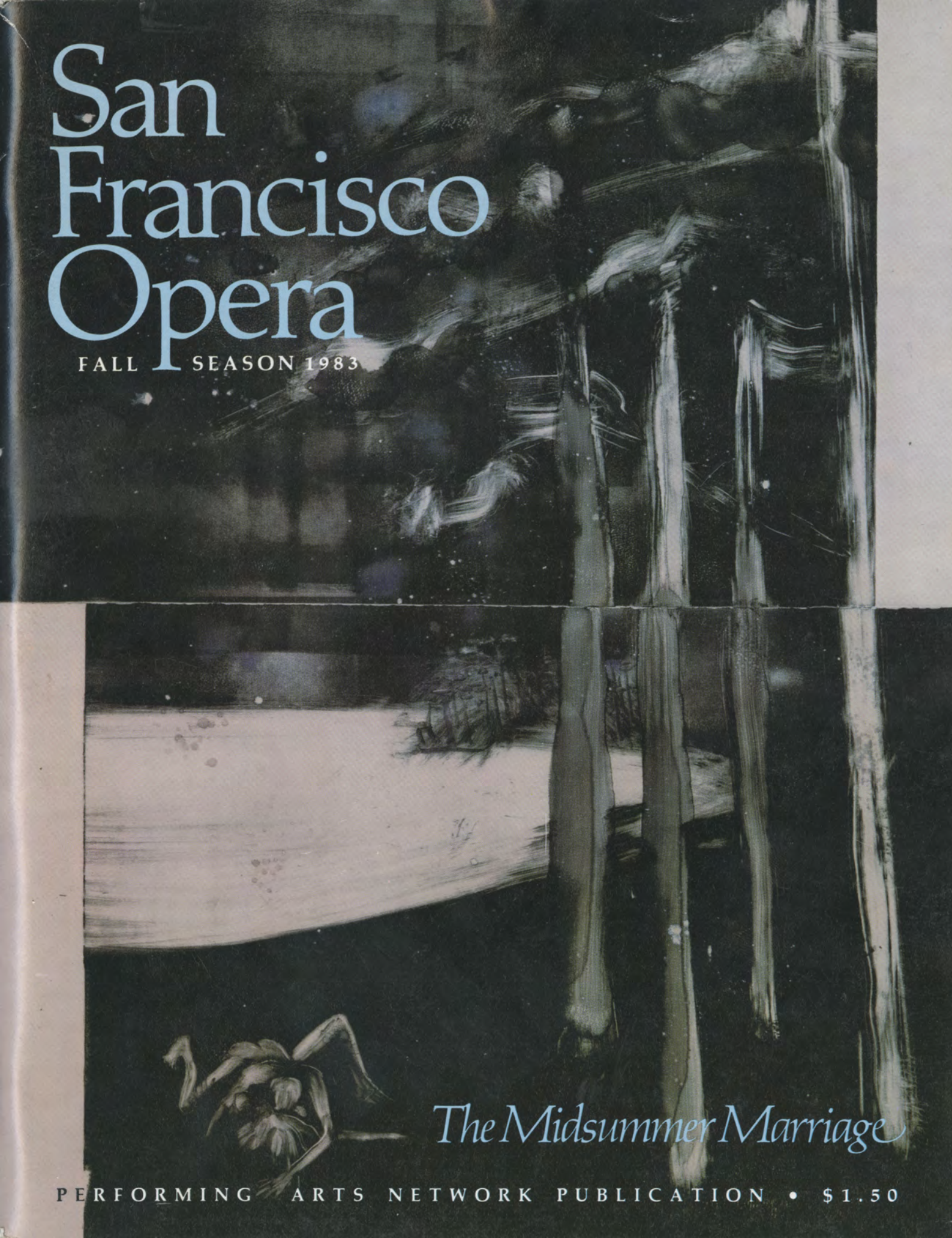
1983

Saturday, October 15, 1983 8:00 PM
Wednesday, October 19, 1983 8:00 PM
Sunday, October 23, 1983 2:00 PM
Wednesday, October 26, 1983 7:30 PM
Saturday, October 29, 1983 8:00 PM
Tuesday, November 1, 1983 8:00 PM

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San Francisco Opera

FALL SEASON 1983

The Midsummer Marriage

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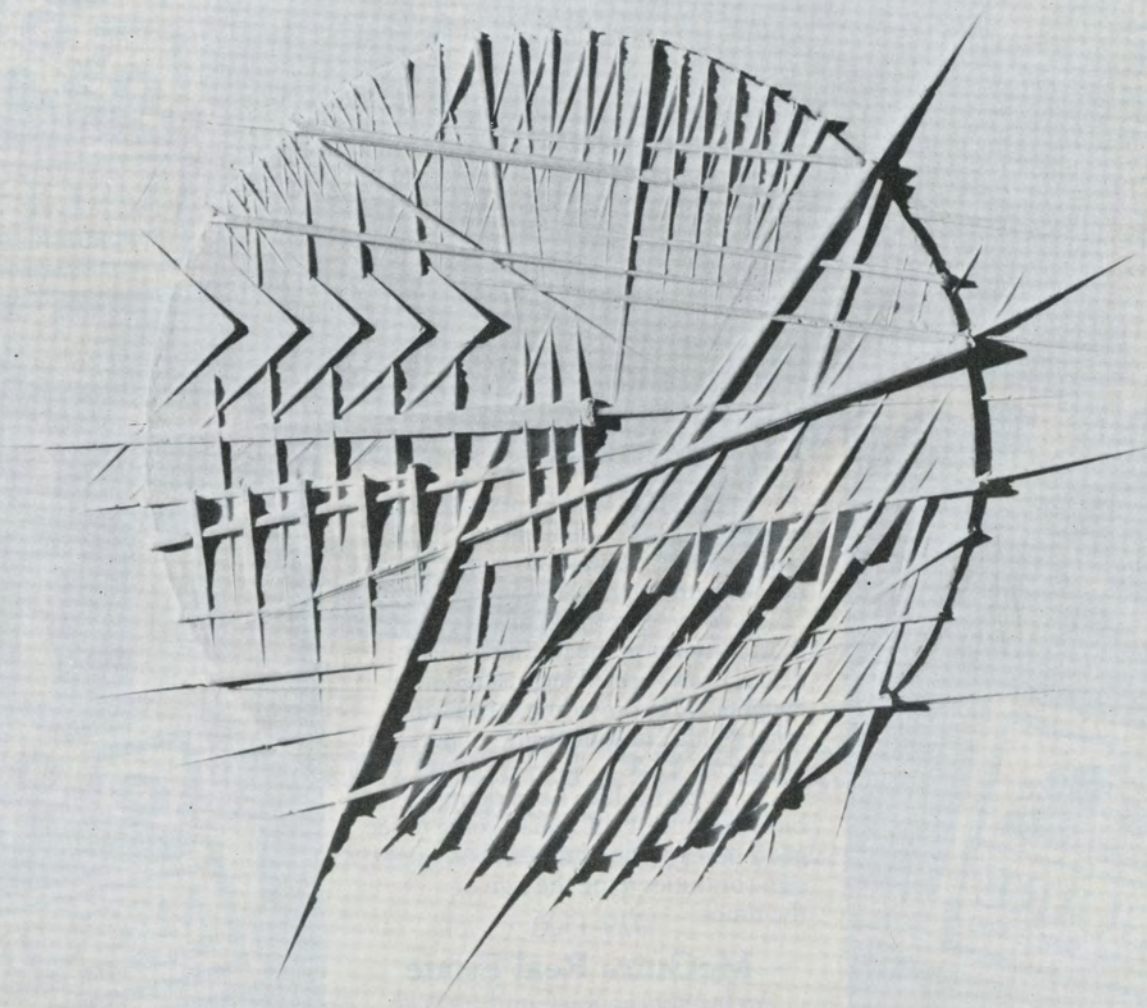
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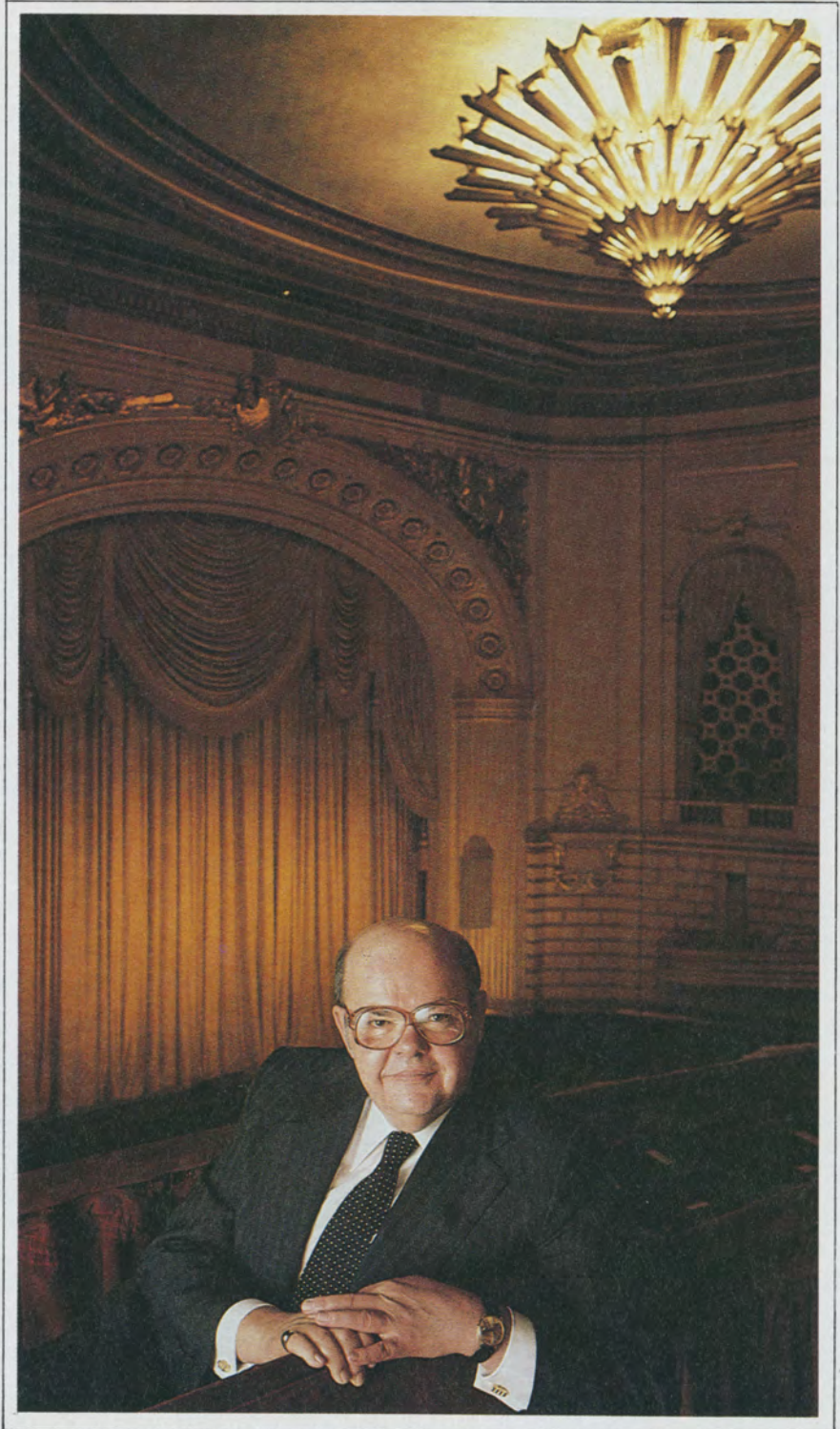
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General Director's Message

Although you see my picture on this page every season and although "the buck stops" at my desk, the San Francisco Opera is very much a team effort. This season, which is particularly heavy for our Technical Department, our Chorus, our Orchestra, and many other departments, makes me particularly aware of this fact and I want to share it with you.

From the technical standpoint, rehearsing and performing as many as five complex productions simultaneously is a heroic task. Matching this undertaking, the musical and artistic staff must contract artists and then plan the long and equally intricate rehearsals months in advance and yet manage to face daily crises with calm, control and even humor. The Orchestra, Chorus, Ballet and Supers are tackling some of their heaviest schedules ever and are handling them with the utmost professionalism. To keep the machinery running, the Development Department endeavors to raise more money. The Public Relations, Marketing and Subscription/Box Office Departments try to sell more tickets and inform an ever increasing audience of our myriad activities. The bottom line is that the conjunction of our summer and fall seasons extends our rehearsal/performance period from April through December. With basically the same number of staff we had before the inauguration of our first Summer Festival in 1981, we are handling a greatly expanded operation. I am glad to report that it is being done with remarkable flexibility, endurance and camaraderie. The 12- to 15-hour days (often seven days a week) necessitate this sustained, maximum effort from all sectors of the Company, and I am very proud of all of my colleagues and employees at the San Francisco Opera who have borne this extra stress.

On a separate page of this book, our President, Walter M. Baird, states the hope that you can increase your support of the San Francisco Opera. May I echo that request while assuring you that there is no finer or more qualified organization you *could* support. Opera is the most complex and irrational of art forms. It is also, when done as it should be, uniquely satisfying and uplifting. We pledge to continue to make it so.



Ron Scherf



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San Francisco Opera

Terence A. McEwen, *General Director*

THE MIDSUMMER MARRIAGE FALL SEASON 1983

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Proceeds from the sale of this magazine benefit the San Francisco Opera.

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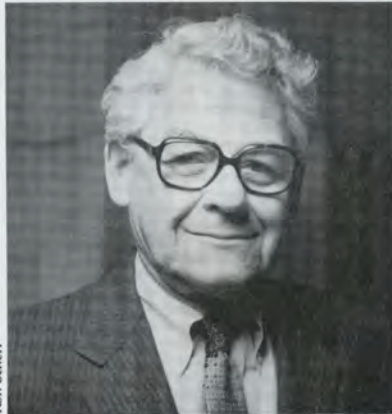
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From the President...



Ron Schert

ANOTHER Fall Season is upon us, that magical time when the performing and visual arts converge to create the most opulent of art forms, opera. We hope that this season is as exciting and special to you as it is to us; the enthusiastic response we have had at the box office would seem to indicate that it is.

Our general director has made it clear since his arrival that one of our highest priorities must be production funding. The world-famous singers who grace our stage and the technical crews that back them up bring us their own unique talents, but it is up to San Francisco Opera to provide the beautiful physical productions that show these artists off to best advantage. We have been fortunate

in the generosity shown by our patrons in funding a number of our fall productions, both new and revivals.

Heading the list must be that very special event, the American premiere of Sir Michael Tippett's *The Midsummer Marriage*, which has been made possible through the generosity of the Paul L. and Phyllis Wattis Foundation. Mrs. Wattis has given us a real jewel, and our gratitude cannot be adequately expressed here.

Three of the five productions owned by San Francisco Opera and revived for this season were the result of donor generosity in the seasons of their premieres. Our *Traviata* was made possible in part through a donation from the Charles E. Merrill Trust in 1969; our *Gioconda* was born in 1979 through the generosity of an anonymous friend of the San Francisco Opera and a gift from the San Francisco Opera Guild; and *Samson et Dalila*, first seen here in 1980, was jointly produced for San Francisco Opera and the Lyric Opera of Chicago with a gift from the Gramma Fisher Foundation of Marshalltown, Iowa.

Revivals, of course, also require funding, and this year's revival of *Otello* was made possible by a gift from Bernard and Barbro Osher.

Financial assistance is also crucial for productions borrowed from other companies. This year's *Manon Lescaut*, owned by the Greater Miami Opera Association and the Dallas Opera, is being seen for the first time by San Francisco Opera audiences thanks to funding provided by The Koret Foundation.

All of these contributions are a blessing to us: they reflect confidence in the artistic stature of our Company, while augmenting our reputation by making possible productions new to our audiences as well as revivals of some of our past successes. Patronage is truly the backbone of any major arts organization, and we enthusiastically welcome any individuals or groups who wish to join the elite company of the donors listed above.

Despite all of the special grants and production fundings, we must depend on thousands of our supporters for their contributions. Grand opera of the quality produced by our Company is the most expensive performing art form in existence, and in recent years we have incurred significant deficits. Ticket sales cover only between 50 to 55 percent of our operating costs; the remainder must come from other sources, and the biggest single source is our annual fund drive. If you are not an annual contributor, won't you please join the many thousands who help us with a contribution? If you are a current contributor, please accept our thanks with the hope that you will consider an increase this year.

In addition, we would like to extend our gratitude to the National Endowment for the Arts, the California Arts Council, the Hotel Tax Fund, Mayor Dianne Feinstein, Chief Administrative Officer Roger Boas, the City and County of San Francisco, the San Francisco Opera Guild, and the War Memorial Board of Trustees. Our friends are many; the value of their assistance, inestimable. —WALTER M. BAIRD



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(Continued on page 20)

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- Each actor, actress, playwright, director, producer, set, lighting and costume designer, composer and

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- Easy to use, with a breakdown by region and company and a complete index, CALIFORNIA THEATRE ANNUAL: 1983 gives a sense of permanence to the element of surprise, discovery, pleasure and growth that California theatre represents.

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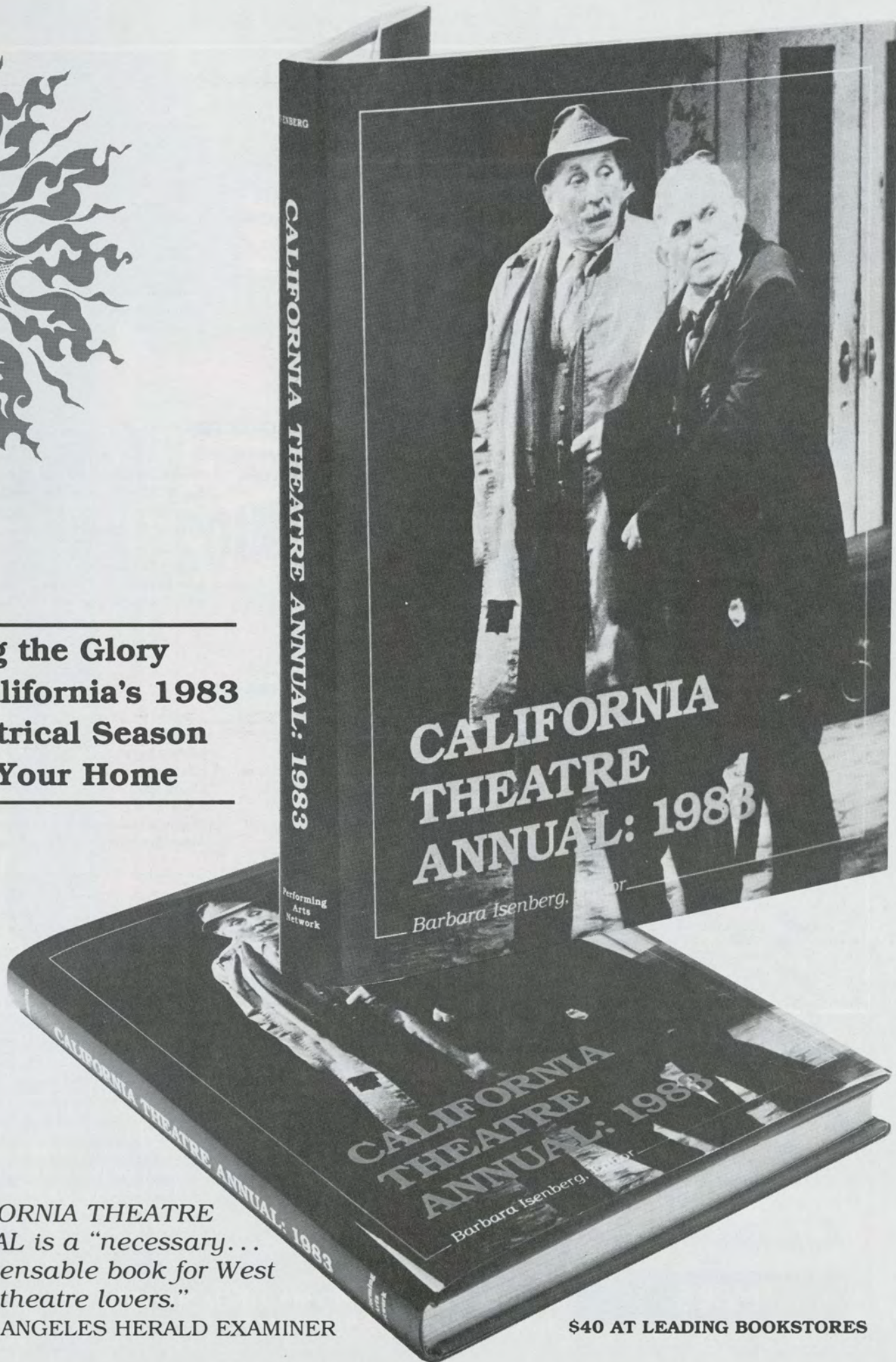
- People like Bernard Weiner and Steven Winn of the San Francisco Chronicle, Dan Sullivan and Sylvie Drake of the Los Angeles Times, Jack Viertel of the Los Angeles Herald Examiner, Welton Jones of the San Diego Union and more take you beyond the glitter and glamor to new discoveries about the 1983 theatrical season.
- You will read how the economy has affected not only the Equity-Waiver renaissance but larger subscription theatres as well; analyze the year's output and major milestones.

Capture the Drama

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Ric Cascio	Maxwell Jarman	Autris Page	Daryl Wagner
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San Francisco Opera

1983 Fall Season

Opening Night

Friday, September 9, 7:00

Otello Verdi

The revival of this production has been made possible by a much-appreciated grant from Bernard and Barbro Osher.

M. Price, Richards/Domingo, Carroli, Davies, Halfvarson, MacNeil, Will, MacAllister Janowski*/Ponnelle/Asagaroff/Ponnelle/Munn

Saturday, September 10, 8:00

Production New To San Francisco

Ariadne auf Naxos Strauss

Production owned by the Metropolitan Opera Association, Inc. and made possible by a generous and deeply appreciated gift from Mr. Francis Goelet.

Plowright* (September 10, 13, 17, 21), DeVol (September 25), Reppell** (September 28; October 2), Battle, Quittmeyer, Parrish*, Swenson, Rice/Bailey (September 10, 13 17), Johns (September 21, 25, 28; October 2), Berry, Titus, Langan, Gordon, Tate, Matthews*, Patterson, Reinhardt

Von Dohnányi/Neugebauer*/Messel*/Greenwood/Munn

Monday, September 12, 8:00

Otello Verdi

M. Price, Richards/Cassilly, Carroli, Davies, Halfvarson, MacNeil, Will, MacAllister Janowski/Ponnelle/Asagaroff/Ponnelle/Munn

Tuesday, September 13, 8:00

Ariadne auf Naxos Strauss

Thursday, September 15, 7:30

Otello Verdi

Saturday, September 17, 8:00

Ariadne auf Naxos Strauss

Sunday, September 18, 2:00

Otello Verdi

M. Price, Richards/Cossutta, Carroli, Davies, Halfvarson, MacNeil, Will, MacAllister Janowski/Ponnelle/Asagaroff/Ponnelle/Munn

Wednesday, September 21, 8:00

Ariadne auf Naxos Strauss

Friday, September 23, 8:00

Otello Verdi

Saturday, September 24, 8:00

Katya Kabanova Janáček

Silja, Lear, Rice, C. Cook*, Bruno/Jobin, Belcourt, Devlin, Kunde*, Matthews, MacAllister, Von Dohnányi/Freedman/Schneider-Siemssen/Walek/Munn

Sunday, September 25, 2:00

Ariadne auf Naxos Strauss

Tuesday, September 27, 8:00

Otello Verdi

Wednesday, September 28, 7:30

Ariadne auf Naxos Strauss

Friday, September 30, 8:00

Katya Kabanova Janáček

Saturday, October 1, 8:00

Otello Verdi

Sunday, October 2, 2:00

Ariadne auf Naxos Strauss

Tuesday, October 4, 8:00

Katya Kabanova Janáček

Wednesday, October 5, 7:30

La Traviata Verdi

This production made possible in part through a donation from the Charles E. Merrill Trust in 1969.

Miricioiu** (October 5), Faix Brown* (October 8, 11, 14), Ricciarelli (October 18, 21, 27, 30), Gustafson, Bruno/Cupido*, Nucci*, Tate, Matthews, MacAllister, Patterson, Thomas, Will, Bradshaw/Farruggio/Businger/Gladstein*/Munn

Friday, October 7, 8:00

Katya Kabanova Janáček

Saturday, October 8, 8:00

La Traviata Verdi

Sunday, October 9, 2:00

Katya Kabanova Janáček

Tuesday, October 11, 8:00

La Traviata Verdi

Wednesday, October 12, 7:30

Katya Kabanova Janáček

Friday, October 14, 8:00

La Traviata Verdi

Saturday, October 15, 8:00

American Premiere

The Midsummer Marriage Tippett

This new production made possible through the generosity of the Paul L. and Phyllis Watis Foundation.

Johnson, Greenawald, Nadler, Richards/Bailey, Davies, Herincx, Langan Agler/Copley/Don**/Gilbert**/Munn

Tuesday, October 18, 8:00

La Traviata Verdi

Wednesday, October 19, 8:00

The Midsummer Marriage Tippett

Thursday, October 20, 8:00

Samson et Dalila Saint-Saëns

This production made possible by and produced through the cooperation of the Gramma Fisher Foundation of Marshalltown, Iowa, The Lyric Opera of Chicago and the San Francisco Opera.

Horne/Chauvet, Quilico, Del Carlo, Langan, Thomas, Will, Tate Fournet/Joël/Schmidt/Robbins/Gladstein/Munn

Friday, October 21, 8:00

La Traviata Verdi

Saturday, October 22, 2:00

Family Matinee

La Traviata Verdi

Vanelli*, C. Cook, Bruno/MacNeil, Woodman, Thomas, Will, MacAllister, Patterson Cathcart*/Zambello*/Businger/Gladstein/Munn

Sunday, October 23, 2:00

The Midsummer Marriage Tippett

Tuesday, October 25, 8:00

Samson et Dalila Saint-Saëns

Wednesday, October 26, 7:30

The Midsummer Marriage Tippett

Thursday, October 27, 8:00

La Traviata Verdi

Friday, October 28, 8:00

Samson et Dalila Saint-Saëns

Saturday, October 29, 8:00

The Midsummer Marriage Tippett

Sunday, October 30, 2:00

La Traviata Verdi

Tuesday, November 1, 8:00

The Midsummer Marriage Tippett

Wednesday, November 2, 7:30

Samson et Dalila Saint-Saëns

Saturday, November 5, 8:00

Samson et Dalila Saint-Saëns

Sunday, November 6, 2:00

San Francisco Opera Premiere

La Grande Duchesse de Gêrolstein Offenbach

Crespin, Erickson, Parrish, Swenson, Bruno, C. Cook/Raffalli**, Trempont**, Corazza, Matthews, Tate Soustrot**/Ducasse**/Monloup**/Sakellariou/Munn

Tuesday, November 8, 8:00

La Grande Duchesse de Gêrolstein Offenbach

Wednesday, November 9, 8:00

Samson et Dalila Saint-Saëns



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Friday, November 11, 7:30

La Gioconda Ponchielli

This production made possible through the generosity of a friend of the San Francisco Opera and a gift from the San Francisco Opera Guild.

Caballé (November 11, 15, 20, 24), Slatinaru** (November 27, 30; December 3), Paunova*, Nadler/Bonisolli, Manuguerra, Kavrakos*, MacAllister, Thomas, Patterson, Woodman Meltzer/Mansouri, Thompson/Brown/Sulich/Munn

Saturday, November 12, 8:00

La Grande Duchesse de Gérolstein Offenbach

Sunday, November 13, 2:00

Samson et Dalila Saint-Saëns

Tuesday, November 15, 7:30

La Gioconda Ponchielli

Wednesday, November 16, 7:30

La Grande Duchesse de Gérolstein Offenbach

Thursday, November 17, 8:00

Production New To San Francisco

Manon Lescaut Puccini

Production owned by Greater Miami Opera Association and Dallas Opera.

The revival of this production has been made possible by a much-appreciated grant from The Koret Foundation.

Freni, Bruno/Mauro, Sardinero, Capecchi, MacNeil, MacAllister, Gordon, Will, Thomas Arena*/Asagaroff/Klein/Arhelger*

Saturday, November 19, 8:00

La Grande Duchesse de Gérolstein Offenbach

Sunday, November 20, 1:30

La Gioconda Ponchielli

Tuesday, November 22, 8:00

Manon Lescaut Puccini

Wednesday, November 23, 7:30

Production New To San Francisco

Boris Godunov Mussorgsky

Production owned by the Metropolitan Opera Association, Inc. This production made possible by a generous and deeply appreciated gift from Mrs. DeWitt Wallace.

Troyanos, Swenson, Petersen,

Richards/Ghiaurov, Ochman, Belcourt, Tomlinson*, Del Carlo, Langan, Gordon, Tate, Woodman, MacAllister, Matthews, Will, Patterson

Janowski/Everding/Kneuss*/Lee/Hall/Sulich/Munn

Thursday, November 24, 7:30

La Gioconda Ponchielli

Friday, November 25, 2:00

Special Holiday Weekend Matinee

La Grande Duchesse de Gérolstein Offenbach

Friday, November 25, 8:00

Manon Lescaut Puccini

Saturday, November 26, 7:30

Boris Godunov Mussorgsky

Sunday, November 27, 1:30

La Gioconda Ponchielli

Monday, November 28, 8:00

Manon Lescaut Puccini

Wednesday, November 30, 7:30

La Gioconda Ponchielli

Thursday, December 1, 8:00

La Grande Duchesse de Gérolstein Offenbach

Friday, December 2, 7:30

Boris Godunov Mussorgsky

Saturday, December 3, 7:30

La Gioconda Ponchielli

Sunday, December 4, 2:00

Manon Lescaut Puccini

Monday, December 5, 7:30

Boris Godunov Mussorgsky

Tuesday, December 6, 8:00

La Grande Duchesse de Gérolstein Offenbach

Wednesday, December 7, 7:30

Manon Lescaut Puccini

Thursday, December 8, 7:30

Boris Godunov Mussorgsky

Saturday, December 10, 8:00

Manon Lescaut Puccini

Sunday, December 11, 1:30

Boris Godunov Mussorgsky

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SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD PRESENTS

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LA TRAVIATA

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Saturday, October 8, 1:00 Wednesday, October 12, 1:00

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1983 Fall Opera Previews

Information on opera previews and lectures
is carried in *San Francisco Opera Magazine* in order to enable patrons to make advance plans.
The following is a list of previews and lectures that are open to the public.



Betty Jane Nevis

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD

Opera "Insights" held in the Herbst Theatre, Veterans Building, Van Ness and McAllister, in San Francisco. All panel discussions begin at 6 p.m.; doors open at 5:30 p.m. Series subscription for Guild members is \$12; Non-Guild member \$18; Individual tickets are \$4. For further information, please call (415) 565-6432. Programs subject to rehearsal schedules.

John Copley/Robin Don 10/12
Mirella Freni/Nicolai Ghiaurov 12/1

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD PREVIEWS

MARIN

Previews held at Park School Auditorium, 360 East Blithedale, Mill Valley; refreshments served at 7:30 p.m., previews at 8:00 p.m. Series regis-

tration is \$17.50 for 6 previews (\$15.00 for students and seniors). Single tickets are \$3.50 (\$3.00 for students and seniors). For further information, please call (415) 388-6789.

THE MIDSUMMER MARRIAGE

James Keolker 10/13

LA GRANDE DUCHESSE

Jan Popper 11/3

MANON LESCAUT

Arthur Kaplan 11/10

BORIS GODUNOV

Blanche Thebom 11/17

NORTH PENINSULA

Previews held at The Central Park Book Store, 32 East 4th Ave., San Mateo. Lectures begin at 7:30 p.m. Series registration is \$20.00; single tickets are \$5.00. For further information, please call (415) 593-2935.

(Continued)



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PREVIEWS (Continued)

THE MIDSUMMER MARRIAGE James Keolker	10/6
LA GRANDE DUCHESSE Jan Popper	10/20
BORIS GODUNOV Blanche Thebom	11/3

SOUTH PENINSULA

Previews held at the Palo Alto Senior Center, 450 Bryant Street, at 8:00 p.m. (with the exception of 10/27, which will be held at the Palo Alto Cultural Center, 1313 Newell Road). Series registration is \$18.00; single tickets are \$4.00. For further information, please call (415) 941-3890.

THE MIDSUMMER MARRIAGE James Keolker	10/11
SAMSON ET DALILA Blanche Thebom	10/18
LA GRANDE DUCHESSE Jan Popper	10/27
MANON LESCAUT Arthur Kaplan	11/8
BORIS GODUNOV Blanche Thebom	11/15

SAN JOSE OPERA GUILD

Previews will be held at the Saratoga Community Center, 19655 Allendale Avenue, Saratoga. All lectures are on Thursday mornings at 10:30. Series is open to the public at a cost of \$4.00 per lecture, \$3.00 for students and senior citizens (free of charge to San Jose Opera Guild members). For further information, please call (408) 741-1331 or (408) 354-7525.

SAMSON ET DALILA Blanche Thebom	10/6
MANON LESCAUT Arthur Kaplan	10/13
LA GIOCONDA Blanche Thebom	10/20
BORIS GODUNOV James Keolker	10/27

JUNIOR LEAGUE OPERA PREVIEWS

All Junior League opera previews will be held in Herbst Theatre in the Veterans Building, Van Ness at McAllister. Lectures begin at 11 a.m. There is no admission charge. For information, please call Joni Settlemier at (415) 922-7100.

THE MIDSUMMER MARRIAGE James Keolker	10/5
LA GRANDE DUCHESSE Jan Popper	11/2
MANON LESCAUT Arthur Kaplan	11/9
BORIS GODUNOV Blanche Thebom	11/15

NAPA OPERA LECTURE SERIES

For the 11th year there will be a 10-week course called "Adventures in Opera" in Napa. The course, which accompanies the Saturday and Sunday series at the San Francisco Opera, will be held at 7:30 in St. Mary's Episcopal Church, 1917 Third Street, in Napa. Ernest Fly will again

teach the course. Cost for the entire series will be \$20.00. Individual lectures will be \$3.00. For further information, please call Mr. Fly at (707) 224-6162.

THE MIDSUMMER MARRIAGE	10/6
SAMSON ET DALILA	10/13
LA GRANDE DUCHESSE	10/20
LA GIOCONDA	10/27
MANON LESCAUT	11/3
BORIS GODUNOV	11/10

OPERA EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL PREVIEW SERIES

Previews of all the operas of the 1983 Fall Season will be given by Michael Barclay, director of Opera Education International. Lectures are given in the auditorium of the Dr. William Cobb School, 2725 California Street, between Scott and Divisadero, at 7:30 p.m. Individual admission at the door is \$5.50. For further information, please call (415) 526-5244.

LA TRAVIATA	10/3
THE MIDSUMMER MARRIAGE	10/10
SAMSON ET DALILA	10/17
LA GRANDE DUCHESSE	10/31
LA GIOCONDA	11/7
MANON LESCAUT	11/14
BORIS GODUNOV	11/21

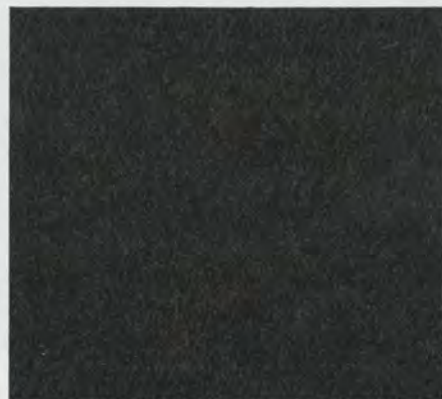
UC BERKELEY EXTENSION LECTURE SERIES

Eight illustrated previews will be given by noted conductor and lecturer Jan Popper. All previews are at 7 p.m. in the auditorium of the UC Extension Center, 55 Laguna St. (at Market), San Francisco. Series \$70; pre-registration advisable; single lectures \$10 at the door if space is available. For further information, please call (415) 642-8840.

ARIADNE AUF NAXOS	10/3
KATYA KABANOVA	10/10
LA TRAVIATA	10/17
SAMSON ET DALILA	10/24
LA GIOCONDA	10/31
MANON LESCAUT	11/7
BORIS GODUNOV	11/14

ROBERT GOODHUE'S FALL OPERA COURSE

10 one-and-one-half hour classes on all the fall operas (one class per opera). There is a choice of six sections: Section A (Mondays at 5:45 p.m., August 22 to November 14); Section B (Mondays at 7:30 p.m., August 22 to November 14); Section C (Tuesdays at 6:15 p.m., September 6 to November 22); Section D (Thursdays at 6:00 p.m., September 1 to December 1); Section E (Thursdays at 7:45 p.m., September 21 to December 1); Section F (Saturdays at 10:00 a.m., September 23 to December 10). Cost for the course is \$60.00; individual classes are \$7.00 if space permits. Classes are held at 13 Columbus Ave., San Francisco. For further information, please call (415) 956-1271.



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San Francisco Opera on Radio

BAY AREA radio audiences will have three opportunities to hear each of nine broadcasts selected from the 1982 Summer Festival and Fall Seasons. These repeat broadcasts, produced by San Francisco Opera in cooperation with KQED-FM, will also be heard nationwide on member stations of National Public Radio and other selected stations throughout the country. Recipient of the 1980 George Foster Peabody Award, the 1982 broadcasts were originally made possible in part by grants from Standard Oil of California and the Chevron companies, R.J. Reynolds Industries, and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

Local broadcasts will be on the traditional Friday evenings at 8 p.m. and Saturday mornings at 11 a.m., with the exception noted below. The broadcasts may also be heard Saturdays at 1:30 p.m. on KCSM, 91.1 FM, beginning October 8 (all times listed are Pacific Time).

9/30	Julius Caesar
10/7	Norma
10/14	The Barber of Seville
10/21	Turandot
10/28	The Marriage of Figaro
11/4	La Cenerentola
11/11	Cendrillon
11/18	Lohengrin (Saturday at 10 a.m. on KQED-FM)
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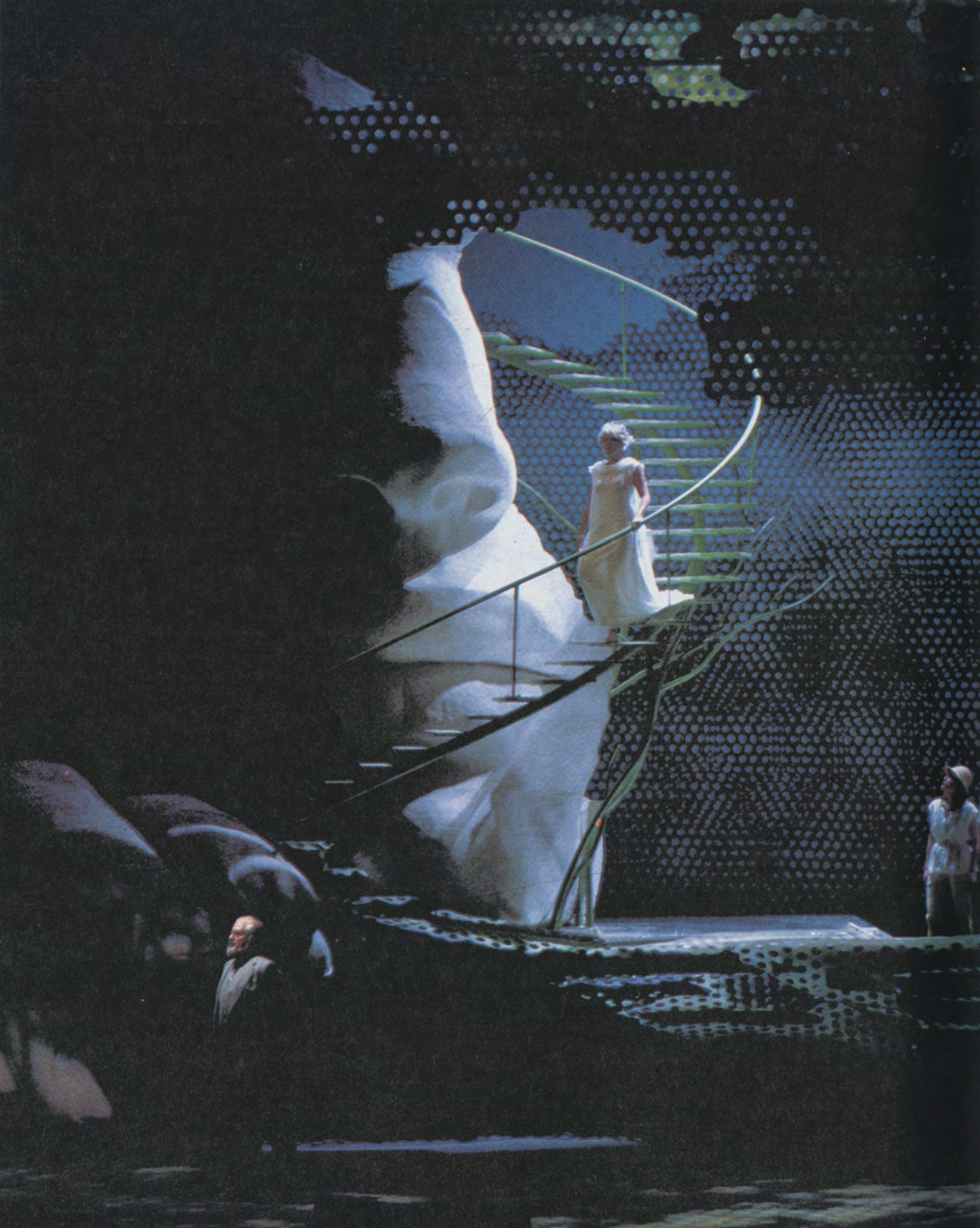
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"Images of Exuberant Beauty"

by Andrew Porter

THE great creators teach us how to live. They dream dreams for us, shape our visions, sound our hopes and our fears, write the history of our days in sounds, words, paint, and stone, and rewrite and reinterpret the history of past days in ways to light our present. Since I first began listening intently to music, Michael Tippett has been for me one of those creators. His *Midsummer Marriage* had its first performance at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, twenty-eight years ago. It was an outpouring of joy, lyricism, and freshness—an extraordinary and heartening work, as a colleague has remarked, to have come out of our bleak mid-century, for it is a "vision on a grand scale; not, as might have been expected, of horror or violence, but of human warmth and unity, of fruitful love and the teeming earth, of goodness and passion and glory."

And yet there were those, in 1955, who were puzzled by the theatrical images in which Tippett's vision took shape—who were bothered, to put it very simply, by the "story." So, let me begin by telling (with explanatory glosses) the "story" of *The Midsummer Marriage*. It is a modern tale, set in the English countryside, with ordinary people—young men and women, a garage hand and a shorthand-typist, an industrialist—as its main characters. Summarized in simplest terms, the plot concerns a young man, Mark, and a young woman, Jenifer, who have planned to elope and get married. He is handsome, romantic, and impetuous; he probably has some small means of his own, and at any rate does not worry about money; he is little given to hard thought and much given to romantic imaginings. He longs to live with

A scene from San Francisco Opera's 1983 American premiere staging of The Midsummer Marriage. Photo taken during a rehearsal.



Sir Michael Tippett in San Francisco in 1981

Jenifer and is ready to hurtle through any obstacles that may bar the way to their life together.

But for Jenifer, the world is a serious and sullied place. The daughter of an industrialist, she is practical, clear-headed, and—although she may not have formulated the thought—probably a little afraid of sex and of the ardor of Mark's love. Revolted by her father's lack of idealism, she has resolved to leave home. But when it comes to the point, she cannot quite bring herself to surrender to Mark. Instead, she decides, shall we say, to go off to London and find herself a job. Perhaps, in time, she will return to Mark. The couple have arranged to meet in a wood near her father's home. Jenifer comes to the meeting-place, however, to tell Mark that she will not elope with him after all but must set out on her own.

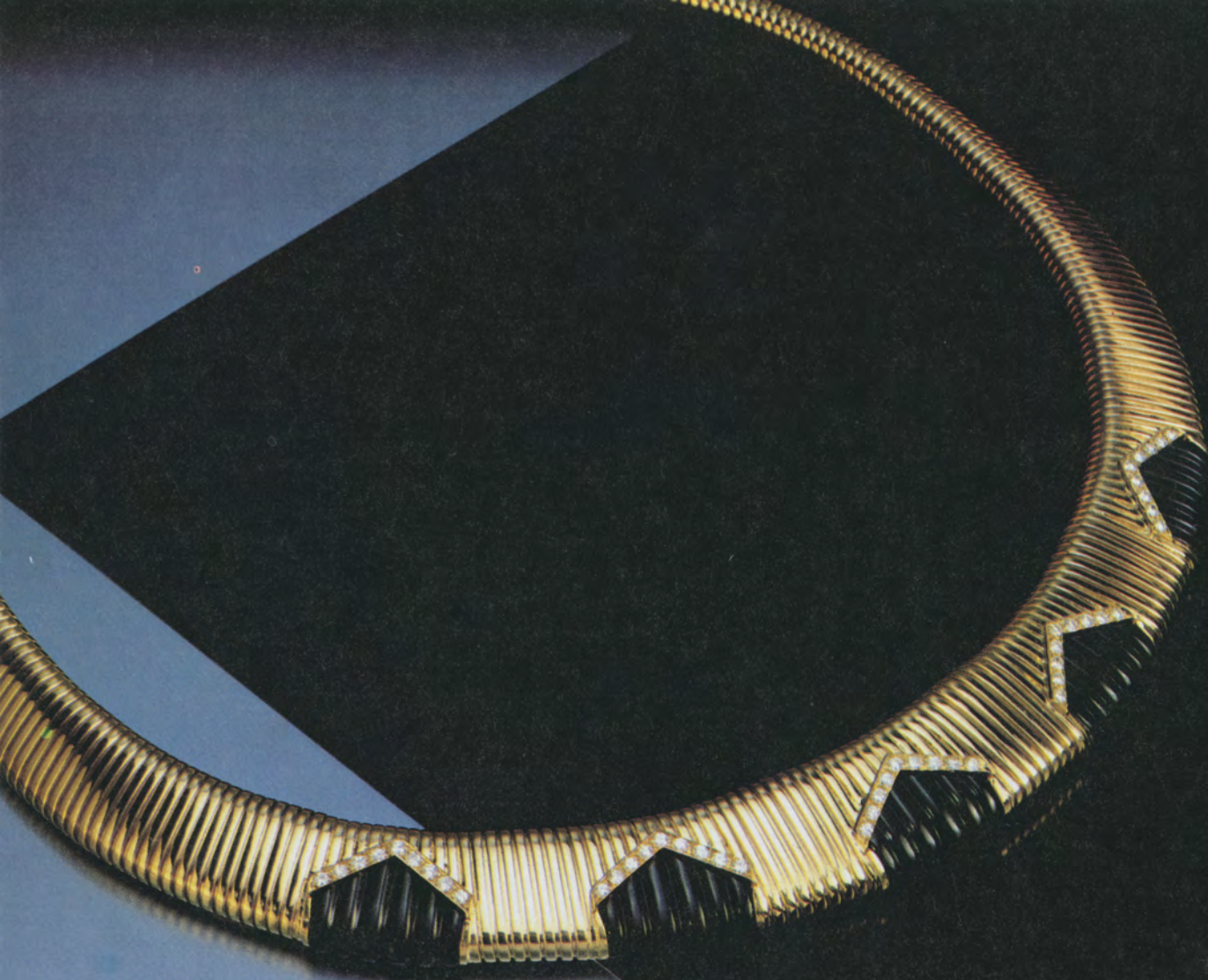
Jenifer and Mark quarrel and part, not in anger, but he uncomprehending and de-

jected, and she more convinced than ever that it is somehow right to keep herself independent. Each becomes more separate, adopts a more extreme position. But when they meet again, Jenifer is obliged to admit that there is a mysterious power and fascination about the physical joy in living which surges up in Mark. She determines to confront the temptation and to master it. And he—conscious of this power and reassured by it—makes a great effort to understand her position. The result is not unexpected. Later, Jenifer, lying in the sunlight, surrenders to Mark's embrace when he approaches her.

Meanwhile, Jenifer's father, King Fisher, who strongly disapproves of this young man of unknown family and with no proper job, has set out in pursuit of the eloping couple and has mustered the forces of law and order to track down and capture the fugitives. He confronts them and tries in vain to persuade Jenifer to return to him. Later, when he comes upon his daughter in Mark's arms, he dies of a heart attack, brought on, it seems, by anger at their defiance. Mark and Jenifer have between them forged a human relationship founded on complete understanding, and at the end they go off together.

So, *The Midsummer Marriage* is a quest opera, in some ways like *The Magic Flute* and in some like *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. The quest here is for a fulfilled human relationship, which finds its expression in carnal love but embraces the whole personality. Mark and Jenifer learn to sacrifice to one another something that lies at the heart of the personality of each; and their reward is in learning that in the sacrifice nothing has

Andrew Porter, music critic of The New Yorker, is also one of today's foremost opera translators. The San Francisco Opera has performed two of his Mozart translations, The Magic Flute and Figaro's Wedding.



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been lost, for both have been enriched.

There are other characters: a chorus of Mark's and Jenifer's friends, whom Mark has invited to be present at the meeting-place in the wood in order to witness his union with Jenifer. They assemble as the everyday friends at tennis parties and dances, but during the conflict they take sides by sex: the men respond like Mark to the surges of the blood, and the women support Jenifer's aspirations. The chorus leaders are, respectively, Jack, the mechanic, and his sweetheart, Bella, King Fisher's secretary. The parallel with Papageno and Papagena is plain, but as a mark of our times we may note that, whereas Mozart's pair look forward to being blessed by whole nestfuls of children, Tippett's pair envisage only "a little Jack or a little Bella."

And then there are characters who belong to the "magic" world, discussion of which can be delayed no longer. I have given a literal account of what happens on that *Midsummer's Day in the wood*, but it is not all that we see on the stage. Tippett has embodied his action in a scenario where the imaginings and the emotional adventures of the characters become concrete and are represented by symbols or are expressed in myth. The poetic metaphors by which we describe and investigate experience take on visual (and sonic) form. Dreams come true, as it were. There is, if you like, a world of magic on this hill that rises in a clearing of the wood. Mark has known the spot since he was a boy. In the rocks and ruins that crown the hill, he has seen in imagination a temple, a stairway that leads to heaven, gates that guard an entrance to the heart of the earth. In the temple, he has imagined two sage elders—he calls them the Ancients—presiding over a troupe of ritual dancers. He has chosen this place for his meeting with Jenifer because it has long been dear to him and because he knows that here imaginings become more vivid, and emotions seem to find concrete expression. One by one, the others enter into his world of the imagination; there is a celesta motif in the orchestra which signals that we are moving from plain speech and action into a world of dramatic metaphor.

The start of the opera is naturalistic. When Jenifer arrives in her traveling coat, we may feel she has left her bags in the station checkroom. But when, in flight from Mark's embrace, she finds herself at the foot of a stone staircase, and exclaims: *O magic staircase that I've always known In dreams since childhood at my mother's knee,* we must understand this as literally true.

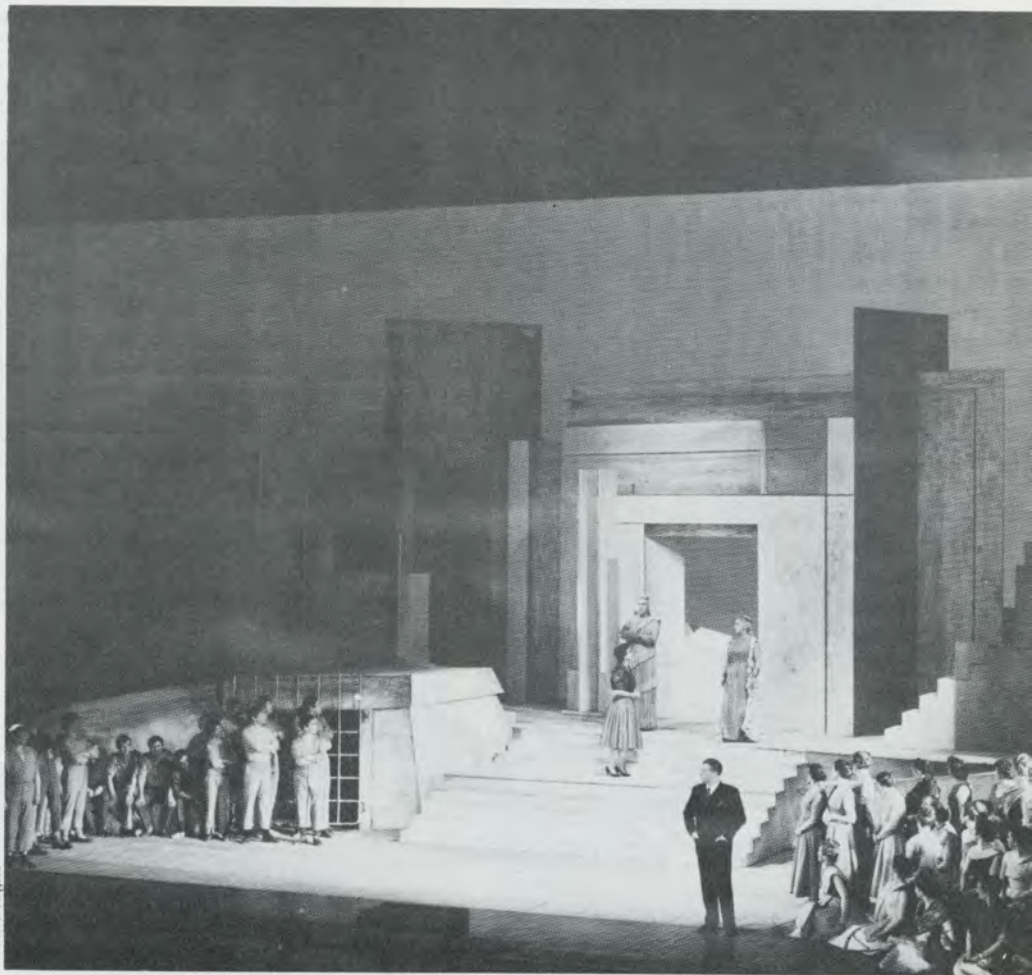
Just such a staircase had in her dreams represented a way to heaven by which she might climb to where the saints would welcome her:

*At last, at last, I set my feet
Upon the way to heaven,
Up, up, I climb to paradise.*

It is the most natural thing in the world for her to do, an embodiment in dramatic terms of her aspirations. And it is equally natural for Mark, in turn, to enter the gates leading into the fruitful earth, where the sap rises and all that is warm and male is surging.

money. Jack, taken into his employ, is commanded to force the gates, but Bella's influence makes him hesitate. This particular male/female conflict is resolved at last in Act III.

In one of the most striking visual scenes, Jenifer now returns from the stair, dressed in white, partly transfigured, with a suggestion about her of Athena. And Mark returns through the gates, dressed in red, with a suggestion about him of Dionysus. Each has been fortified in her and his own belief. In her cool pride, Jenifer produces a mirror in which she hopes Mark will see



Houston Rogers

From the Covent Garden world premiere performance of The Midsummer Marriage: Bella (Adele Leigh) approaches the Ancients (Michael Langdon and Edith Coates) on behalf of King Fisher. (Otakar Kraus).

King Fisher, hot in pursuit, arrives in time to see the gates shut on Mark. He chooses to believe that the Ancients are people of his own world, harboring the runaway couple in their curious building. He does not deign to deal with them directly, but addresses them through his secretary. He enlists the men of the chorus on his side, but the women reject his

reflected the wrongness of his position. But Mark's confidence that he is right gives him the power to shatter the glass. Jenifer is abashed for a moment, and then with resolution enters the gates whence Mark has come, determined to discover and confront the source of his power. And he, in an effort to understand her way of thinking, ascends the staircase. Thus, what I narrated literally above, is expressed in uncomplicated poetic imagery.

Act II is composed chiefly of three Ritual Dances, reflecting the seasons, the elements, and the age-old courtship of man

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The Midsummer Marriage

OPERA IN THREE ACTS

Words and Music by MICHAEL TIPPETT

Scenery and costumes by BARBARA HEPWORTH

Choreography by JOHN CRANKO

CONDUCTOR • JOHN PRITCHARD

PRODUCER • CHRISTOPHER WEST

THURSDAY, 27th JANUARY, 1955

Program, world premiere of The Midsummer Marriage.

and woman: the Hound hunts the Hare in Fall; the Otter hunts the Fish in Winter; and the Hawk hunts the Bird in Spring. In each case, the part of the predator is taken by a female dancer, and that of the hunted by a male dancer. Twice the victim escapes; the third time he lies exhausted, awaiting the Hawk's attack. Bella, who has been watching this as if it were a dream, awakes with a shriek; she is startled by a violence that, she little suspected, lies implicit in her dream of a cozy domestic life, and in all love between men and women. But this capable little woman pulls herself together, adjusts her make-up, and prepares to deal with her new experience, this new knowledge about herself.

In Act III, King Fisher has summoned an

arbitrator to determine that his daughter is in the wrong. He deals with the affair in business-like fashion. To the Ancients, he declares:

*You two thought to get the better of me
Catching my daughter in your trap like that.
I'm not the man to fall so easily.
I've sent for one who'll see through all your
schemes*

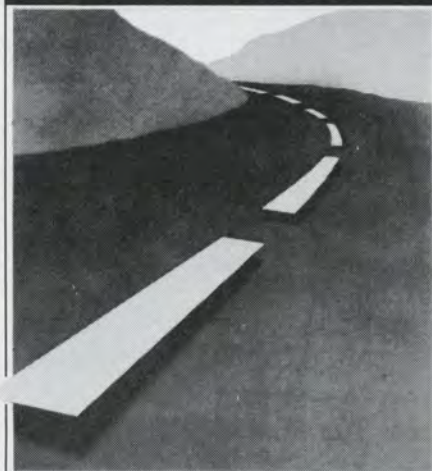
To hold my daughter from her home.

But he has cheated. The soothsayer is not impartial but is his own hireling, Jack, in disguise. Once again, female perception sees through male plans; Bella recognizes Jack, and he drops his disguise. But Truth has been invoked, and Truth now appears, in the form of the clairvoyante Sosostriis. In deep, firm tones, Sosostriis describes the

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CHARACTERS IN ORDER OF
APPEARANCE

STREPHON, one of the dancers	PIRMIN TRECUCO
THE ANCIENTS, Priest and Priestess of the Temple	MICHAEL LANGDON EDITH COATES
MARK, a young man of unknown parentage	RICHARD LEWIS
JENIFER, his betrothed, a young girl	JOAN SUTHERLAND
KING FISHER, Jenifer’s father, a business man	OTAKAR KRAUS
BELLA, King Fisher’s secretary	ADELE LEIGH
JACK, Bella’s boy-friend, a mechanic	JOHN LANIGAN
A VOICE	MONICA SINCLAIR
A GIRL DANCER	JULIA FARRON
HALF TISPY MAN	GORDON FARRALL
A MAN DANCING	ANDREW DANIELS
SOSOTRIS, a clairvoyante	ORALIA DOMINGUEZ

Chorus of Mark’s and Jenifer’s friends
Dancers attendant on the Ancients

THE COVENT GARDEN OPERA BALLET
Ballet Master — Harold Turner

*Cast page, world premiere performance of
The Midsummer Marriage.*

consummation of Mark’s and Jenifer’s love. King Fisher will not accept her testimony and orders Jack to tear open her veils. Again Bella intervenes, and this time her influence is decisive; Jack leaves King Fisher’s service. King Fisher sets about the veils himself, but only to reveal exactly what Sosotris has described: Mark and Jenifer joined in a single hieratic group. It destroys him.

The magic now reaches its climax in a fourth, choral dance, Fire in Summer—not a hunting dance but a sacrificial one. And then we return to the naturalistic world. Mark is no longer so impetuous (“After the visionary night, the senses purified, my heart’s at rest”), nor Jenifer so reserved (“In love so rich I could love all—even my father had he lived”).

Tippett not only writes his own libretto; he has invented his own subjects for his four operas—a rare, perhaps unique, achievement in the annals of opera. He is a poet, a visionary, and a craftsman. *The Midsummer Marriage* began as a vision:

I saw a stage picture (as opposed to hearing a musical sound) of a wooded hilltop with a temple, where a warm and soft young man was being rebuffed by a cold and hard young woman to such a degree that the collective, magical archetypes take charge—Jung’s anima and animus.

Music and words then took shape together, afterwards.

Few composers are as comprehensive or as allusive as Tippett. The allusions may be literary. There are a few lines in his opera *King Priam* where Aristotle, Stefan George, and Yeats are mingled; Shake-

speare, Paul Valéry, and Jung join in a parallel passage of *The Ice Break*. In connection with quite another piece of music, Elliott Carter’s *Syringa*, I read W.K. Guthrie’s study *Orpheus and the Greek Religion* and discovered that Orphic funerary plates had been found bearing the inscriptions “I am a child of the fruitful earth” and “I am a child of the starry heaven.” The lines sang out from those scholarly pages to music I had heard a quarter-century earlier, in *The Midsummer Marriage*.

The allusions may be musical. Tippett’s Piano Concerto arose from memories of hearing Gieseeking play Beethoven’s Fourth. His Third Symphony is an attempt to find possible present-day responses to the bass soloist’s injunction in Beethoven’s Ninth, “O Freunde, nicht diese Töne!” What tones can a composer honestly sing in an age when the old, brave, confident affirmations of universal brotherhood must ring hollow? *The Tempest*, Schubert’s *Die schöne Müllerin*, and Virginia Woolf’s last book, *Between the Acts*, all flow into *The Knot Garden*. Goethe, Solzhenitsyn, the imagined sound of ice cracking on great rivers, and news stories from today’s paper mingle in *The Ice Break*. “My days,” Tippett once wrote, “are spent pondering, considering, wrestling with an infinite permutation of possibilities. I must create order out of chaos.” His music is topical in that it deals with burning issues of our day, private and public. But it considers and comprehends what composers, poets, and thinkers of the past have dreamed, thought, and written. Their observations flower afresh and bear new fruit in Tippett’s marvelous mind. His music seems to me some of the richest and most beautiful of our age.

Tippett once defined his task thus:

... to continue an age-old tradition . . . to create images from the depths of the imagination and to give them form . . . Images of the past, shapes of the future. Images of vigor for a decadent period. Images of calm for one too violent. Images of reconciliation for worlds torn by division. And, in an age of mediocrity and shattered dreams, images of abounding, generous, exuberant beauty.

His later operas are darker, starker, more shadowed, more limited in their consolation than *The Midsummer Marriage*. This first opera is not without its shadows, its awareness of violence and cruelty, but above all it is joyful. There is no twentieth-century score more abundantly, more generously lyrical. It contains some of the loveliest nature music ever written. It leaps and dances. It makes life richer. □



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About Sir Michael Tippett

by Christopher Hunt



Ron Scheer

Sir Michael Tippett in Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, 1981.

MICHAEL TIPPETT is in his 79th year. All his life he has followed with total integrity the direction of his own beliefs, ignoring fashion and retaining a kind of Wordsworthian, childlike innocence. In his youth and middle-age he was much involved in humanitarian causes, and he was briefly imprisoned for his pacifist beliefs during the Second World War. His later life has, however, been devoted more exclusively to music—its “events” are his compositions. A rigorously self-critical person, he destroyed most of his early works. His

first acknowledged composition was only published when he was thirty, and he attracted little critical attention until he was in his forties. Since then, he has been increasingly recognized as one of the most original figures in the music of this century. Although his output covers a wide range of instrumental and vocal music, its cornerstones are his four operas and his wartime oratorio *A Child of Our Time*, the work that first won him international recognition. A countryman at heart, he has lived most of his life outside of cities, surrounded by the English landscape whose

influence pervades much of his music, most notably his first opera *The Midsummer Marriage*. He did not make his first visit to America until he was sixty, at which time he spent a summer as composer-in-residence at Aspen. Since then, however, he has been more and more fascinated by both the culture and the landscape of this country.

He was born on January 2nd, 1905 in a London nursing home; in the year he was born his family moved to a village in Suffolk, where they lived until Tippett was fourteen. His father, a retired lawyer who

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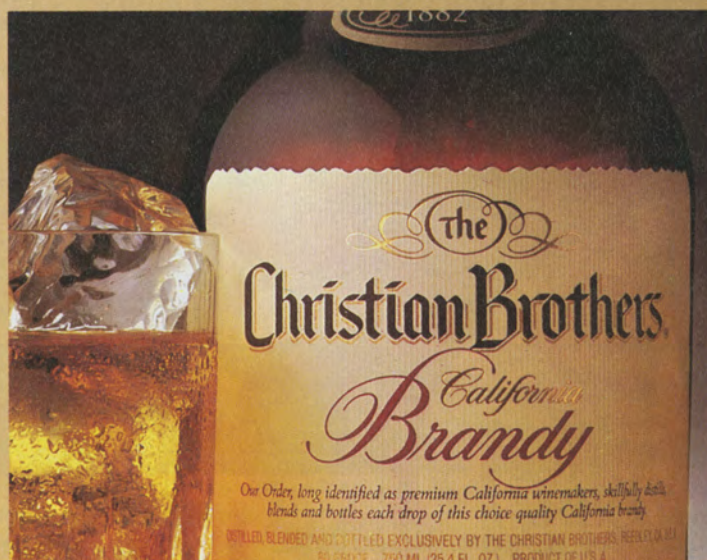
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was in his mid-forties when his second son Michael was born, was the proprietor of a hotel in Cannes in the south of France, and Tippett used to spend his vacations in Cannes between terms at English boarding schools. His mother was a remarkable woman who had published several novels in her youth, and had gone to prison as a suffragette: when her son was later imprisoned for his own beliefs, she called it "the proudest day of my life."

His schooldays were uneventful. Although he showed early musical gifts, and although music formed a regular part of his parents' domestic life, he was not exposed to much more than domestic music-making until at the age of eighteen he entered the Royal College of Music in London, where he studied composition, piano and conducting (the latter with Malcolm Sargent and Adrian Boult, both of whom were later to conduct premieres of major orchestral works by their former pupil).

"My generation was the same age as the century. I was born in 1905, lived in the depths of an unpolluted countryside and remained ignorant and innocent of all events outside the family until the start of the Great War. As the men marched away I remember the sense of their lighthearted confidence, singing those songs that gave me my first musical excitement. I was so young still that I could reduce the significance of war to those songs. When the war ended, the springtime of my life coincided with the momentary springtime all Europe felt as the killing stopped. In 1923 I came to London as a student of eighteen. I now knew that my life lay in artistic creation. I had no misgivings whatsoever. I scarcely considered any of the great contemporary events which seemed to lie outside my musical needs, concerned only with the huge ferment of artistic creation of the period and the general mood—in England at any rate—of frenetic gaiety.

*"Into this nonchalant atmosphere there began to dawn the first truths about the war, and strangely enough this experience happened to me when I went to see the film *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*. This was popular art. We all went to see Valentino in his latest movie. In fact I can recall nothing of the love story, all I remember is the violence and destruction of the war sequences. And what I never forgot was the extraordinary image of four horsemen flying across the screen at every moment of destruction, and the doom-laden sound*

of Beethoven's 'Coriolan' Overture. These things combined to give me the sense that there were enormous forces beyond human control which could simply destroy the whole fabric of our civilization. At the end of the film came the first pictures I had ever seen of the Flanders graveyards: row upon row of little white crosses. This gave me the horrified understanding that so many thousands of young men whom I had seen marching lightheartedly away, had ended under the earth. I burst into tears (virtually) and went out. I realized that although I was still a very young man and had a great deal to learn about the merely technical questions of music and was going to immerse myself in everything to do with the technique of my art, that this was something which I simply could not forget: there was a necessity for art of our time in some way, when it had learned its own techniques, to be concerned with what was happening in this 'apocalyptic' side of our present time.

"What indeed was happening to all of us of my age in England was a realization that the spring was false, and that it was in fact still winter. For the majority of my countrymen perhaps there had never been a spring at all. With this realization every artist of my generation became politically involved in some way or other."

For twenty years after he left the Royal College of Music in 1928, Tippett was deeply involved in social causes. He continued to compose, but it was always necessarily in the spare time left from earning a living and pursuing his concern for those causes. He was for a while a schoolmaster (teaching French, in which he had become fluent while staying with his parents in their Cannes hotel), and at the same time he conducted a madrigal group and an amateur musical and dramatic society for which he prepared his first theatrical work, a realization of an 18th-century ballad opera *The Village Opera*. In 1930, believing his own musical technique inadequate, he returned for two years to the Royal College for further study in composition. When he left the College for the second time, in 1932, he was invited to take charge of music at work-camps for unemployed miners in the north of England. His second stage work, a folk-song opera, *Robin Hood*, was written for performance in those camps. His firsthand experience of the poverty of the depressed north spurred him to take up more active involvement in working-class

problems than his life as a schoolmaster allowed. He became conductor of the orchestra at Morley College, an educational establishment in South London for unemployed working-class people. Income from concerts given by the orchestra, which was largely drawn from musicians thrown out of employment by the depression (and by the advent of the "talkies," which rendered obsolete the cinema bands that had provided accompaniment to the silent movies), was divided on a cooperative basis among the players. He also directed two choirs sponsored by the Royal Arsenal Cooperative Society, which was affiliated to the Labor Party. Throughout this period Tippett was actively involved in left-wing politics, like most of the intellectuals of his generation. As the '30s progressed, however, his initial enthusiasm



Sir Michael Tippett in the 1960s.

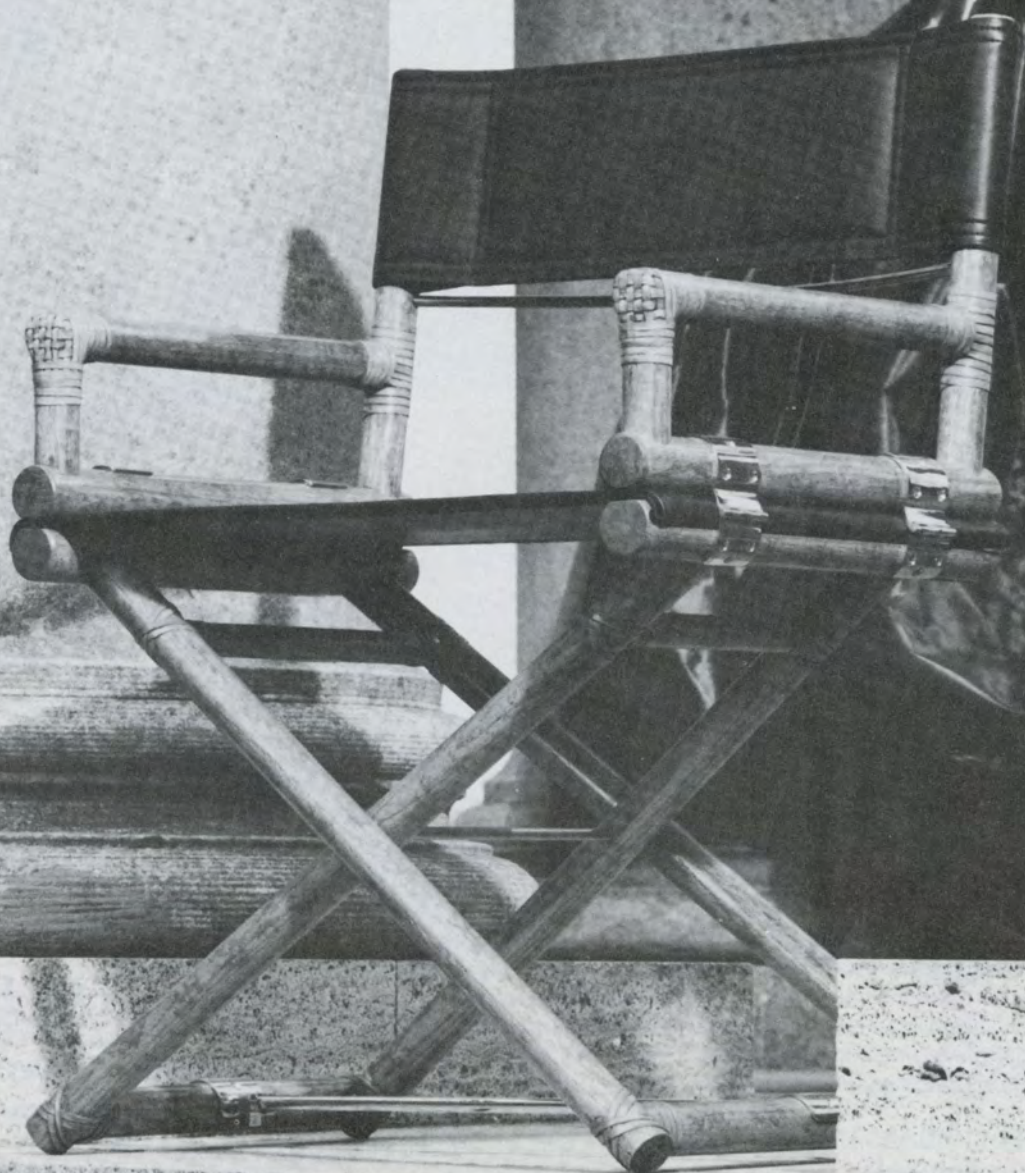
for the attractions of Communism as a socially beneficial force waned, under the influence of growing knowledge of its ineffectiveness against Nazi barbarism, and of its disastrous realization in the Soviet Union. A less specific philosophical creed, influenced by the optimistic tenets of Shavianism, and embracing a certain kind of mysticism whose visionary optimism characterizes much of his music, replaced allegiance to any party's political doctrine, as the Second World War approached.

He continued to write music, including a third stage work, this time in collaboration with Christopher Fry, who had taught English at one of the schools in which Tippett had taught French, and who became an influential and lasting friend, as did another poet, T.S. Eliot. He also developed

(Continued on page 60)

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Artist Profiles

Mary Jane Johnson



Soprano **MARY JANE JOHNSON** returns to San Francisco Opera as Jenifer in *The Midsummer Marriage*. She made her Company debut during the 1983 Summer Festival as Freia in Wagner's *Das Rheingold*, singing also the role of Musetta in *La Bohème*. A winner of the first Luciano Pavarotti International Voice Competition, the young Texan bowed with the Opera Company of Philadelphia last year as Musetta opposite Pavarotti in a production of *La Bohème* directed by Gian Carlo Menotti and telecast nationally by PBS last August, as well as singing Adina in *L'Elisir d'amore*. She made her Chicago Symphony debut under Sir Georg Solti this past season, appearing as Freia in *Das Rheingold* both in Chicago and at Carnegie Hall. She also sang in *La Bohème* at Miami Beach during the 1982-83 season. Miss Johnson made her Santa Fe Opera debut during the summer of 1982 as Rosalinda in a new production of *Die Fledermaus* and Xanthe in Strauss' rarely heard *Die Liebe der Danae*. She returned to Santa Fe this past summer as Miss Jessel in *The Turn of the Screw*. Recent engagements include Musetta with the Annapolis Opera and Agathe in *Der Freischütz* with the New York Lyric Opera. In 1980 she was honored as regional winner of the Metropolitan Opera Auditions, was semifinalist in the National Metropolitan Opera Auditions and received a 1980 scholarship from the American Institute for Musical Studies. Future engagements include performances with the San Francisco Symphony, appearances as Musetta in Edmonton and the title role of *The Merry Widow* with the Washington Opera.

Sheri Greenawald



Soprano **SHERI GREENAWALD** returns to San Francisco Opera as Bella in *The Midsummer Marriage*. She first appeared with the Company in the 1978 production of *Fidelio*, returning to sing Pamina in *The Magic Flute* in 1980, and winning great acclaim last fall in the title role of Massenet's *Cendrillon*. The Iowa-born singer has participated in a large number of premieres: the world premiere at Brooklyn College of John Eccles's *Semele* (written in 1707); the New York premieres of Poulenc's *Les Mamelles de Tirésias* and Pasatieri's *Signor Deluso* with Manhattan Theatre Club; the title role in the world premiere of Floyd's *Bilby's Doll* during the Houston Grand Opera's 1975-76 season (her debut with that company); the world premiere of Pasatieri's *Washington Square* for Michigan Opera Theater's 1976-77 season; and, earlier this year, the role of Dede in Houston Grand Opera's world premiere of Bernstein's *A Quiet Place*. During the 1980-81 season, Miss Greenawald bowed with Netherlands Opera as Susanna in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, the vehicle of her 1976 debut with Santa Fe Opera, where she repeated the role in 1982. During the 1981-82 season she returned to Netherlands Opera to sing Anne Trulove in *The Rake's Progress*, appearing in the same production when it traveled to the Israel Festival, and reprising the role that same season at the Kennedy Center in Washington, where she also appeared as Mimi in *La Bohème*. Recent assignments include Zdenka in *Arabella* with Netherlands Opera, Gilda in *Rigoletto* with the Kentucky Opera, the Governess in *The Turn of the Screw*, Euridice in *Orpheus in the Underworld* with

Sheila Nadler



Santa Fe Opera, and concert appearances with the Cleveland Orchestra.

Contralto **SHEILA NADLER** appears as Sosostris in *The Midsummer Marriage* and as La Cieca in *La Gioconda*. Since her 1968 Company debut, she has been heard in over 20 roles ranging from Erda in *Siegfried* to Auntie in *Peter Grimes*, and in 1973 triumphed in the title role of *The Grand Duchess of Gerolstein* for Spring Opera Theater. Miss Nadler made her operatic debut with Lyric Opera of Chicago, going on to make her Metropolitan Opera debut in 1976. She returned to the Met this year as the Witch in *Hansel and Gretel*, an assignment she will repeat there in 1984 and 1985. In 1978 she made her Santa Fe Opera debut as Herodias in *Salome*, a role she subsequently performed in Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Dayton and New Orleans. Miss Nadler made her Canadian debut as Amneris in *Aida* for Vancouver Opera and shortly thereafter made her European debut to great acclaim at the Opéra de Marseille, where she sang Fricka in *Die Walküre*. Subsequent European engagements include Waltraute in *Götterdämmerung* in Brussels and Lyon, where she sang both Fricka and Waltraute in the complete *Ring* in 1981. That same season, she bowed at La Scala as Anna in *Les Troyens*, a role she had recently sung in Marseilles. Her numerous concert appearances have included Massenet's *Marie-Magdeleine* with the Sacred Music Society at Avery Fisher Hall, Tippett's *Child of Our Time* in Houston, St. Louis and Syracuse (Sir Michael Tippett conducting), the Verdi Requiem at the Casals Festival, and annual appear-

Leslie Richards



Dennis Bailey



Ryland Davies



Raimund Herincx

sional opera debut with New Orleans Opera in 1974 and his European opera debut at Glyndebourne in 1981. During the 1982-83 season, he appeared with the Welsh National Opera as Florestan in *Fidelio* and opposite Elisabeth Söderström in *Katya Kabanova*, both of which were broadcast over the BBC. He also appeared as Bacchus with the Hamburg Staatsoper and made his debut with the Grand Théâtre de Nancy as Erik in *Der Fliegende Holländer*. Later that season, he made his Santa Fe Opera debut as Midas in Strauss' rarely performed *Die Liebe der Danae*. This spring he sang Froh in concert performances of *Das Rheingold* with the Chicago Symphony under Sir Georg Solti in Chicago and at Carnegie Hall, marking his debut in that hall. Bailey recently returned to Hamburg to sing Bacchus and opened Washington Opera's 1983 season as Don José in *Carmen* and, later in the season, as Peter Quint in *Turn of the Screw*. In September he appeared as soloist with the National Symphony in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, and in November will be heard as Pollione in *Norma* with the Winnipeg Opera. An active concert artist in Europe, Bailey has sung with the Birmingham Orchestra in England and with the Orchestre Suisse Nationale. Earlier this summer he performed in Beethoven's Ninth with the French National Symphony in Paris and will make his debut in Geneva later this season in *Idomeneo*.

ances at the Washington, D.C., Handel Society Festival at Kennedy Center, where she will return in the title role of *Orlando* in 1984. A frequent guest artist with Opéra de Marseille, Miss Nadler will appear there in 1985 as Sonja in *War and Peace*.

Mezzo-soprano **LESLIE RICHARDS** sings Emilia in Verdi's *Otello*, the role of the Ancient in the American premiere of Tippett's *The Midsummer Marriage* and the Nurse in Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov*. She appeared as Rossweisse in *Die Walküre* during the 1983 Summer Festival, a role she first sang with the Company in 1981. Last Fall Season, she sang the role of Clotilde in *Norma*, Tisbe in *La Cenerentola* and Mother Jeanne in *Dialogues of the Carmelites*. She made her Company debut in the fall of 1980 in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* and *Jenůfa*. During the 1982 San Francisco Opera Center Showcase series, Miss Richards sang Leonora in Scarlatti's *The Triumph of Honor*. She created the roles of Mme. Pernelle in the American Opera Project's world premiere of Kirke Mechem's *Tartuffe* in 1980 and Marla in the world

premiere of Mollicone's *Emperor Norton* with Brown Bag Opera in 1981. As a member of the 1980 Merola Opera Program, she appeared as Nancy in *Albert Herring* and Berta in excerpts from *The Barber of Seville*. A native of Los Angeles, she participated in the San Diego Opera Center Program and made her debut with that company as Sofia in Verdi's *I Lombardi* in 1979. In addition to her operatic assignments, Miss Richards has recently appeared with the San Francisco Concert Orchestra in Mahler's *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* and a concert version of *Carmen* with the Ventura Symphony. Other recent engagements include Marcellina in *Le Nozze di Figaro* and Maddalena in *Rigoletto* with Hawaii Opera Theater, and the *St. Matthew Passion* with the Hawaii Symphony.

Tenor **DENNIS BAILEY** returns to San Francisco Opera to sing Bacchus in *Ariadne auf Naxos* and Mark in *The Midsummer Marriage*. He made his Company debut as Tom Rakewell in the 1982 Summer Festival production of *The Rake's Progress*. It was as Bacchus that he made his profes-

Welsh tenor **RYLAND DAVIES** returns to the San Francisco Opera singing Jack in the American premiere of Tippett's *The Midsummer Marriage* and Cassio in Verdi's *Otello*, a role he sang here in his 1970 American debut with the Company. That same season, he portrayed Ferrando in *Così fan tutte*, a role he repeated here in 1973. It was as Ferrando and as Belmonte in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* that the tenor first won critical acclaim at the Glyndebourne Festivals of 1968 and 1969. Now a stalwart at the renowned festival, Davies has repeated these roles and added Lysander in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and the Prince in *Love for Three Oranges* to his credits. This season he returned to Glyndebourne as Belmonte and the Prince. Davies sings regularly with all the major opera houses in Great Britain and his appearances at Covent Garden have included Don Ottavio in Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, Ferrando, Cassio and Count Almaviva in Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*. He returned there earlier this season for performances of *Don Pasquale*. Davies has sung extensively in France, appearing as

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Pelléas in Lyons, Belmonte at the Paris Opera and, most recently, Lensky in *Eugene Onegin* at Nancy. In 1979 he made his debut in Germany singing Pelléas in Stuttgart and has since returned for *La Traviata* and *Don Giovanni*. A busy concert artist, he has appeared extensively on the concert stages in Great Britain. This season he sang with the English Chamber Orchestra portraying the Evangelist in Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* at the Barbican Centre. Davies's extensive discography includes complete operas by Cimarosa, Leoni, Montemezzi, Mozart, Verdi and Handel.

Bass-baritone **RAIMUND HERINCX** returns to San Francisco Opera as King Fisher in *The Midsummer Marriage*, the role in which he made his 1968 Covent Garden debut and subsequently sang with the Welsh National Opera, at the Adelaide Festival in Australia, for the French National Radio and in the premiere recording conducted by Sir Colin Davis. He made his 1978 San Francisco Opera debut as Mr. Redburn in *Billy Budd* and Telramund in *Lohengrin*, returning in 1980 as the Spirit Messenger in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. Herincx began his career with Sadler's Wells Opera, where he sang over 400 performances of 40 major roles, and went on to appear throughout Europe and the United States. In 1974 he sang Wotan in the English National Opera's acclaimed *Ring* production, which he repeated during the 1975-76 season in London and on tour. In 1975 he participated in the Covent Garden *Ring* and, the following season, made his Metropolitan Opera debut in Meyerbeer's *Le Prophète*. From 1977 to 1981 he was a regular guest artist at Seattle Opera's Pacific Northwest Wagner Festival, singing Wotan. He has participated in three world premieres at Covent Garden: Tippett's *The Knot Garden* (1970); Davies's *Taverner* (1972), which he repeated there this past summer and will portray in the work's American premiere early next year in Boston; and Henze's *We Come to the River* (1976). Recent engagements include *Lohengrin* in Barcelona, *Elektra* with the New Orleans Opera, *The Tales of Hoffmann* with Opera North, *Oedipus Rex* at London's Royal Albert Hall and *Manon Lescaut* with Scottish Opera, a performance he will repeat later this season.

Bass **KEVIN LANGAN** returns to San Francisco Opera as Truffaldino in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, the Ancient in the American premiere of Tippett's *The Midsummer Marriage*, an Old Hebrew in *Samson et Dalila* and Varlaam in *Boris Godunov*. Since his

(Continued on page 57)

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- Merola Opera Program
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Western Opera Theater
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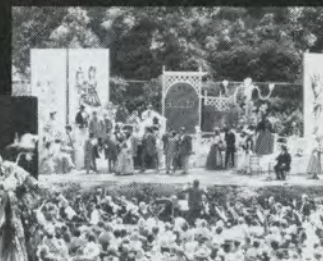
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Leslie Richards, Kevin Langan

The Midsummer Marriage

Photos taken in rehearsal!



Mary Jane Johnson, San Francisco Opera Chorus and Ballet

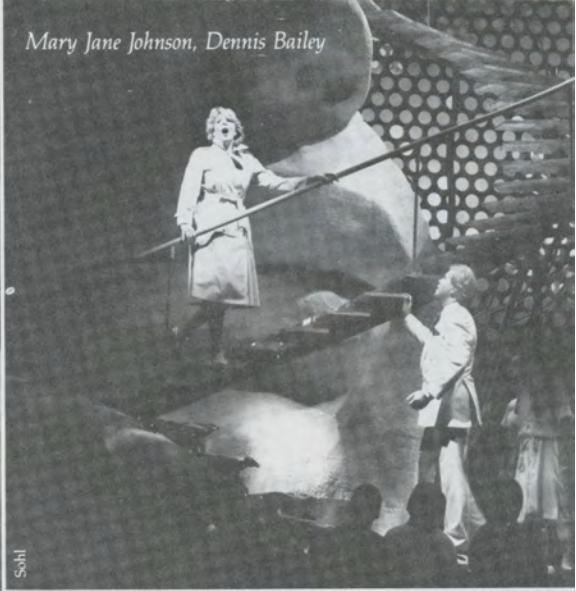




Acheson



Acheson



Sohl



Mary Jane Johnson



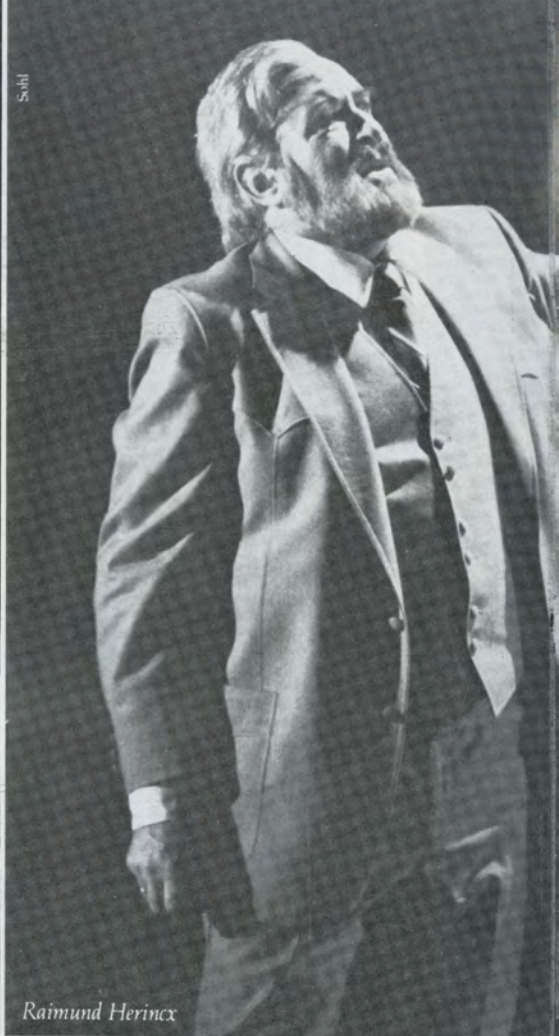
Mary Jane Johnson, Dennis Bailey

Sohler



Acheson

Sheri Greenawald, Ryland Davies



Sohl

Raimund Herinx



Sheila Nadler



Jamie Cohen

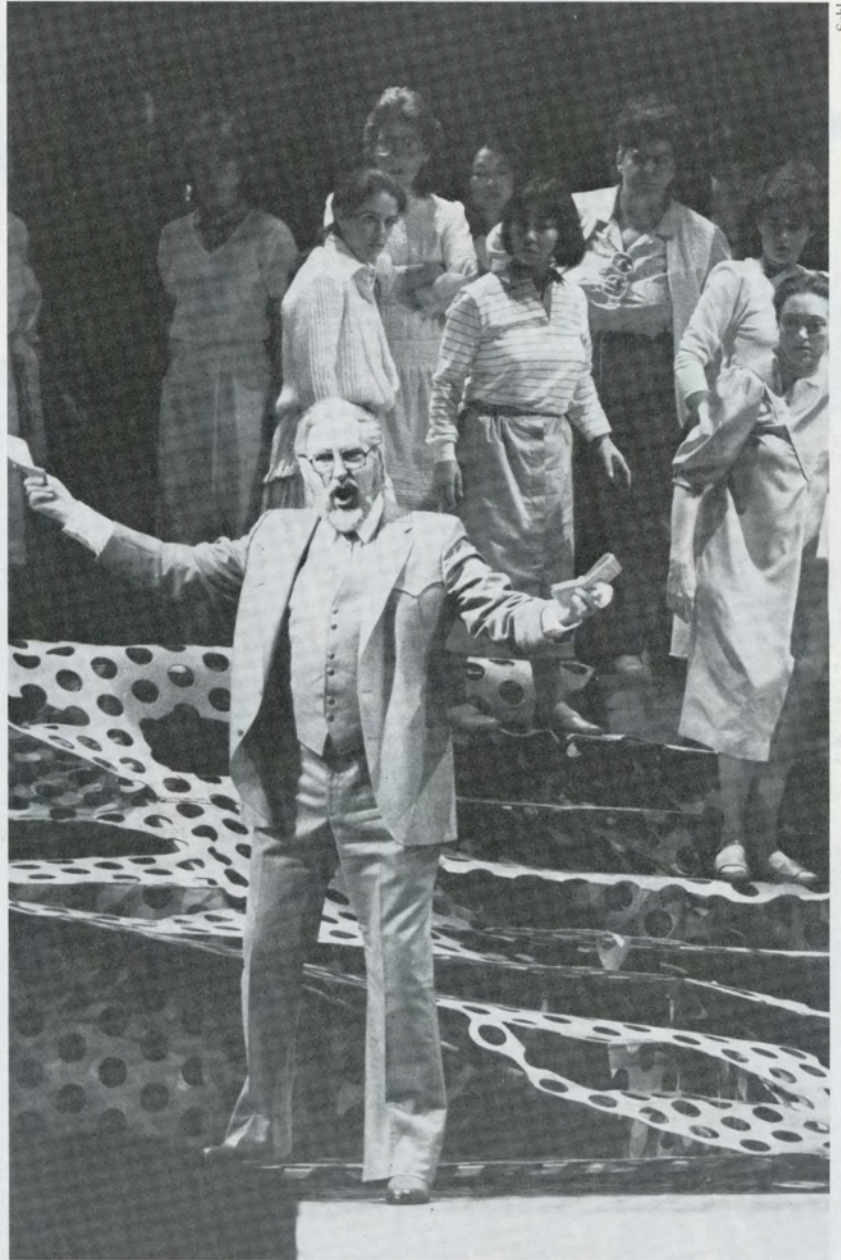
Scherl

Acheson



Summer
Stage

Raimund Herincx



Sohl



This new production made possible through the generosity of the Paul L. and Phyllis Wattis Foundation.

American Premiere
Opera in three acts by SIR MICHAEL TIPPETT
Text by the composer

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The Midsummer Marriage

(in English)

Conductor
David Agler

Production
John Copley

Choreographer
Terry Gilbert**

Designer
Robin Don**

Lighting and Projection Designer
Thomas J. Munn

Projection Design and Photography
Ron Scherl

Sound Designer
Roger Gans

Chorus Director
Richard Bradshaw

Musical Preparation
Martin Smith
Mark Haffner
Marvin Tartak
Susan Webb

Prompter
Susan Webb

Assistant Stage Director
Robin Thompson

Stage Manager
Jerry Sherk

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First performance:
London, January 27, 1955

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 15 AT 8:00
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 19 AT 8:00
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 23 AT 2:00
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 26 AT 7:30
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 29 AT 8:00
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 1 AT 8:00

Latecomers will not be seated during the performance after the lights have dimmed.

The use of cameras and any kind of recording equipment is strictly forbidden.

The performance will last approximately three hours and fifteen minutes.

CAST

(in order of appearance)

<i>Strephon, one of the dancers</i>	Jamie Cohen*
<i>The Ancients, priest and priestess of the temple</i>	Leslie Richards Kevin Langan
<i>Mark, a young man of unknown parentage</i>	Dennis Bailey
<i>Jenifer, his betrothed, a young woman</i>	Mary Jane Johnson
<i>King Fisher, Jenifer's father, a business tycoon</i>	Raimund Herincx
<i>Bella, King Fisher's secretary</i>	Sheri Greenawald
<i>Jack, Bella's boyfriend, a mechanic</i>	Ryland Davies
<i>A half-tipsy man</i>	Mark Coles
<i>A dancing man</i>	Sigmund Seigel
<i>Sosostris, a clairvoyante</i>	Sheila Nadler
<i>Mark's and Jenifer's friends</i>	
<i>Dancers attendant on the Ancients</i>	
<i>Lisa Brodsky</i>	Peter Childers
<i>Anne Elizabeth Egan (Hawk)</i>	Gregory Gonzales
<i>Amy Laszlo</i>	Tom Hillyard
<i>Sarah Gale Oppenheimer (Otter)</i>	Gregory Lara
<i>Kathryn Roszak (Hound)</i>	Karstyn McCoy
<i>Elaine Wadsworth</i>	Dennis McDonald

**American opera debut *San Francisco Opera debut

TIME: The present

ACT I Morning

INTERMISSION

ACT II Afternoon

INTERMISSION

ACT III Evening and Night

The director wishes to acknowledge the help of Miss Adrienne Corri in preparing this production.

Synopsis

ACT I—Pre-dawn, Midsummer Day. A group of Mark's friends gather in a forest clearing to await his fiancée, Jenifer. In this "magic wood" the young couple's marriage ceremony is to take place. The rising sun reveals a strange temple from which emerge two ancient-looking figures leading a young dancer, Strephon, and his companions. Ordered by these sage-like creatures, Strephon and friends begin a ritual dance, but are interrupted by the arrival of Mark. Tired of the old order, he demands a new dance for his wedding day. The Ancients seemingly relent and a "new" dance starts, only to be deliberately stopped by the He-Ancient, who warns Mark change does not come free of pain but that he shall nonetheless "learn a new dance" before the day's end. Without further explanation, the Ancients and dancers leave. Mark's friends, who have been hidden in the forest, reappear. Mark tells them he has observed the temple's inhabitants since boyhood but was never able to discover their origin or his own unknown parentage. His thoughts then turn to Jenifer, but his joy is cut short when she arrives dressed for travel, not a wedding. Torn between genuine love for Mark and a spiritual need she does not understand, Jenifer abruptly calls off the marriage. As they quarrel, Jenifer breaks away from Mark and finds herself at the foot of a staircase leading to the temple. Instinctively, the young women separate from the men. Jenifer, fascinated, ascends the "magic staircase that I've always known in dreams" and disappears. The women laugh knowingly. Jenifer's father, King Fisher, is heard in hot pursuit of his eloping daughter. The men urge Mark to run away, but he breaks free, suddenly realizing that, like Jenifer, he must embark on his own spiritual search. While hers led upward into the symbolic white light, his course leads down into the red recesses of the rich earth. At his cry, "Cave I have always longed to enter, open to receive your child," the entrance magically opens and Mark disappears. By following their subconscious instincts, Mark and Jenifer have entered the supernatural world, where they will begin their quest for a spiritual core. King Fisher enters just in time to see Mark's exit. Believing his daughter to be with Mark, the business tycoon sets out to retrieve her by using the only means he knows: money, power and hired brute force. He orders his super-efficient secretary Bella to demand that the inhabitants of this strange place return his daughter. The Ancients, recognizing in King Fisher a soul beyond hope, dismiss his inquiries and leave. Infuriated, he hires Bella's boyfriend Jack, a mechanic, to force the cave open.

While Bella is fetching Jack, King Fisher tries to bribe the young people into his employ. The men cynically accept his ready cash, but the women, repulsed by his bullying, refuse it. Jack tries to pry the entrance to the cave open, but an ominous voice sounds a warning. Bella and the women urge the men to stop tampering with the mysterious cave, while the men egg Jack and King Fisher on, labeling the voice a trick. Jack hesitates. The argument builds to a tense climax, and as the women call for help, Jenifer reappears from the temple. Visibly transformed, she slowly descends the stairs. During this moment of stunned confusion Bella seizes her chance and leads the baffled Jack away. Jenifer's abrupt return to reality forces the same from Mark, who emerges from the cave, also changed. Jenifer's transformation suggests the goddess Athena; Mark's, the god Dionysus. Representing these two archetypes, they confront each other in a spiritual contest. Jenifer believes her particular path to be the only true way to enlightenment and demands that Mark look at his spiritual reflection in a symbolic mirror. Mark, who is less naive, pierces the mirror with a "golden bough." The action forces them to exchange personas. Jenifer now descends into the cave to complete her self-exploration, while Mark ascends the staircase. King Fisher storms off, claiming, "Now is this nonsense at its noon." But the young people rejoice for Mark and Jenifer, who have the courage to pursue self-awareness in their stead.

ACT II—Afternoon. Strephon's dance is interrupted as Jack, Bella and their friends pass through. Bella informs Jack she has decided they should marry. Jack agrees, and they lovingly dream of their uncomplicated future. Strephon re-appears from the temple and watches as the mortals exit, arm in arm. Next, we have three of the opera's four ritual dances, each depicting a male animal, at his most vulnerable, under attack from a female animal at her most predatory. (In Jungian terms, these dances illustrate the psychic battle between Mark's *anima* and Jenifer's *animus*.)

The first dance, "The Earth in Autumn," deals with a male hare (Strephon) who is hunted by a female hound. In the second, "The Waters in Winter," the female otter pursues the male fish. The third dance, "The Air in Spring," during which a female hawk preys upon and injures the male bird, is interrupted at a crucial moment by the return of Jack and Bella. Confusing their dreamy dance ritual with reality, she screams in fear. Amused, Strephon and the dancers return to the temple. Bella pulls herself together by combing her hair and

fixing her face. As she and Jack leave, she tells him King Fisher wants him to play "another role." Jack has strange misgivings. The magic wood is once again still.

ACT III—Evening. Mark's and Jenifer's friends have been summoned back to the wood by King Fisher. A wild revel is in full swing. King Fisher announces that he has hired his own clairvoyante, the famed Madame Sosostris, through whom he, too, will gain access to the other world. In case that fails, he has also brought a gun. The famous sybil is borne in, but Jack shows the crowd that the apparition is actually he, in costume. Suddenly, the supernatural world takes over and the real Sosostris magically appears. The amazed King Fisher demands a look into the future. Sosostris, resenting his summons, painfully responds with visions "drawn inexorably out from the vast lottery, a dream." A tortured medium, she describes herself as "what has been, is, and shall be." As Jack holds up a crystal ball, her powers reveal a vision of the union of Mark and Jenifer's spirits. King Fisher breaks in and shatters the ball, calling Sosostris and her vision a lie. He aims his gun at her, but Bella cries out and stops him. Sosostris vanishes. Bella's act of courage finally pushes Jack over the edge. He chooses "to strip the veils not from Sosostris but myself," freeing himself from King Fisher and all he represents. Jack decisively leads his beloved Bella away.

The Ancients return. A lotus blossom, containing the transfigured spirits of Mark and Jenifer, emerges from the temple. They face each other as the Hindu gods Shiva and Parvati in a pose of perpetual copulation. King Fisher vainly attempts to shatter the vision of something he cannot comprehend. One glance from the radiant pair causes him to fall down, dead. "Mourn not the fall of a man that goes down leaving the room for someone beautiful" is sung as his requiem. The fourth, and last, ritual dance begins: "Fire in Summer" is a hymn to St. John's fire. As the spirits chant, young couples sing a wild incantation to the joys of carnal love. The dance's frenzy reaches a joyful climax as Strephon is lifted up to join the spirits of Mark and Jenifer. In immolating flame, the lotus disappears. Left alone, the young people wonder, "Was it a vision, was it a dream?" They tenderly embrace each other, changed by the day's events. As dawn breaks, Mark and Jenifer re-enter the wood, she in her wedding garb. Their spiritual growth complete, the couple unites in wedlock and goes "down the hill with joy to the bounteous life of this Midsummer Day."

□

Kevin Langan



1980 Company debut as the Old Hebrew, Langan has appeared in 17 different productions here, most recently as Colline in *La Bohème* and Zuniga in *Carmen* during the 1983 Summer Festival. He made his recital debut in 1979 in London under the sponsorship of Elisabeth Schwarzkopf and the late Walter Legge, and in 1980 he was a Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions winner and member of the Merola Opera Program. In recent seasons he has appeared as Bartolo, Ashby in *La Fanciulla del West* and Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte* in Philadelphia; Sarastro in St. Louis and Omaha; and in *La Traviata* in New Jersey. He made his European operatic debut last November as Osmin in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* in Lyon, with additional performances of the role in Chambéry and Grenoble. Earlier this season he sang Sarastro in Palm Beach, bowed with Canadian Opera Company as Seneca in *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* and appeared as the duke in the American premiere of Saint-Saëns's *Henry VIII* in San Diego. In the spring of 1984, Langan will make his Carnegie Hall recital debut.

Currently in his fourth year as a member of the Eliot Feld Ballet, **JAMIE COHEN** makes his San Francisco Opera debut as Strephon in *The Midsummer Marriage*. Born in Peoria, Illinois, Cohen attended the National Academy of Arts in Champaign-Urbana, subsequently receiving study scholarships at the Ellis Du Bonley School in Chicago and at the Ruth Paige Foundation, eventually becoming apprenticed to the Chicago Ballet. After a summer scholarship with the American Ballet Theatre, Cohen spent two years in ABT II, during which his assignments included the lead in *Elusive Dreams*, a role created especially for him by Dame Rietter-Soffer. He most recently appeared with the Feld Ballet

Jamie Cohen



in the principal role of *The Real McCoy*, a role previously danced only by Eliot Feld himself. Other recent engagements include his appearance in New York City Opera's production of *Song of Norway*.

San Francisco Opera musical supervisor and resident conductor **DAVID AGLER** leads the American premiere of Sir Michael Tippett's *The Midsummer Marriage*. The Chicago native was last on the SFO podium for Tchaikovsky's *The Queen of Spades* during the 1982 Fall Season, having led Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress* for the 1982 Summer Festival. He received high praise for Henze's *Elegy for Young Lovers*, Britten's *Death in Venice*, Kurka's *Good Soldier Schweik* and Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* during the last four seasons of Spring Opera. In 1979 he led the world premiere of John Harbison's *Winter's Tale* to inaugurate the American Opera Project at Herbst Theater, returning there in 1980 for the AOP's second offering, Kirke Mechem's *Tartuffe*. Agler made his official Company debut with the 1979 English-language performances of *Così fan tutte*, and the following year led the English-language production of *Don Pasquale*. During the first San Francisco Opera Summer Festival in 1981 he was on the podium for *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, and during the 1981 Fall Season conducted *Lucia di Lammermoor*. Agler served as administrator and conductor for the Festival of Two Worlds in Spoleto, where his credits included Menotti's *Tamu Tamu* and *The Old Maid and the Thief*, Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia* and the world premiere of Bruni-Tedeschi's *La Giusta causa è una buona ragione*. In 1980 Agler made his Santa Fe Opera debut conducting *The Magic Flute* and Schönberg's *Erwartung*. He made his first appearance with the San Francisco Symphony leading the 1982 Mostly Mozart Marathon and per-

David Agler



forming one of the solo keyboard parts in the Bach Concerto for Four Claviers and Orchestra.

Stage director **JOHN COPLEY** returns to the San Francisco Opera for the American premiere of Tippett's *The Midsummer Marriage*. He made his Company debut with the highly acclaimed 1982 Summer Festival production of Handel's *Julius Caesar*. Copley spent several years early in his career as stage manager of the opera and ballet companies at Sadler's Wells Theatre, where he directed his first opera, Puccini's *Il Tabarro*. He was stage manager for musicals in London's West End before becoming assistant and then principal resident producer (director) at Covent Garden, a position he still holds. His productions there have included *Don Giovanni*, *La Bohème*, *Alceste*, *Werther*, *Così fan tutte*, *Le Nozze di Figaro* and *L'Elisir d'amore*. His work has been seen at La Scala, the Welsh National Opera, the Netherlands Opera and the Athens Festival. For the English National Opera he has staged *Julius Caesar*, *Il Trovatore*, *La Traviata*, *Mary Stuart* and *Der Rosenkavalier*, which he will revive



John Copley

Robin Don



there early next year. For the Australian Opera in Sydney, he has mounted productions of *Die Zauberflöte*, *Manon Lescaut*, *Jenufa*, *Macbeth* and, during the last season, *Così fan tutte*, *Tosca*, *La Traviata* and *Lucia di Lammermoor*. In North America, his directing credits include productions for the Canadian Opera Company, Vancouver Opera, New York City Opera and Washington Opera, where his staging of Handel's *Semele* will be mounted this fall.

Scottish designer **ROBIN DON** makes his American debut with designs for *The Midsummer Marriage*. He has created set and costume designs for many leading ballet, theater and opera companies in the United Kingdom and abroad. He designed Poulenc's *Les Mamelles de Tirésias* for the English National Opera and Opera North. For the latter company, he also designed productions of Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* and Wagner's *The Flying Dutchman*. Recent projects include *Madame Butterfly* for ENO, *Peter Grimes* for the Welsh National Opera and *Eugene Onegin* for the 1983 Ottawa Festival. Don was the designer of the world premieres of Hoddinott's *The Trumpet Major* and Musgrave's *Mary, Queen of Scots* for Scottish Opera. For the Aldeburgh Festival he designed Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* in 1979 and Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in 1980. His designs for *Onegin*, as part of the British entry at the 1980 International Theatre Design Competition in Prague, won the Golden Trophy. In addition to opera, Don's credits for legitimate theater include *The Birthday Party*, *For Services Rendered*, *Hotel Paradiso* and *Bartholomew Fair*, as well as a number of musicals in London, including *Billy*, *Bar Mitzvah Boy* and *Song and Dance*. Recent assignments include a new production of *Twelfth Night* for the Royal Shakespeare Company at Stratford on Avon.

Terry Gilbert



TERRY GILBERT makes his American debut with the choreography for *The Midsummer Marriage*, a work he choreographed in 1976 for the Welsh National Opera. Born in Chesterfield, England, Gilbert studied choreography and dance with the Ballet Rambert, going on to become principal dancer with that company and dancing leading roles with London's Festival Ballet. He was associated for several years with Mercury's Ballet Workshop and with the Sadler's Wells Choreographic Group, for which he created his first ballet. A freelance choreographer since 1960, he has worked in several media, including film, television, opera and theater. In addition to being a working choreographer, Gilbert is well known for his directorial talents. He was recently involved in four major BBC productions: he directed Gilbert and Sullivan's *Princess Ida*; choreographed *Orpheus in the Underworld*; produced and directed the musical *Treasure Island*; and directed the musical revue *A Night on the Town*. Gilbert's film credits include choreography for several Ken Russell films, such as *Women in Love*, *The Boyfriend*, *The Music Lovers* and *The Elephant Man*. His work in opera has been acclaimed throughout Great Britain, including Glyndebourne, Covent Garden, the Welsh National Opera, the English National Opera, Scottish Opera and England's Opera North. His credits with these companies include *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Jenufa*, *Salome*, *La Traviata* and *Aida*, among others. In addition, he has choreographed video productions of the entire Gilbert and Sullivan repertoire.

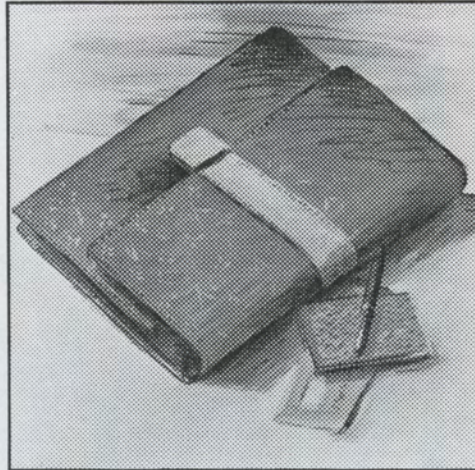
In his eighth year with the San Francisco Opera, **THOMAS J. MUNN** is responsible for the lighting designs of *Otello*, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Katya Kabanova*, *La Traviata*, *The Midsummer Marriage*, *Samson et Dalila*, *La Grande Duchesse de Gérolstein*, *La Gioconda*

Thomas J. Munn



and *Boris Godunov* during the 1983 Fall Season. For the 1983 Summer Festival, Munn designed the lighting for *Das Rheingold*, *Die Walküre*, *Carmen* and *Così fan tutte*. The 1982 Fall Season saw his designs for *Un Ballo in Maschera*, *The Queen of Spades* and *Lohengrin*; found him as the lighting supervisor of *Tosca*; and the scenic supervisor and the lighting designer for *Salome*. During the 1982 Summer Festival his lighting was seen in productions of *Julius Caesar*, *Turandot* and *Nabucco*, for which he also designed the sets. For the first Summer Festival in 1981, he created the lighting for *Don Giovanni*, *Lear* and *Die Meistersinger*. In 1980 he originated the lighting designs for the productions of *Samson et Dalila* and *Don Pasquale*, and the previous year won an Emmy Award for the production of *La Gioconda* that was telecast internationally. That year he also designed the scenery for *Roberto Devereux* and *Pelléas et Mélisande*. In past seasons he has created special effects for the Company's productions and served as supervising set designer for *Adriana Lecouvreur*, *Faust* and *Billy Budd*. Since 1976 he has designed the lighting for nearly all of the new productions of the San Francisco Opera, including the world premiere of Imbrie's *The Angle of Repose* in 1976. Munn has created the scenery and lighting projection for the Hartford Ballet's acclaimed multi-media productions of *The Nutcracker*; created the scenery and lighting designs for *Don Quichotte* with the Netherlands Opera; and, last year, designed the lighting for the Washington Opera Society's productions of *Tristan und Isolde* and *Lucia di Lammermoor*. Other recent design credits include *La Bohème* and *Rigoletto* with the Houston Grand Opera. Munn's recent television projects include Luciano Pavarotti's live concerts from Houston and San Francisco earlier this year.

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a keen interest in the writings of C.G. Jung. For a short time he underwent Jungian analysis with John Layard, but soon abandoned that in favor of his own deep self-analysis. The outbreak of war in 1938 closed the sources of income from his choral conducting, and he returned to schoolmastering, now teaching classics as well as French. Early during the war he joined the Peace Pledge Union, and registered as a conscientious objector. When his case was eventually heard, he was allocated certain non-military duties connected with the war-effort, which he felt unable to comply with. He was sentenced in consequence to three months' imprisonment on June 21, 1943.

He had continued composing throughout this period. The work which was to



Michael Tippett and Benjamin Britten.

bring him widespread public attention, the oratorio *A Child of Our Time*, was begun just after the outbreak of war. It was inspired by his horror at what was to that time the most savage Nazi pogrom. In November 1938, a 17-year old Polish Jew, Herschel Grynsban, sheltering from persecution in Paris, assassinated a minor Nazi diplomat as his desperate protest against the treatment of his parents in Poland. The Nazis responded with a massive pogrom. The boy was tried, imprisoned and he disappeared. It was typical of Tippett that he responded to this event with an attempt to confront the fundamental question of Man's Inhumanity to Man. His oratorio, which uses spirituals in the same way that Bach had used Lutheran chorales in his passions, is especially

notable for its contrasting of the "dark" and the "light" in human personalities—the need to accept the presence of both good and evil in the same person. This concept was to dominate much of his later work, most of all *The Midsummer Marriage*, written in the decade following the war.

"I remember how I went up north in 1932 to a work-camp, helping unemployed ironstone miners, then hiked into the coalfields and saw for the first time, with horrified eyes, the undernourished children. When I returned to the well-fed south, I was ashamed.

"I saw now, and understood for the first time, the stark realities of human life for so many people and accepted the overwhelming need for compassion with regard to such things. So I was faced, consciously perhaps for the first time, with the fundamental question: had I the right to turn away from such reality, to shut myself up to write abstract music?"

"... Although the artist appears to be locked away, doing his particular thing, one could not, at that time, but be aware of what was going on. I was most peculiarly aware. I was drawn by something in my own entrails into what was happening, particularly in Germany. The Jews were the particular scapegoats of everything, for every kind of standing outcast, whether in Russia or America or even in England. For these people I knew somehow I had to sing songs. Suddenly, in fact the day after war broke out, the whole thing welled up in me in a way which I remember exactly. I simply had to go and begin to write *A Child of Our Time*. I felt I had to express collective feelings and that could only be done by collective tunes such as Negro spirituals, for these tunes contain a deposit of generations of common experience.

"... I hold for myself that the composition of oratorio and opera is a collective as well as a personal experience. While indeed all artistic creation may be seen in that way, I believe the collective experience, whether conscious or unconscious, is more fundamental to an oratorio or an opera than to a string quartet... I find that there are unresolved but deeply serious collective experiences of our time which will not get themselves successfully into the traditional modes of expression.

"I first became aware of this, as it concerned my activity as a composer, when the oratorio *A Child of Our Time* began the long process of gestation.

In that example the collective experience was partly conscious (the experience of rejection, whether as individual, class or race) and partly unconscious (the experience of involvement in some uncontrollable catastrophe). I was able to use traditional Lutheran and Handelian passions and oratorios as a technical basis... but the modern experience keeps bursting out of the older forms. I took a half-line from Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral* as motto:

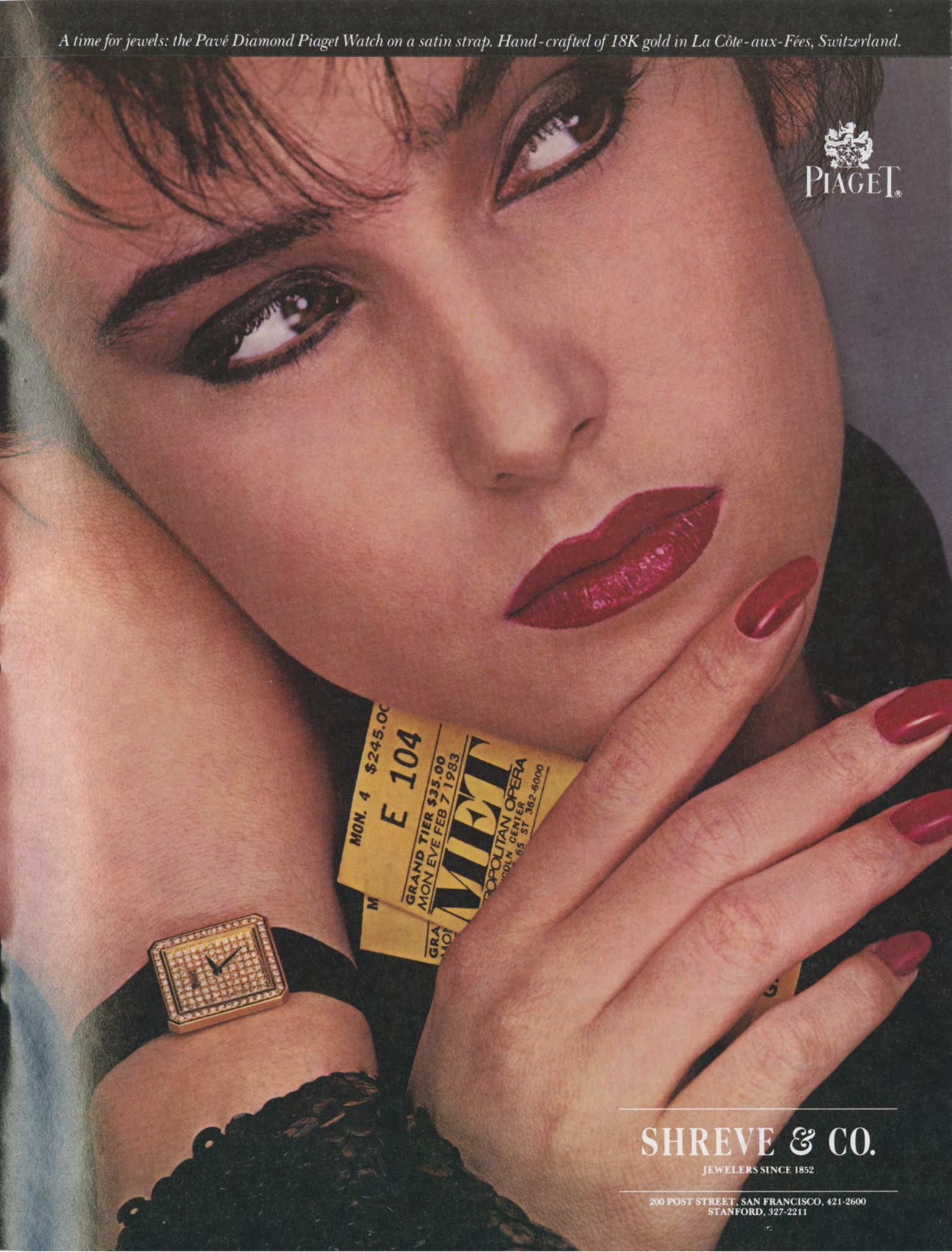
... the darkness declares the glory of light.

In this half-line the traditional biblical words have been changed in order that they may reflect modern sensibilities. *A Child of Our Time* constantly plays the same trick. Not only in words, which I wrote myself, but in the music too...

"Verbally the text reached an affirmation at the end before the final spiritual. The solo tenor sings: 'I would know my shadow and my light, so shall I at last be whole.' This contrast of division and wholeness had appeared in an earlier essay in which I used the words: 'The only concept we can place over against the fact of divided man is the idea of the whole man.' And I immediately followed those words with an example taken from the history of opera, saying that the most enchanting expression of a general state where theological man is balanced against natural man is in Mozart's *Magic Flute*. So it is clear to me that already as the first performances of *A Child of Our Time* were being given, I was toying with the idea of trying to give dramatic expression to the experiences of knowing the shadow, and of wholeness, not by the method of example and contemplation proper to an oratorio, but by the method of action and consequence proper to an opera."

The opera was to be *The Midsummer Marriage*, which Tippett began writing in 1946, at the end of the war. He had by now achieved complete mastery of his technical means of expression, a style strongly individual and contemporary, although fundamentally tonal (and therefore traditional). His published and performed works were growing in number. Notable among them were the first three string quartets and the *First Symphony*, which had its premiere in 1945 under Malcolm Sargent's direction. The string quartets had been written for the newly formed *Amadeus Quartet*, and another work of the period, the song-cycle *Boyhood's End*, was written

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for another (then) little-known duo, Peter Pears and Benjamin Britten. Both the quartets and the song-cycle were written for performance at Morley College during the war—or rather for performance in the halls in which that organization, now under Tippett's own direction, continued to function after the bombing of its premises in 1940. It was a time of notable music-making: many works, both old and new, were given their first London performances under Tippett's auspices: Purcell, Dowland, Gibbons, Monteverdi, were notable among the old; Stravinsky, Hindemith, Britten and Tippett himself, among the new.

After the war, Tippett continued as Director of Music at Morley College. Eventually, during the composition of *The Midsummer Marriage*, he was offered enough work broadcasting talks for the BBC that he was able to resign from Morley College in 1951 and devote himself entirely to composition. His main activities since then have been his compositions, though he has remained active in the Peace Pledge Union, of which he is still Chairman, and he was for five years Director of the Bath Festival in England, succeeding Yehudi Menuhin. Since 1951 he has lived continuously in the country, not as a recluse but in harmony with the landscape that he grew up with and which brought him the peace he needed for his writing. At the age of 60, he was invited to visit the United States, and he found the novel experience of American civilization, and the landscape of the southwest, a new source of inspiration. He has returned frequently ever since, both as a visitor, and to attend performances of his works, a number of which have now been written specifically for American organizations. For the past few years he has been working on a large-scale choral work commissioned by the Boston Symphony Orchestra for its centennial, scheduled for its premiere early in 1984. Among his most ardent American champions was Calvin Simmons, the inspiration behind the Tippett Festival that was held in the Bay Area in 1981. At about the time *The Midsummer Marriage* will be receiving its first American performances, here in San Francisco, (his three later operas have all been staged in this country in the past ten years), Julian Bream is scheduled to give the premiere performances of a major work for solo guitar which Tippett wrote in Calvin Simmons's memory after his tragic death last year.

"Deep within me, I know that part of the artist's job is to renew our sense of the

comely and the beautiful. To create a dream. Every human being has this need to dream. It might seem that this need is satisfied by the simplicities of popular art but behind the mass demand for entertainment lies somewhere the desire for something more permanent, for the deeper satisfaction of proportion and beauty in a world of impersonal exploitation—a world which has no care for the inner person. And if for the poet this means a barren age what does he mean by 'barren'? Our age is not technologically barren. Technology means power and vast production through machines. So man can apparently accomplish everything for good or ill. He can produce abundance, he can manufacture milk powder for starving children in vast quantities. Technology has potentially all the answers for a hungry world.

"The barrenness of the age lies in the deprivation of man's imaginative life once he has put all value into machines. As man becomes more and more capable scientifically, the debasement of the world of imagination produces human beings who find it harder to use decently the material abundance thus provided.

*"... When I look at the exuberance of young people today I see the paradox between the precision and accuracy and power of the scientific world and the primitive, uncouth, even psychedelic nature of the world of popular art at its sharpest. I think the universality of this psychedelic craving is a symptom of an acutely felt imbalance in our society, an imbalance which denies the needs of the impoverished raw world of the inner self.**

"There are other dreams—apparently political, often incoherent. As in my youth, it is the prerogative of young men to shout for a better world. The outstanding feature of this unrest today is its universality. . .

"The dream is broken, as it is time and time again. The dream of the French revolution, of the British Empire, of the 'War to end War', of the communist's Utopia. Most resounding of all for our time—Jefferson's dream of an America which accepts that all men are created equal. That dream is broken. But must I stop singing, like Hölderlin, because of the fragility of all aspiration? I do not think this is what happens. We celebrate—even in outdated forms at times, because we must. The young people who sing that great hymn of affirmation, Blake's 'Jerusalem,' are not so naive as to

imagine that they will in fact build it any more than that all mankind will be brothers. Yet there is a momentary vision of a possibility. The illusion we have now to discard is that this Jerusalem is still to be found outside, somewhere among the glittering promises of technology. As they leave the earth, the astronauts see it from afar—flat, round, nothing so small as a man to be seen. And that flattened out picture of the earth has always seemed to me to symbolize the devaluation of the singular, minute, particular man we all are. But I am still me on the earth and the astronaut is still one particular man on his moon. And it's my task as an artist to talk to him, to find some way to speak through the space suit of the technological man to the imaginative being within.

"I have lived in the country since my student days. This is practical and personal. I need to shut myself away from the noise and activity of the town in order to find some kind of inner silence. The outside world with all its troubles goes on around my personal sanctuary, and I am fully aware of its harsh realities. And I face continually a question within this paradox: has the reality of my imagination any lasting relationship to the reality of those events which immediately affect the lives of men?

"I have been writing music for forty years. During those years there have been huge and world-shattering events in which I have been inevitably caught up. Whether society has felt music valuable or needful I have gone on writing because I must. And I know that my true function within a society which embraces all of us, is to continue an age-old tradition, fundamental to our civilization, which goes back into pre-history and will go forward into the unknown future. This tradition is to create images from the depths of the imagination and to give them form whether visual, intellectual or musical. For it is only through images that the inner world communicates at all. Images of the past, shapes of the future. Images of vigor for a decadent world, images of calm for one too violent. Images of reconciliation for worlds torn by division. And in an age of mediocrity and shattered dreams, images of abounding, generous, exuberant beauty."

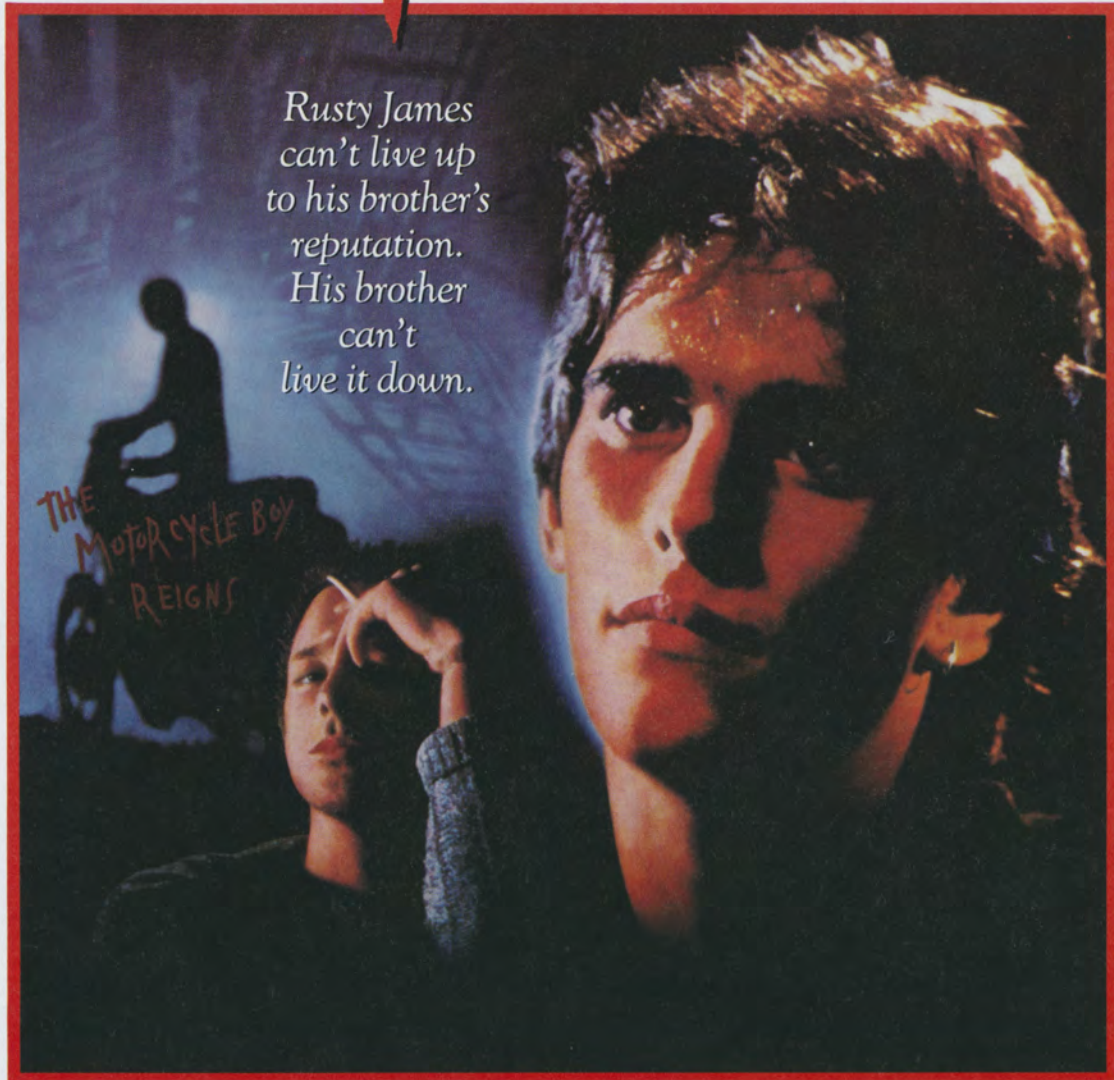
No one, in recent times, has given more exuberant, more generous, more abounding images of beauty than has Michael Tippett himself in his first mature opera, *The Midsummer Marriage*. □

* Written in the late 1950s

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His brother
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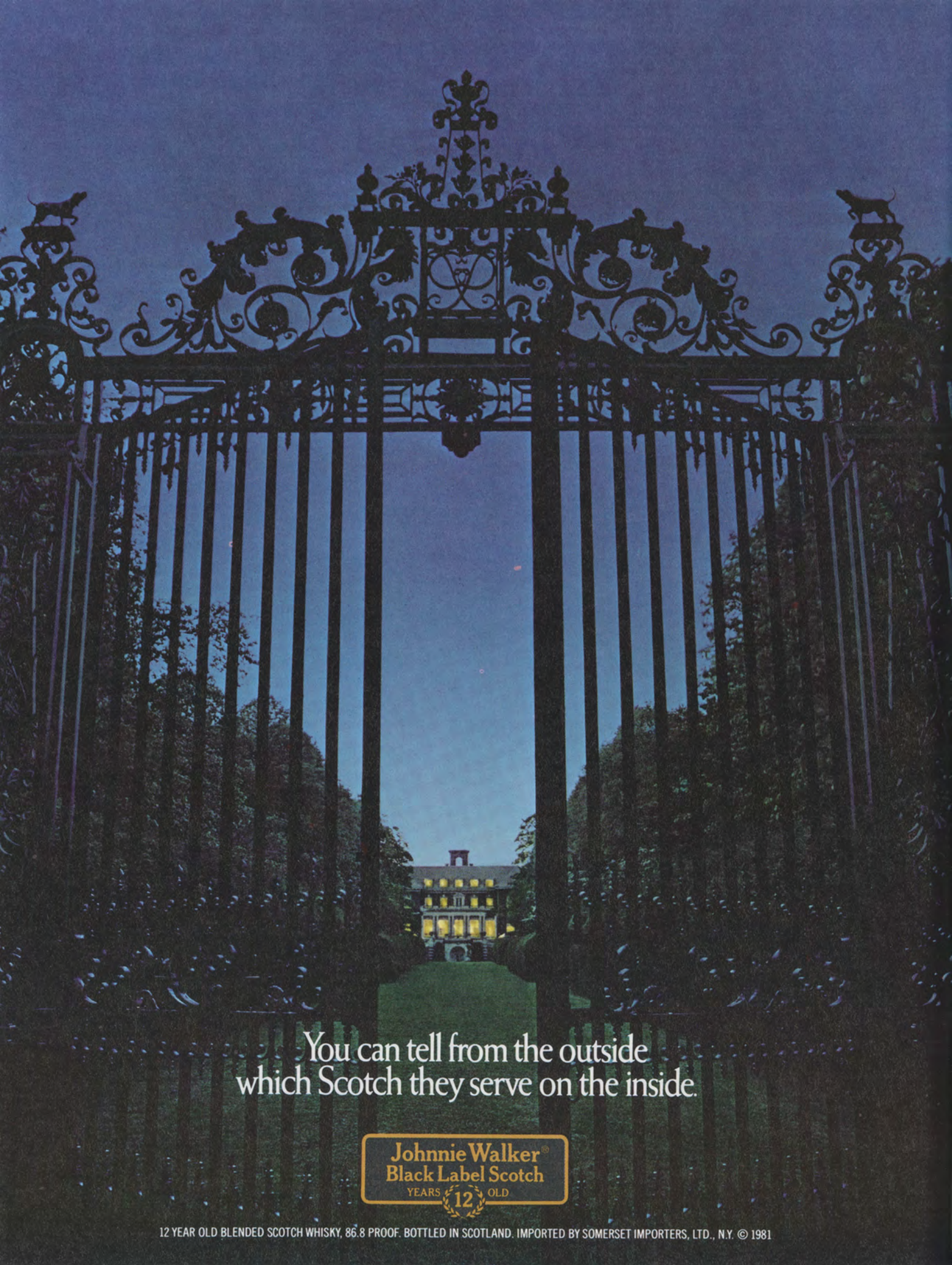
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Midsummer Thoughts

by John Schauer



San Francisco Opera Chorus and Ballet during a rehearsal for *The Midsummer Marriage*.

LIKE Rorschach inkblots or the enigmatic images on Tarot cards, Tippett's *The Midsummer Marriage* seems to speak to each individual in an intensely personal and unique way. Profoundly influenced by the theories of Carl Jung, Tippett has imbued *The Midsummer Marriage* with a wealth of symbolic imagery.

Jung once wrote, "A word or an image is symbolic when it implies something more than its obvious and immediate meaning. It has a wider 'unconscious' aspect that is never precisely defined or fully explained. Nor can one hope to define or explain it. As the mind explores the symbol, it is led to ideas that lie beyond the grasp of reason."

So it is no surprise when members of the production team for the American premiere production of this complex work hesitate to offer a specific interpretation of the amazing proceedings that take place on Midsummer Day.

According to director John Copley, "The opera is deceptively simple in its outward conception. Tippett begins where *The Magic Flute* leaves off, or so he would have

you believe, with the two lovers, Mark and Jenifer, about to be married. In Mozart's opera, Tamino and Pamina survive the initial tests as to their suitability to be partners for life; Tippett poses in a modern context the question of their ability to become one and perpetuate the future in their union.

"The recognition of this state is first voiced by Jenifer. With a woman's intuition she knows that before she can become responsible for new life, she must understand her own on every level, and so her search for truth and wholeness begins by her refusal of the marriage.

"After his initial horror at her decision, Mark discovers the need to find his own truth. He has already voiced, before Jenifer's first appearance, his knowledge of the mystery of birth—not just his own, but all birth and creation. In his first exchange with the Ancients he has begun to question the 'simplicity' of the marriage, and therefore is prepared for his own quest after truth, although he must find his in a way different from Jenifer's. In the first few actions of the opera, therefore, we are

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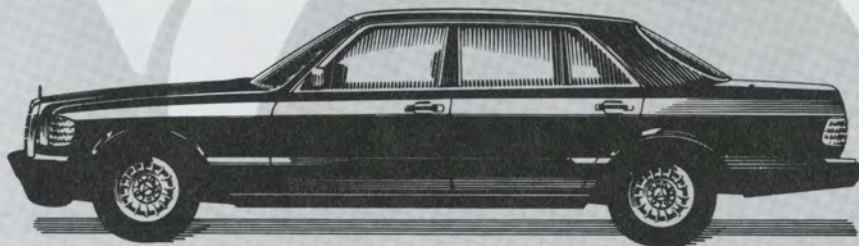
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told that love is *not* enough and is *not* simple, and that before consummation can take place, full understanding of ourselves is necessary.

"The acceptance by Mark and Jenifer of their incomplete state is mutual. Their parting is necessary so that they may come together as complete beings, but before they can become one, they must explore the singular, unawakened sides of themselves. By unity with the unknown, they will become fit for the marriage to take place.

"Tippett's terms of reference stem from a wide range, from T.S. Eliot to Blake, pagan to Christian, Freud to Jung, Greek and Roman myths to Eastern concepts. This is a deliberate effort to show the universality of the characters of his hero and heroine and the breadth and depth of his theme. It is essential that they be modern, as they are timeless and the problems they face are eternal.

"The conflict of the piece is provided not only by the lovers themselves, but by the material and self-defeating, sterile world of King Fisher, whose values admit nothing that cannot be counted. He is anti-life and a natural opponent of his daughter's impending union. She rejects his standards from the outset, knowing that they are the way to death as they have no place for the spirit. King Fisher is Brechtian in his apparent simplicity, but he is also the ultimate evil in his concentration only on that which he can own, in the way he asserts his ownership over his daughter, and his insistence on accepting only the things he can see, rejecting any spiritual level of existence. As he is treated simply, I have chosen to portray him in the same way, without detracting from his essential malevolence. He is anti-life, and for life to go on, he must inevitably die.

"This opera is essentially about life, the Shavian life force. It is not solely confined to woman, for Mark is in many ways the prime mover and motivation of the action; Jenifer is conquered. In their first confrontation, Mark's knowledge or 'magic' is more potent than hers, and his advancement is always one step ahead. Jenifer recognizes his superiority; after the mirror shatters, she takes his way to enlightenment, while Mark, to complete his, ascends the steps to the temple.

"The Jungian stress on the anima and animus of the two lovers, and their search for the balance of these two sides of their subconscious, is a very modern, conscious, analytical treatment of that which Mozart illustrated so well in *The Magic Flute*. The



Top: Stage director John Copley, assistant stage director Robin Thompson and soprano Sheri Greenawald, during a pause in a *Midsummer Marriage* staging rehearsal. Center: Mary Jane Johnson and Dennis Bailey rehearsing the parts of Mark and Jenifer. Bottom: Ryland Davies ponders Jack's impossible assignment during a rehearsal.



symbols are the same and the reconciling of opposites has the same happy ending. In *The Midsummer Marriage*, Tippett has had the benefit of years of scientific analysis.

"The same symbols are at work, and the same conclusions are drawn. It is rather as if we were looking at a similar case history 200 years later, using modern techniques. In spite of this, the ultimate truths remain constant and the means of their transmission have changed very little. Where Mozart used the Masonic mysteries to open the doors of enlightenment, Tippett uses Freud and Jung to evoke the consciousness. The revolutionary ways of Masonic thought, as controversial and anti-establishment as Freud's discoveries a century later, are perpetuated and form the basis of this modern myth. The components are in all of us; it is only the terms that are different. Evil is fought and conquered, and new life is established to begin the life cycle again, so perhaps the story after all is basically simple; only the language is altered.

"Jenifer and Mark enter into the world of self-analysis as deliberately and with the same dedication as a patient who goes to a doctor. That they assume masculine or feminine characteristics according to the stages of their progress towards enlightenment, is an increased awareness of the psyche, not weakness or aberration. Jenifer at first grows in a masculine way towards her mental potential, while Mark discards (but does not abandon) his weaker, feminine traits in order to be able to guide Jenifer towards their mutual goal of union. After the exchanged experiences and a sharing of each other's strengths and weaknesses, they emerge mutually strengthened. Opposites are reconciled and they become a perfect whole; one is not complete without the other.

"The difference between *The Magic Flute* and *The Midsummer Marriage* is in the emphasis placed on the active choice exercised by the young couple. They are not manipulated by fate or accident; from the start they have an aim and an end in sight. The tests spring from themselves, not from outside, and it is that difference that makes this opera really a modern part of its time.

"Where traditional opera generally tells a story to lead into emotion, Tippett plunges

straight into the subtext of the unconscious. The style is not on a plane of reality but is formalized. William Blake explains his own visionary perception as 'a double vision,' incorporating reality first and then the unseen, 'faery' reality, which to him is more important than the reality seen by everyone else. Tippett dispenses with the corporeal and goes straight to the unseen.

"Only Bella and Jack voice the perception of 'ordinary' people, and that is because they are as yet unawakened to the depths of their psyches. The problems of producing the visionary in terms of the prosaic poses many difficulties. It is essential not to underestimate your audience, and to find the images to match the words and music so as to reach directly into their subconscious and bring the piece to life the way the composer conceived it.

"I was around Covent Garden as a student when it was first done, and I remember my generation in particular just loved it. We were at all the performances, and I remember every night thinking that that was a happening. It wasn't an ordinary evening, like *Bohème* or *Traviata*; it was baffling, but also something very new and exciting. One hopes that the San Francisco audiences will be as fascinated and excited as we were all those years ago."

Production choreographer Terry Gilbert elaborates considerably on that metaphor, which is expressed through dance. "Tippett uses the dance as a metaphor," Gilbert asserts. "I think Tippett believes that in the most ancient of religions, dance and ritual must have been very important. In other words, when man first opened his eyes and looked at the sun or the moon or was looking for a concept beyond himself, the first actions of the ancient tribes must have been to beat their feet into the ground and sing and dance, before there was any philosophic idea. Every ancient religion has a dance content. Think of Hindu dance, or the dancing of the ancient Egyptians or Greeks. The dancers and their instructors—the Ancients—are a symbol of a very ancient philosophy or religion. This for me as a dancer and choreographer, and for any people lucky enough to dance in a production like this, is marvelous, because for once the dance is not something thrown in, a divertissement that can be left out; it's an integral part of the structure. The dancers are the very core of events, and they're on in each of the three acts.

"Briefly, in the first act they're disporting themselves, doing their daily workout, their routine exercise—an equivalent of

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"This is interrupted when Mark suggests they should have a new dance to celebrate his wedding day. Of course the dancers would want novelty; they would long for a new dance because their life is structured, they are tutored. A dancer lives in awe, in hatred, in love, with his teachers and choreographers. People have to train to dance; they have to be forced, bullied, coaxed, whacked and whipped into shape, and it's a daily business. What these kids are doing in this opera is like what they do in their lives; it is about us, and the dancers feel that they are absolutely the spine of the piece.

"People often think the dances in Act II are an extension of Jack and Bella, but I am certain they're about Mark and Jenifer. Their quest for a holy grail, or whatever it is, is represented in dance by these rituals. When the act starts, Strephon is a creature of the forest. He enters the forest alone. He's not exactly vain or narcissistic; he's sensuous and sensual. He's part of and in love with the rocks, the trees—it's earth worship. He makes love to the ground. This private moment is interrupted by humans, and he returns to the temple for the dances proper.

"These dances must tell us something about many things: about the seasons, about the elements. And because the aggressors, the chasing animals, are women, it has to tell us about woman's eternal quest for a man in order to reproduce and make this endless cycle of life,

birth and death continue. Of course, in the last act the ritual of fire, St. John's Fire, must be absolutely and unequivocally a celebration of the lusts of the body, of carnal love. We've gone through the dramas of Mark and Jenifer finding their minds, finding a plane where they can understand each other. Now this is a celebration of physical communion.

"This is not a piece about human inhibitions or failings; the whole piece is about man's achievement. It's a life-affirmative work. Put it in Strephon's terms. Strephon is sacrificed for Mark and Jenifer, and he's going to go on being sacrificed. Mark and Jenifer are not the only people who have been to the temple; these people who inhabit the temple, the Ancients and dancers, have been through the same thing again and again.

"I get lost, to be frank, with all the philosophical attitudes contained within this piece—there are so many. What I do think is important behind everything Tippett is saying—and this is a Jungian idea—is that it all exists, we are all part of it, and we just have to get into it and get on with it.

"Tippett's own music seems to me to follow that principle. There's so much in this piece that seems to me to have existed before it was written down. Sometimes you can hear music and you know that it came from the craft of a composer; and some music strikes you as being absolutely inevitable; it had to be written. It seems to have come from some deep spring, as if it were already written and only needs playing."

David Agler, San Francisco Opera's musical supervisor and resident conductor who will be on the podium for this production,

(Continued on page 73)

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A Marriage Arranged with Angelic Assistance

by John Schauer

THE American premiere of Tippet's *The Midsummer Marriage* is a project particularly dear to the heart of San Francisco Opera's general director Terence A. McEwen, who championed Tippet's complex masterpiece long before he came to the Bay Area. "I lived in London from 1950 until 1960," he says, "and during that period, I saw the world premieres of many important operas, including *The Midsummer Marriage*, Walton's *Troilus and Cressida* and Britten's *Billy Budd* and *Gloriana*, as well as several French operas—I lived between Paris and London a lot. One that made a most distinct impression on me was *The Midsummer Marriage*. I was fascinated and a little confused by the libretto, but extremely moved by the music. In Tippet's subsequent operas, particularly *King Priam* (which is in fact the first one I thought of putting on the stage when I got this job), the music seems to me less important—very powerful, but less beautiful. I still believe *The Midsummer Marriage* is Tippet's most beautiful opera, that musically it is the most interesting. It is also a tremendously vital and uplifting work, a sort of hymn to life and the delights of experiencing it to the fullest. And so I decided that it would be high on my list of priorities when I was named to this position in 1979."

One person sharing McEwen's interest in new works is Mrs. Paul Wattis. "I've been going to the opera regularly since 1935 or so," she confides. "I'm sure everyone has certain favorites. I enjoy much of the standard repertoire, but I also like the more contemporary music. I try to listen to it with an open mind, and I find I like it more and more as I hear it. I would like to see the repertory enlarged to include at least one or two contemporary works each season, although of course that's impossible. I loved *Lear*; I thought it was terrific, and I hope it will be repeated. I suppose it was too far out for a lot of people, but I think they're closing their minds to something that they might learn to enjoy. I think that's true with all new art."

McEwen's path and Mrs. Wattis's were

eventually to cross. "I moved to San Francisco in August of 1980," McEwen recalls, "and at the opening night of the 1981 Fall Season—which you may remember was a rather eccentric production by Mr. Pizzi of *Semiramide*—I was sitting as I often did in the back of Box V, and in the next box was Mrs. Wattis, whom I had met a couple of times. I knew that she was a charming lady, but I didn't know much else about her. She turned to me during the performance at one point and said, 'Terry, whether you like this or not, it's adventurous, and I hope you'll do adventurous things when you take over the San Francisco Opera.' I said, 'Mrs. Wattis, I can assure you that I intend to do adventurous things,' and she said, 'I'm glad to hear that, because I think that is very much part of the life, the ongoing living of an opera house.'

"I had already decided that if we did *The Midsummer Marriage*, David Agler would conduct it, and I had also decided on a combined British and American cast. I felt that an overall British-American collaboration might be good, to have an American conductor and a British director. Since John Copley did such a marvelous job with *Julius Caesar*, which was the first opera of my first season here, I decided to offer the assignment to him. He was quite eager to do it, and was also quick to suggest a designer he thought would be right for the piece—that's Robin Don. I asked to see some of Robin's designs, and we engaged him as designer.

"So I proceeded to cast the opera, and when I started to think about the funding, I remembered Mrs. Wattis's remark at that *Semiramide* performance, so I called her. By then I knew her a bit better, and I asked if I could come and see her about an idea I had. I went to her home and talked to her about helping us with this, and she was most enthusiastic."

"I have thought for a long time it would give me great pleasure to sponsor a whole opera," Mrs. Wattis explains, "and I really feel that an opera company can very easily get into a rut of having just the old tried and true every year. So when I decided to

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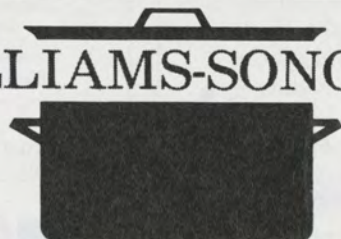
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back an opera, I preferred to have it be something contemporary. And one of the conditions was that it be solid enough to remain in the repertoire." The tapes McEwen played for her convinced her that *The Midsummer Marriage* stood a very good chance indeed of earning a secure niche in the repertoire.

McEwen continues, "Mrs. Wattis came to the opera a few times with me to get acquainted with how a production is born and how it evolves. First the designer has to get the dimensions of our stage and learn something about our house, the size of the house, the sight lines, etc. Some designers draw pictures, and some build models; Robin built a model, which was tremendously impressive, and when we presented it to Mrs. Wattis, she loved it and committed herself then to sponsoring the production.

"Although we all liked the model very much, we suggested certain modifications for two reasons: some to suit our stage better, and others to suit the budget better, because when I ask someone to sponsor a production, one of the things I try to do is to stay within the budget that we agree on at that time. I don't want to have to go back and ask for more money if I can avoid it."

McEwen has nothing but praise for his newest angel. "She's a great patron of modern art—at the moment she's sponsoring a Juan Gris showing at the National Gallery in Washington. She's deeply involved in the progress of the arts, and she is such an intelligent and sensitive woman that it has turned out to be a thoroughly enjoyable relationship. Like me, she is incredibly excited about the whole thing. Everybody is, I think, who has seen the designs.

"There is already a lot of interest from other companies in renting this production and doing it in various parts of the country, and I know that the directors of several opera companies are coming to see it. I have a feeling that it will travel around the country most successfully."

Such news can only be gratifying to Mrs. Wattis. "I feel we should get away from staid programs and hear some of the new things," she asserts. "They may not all be good, they may not all last, but some of them are bound to. I hope *The Midsummer Marriage* will be one of them." □

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agrees with Gilbert's assessment of the music's feeling of inevitability. "Which is not to say that Tippett did not work very hard to write this music," Agler hastens to add. "Beethoven worked very hard to write his music, too, and I think there are certain similarities. Both of these composers struggled over their music, but it is quite clear that it came from the depths of them; there's nothing contrived about Tippett's music.

"It's a hard piece to talk about. You can discuss Tippett's musical style. Certainly he's a composer whose music you can recognize immediately. Like Janáček or Sibelius, he's so individual a composer that there's never a question about whose music it is, from the first strains. It's hard to pin the music of *The Midsummer Marriage* down, except to say that it's extremely evocative and very beautiful.

"Tippett's music comes from the same world as Vaughan Williams and Holst, but I think Tippett rose above a kind of provincialism of certain English composers—and I do not say this as a criticism of them—such as Vaughan Williams and Holst, whose music I adore and champion. I think Tippett stands out as the greatest of them and therefore is an international composer.

"*The Midsummer Marriage* is a huge madrigal in a way; the way he sets words is so English—very much like Purcell. Yet I have a suspicion that if every word were enunciated clearly, perfectly, so that the audience could get every single word, there would still be a lot no one understood, because the words aren't really what the opera means. The words are a marvelous vehicle, and you can analyze them on any number of levels.

"One of the fascinating things about the opera is that there are so many levels of reality existing simultaneously that it's sometimes confusing to sort them out; but Tippett is able to create a world of music for all these realities. Therefore you have what you could call his 'magic music' or 'incantational' music, his 'ritualistic music,' the music that accompanies the appearance of the Ancients, for instance. It's an extremely taut piece rhythmically, and when Tippett comes to his magical moments, it's as if the music floats for a minute. There's still a great rhythmic structure, but it's as if the music were in slow motion or just suspended in the air. It's difficult to put into words, but I think if you're open to that sort of experience, you'll recognize it immediately.

"I think the wonderful thing about this opera is how it puts forward the proposi-

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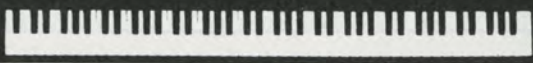
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tion that man is capable of profound and fundamental change; that if a man will put real effort into it, he can experience a self-unfolding or self-realization, which can make him whole and integrated with himself and everything he comes in contact with. It's a great humanistic piece, and I say this with enthusiasm, because I don't believe that about most opera. I get kind of jaded with the *Sonnambulas* of the world.

"I think *The Midsummer Marriage* is a very good opera for San Francisco, because in many of the things that happen, both realistically and ritualistically in this production, people will intuitively know they are somewhere in this spectrum of human experience; somewhere along the way they will be able to recognize themselves."

Copley offers some final advice: "One of the most important things to remember when you're actually seeing the piece—and I certainly know this from experience, having seen it over many years in different versions—is that when you are suddenly baffled by something, the great secret is not to remain baffled but to let it happen to you and pass to the next thing, because ten to one it will be clarified eventually if not almost immediately. It's not a piece in which you should suddenly think, 'What did THAT mean?' because you'll probably miss the clarification or something else that is terribly relevant or valuable. It's got to be viewed as a whole; it's got to be taken as a whole spectrum. Get involved in it; let it happen to you.

"I believe totally now in this collective unconscious. Doing this piece has changed my whole life in a way. I think the rest of my life I've been very busy being Jack; I've been an operatic mechanic, rushing around the world mechanizing opera houses. Suddenly at this point in my life I find that that's terribly trivial, that there's another whole world. I understand why, for instance, Tippett, who is in his late 70s, is still fresh and young and alive and vital. He is the eternal child, in a way, and I'm sure it's the result of his always being open. Perhaps that's what's going to happen to all of us. Certainly I feel he's made the most extraordinary impression on me. You don't often work with men of that greatness, and I've worked with some extraordinarily brilliant, creative people.

"It's Tippett's complexity as a man and as a composer that makes *The Midsummer Marriage*, which is his first opera, such a complex affair. It was five years in the creating, and he dug out of himself a lifetime of thoughts and ideas. He is not in any way ordinary. He's a magic man." □

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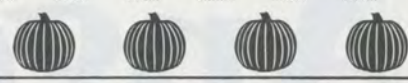
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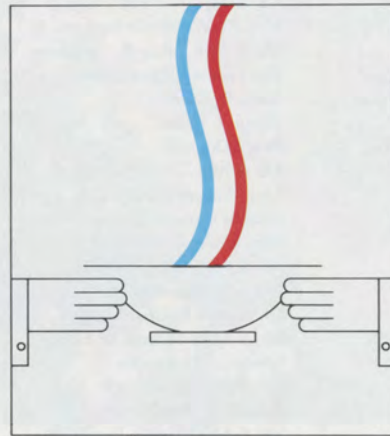
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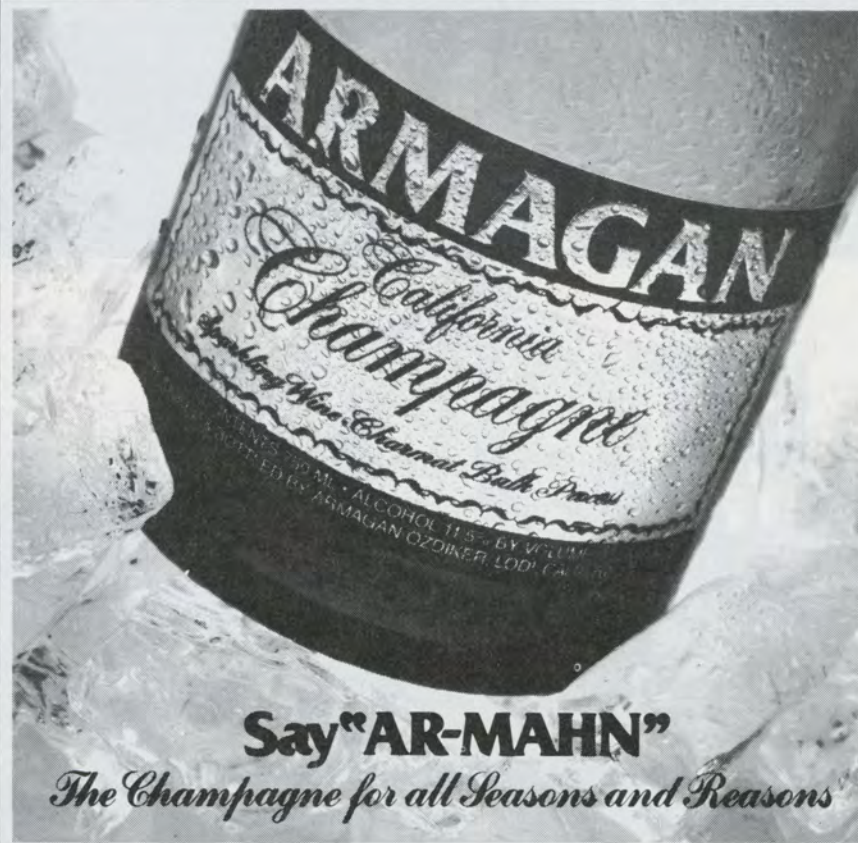
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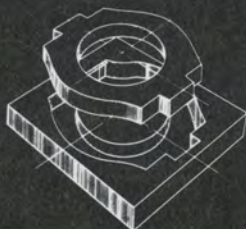


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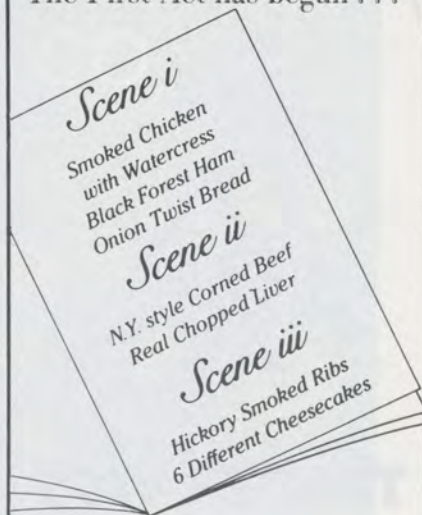
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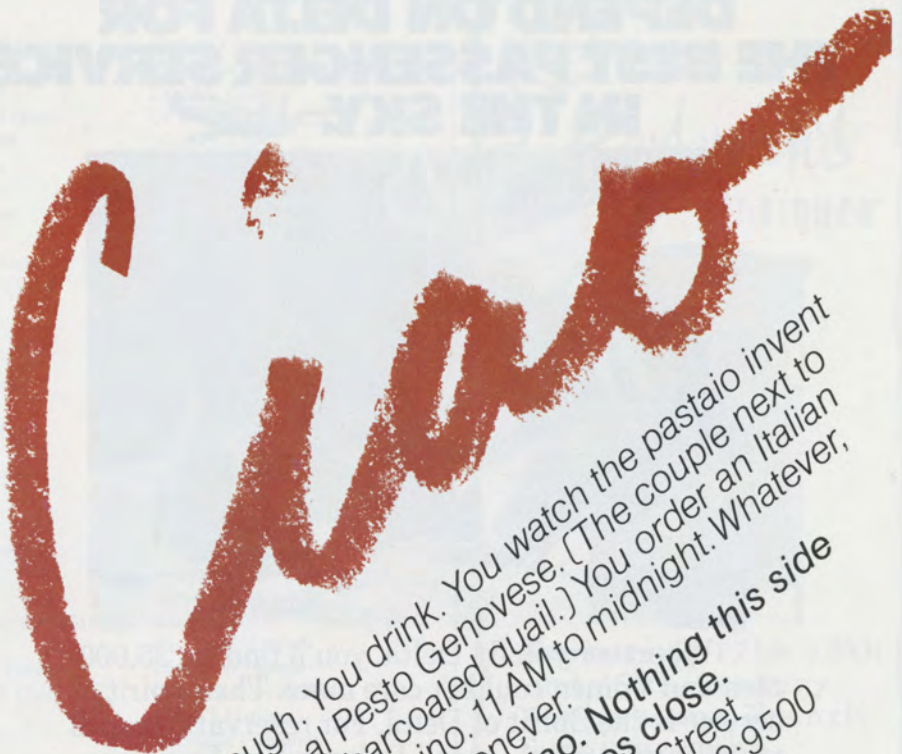
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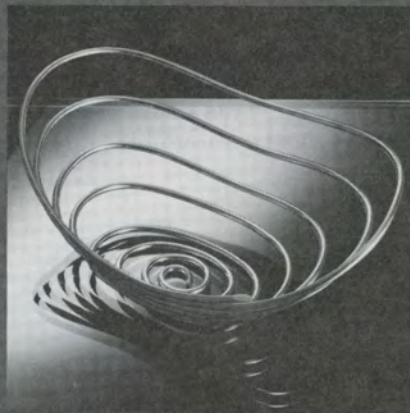
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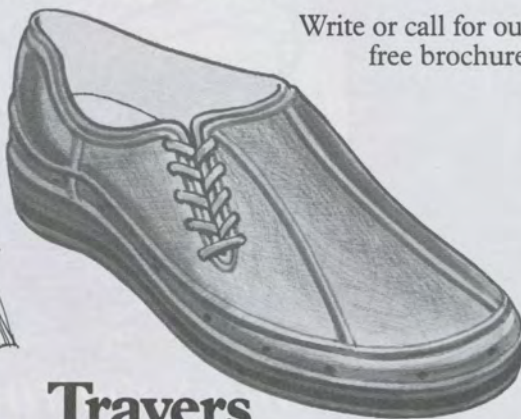
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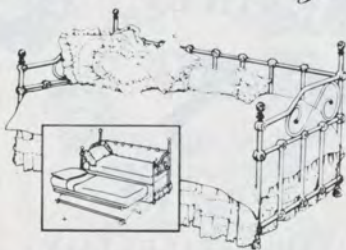
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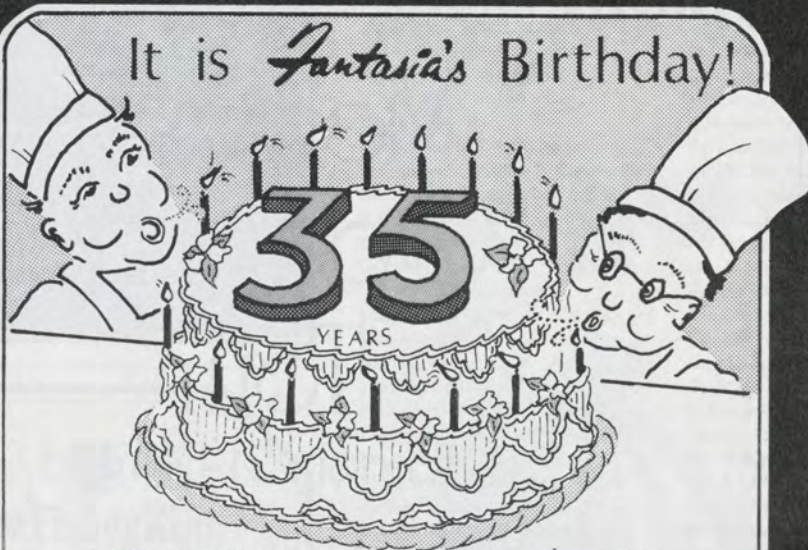
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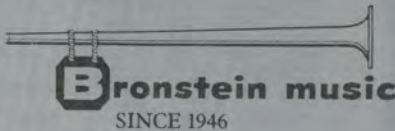
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San Francisco Opera Box Office. Lobby, War Memorial Opera House: Van Ness at Grove, (415) 864-3330. 10 A.M. to 6 P.M. Monday through Saturday. 10 A.M. through first intermission on all performance days.

Important Notice: The box office in the outer lobby of the Opera House will remain open through the first intermission of every performance. Tickets for remaining performances in the season may be purchased at this time.

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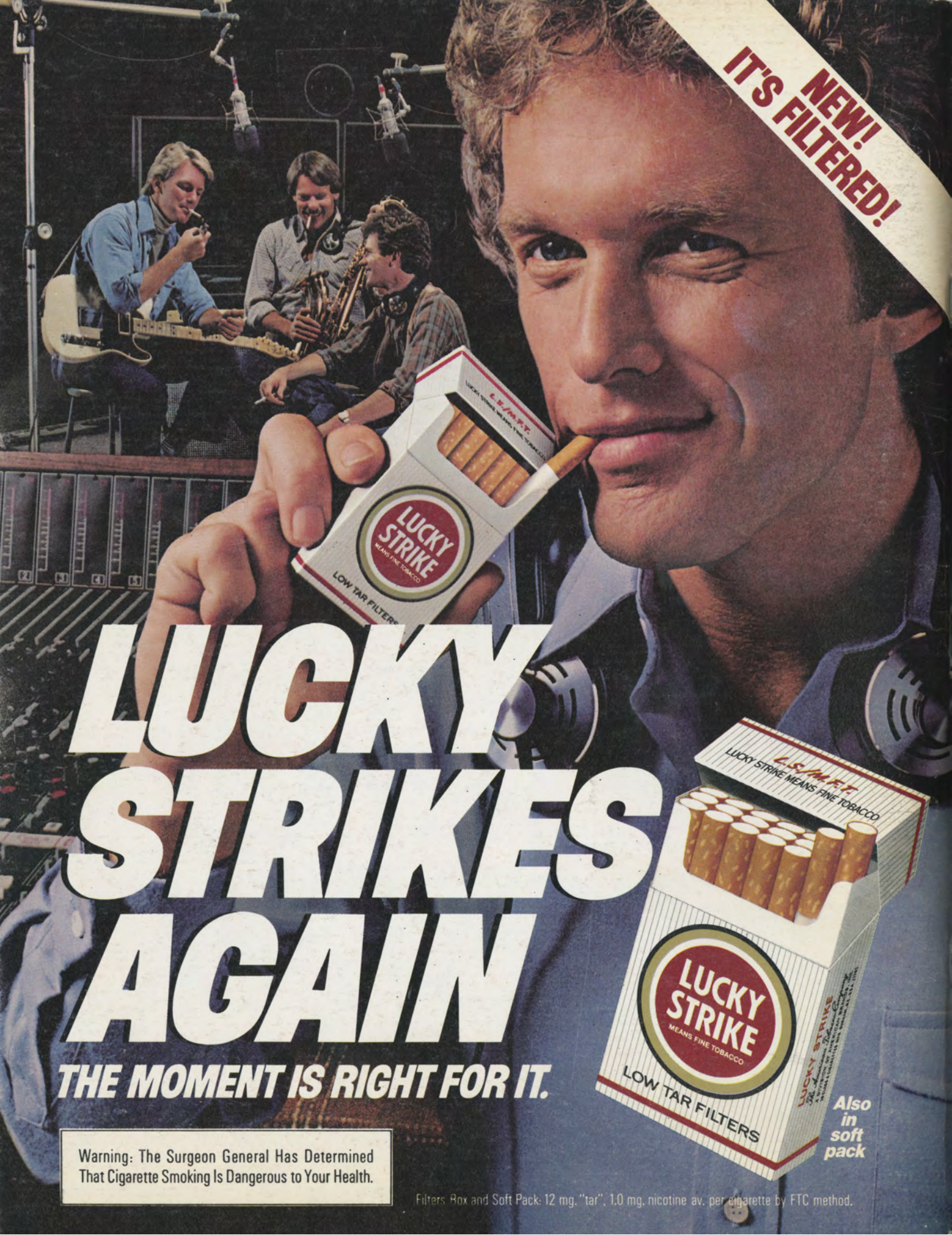


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