

Siegfried

1983

Saturday, May 26, 1984 7:00 PM

Thursday, May 31, 1984 7:00 PM

Sunday, June 3, 1984 1:00 PM

Friday, June 8, 1984 7:00 PM

Tuesday, June 12, 1984 7:00 PM

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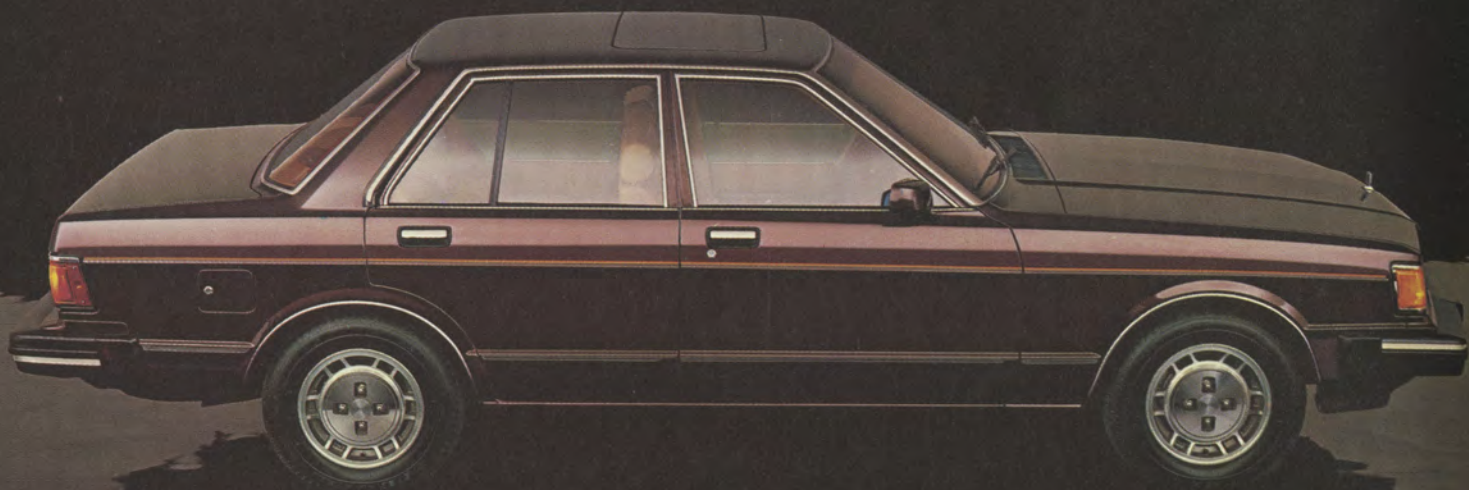
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San Francisco Opera



Siegfried

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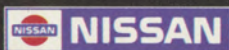
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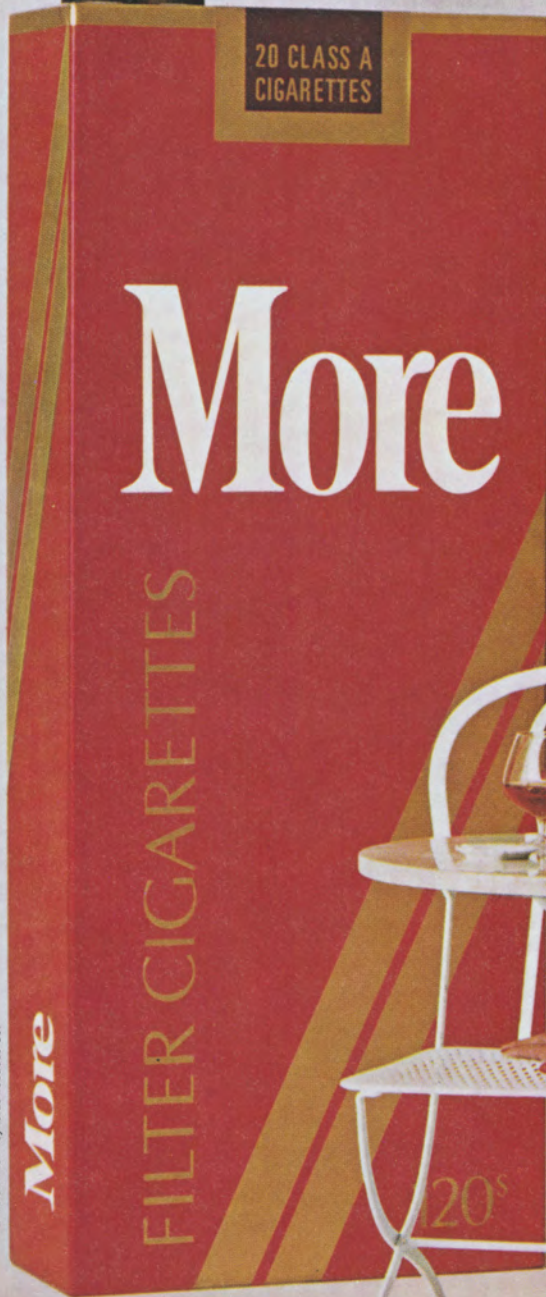
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COVER: Richard Wagner, ca. 1864. Pastel by Franz von Lenbach, 1836-1904. Richard Wagner Museum, Bayreuth.

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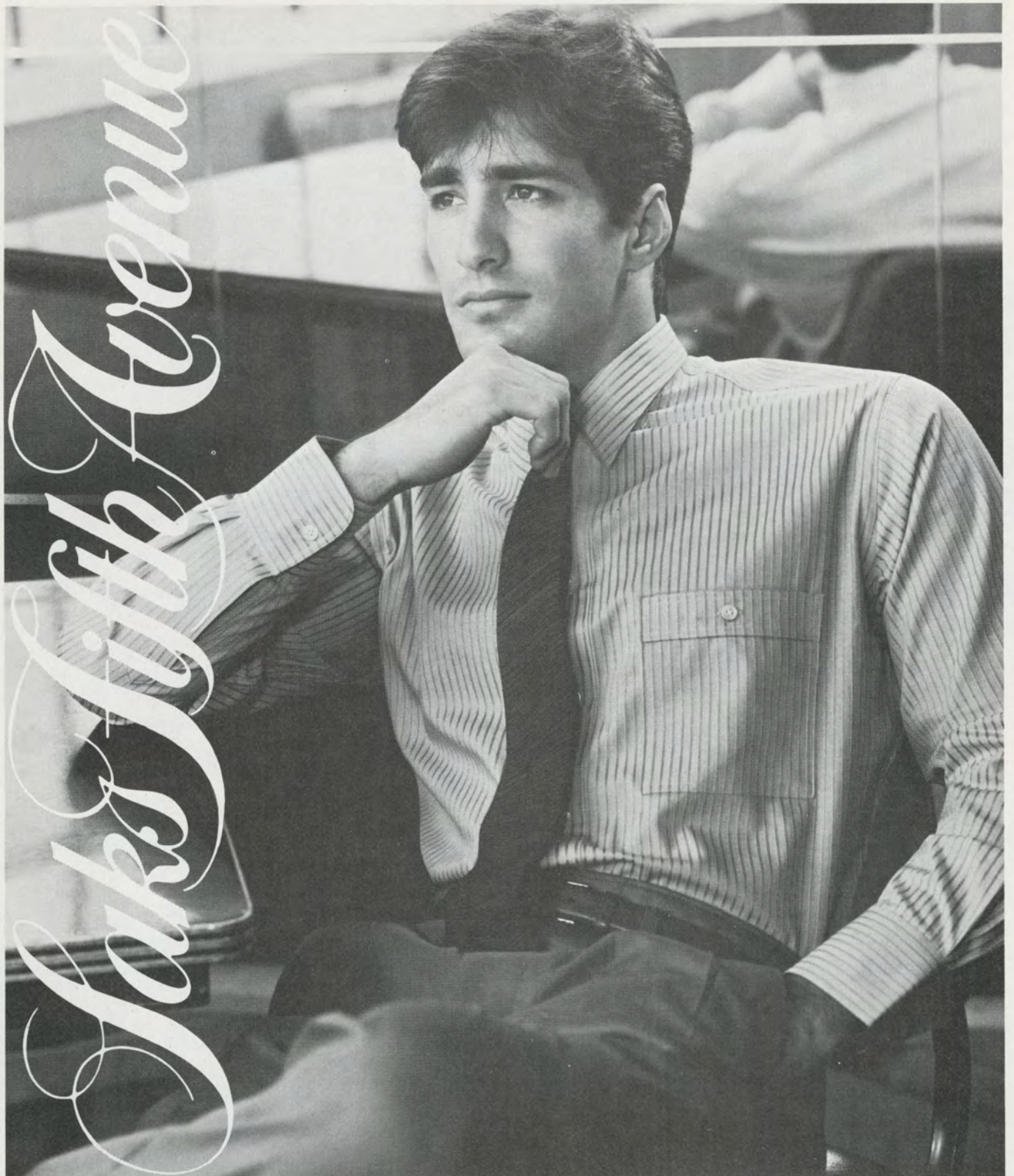
We are exceedingly gratified to observe that our Summer Season, currently in its fourth year, has become a firmly established and significant element in the spectrum of offerings from San Francisco's major performing arts organizations. Attendance at last year's summer opera performances was on a level with that enjoyed by our Fall Season, and we anticipate that this year's response will be as great. To have accomplished this within just a few years is a ringing affirmation of our belief that San Francisco wants, deserves and is willing to support the best opera that can be produced today.

Our marketing studies show us that our Summer Season audience is not the same as our Fall Season audience, a fact from which we may draw two encouraging conclusions: one, that we are not merely giving more performances, but are reaching many more people; and two, that our new audience gives us an extended base of support.

We are especially heartened by the spirit of generosity reflected in the production funding behind some of this summer's offerings. Our *Aida* production, for instance, was made possible by a gift from an anonymous friend of San Francisco Opera in 1981. The Koret Foundation has kindly underwritten the cost of reviving our production of *Don Pasquale* this summer. And very special thanks indeed are due the anonymous friend of San Francisco Opera who has elected to cover the costs of the third installment of our beautiful new *Ring* cycle, *Siegfried*. This magnificent gesture has given us more than a new opera production; it has enabled our Company to maintain its position among that elite group of opera companies that have been entrusted with perpetuating the highest international standards.

It is an awesome responsibility, and the presentation of our Summer Seasons has taken its toll financially. Grand opera is by far the most expensive of the performing arts; ticket sales cover only 50 to 55 per cent of our expenses. For many years prior to 1981, when we had only the Fall Season to produce, we essentially broke even thanks to the generosity of our patrons and other revenue sources. The fiscal impact of increasing the number of operas produced annually by 50 per cent—about a one-third increase in the number of performances—is obvious. During each of the last three years we have suffered significant losses, a situation we can no longer afford. We are confident that we run a tight ship, so the answer is not simply to reduce expenses; to maintain the quality for which we are known world-wide means we must increase contributions from our patrons, particularly our newer ones. If you are now a contributor, we thank you and hope you will do your best to increase your gifts. If you are not a contributor, won't you please join the thousands of our present contributors with a meaningful donation? We must have your help if we are to bring you the opera you want.

The assistance of a large number of groups and individuals has become a vital factor in our ongoing success, and we would like to thank them: the National Endowment for the Arts, the California Arts Council, the Hotel Tax Fund, Mayor Dianne Feinstein, Chief Administrator Roger Boas, the City and County of San Francisco, the San Francisco Opera Guild, and the War Memorial Board of Trustees. Our gratitude for their indispensable assistance is most deeply felt. —WALTER M. BAIRD



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General Director's Message

Welcome to San Francisco Opera's 1984 Summer Season. This year's summer offerings are marked by two developments adding special significance to what should be a fascinating season. One of these is the unveiling of the third opera in our new production of Wagner's monumental *Ring of the Nibelung*. Mounting a production of *Siegfried* alone would be an enormous undertaking; presented as part of a complete new *Ring* cycle, it is a herculean and yet most welcome task. Being involved with an artistic endeavor of this magnitude is a thrill we all shared last summer when we began our *Ring* with *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*. The depth and breadth of coverage we received from national and international media confirm the scope of our enterprise. The well-deserved success earned by the countless individuals involved on all levels of our Company—our team—is something in which we take great pride.

When the curtain goes up on our new *Siegfried* production, there will be at least

two heroes to applaud: one of them is the on-stage son of the Wälsung twins whose name identifies the opera; the second is the off-stage anonymous friend of the San Francisco Opera who has enabled us to continue bringing Wagner's timeless epic to life on our stage. Such generosity deserves recognition we can never adequately bestow on one whose modesty has requested anonymity.

Another major new development for our international seasons is the use of supertitles in our regular, subscription performances. The striking effectiveness of this technique for enriching one's enjoyment of opera as total theater cannot be appreciated until you have attended a supertitled performance yourself. It is my experience that even seasoned operaphiles attending standard repertory works are surprised by the degree to which their comprehension is enhanced by this deceptively simple device. It is certain to be a boon to the understanding of many members of the San Francisco

Opera audience, novices as well as connoisseurs. We owe a round of thanks to Francesca Zambello and Jerry Sherk for implementing and developing a system whose unobtrusive efficiency belies the sophistication and skill required for its realization. We are also indebted to the San Francisco Opera Guild, whose generous support has made the production of supertitles possible.

Finally let me welcome the long list of stellar artists who are performing here this summer, exciting newcomers as well as beloved veterans. Some of them will be appearing in roles new to them, others in roles with which they have become closely identified. Each one of them offers his or her unique gifts as part of this promising new season. It is a privilege to be able to share such excitement with you.

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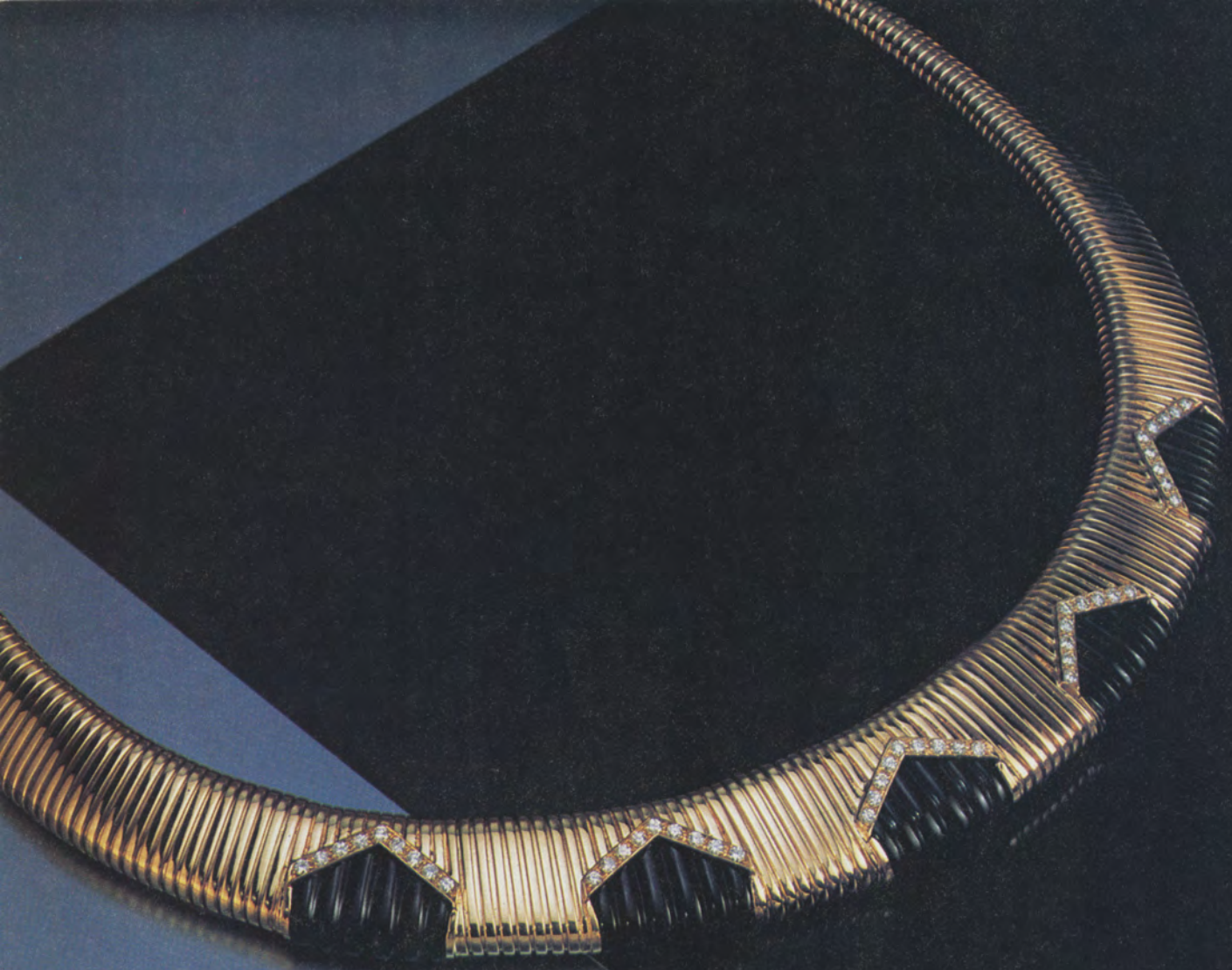
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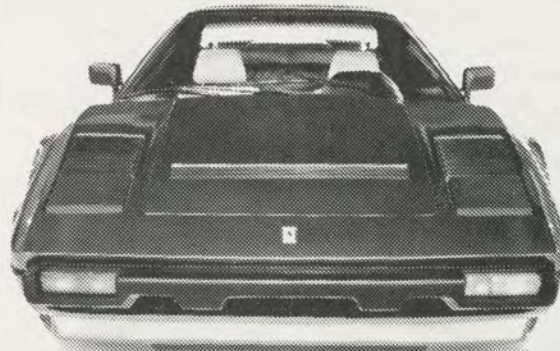
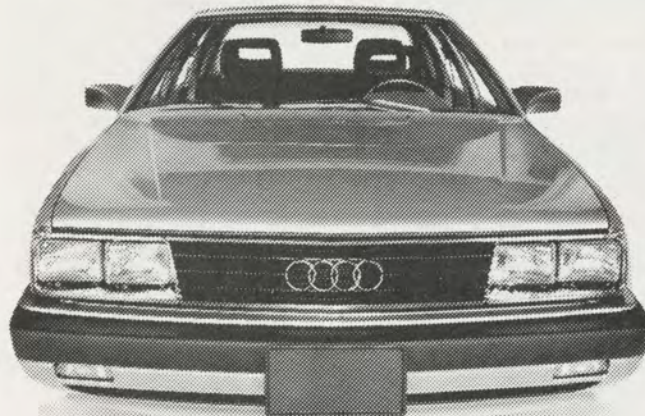
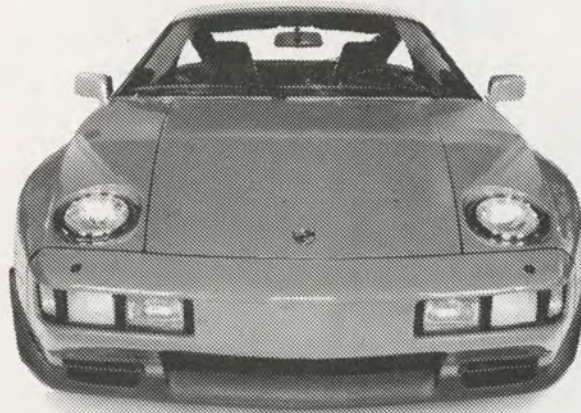
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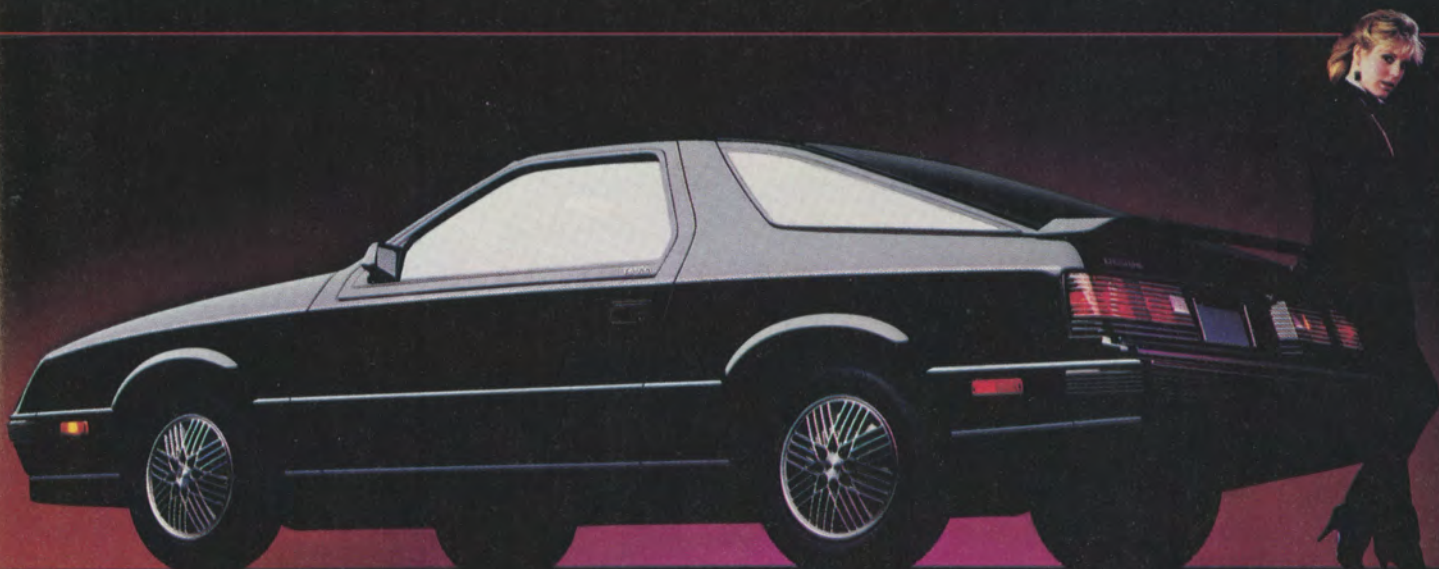
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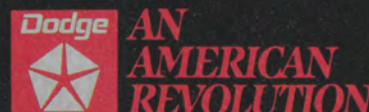


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Saturday, May 26, 7:00 New Production

Siegfried Wagner

The production of *Siegfried* has been made possible by a generous gift from an anonymous friend of the San Francisco Opera. The production of San Francisco Opera's new *Ring* has been partially underwritten by generous three-year grants from the Sells Foundation and BankAmerica Foundation.

Marton, Dernes, Parrish/Kollo*, Stewart, Pampuch** (May 26, 31; June 3), Egerton (June 8, 12), Patterson, Wexler
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Sunday, May 27, 2:00

Don Pasquale Donizetti

Thursday, May 31, 7:00

Siegfried Wagner

Friday, June 1, 8:00

Don Pasquale Donizetti

Saturday, June 2, 8:00

Aida Verdi

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L. Price (June 2, 6, 10, 15), Evstatieva* (June 20, 23, 27, 30), Baldani, Zajic*/Bonisolli, Pons, Langan (June 2, 6, 10), Tomlinson (June 15, 20, 23, 27, 30), Patterson, Harper*
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Sunday, June 3, 1:00

Siegfried Wagner

Wednesday, June 6, 8:00

Aida Verdi

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Don Pasquale Donizetti

Friday, June 8, 7:00

Siegfried Wagner

Saturday, June 9, 8:00

Don Pasquale Donizetti

Sunday, June 10, 2:00

Aida Verdi

Monday, June 11, 8:00

Don Pasquale Donizetti

Tuesday, June 12, 7:00

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Friday, June 15, 8:00

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Stories Behind the Story

By STEPHANIE VON BUCHAU

Illustrations by Arthur Rackham, 1911

When confronted with Fritz Lang's famous "Wagnerian" silent films, *Siegfried* and *Kriemhild's Revenge*, the opera lover who is not also a film buff may be forgiven for becoming confused. Siegfried we know, but who is Kriemhild? Is this another Teutonic name for Brünnhilde? And if so, what is her "revenge"? It is only when one investigates further that we discover the Lang movies are not "Wagnerian" at all, but are based on the middle German *Nibelungenlied*, which was one of the sources of Wagner's monumental four-part opera, *Der Ring des Nibelungen*.

Let us look at the story of Siegfried and Kriemhild as told in this anonymous epic dated roughly 1200 A.D. Siegfried is a knight, the son of Siegmund and Sieglinde, a king and queen of the Franks. Richly dressed, Siegfried is sent off by his loving parents to seek honors and do knightly combat. The young man is courtly, poetic, and heroic, but he is also a bully and a male chauvinist pig, all attributes highly prized in medieval culture. After adventures during which he wins a hoard of gold from "two mighty princes," Siegfried arrives at the court of Gunther, a Burgundian king and son of King Gibich.

Hearing tales of the beauty of Gunther's sister, Kriemhild, Siegfried woos and wins the lady. Gunther also wishes to be married, to an Icelandic queen named Brünnhilde. She is spoken of as fierce and powerful. Gunther is afraid of her so his new brother-in-law, Siegfried, goes off to do Gunther's wooing, a strenuous task. It involves besting the lady in three Olympic-sized trials: javelin throwing, the shot put, and the long jump. Gunther, though now married to Brünnhilde, still cannot conquer his new wife. On their

continued on p.53



Mime and The Wanderer.

Stephanie von Buchau is a freelance music writer and local correspondent for Opera News.



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Der Ring des Nibelungen

THE MUSIC

By WILLIAM MANN

By the time Wagner completed his sixth opera, *Lohengrin*, in 1847, he knew that he was done with German romantic opera: his stage works in future must be as closely knit as Beethoven's symphonies, without the stop-and-start conventions of the "number-opera," without anything resembling recitative, and without concerted vocal ensembles which prevented the audience from hearing and appreciating the words. The works that Wagner proposed to write could no longer be called operas: the name "music-drama" was wished upon them, but Wagner found that unsatisfactory too—he wanted a term meaning "deeds of music made visible." The word for that is still "opera."

Wagner's change of artistic direction was caused by his planning of an opera about the death of Siegfried, the hero of Norse and Teutonic sagas. He isolated the subject in 1848, and soon found that the epic nature of the tale demanded a dramatic and musical treatment such as German romantic opera, even his own *Lohengrin*, could not supply. The language had to be flexible in order to comprehend a scenario that insisted on expanding until the one opera *Siegfried's Death*, became the last of four: *The Rhine Gold*, *The Valkyrie Maiden*, *Siegfried*, and *Twilight of the Gods*. The right language for this symphonic super-opera would, Wagner realized, require a web of recurrent melodic elements, spreading the length and breadth of his dramatic frame, constantly evolving and being transformed by allusive recollection. The "melodic elements" are musical themes, usually short and greatly striking, capable of suggesting several facets of any particular topic. German musicologists quickly named them *Leitmotiven*, or "sign-post

themes"—nowadays we lazily tend to anglicize the term as "leit-motif." Some more specific themes, such as "the unlucky Volsung family" or "Annunciation of Death," are longer and more lyrical, and the most spacious of all is the "loving self-sacrifice" theme sung by Sieglinde in the third act of *Walküre*, and then not again heard until the close of Brünnhilde's Immolation solo at the end of *Götterdämmerung*.

I shall draw attention to the more important of these "signpost themes" in commenting on the music of each opera in the *Ring*. They are not just business convention identification labels, indeed sometimes it is hard to find a label that fits every appearance of the theme; but they are the subject matter of the world's hugest, most splendid, involving, and inexhaustible piece of music-theater (Wagner might have accepted our modern name for it).

The symphonic argument largely has to be conducted by Wagner's orchestra, and the symphonic interludes and preludes provide moments for substantial musical summary; they are often heard as concert excerpts, such as "Siegfried's Rhine Journey," "Ride of the Valkyries," or "Forest Murmurs"—the last two include singing voices as well, when we hear them in the theater. Most of us go to our first *Ring* because we already know and enjoy some of these glorious set-pieces for orchestra. We will discover, I hope, that the *Ring* is a great singers' opera, with principal roles that encourage true *bel canto*, with words and musical line perfectly matched by the author of both. The *Ring* is also a great morality play, an allegory of world society yesterday, today and, I fear, forever. It is not for people in a hurry, and it will survive all the investigation we care to give it for so long as we bring our ears and brains to bear upon its contents. □

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Siegfried: The Journey



to Enlightenment

By WILLIAM MANN

Musical form-mongers used to describe Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* in terms of a four-movement symphony. *Das Rheingold* is clearly the Introduction, if not a complete exposition of material. *Götterdämmerung* (exceptionally among titles, it has no definite article in front of it) is, just as obviously, the Finale. In between came *Die Walküre* which can be regarded, I suppose, as a lyrical intermezzo, but also much besides that.

Siegfried was firmly labeled "the Scherzo of *The Ring*." It is certainly enlivened with much jovial activity in the forging scenes of the first act; the shrill arguments of Mime and Alberich outside Fafner's cave, which follow Siegfried's fight with the Dragon; the preceding comic turn in which Siegfried vainly tries to construct a woodland pipe, not to mention the macabre joke which leads to the slaughter of Mime, much to his surprise, by the boy he had raised single-handed from babyhood. The third act begins very seriously indeed, but the scherzo spirit surfaces a little in Siegfried's irreverent encounter with his grandfather Wotan, a crucial moment in the drama that keeps amusement to a minimum. The winner's triumphant ascent of the firegirt mountain peak is jovial enough for the best scherzo, and the opera ends optimistically with what is generally accepted as a love duet.

Again, it is more than that, even something else. The closing dialogue of Siegfried and Brünnhilde is her initiation, rather against her will, into human love which has to be at the root of all human

co-existence (the assumption, as a matter of principle, that the person you are dealing with is not necessarily inferior to you, let alone a rotter, as Jesus taught in his Golden Rule "Love your neighbor as if he were yourself," the neighbor being exemplified in the parable of the Good Samaritan). It is a duet of courtship, leading to contented seduction, though the concluding duet, so ebullient and passionate in the energy which throughout is at the forefront of Siegfried's boyish personality, has built-in clouds with Brünnhilde's final passage of doom for the "eternal gods"—not eternal at all! The clouds are hardly felt unless you have read the words, and these you are unlikely to distinguish when both characters are singing at the same time. At any rate, Siegfried's sentiments are entirely optimistic, just as the music seems to be.

If you consider the contents of *Siegfried* rather more deeply, it may stand out more firmly as a drama about enlightenment. The lighting director will tell you that *Siegfried* begins in comparative obscurity, inside a woodland cave far from the eyes of men, then moving into a forest clearing, pierced occasionally by sunlight through dense foliage, towards the final scene in brightest sunlight upon a high mountaintop. Conductors will tell you of the dark orchestral colors in the first act (clarinets, violas, heavy brass), relieved by the energetic radiance of Siegfried, and the sparkling strength of the Forging Scene. Then darkness again, in the second and third

The work of Caspar David Friedrich (1774-1840) was the most important influence on the physical look of San Francisco Opera's new production of Wagner's *Ring of the Nibelung*. Shown: *Graves of the Fallen Freedom Fighters*, 1812. Kunsthalle, Hamburg.

William Mann is the author of books on the operas of Mozart and Richard Strauss. He recently retired from the staff of *The Times*, London, after 34 years, 22 of them as chief music critic. He is an associate editor of *Opera magazine*.

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Eva Marton in rehearsal for the first Brünnhilde of her career: with director Nikolaus Lehnhoff (left) and her Siegfried, René Kollo (right).

acts, relieved by an orchestral gleam, like sunlight, growing gradually brighter toward the last duet scene. *Siegfried* might be an illustration of that rather obscure line by Rellstab in Schubert's song *Frühlingssehnsucht* which says "Everything pushes towards the bridal light": the poet was thinking of plants under the soil, growing towards the sun in which they will breed. *Siegfried* points in that direction too, visibly and audibly, though the outcome is not breeding, but the bride Brünnhilde who will fulfill her new role at the end of *Götterdämmerung*.

The quest for light out of darkness is the motive of the scenario and text of *Siegfried*, as well as its music. It is not only about emergence from a deep forest cave into mountaintop sunlight, but about its intellectual equivalent. This is an opera about the growing up of Siegfried, forest-bred, fearless and adventurous, but also untutored and emotionally insecure. He is without awareness of the parents whose upbringing he instinctively misses all the time. He will ask plenty of questions, and be gradually informed, though never enough to fulfill his heroic potential. He gets little help from Mime, who is self-motivated, and out of timidity a compulsive liar.

Mime opens the opera alone, wondering how to forge a tough sword for a charge who breaks all the filigree blades that the old man makes. Wagner's music for him, before and after this introductory scene, dwells on his job as a miner and forger, in the strongly rhythmical, low-lying orchestral theme which dominates

much of this introduction: it also refers clearly to his monomania about acquiring a treasure which is jealously guarded in a cave by its owner Fafner, the giant who has turned himself into a dragon. The treasure includes a magic ring that confers world mastery on whoever wears it. Mime would like to be its wearer.

Wagner's orchestral introduction uses his thematic vocabulary, the famous *Leitmotifs*, most articulately: they announce "I think constantly about the treasure, forged by smiths, slaves like myself. I need a sword to capture the greatest treasure there, the Ring with which I can master everyone, even Wotan, lord of the gods." The music has declared all this before Mime opens his mouth. Wagner's thematic technique, adapted from Beethoven's symphonies for his own operatic purposes, becomes more masterly, and more completely communicative, the longer you study it. When it was new, Debussy compared these name-tags to visiting cards; but they help a non-linguist, non-German, to understand precisely what is being thought, discussed, or done, at any given moment. And we can experience ourselves the growth of each theme's significance through the span of four operas, once we are familiar with the tunes and their particular references. I think, in *Siegfried* particularly, of the mournful Volsung themes from *Walküre*, and of the heroic Siegfried, grand and tragic on horns, as well as the woodland rover of the solo Horn-theme, outside the cave, and the impatient vigorous lad who berates Mime

in the first act's second scene, a theme which proves adaptable to more thoughtful moments. Wagner planned *Siegfried*, and all the *Ring* operas, as simply as possible, because each strut on the plan has so much weight to carry. The first act is really four scenes, though the libretto runs the first two together. We have already begun with Mime, Alberich's brother-Nibelung, the forger of the magic Tarnhelm, which is currently in the possession of the dragon Fafner, together with the all-powerful ring and the rest of the treasure that was stolen from the Nibelungs by Wotan to pay Fafner and his brother-giant for the building of Valhalla. Mime's Brooding theme, which looms at us out of the darkness in the orchestral introduction, is audibly related to the Ring theme, because that is what he broods about. It would be a pleasure, he supposes, to recover the treasure, which really belongs to the Nibelungs who mined and forged it themselves; but what Mime really desires is to wear the ring himself, not any dragon-giant nor god, and especially not brother Alberich. Mime is too little and cowardly to defeat Fafner, but he has been rearing the orphan Siegfried to fulfill the task for him, and he is also in possession of the magic sword Nothung, in two broken pieces. (Wagner's Sword theme is heard in fragments.) Mime has had many a go at welding them together, since he is a professional goldsmith fallen on hard times; but even he is not up to reforging Nothung, and that is why he is brooding. The only alternative, he supposes, is to forge another sword that



ROBERT MESSICK

René Kollo (Siegfried) and Eva Marton (Brünnhilde) rehearsing the last scene of *Siegfried*.

Siegfried, a strong and dauntless lad, can use to slaughter Fafner. Then Mime can murder Siegfried, by poison probably, and be ruler of the world. So we find him busy in the cave which is his smithy, the only home Siegfried has ever known, putting the finishing touches to his latest sword, and pessimistically in no doubt that the muscular lad will break it at once, as he did all its predecessors. The only indestructible plaything that Mime has made for Siegfried is a hunting horn, and the boy can play it very expertly, as we now hear.

Siegfried is on his way back to the cave, blowing his own signature-tune to announce his presence, also perhaps to encourage his new playmate, a large but docile bear which grows happily on the contrabass-tuba, terrifies Mime by ambling round the cave, and shambles off (Siegfried's horn call theme played backwards on strings) at the boy's command. The bear is a sign that Siegfried is quite up to conquering dragons, though he is still only a boy, probably 16 or less (hard as it is to find a Heldentenor who can look the part without seeming absurdly undignified). He already has another theme, very heroic on the horns too, and it is heard when he duly smashes his new sword. But in this scene we chiefly hear the bustling, blustering theme associated with his physical energy and impatience with the doddering old dwarf from whom he longs to get away as soon as possible. He is still too young to suspect how evil his guardian really is, or why he keeps on

recounting tales of dragons, giants and the treasure: he simply finds the dwarf repulsive, absurd but not amusing (though able tenor comedians find Mime a stimulating role), and unworthy of a youngster's respect.

Mime constantly reproaches Siegfried for impudent, ungrateful behavior: this scene, which centers on reprises of Mime's absurd slogan-song, "Als zullendes Kind," is a convenient conflation of talks that must have been going on regularly for some years, ever since the strippling began to observe the behavior of other animal families in the forest, even before he entered the natural adolescent phase of parent-rejection, which will have happened uncommonly early, given such a repulsive father-substitute. Wagner brings out a new theme, warmly glowing and darkly lyrical on lower strings, when Siegfried speaks of the family bonds which unite other beasts, and which he longs to experience himself—a comforting mother especially, but also a credible father-figure. This is manifestly a duologue between a pupil and (unwilling) teacher, part of the quest for enlightenment about which I wrote earlier. Eventually Mime reveals a hint or two of Siegfried's parentage and birth, still concealing the father's name, and produces the shards of Nothung. Siegfried assumes that the smith who is his loathed guardian can easily repair this sword, and so enable him to leave the premises, which he has no reason to cherish as a home. Before

leaving for a short stroll, he sings a song in grateful anticipation of his future freedom, and this is partly thematic for him, particularly in its rhythm, which has a joyful stamping sound.

Mime is left alone, wondering how to coax Siegfried to the hate-cave of his dreams, where Fafner dwells. His meditation is broken by noble, sonorous, rather chromatic chords (reminiscent of Magic Sleep in *Walküre*) that stride along mysteriously. They belong to his visitor Wotan disguised as a traveler, in broad-brimmed hat, cloak and walking-stick (his famous spear, with its descending scale in the bass): he now calls himself Wanderer. He has given up government, and merely journeys hither and thither, watching events and giving advice. At present he is concerned with his grandson Siegfried, who has certain tasks to do for Wotan, though they have to be done independently—Wotan's traditional authority no longer counts, since he broke the contract on his spear by stealing the treasure from Alberich in *Das Rheingold*. His task is quite delicate. He planned to rescue the world from disaster by creating an independent hero, Siegmund, but soon found out that the hero in question was not nearly independent enough to save the situation. Wotan unwillingly let his son die, but not before his favorite daughter, Brünnhilde, had fulfilled his wish for him, and made provision for Siegmund's unborn son, who has meanwhile grown up entirely free of Wotan's influence. If Wotan can

refrain from interfering, Siegfried may accomplish Wotan's will for a world that he is no longer able to command.

Wotan now enters Mime's cave, disguised as the Wanderer, and offers Mime, who does not fancy any visitor, a wager of his own life against any three questions Mime asks. He is offering Mime information, and Mime needs all the help he can get. But being mistrustful, he asks the Wanderer questions to which he already knows the answers. Wotan obliges with them, and we have an extended reprise of Wagner's earlier music about dwarfs, giants and gods, in effect a splendid tripartite solo aria for a grand bass-baritone voice.

Wotan now insists on a return match, and Mime is obliged to cudgel his wits, which he does with a slithery downward scale themed as pendant to his forging motif, often on violas, but sometimes also sung. He has no difficulty in answering the first two questions, and he becomes quite cheerful, until the Wanderer asks who will reconstitute the sword **Nothung**. That should have been Mime's first question, and it is his undoing. Wanderer does not bother claiming his prerogative as winner: Mime's life is forfeit to the forger of the sword, someone who is ignorant of fear. That person, Mime knows, is the boy Siegfried—unless Mime can teach him, out of extensive personal experience, what fear means. The flashing sparks from Wotan's departure on his magic horse delude Mime into imagining the ravaging approach of the Dragon (a tremendous orchestral passage, this), and Siegfried, returning to the smithy, finds him hiding under the anvil, terror-struck. Mime attempts, in a fine solo with obbligato orchestra, to convey the fearfulness inspired by watching a forest fire. Siegfried has always found such things enjoyable—Wagner here alludes to the sleeping Brünnhilde, whom the boy will soon reach after walking through just such a blaze—and wonders what this fear can be. Meanwhile he has decided to reforge the sword himself, if Mime cannot.

Nothung. The last scene of this act is about the reconstruction of the sword, a grand solo in two sections, both punctuated by asides for Mime, who gleefully takes the opportunity to brew a poisonous eggnog which Siegfried is to drink *after* slaying the monster. Siegfried's forging song has, as its refrain, the words "Nothung, Nothung, neidliches Schwert," a



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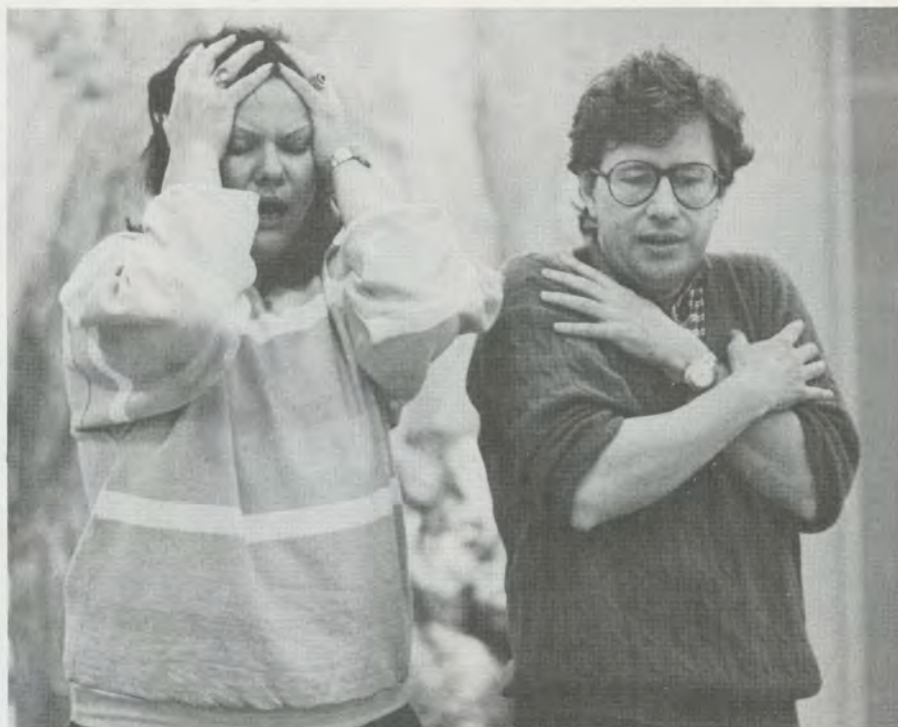
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ROBERT MESSICK

Soprano Eva Marton and director Nikolaus Lehnhoff rehearsing the various stages of Brünnhilde's anguish.

near-echo of the words sung by his father before pulling the same sword out of Hunding's house-tree, and with the same characteristic drop of an octave on the two syllables of the sword's name. The song is in D minor, with a marvelous turn into D major at the end of the act, when Siegfried holds up the finished weapon. Mime's comments increasingly encroach on Siegfried's singing, but Wagner never quite allows a simultaneous duet. The physical energy of the music in this last scene is immensely striking in the context of what had preceded it. We have come some way towards the light.

Act two, in the forest outside the dragon's lair, begins with a return to utter darkness, as Wagner shows us the monster in sinuous expanse, both giant and worm, with a rhythmic pattern for drums with doublebasses, and an unhurried melody for contrabass tuba. There are distant flashes of lightning: Wotan is on his way here, to the horse-riding music which will reach its apogee in the introduction to the third act. He will find another spectator already installed; the music specifies the Curse, Hatred, the Ring, and Nibelung Despair: in fact, Alberich. The old adversaries are to confront one another again, and Alberich's malevolence is not at all appeased by

the news that Wotan is a non-participant in the events shortly to be witnessed, merely another bystander: What new trick is his opponent up to now?

I call this first scene *Alberich*, who will be back again shortly. Fafner, who makes a brief vocal contribution to Alberich's scene and who dominated the orchestral introduction, has a scene of his own later, and the last part of the act is dominated by the offstage voice of the Woodbird. Between *Alberich* and *Fafner*, Wagner interposed a lovely lyrical scene for Siegfried alone in the clearing, listening to the music of nature, the scene known as "Forest Murmurs," sometimes excerpted orchestrally at concerts. Siegfried is again wondering what his parents were like: thoughts of his mother, "a human woman" (Siegfried has never seen one), incline Wagner to the theme of Freia, the spirit of youthfulness and lovability from *Das Rheingold*, as the orchestral strings subdivide many times in a passage of magical radiance. Birds are heard twittering above: Wagner collected their songs on country walks, identifying a blackbird and a nightingale, but not naming all the relevant motifs—the vocal Woodbird, later in the act, seems to be a blackbird, though it mimics other birdcalls as well, and its chief theme is akin to the Rhine-

continued on p.61



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ARTIST PROFILES



EVA MARTON

Soprano **Eva Marton** returns to San Francisco Opera to sing the first Brünnhilde of her career in *Siegfried*. The world-acclaimed singer considers her 1977 San Francisco Opera debut as Aida a turning point in her career, and she returned to sing the title role of *Tosca* for the Company's 1979 tour to the Philippines. During the 1980 Fall Season she appeared here as the Empress in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. Born in Hungary, Miss Marton studied at the Franz Liszt Academy in Budapest. An engagement with the Budapest State Opera led her to an association with the Frankfurt Opera, of which she was a member from 1972 to 1977. Since that time she has lived in Hamburg, and her assignments with the Hamburg Opera have included the title roles in new productions of *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, *Manon Lescaut*, *Tosca* and *Turandot*. In recent years she has won great acclaim with the opera companies of Buenos Aires, Chicago, Milan, Munich, New York and Vienna in such roles as *Tosca*, the Empress in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, Leonora in *Il Trovatore*, Aida and Elsa in *Lohengrin*. She has also won applause at the world's great festivals, including Bayreuth (Venus and Elisabeth in *Tannhäuser*), Munich (the title role of Strauss' *Die Aegyptische Helena*) and Salzburg (*Fidelio*). Numerous honors have been conferred upon Miss Marton: in 1979 she was honored for her Elsa and Empress by being named the best singer in

a debut performance of all time in Buenos Aires; in 1981 she received the Silver Rose for her *Tosca* at La Scala; in 1981 the New York Times voted her best female singer of 1981, and that same publication dubbed her "Artist of the Year" in 1982 and '83. In addition, the Friends of the Vienna State Opera awarded her special honors for her debut as *Turandot*. Miss Marton has won special notice for her interpretation of *Turandot*, and she has had offers through 1989 to sing the part in Barcelona, Berlin, London, Chicago, New York, Paris, Milan, Verona and Hamburg. She has recorded the role for CBS records, and recently participated in a complete recording of d'Albert's *Tiefland* with René Kollo under the baton of Marek Janowski.

Viennese-born mezzo-soprano **Helga Dernes** returns to San Francisco Opera to add two roles to her repertoire, Erda in *Siegfried* and Prince Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus*. She made her San Francisco Opera debut as Goneril in the American premiere of Reimann's *Lear* during the 1981 Summer Season and returned as Herodias in *Salome* during the 1982 Fall Season and as Fricka in *Die Walküre* last summer. In 1965 Miss Dernes made her debut at the Bayreuth Festival, where until 1969 she appeared as a Rheinmaiden, a Valkyrie, Eva in *Die Meistersinger*, Freia in *Das Rheingold* and Gutrune in *Götterdämmerung*. She began singing the heavier dramatic Wagner roles and in 1969 made her debut at the Salzburg Easter Festival as Brünnhilde in *Siegfried*, under the baton of Herbert von Karajan. She returned there in subsequent years for the *Götterdämmerung* Brünnhilde, Leonore in *Fidelio*, and as Isolde, and recorded each of these parts with Maestro von Karajan. Under the baton of Sir Georg Solti, she appeared at Covent Garden as Chrysothemis in *Elektra* and the Dyer's Wife in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, which she has performed in Vienna, Hamburg, Munich, Cologne and Düsseldorf. She has also been heard as Klytemnestra in *Elektra* in Vienna, Hamburg, Berlin and Munich; Brangäne in *Tristan und Isolde* in Trieste and Frankfurt; and Herodias in Hamburg and, in 1983, Rio de Janeiro. At the 1982 Salzburg Festival she performed in a concert pres-

SIEGFRIED



HELGA DERNESCH

entation and recording of Othmar Schoeck's *Penthesilea*, and has also participated in a concert performance and recording of Aribert Reimann's new Requiem. Last September she appeared in a new production of *Elektra* in Cologne, which she repeated last March. Other recent engagements include appearances in Munich and Hamburg, a concert presentation of *Elektra* in Zurich, and performances in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* with the Hamburg Opera in Tokyo. The most recent addition to her distinguished discography is a highly acclaimed recording of Mahler's Third Symphony with the Chicago Symphony under Sir Georg Solti. Next fall, Miss Dernes returns to San Francisco Opera to sing Marfa in Musorgsky's *Khovanshchina*.

Soprano **Cheryl Parrish** is the Forest Bird for the Summer Season production of *Siegfried*. Most recently seen in the Opera Center's 1984 Showcase production of Mozart's *The Abduction from the Seraglio*, the Texas native made her Company debut as Naiade in *Ariadne auf Naxos* during the 1983 Fall Season. She also appeared last fall as Iza in *La Grande Duchesse de Gêrolstein* with Régine Crespin, with whom Miss Parrish studied in France earlier this year. Currently an Adler Fellow with the Opera Center, she was selected to give the first of the Schwa-

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CHERYL PARRISH

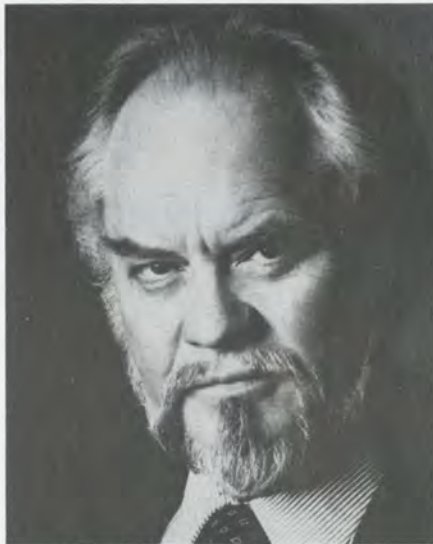
bacher Debut Recitals last December. A participant in the 1981 and '82 Merola Opera Programs, she was featured in numerous roles including Papagena in *The Magic Flute*, Sally in *Die Fledermaus*, Alice Ford in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and Gilda in *Rigoletto*, a role she also performed on Western Opera Theater's 1982 national tour. During 1983, Miss Parrish was soprano soloist in Mozart's *Coronation Mass* performed during a pontifical high mass celebrated by the Vatican Secretary of State to mark the opening of the Vatican Art Exhibit. Recent operatic engagements outside of San Francisco include Fiametta in *The Gondoliers* with the Fort Worth Opera Association, and she scored a triumph as the Queen of the Night with the Modesto Symphony last April.

Tenor **René Kollo** makes his San Francisco Opera debut in the title role of *Siegfried*, a role he sang in the 1976 Bayreuth production. Early in his studies the Berlin-born singer financed his voice lessons with money he earned as a pop singer—his 1958 recording of "Hello, Mary Lou" became a best-seller. His first opera engagement was at the Braunschweiger Staatstheater in a Stravinsky triple-bill including *Mavra*, *Renard* and *Oedipus Rex*. He became a regular member of that company, singing seven to eight performances a week. In 1967 he joined the Deutsche Oper am Rhein in Düsseldorf, where his assignments included Laca in *Jenůfa*. During his six years in Düsseldorf, he also made numerous guest appearan-



RENÉ KOLLO

ces in Munich, Frankfurt, Milan and Lisbon. Kollo made his Bayreuth Festival debut as the Steersman in *Der Fliegende Holländer* in 1969, singing the role of Eric the following year. A major turning point in his career came when he performed the title role of *Lohengrin* at Bayreuth in 1971 and '72. In 1973 and '74 he appeared at Bayreuth as Stolzing in *Die Meistersinger*, and in 1975 sang his first Parsifal in the new Wolfgang Wagner production. The following year he repeated Parsifal and sang Siegfried, making him the youngest singer in the history of Bayreuth to sing either of those roles. He is considered today one of the leading Wagnerian tenors in all of the major houses. His repertoire embraces other composers and styles as well, however, and in 1976 he received the Herman Lons Medal as the most popular interpreter of German folk music. West German President Walter Scheel also awarded him the Federal Distinguished Service decoration. His discography includes operetta as well as such works as *Parsifal* and *Tannhäuser* under Solti, and *Fidelio* and *Missa Solemnis* under Bernstein. It was Bernstein who conducted the 1978 Vienna State Opera production of *Fidelio* with Kollo as Florestan, a production that was televised world-wide. Triumphs of the past few years include opening the 1981 Bayreuth Festival in Jean-Pierre Ponnelle's production of *Tristan und Isolde*, under Barenboim; the opening of La Scala's 1981-82 season as *Lohengrin* under Claudio Abbado; and a 1982 concert tour of 25 cities. This past April he sang the title role in a concert



THOMAS STEWART

performance of Act III of *Parsifal* with the San Francisco Symphony.

Acclaimed as "the Wotan of his generation," renowned American baritone **Thomas Stewart** returns to San Francisco Opera as The Wanderer in *Siegfried*. He made his San Francisco Opera debut in 1962 with five leading roles: Rodrigo in *Don Carlo*, Escamillo in *Carmen*, Valentin in *Faust*, Ford in *Falstaff* and Count di Luna in *Il Trovatore*. Since then he has distinguished himself here in such varied roles as Don Giovanni, Count Almaviva in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Dr. Falke in *Die Fledermaus*, Golaud in *Pelléas et Mélisande*, Germont in *La Traviata*, the Count in *Capriccio*, Orest in *Elektra*, Prince Yeletsky in *The Queen of Spades*, the title role of *Eugene Onegin*, Don Alfonso in *Così fan tutte*, Kurwenal in *Tristan und Isolde* and, of course, Wotan. Other Wagnerian roles in which he has won acclaim locally are Wolfram in *Tannhäuser*, Gunther in *Götterdämmerung* and Amfortas in *Parsifal*. A major landmark in his distinguished career was the title role of Aribert Reimann's *Lear* when San Francisco Opera presented the American premiere of that work in 1981. The only American to sing major roles for more than a decade at Bayreuth and the only non-German to sing there in all baritone leads of the *Ring*, Stewart has also sung in *Ring* productions in Salzburg, Vienna and at the Metropolitan Opera. Since his 1966 Met debut as Ford in *Falstaff*, he has returned for nearly every role in his extensive repertoire, including Don Gio-

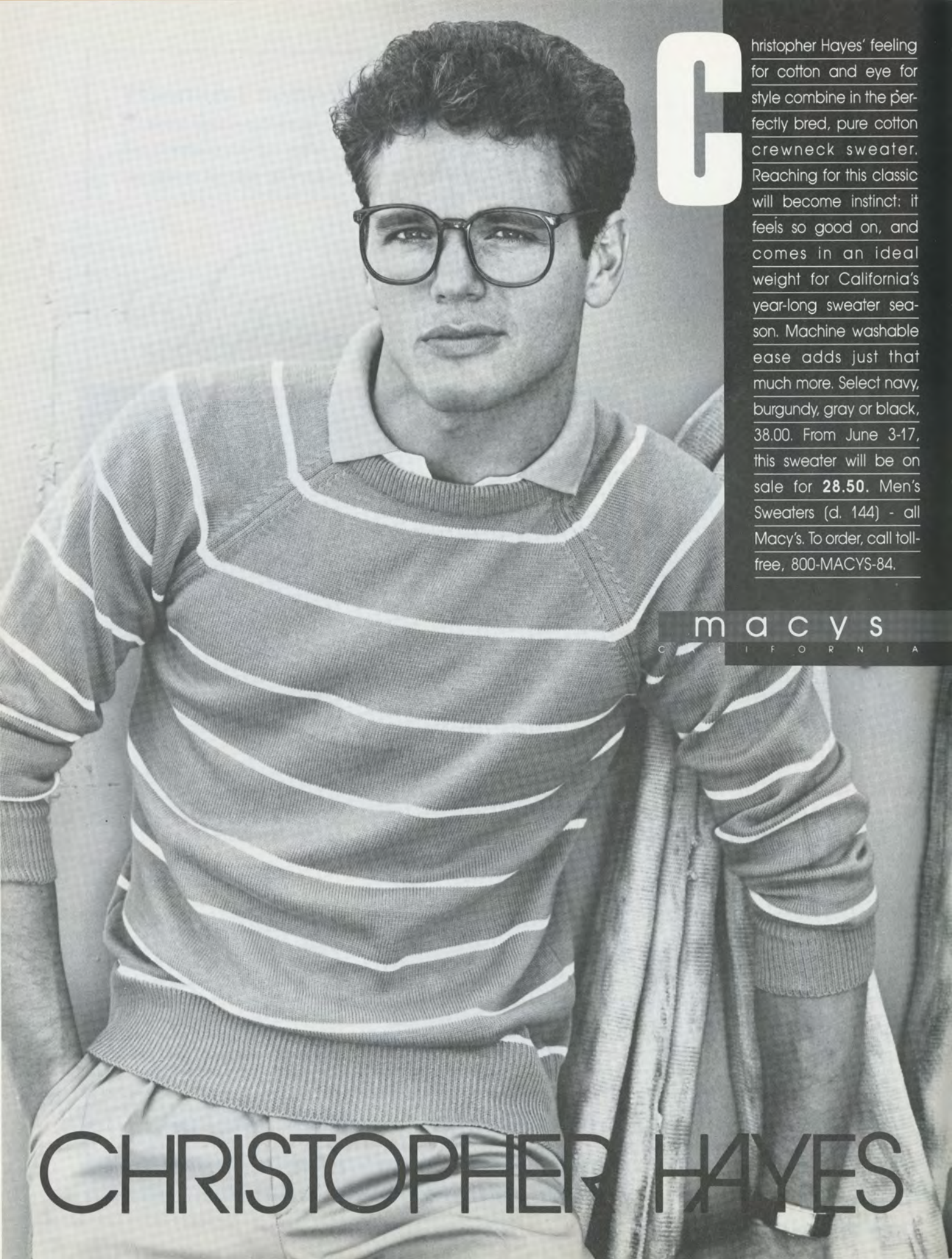


HELMUT PAMPUCH

vanni, Iago in *Otello*, the four villains in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, Hans Sachs in *Die Meistersinger* and Golaud in *Pelléas et Mélisande*. Highlights of his 1983-84 season include Captain Balstrode in *Peter Grimes* at Houston Grand Opera and the Met, where he also appeared on the televised 100th anniversary marathon concert; a performance of Berlioz's *L'Enfance du Christ* with the Boston Symphony; recording an album of arias in Amsterdam; and numerous joint recitals with his wife, soprano Evelyn Lear. Other recent assignments have included a film of *Das Rheingold* led by Herbert von Karajan, and the first Nick Shadow of his career in the Netherlands Opera's new production of *The Rake's Progress*.

Tenor **Helmut Pampuch** makes his American opera debut as Mime in *Siegfried*, a role he has also sung in Geneva, Trieste, Düsseldorf, Bordeaux and Rouen. A German born in Oberschlesien (now part of Poland), he graduated from the Conservatory of Nürnberg and studied with Willy Domgraf-Fassbänder before his professional debut in Regensburg. That engagement led to others in Braunschweig, Saarbrücken and Wiesbaden. Since 1973 he has been a member of the Deutsche Oper am Rhein in Düsseldorf. He has also appeared as a guest artist at a number of important European houses. In Berlin he has been seen in *The Flying Dutchman*, as Beppe in *I Pagliacci* and Wenzel in *The Bartered Bride*; in Geneva as

continued on p.46



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CAST

(in order of appearance)

<i>Mime</i>	Helmut Pampuch** (May 26, 31; June 3) Francis Egerton (June 8, 12)
<i>Siegfried</i>	René Kollo*
<i>The Wanderer (Wotan)</i>	Thomas Stewart
<i>Alberich</i>	Stanley Wexler
<i>Fafner</i>	James Patterson
<i>Forest Bird</i>	Cheryl Parrish
<i>Erda</i>	Helga Dernesch
<i>Brünnhilde</i>	Eva Marton

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*San Francisco Opera debut

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<i>ACT I</i>	Mime's cave
INTERMISSION	
<i>ACT II</i>	Fafner's cave
INTERMISSION	
<i>ACT III Scene 1</i>	Terrace of the gods
<i>Scene 2</i>	Valkyrie island

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and forty-five minutes.

Siegfried/Synopsis

Siegfried is the third opera in Wagner's tetralogy *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (The Ring of the Nibelung). Here is a brief summary of the first two: In *Rheingold*, the Nibelung dwarf Alberich steals the Rhine gold from the Rhine Maidens and renounces love so that he may forge the gold into a Ring that will make him master of the world. Wotan, chief of the gods, has engaged the giants Fasolt and Fafner to build Valhalla for the gods, in payment for which he has promised them Freia, the goddess of youth without whom the gods cannot survive. The fire god Loge persuades Wotan to accompany him to Nibelheim, where Wotan tricks Alberich into yielding his treasure so as to ransom Freia. Alberich puts a curse on the Ring, which

the giants demand in addition to the rest of the treasure, including the magic helmet Tarnhelm. Wotan hesitates, his wife Fricka urges him to comply, and the earth goddess Erda warns him against keeping the Ring, which Wotan relinquishes. Fafner kills Fasolt in a quarrel and absconds with the entire treasure as Loge cynically watches the gods enter their new home, Valhalla.

In *Die Walküre*, Siegmund seeks shelter in Hunding's hut. He and Hunding's wife, Sieglinde, feel a mysterious attraction, not realizing they are Wotan's children by a mortal and were separated after birth. Sieglinde shows him the sword Nothung that Wotan thrust into a tree, a sword that

can only be removed by a hero. Siegmund removes it and runs off with Sieglinde. Fricka, the guardian of marital vows, forces Wotan to side with Hunding in his forthcoming fight with Siegmund. Wotan's favorite Valkyrie daughter (one of nine, borne by Erda) Brünnhilde disobeys her father and aids Siegmund. Wotan intervenes, however, and Siegmund dies, his sword shattered by Wotan's spear. Brünnhilde gives the fragments to Sieglinde, who will soon give birth to Siegmund's son: the hero Siegfried. Wotan punishes Brünnhilde by putting her to sleep on a rock surrounded by magic fire, from which she will one day be rescued by a hero who will come to claim her.

The first act takes place in the forge of the Nibelung dwarf, Mime, Alberich's brother. (Sieglinde earlier fled to this workshop, gave birth to a child and died. In accordance with his mother's last will, this child was named "Siegfried." In order for Mime to possess the Ring he has reared Siegfried to kill its present owner, Fafner.) The young man, Siegfried, asks about the broken sword that his father bore in his last fight. Mime, who has been unable to repair it, evades the subject. Shortly afterward, Siegfried leaves to run exuberantly into the forest and a Wanderer enters. It is Wotan, who no longer rules the world, but rather observes and reflects upon it. Against Mime's will he sits down and offers to play a game in which each will exchange three riddles. If either player is unable to answer any riddle, he will lose his head. The Wanderer answers all three questions Mime asks. In the return match Mime is unable to answer the god's last question, "Who can forge the fragments of the sword Nothung?" Mime cannot do it. The Wanderer departs from the workshop; Mime's head will be taken by the fearless slayer of the dragon. Siegfried returns, and Mime now gives him the fragments of Nothung, which Siegfried, chanting while he works, hammers into smaller pieces, melts and forges into a new sword. At the same time, Mime brews a poisonous potion. According to his plan, Siegfried, after slaying Fafner, will drink it and die. Then the treasure will belong to Mime, the dwarf, and make him master of the entire world. Siegfried tests the newly forged sword by striking it on the anvil. The anvil splits.

The second act further develops the story of *Siegfried's Death*, Wagner's first-draft title for *The Ring*. Wearing the sword Nothung, Siegfried goes into the forest, guided and goaded by Mime, to the cave where the dragon, Fafner, dwells and guards his hoard. Their arrival is preceded by a scene in which Alberich waits at Fafner's cave expressing his hope that his curse upon the Ring will take effect so that he can regain possession of it and its powers. The Wanderer joins him; they wake Fafner to warn him that Mime will shortly bring Siegfried to slay him. Alberich offers to protect Fafner if he will peacefully relinquish the Ring to him. But Fafner is uncooperative: "I lie and possess: let me sleep." The Wanderer departs laughing and Alberich disappears too as soon as Mime arrives with Siegfried. Mime tries once more to instill fear into Siegfried's heart. He fails and leaves angrily with the comment, "Siegfried and Fafner oh, that they would slay one

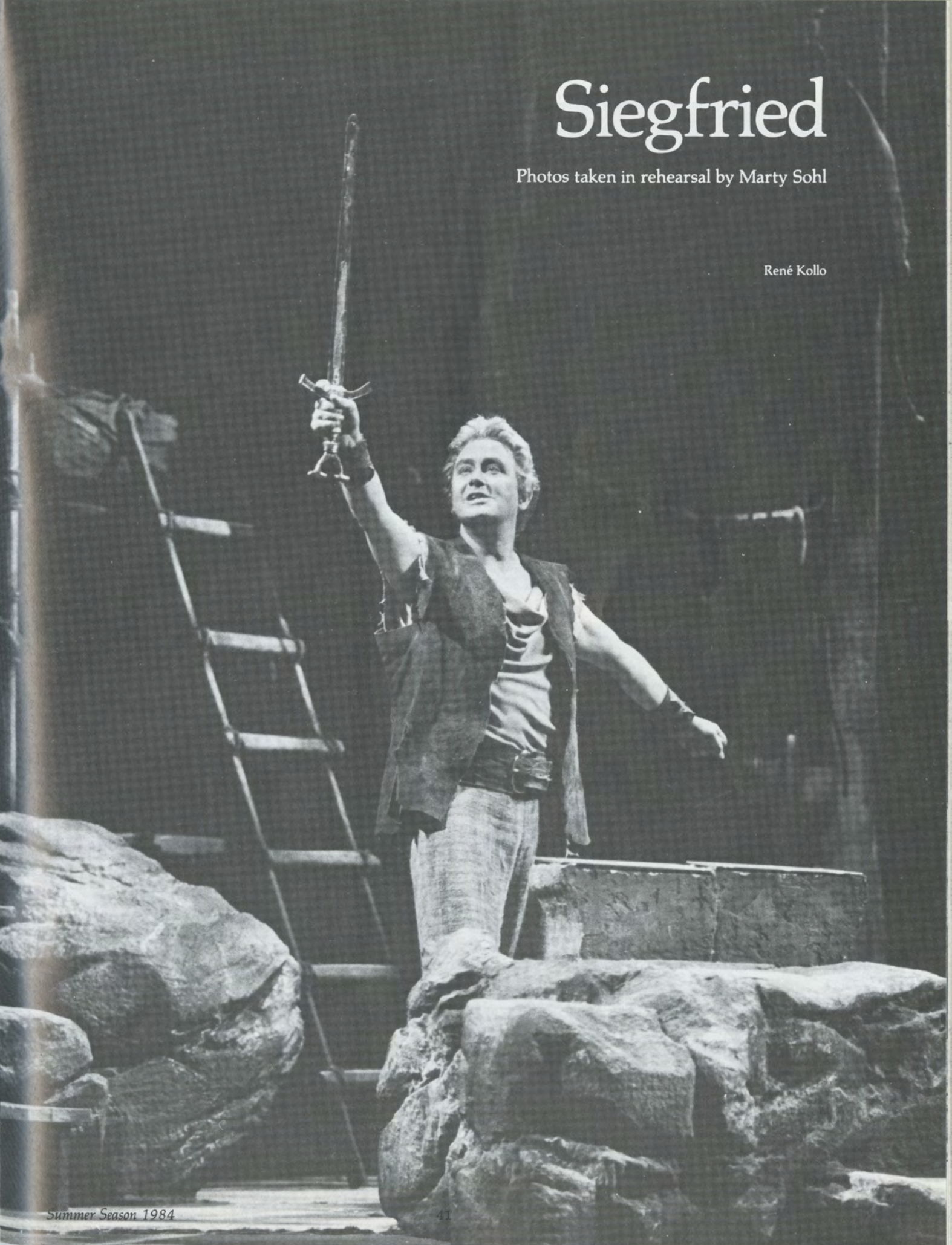
another." Siegfried lies down in the grass near the cave. He hears the song of a forest bird and the gentle rustling of the leaves—the passage that Wagner called "Forest Murmurs." Siegfried's thoughts turn back to the father and mother he never knew, his heart longing especially for his mother. He tries to imitate the song of the forest bird, first with a reed-flute, then with a horn. This noise awakens Fafner, and after a short struggle, Siegfried drives Nothung into his heart. In his dying moments, Fafner is filled with admiration for the "heroic youth" who has slain him. He foretells Siegfried's future, warning him that Mime is plotting Siegfried's death in order to gain the hoard. A drop of the dragon's blood falls onto Siegfried's hand; the instant he puts his hand to his mouth to lick away the drop, he understands the words and meaning of the forest bird's song. The bird tells him to be sure to take the Ring and the Magic Helmet, which Siegfried does. Mime returns. And just as the dragon's blood has given Siegfried the ability to understand the forest bird, it also enables him to recognize the malicious intent behind Mime's friendly words; as Mime hands him the poisoned drink, Siegfried kills him. The forest bird tells Siegfried of Brünnhilde, the most beautiful of all women, who lies on her rock surrounded by fire and awaits the one who has not learned to fear. The bird flies ahead, showing the way, and Siegfried follows.

At the beginning of the third act the Wanderer entices Erda from the earth. She refuses to answer his question regarding the fate of the world; only after he declares that he no longer fears its downfall does she reveal the impending doom. Siegfried enters, led by the forest bird. The Wanderer bars his way with his spear, feared by all except one man. Siegfried breaks Wotan's spear with Nothung, proving thereby that he is the one man who does not fear it. The Wanderer steps aside, and Siegfried rushes up the rocks until he stands before the sleeping Brünnhilde. He realizes that she is not a man, and he, who feared neither Fafner, fire nor Wotan's spear, learns fear with his first glimpse of a woman. He awakens her with a kiss; she greets the sun and light; then she sees Siegfried, and they gaze into each other's eyes. But their growing passion is interrupted by her fearful recognition that she has been divested of her godhood, and is now no more than a defenseless mortal woman. However, this emotional obstacle is crossed, and Siegfried and Brünnhilde sink into each other's arms in glowing, and ever increasing love.

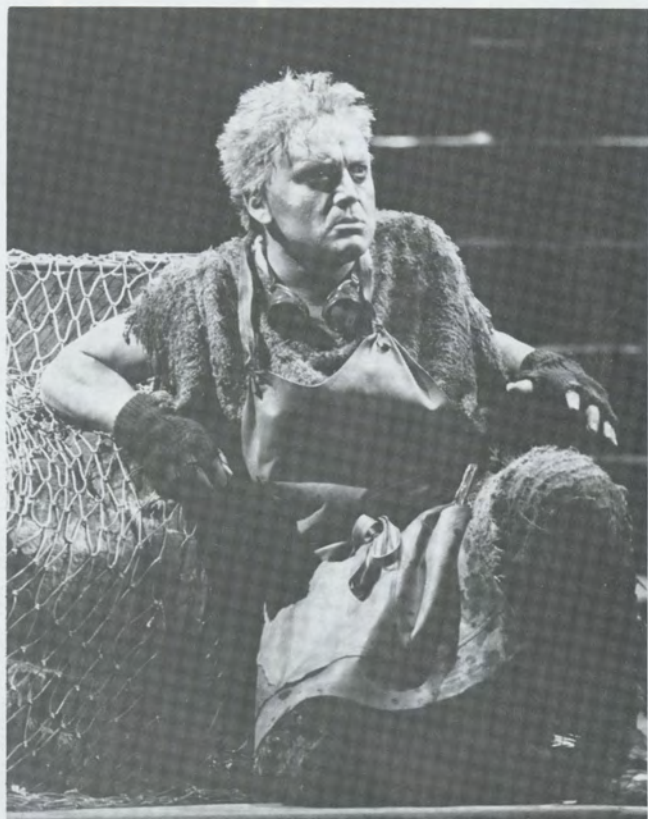
Siegfried

Photos taken in rehearsal by Marty Sohl

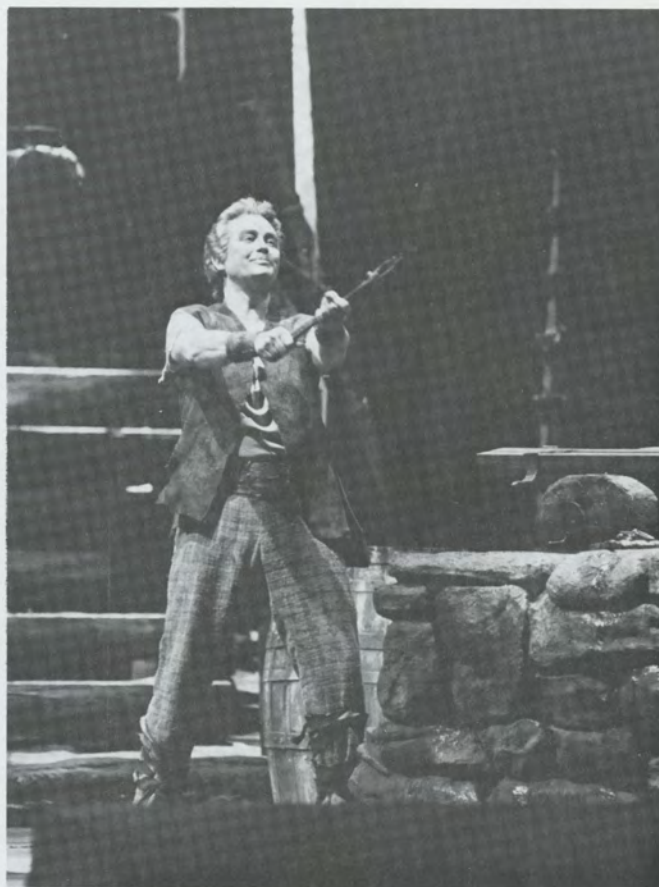
René Kollo



ACT I



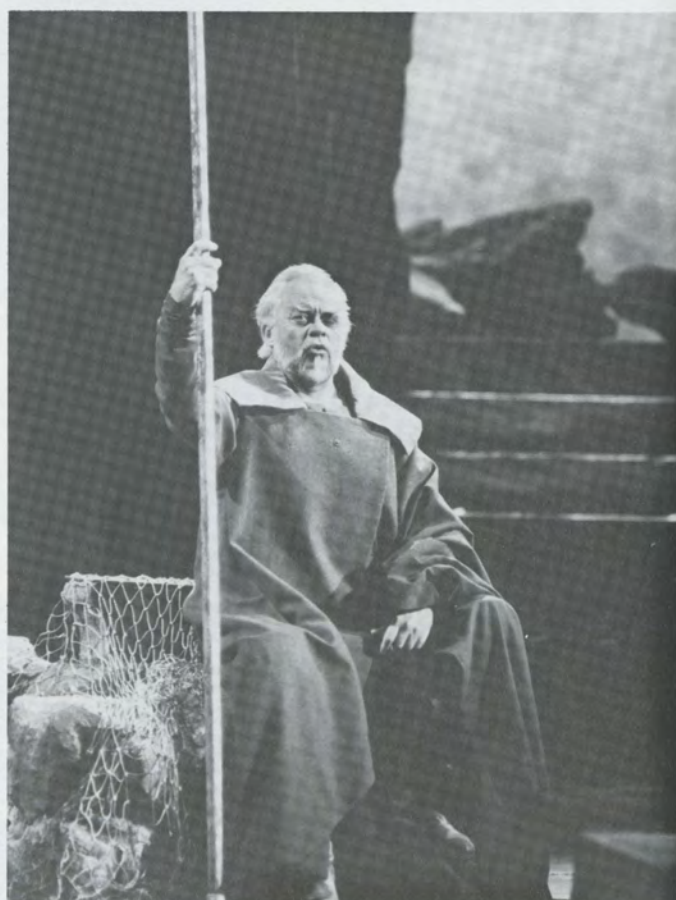
Helmut Pampuch



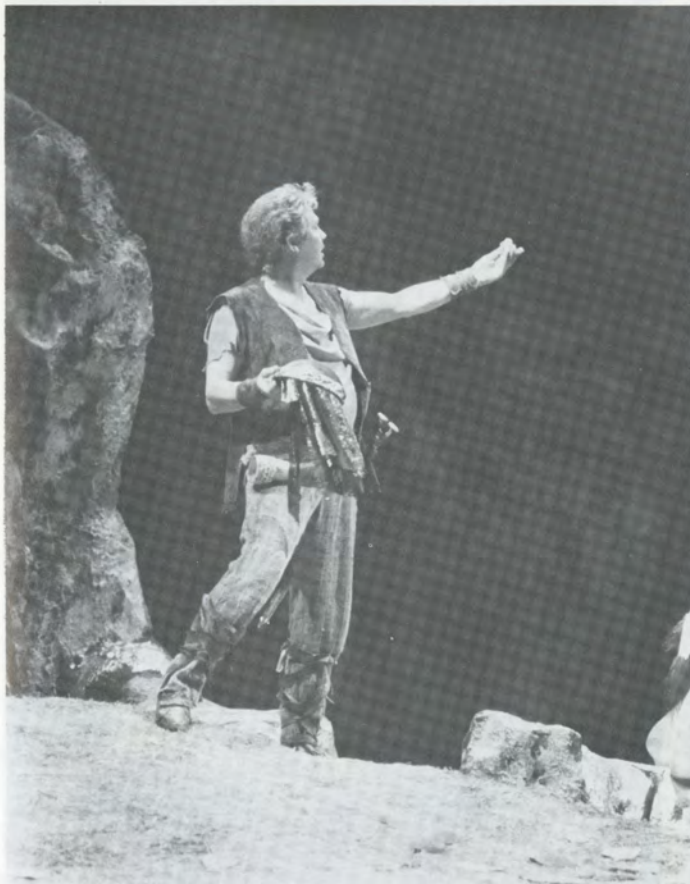
René Kollo



Helmut Pampuch, Thomas Stewart



Thomas Stewart

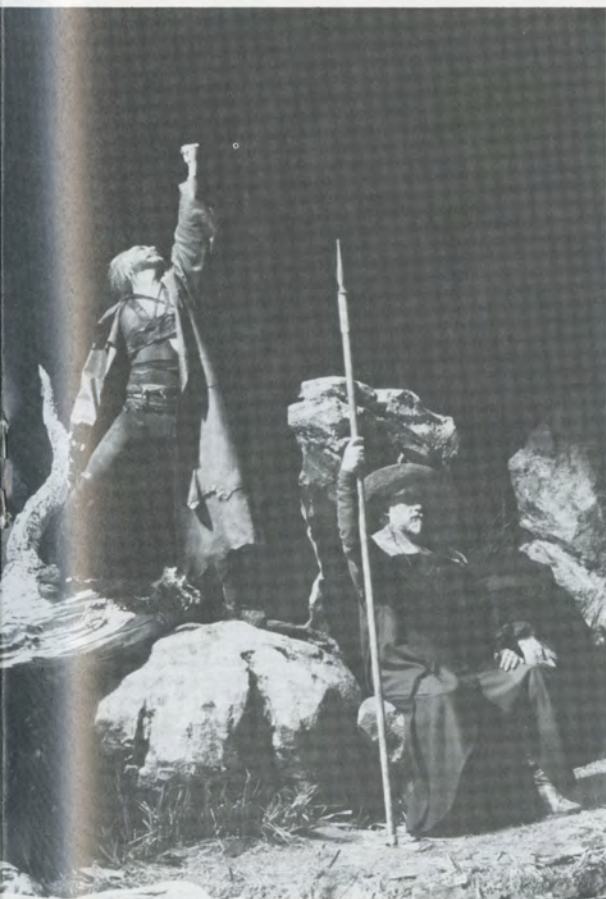


René Kollo

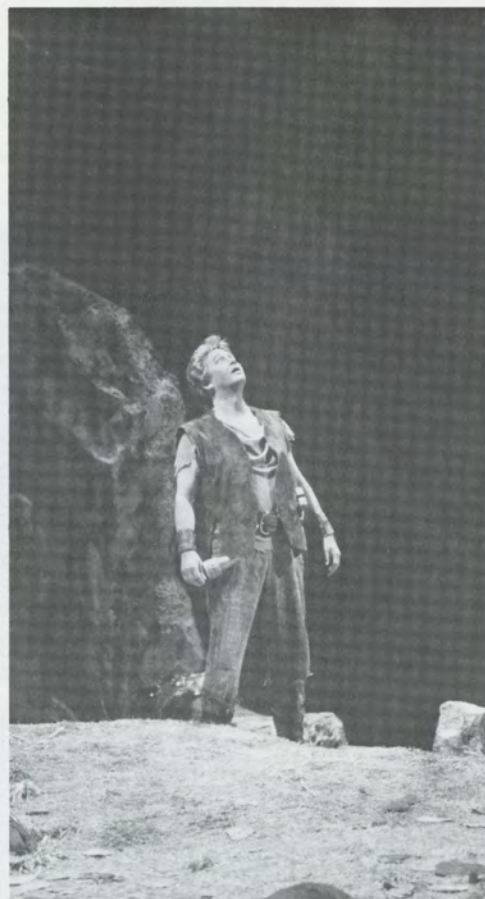
ACT II



René Kollo



Stanley Wexler, Thomas Stewart



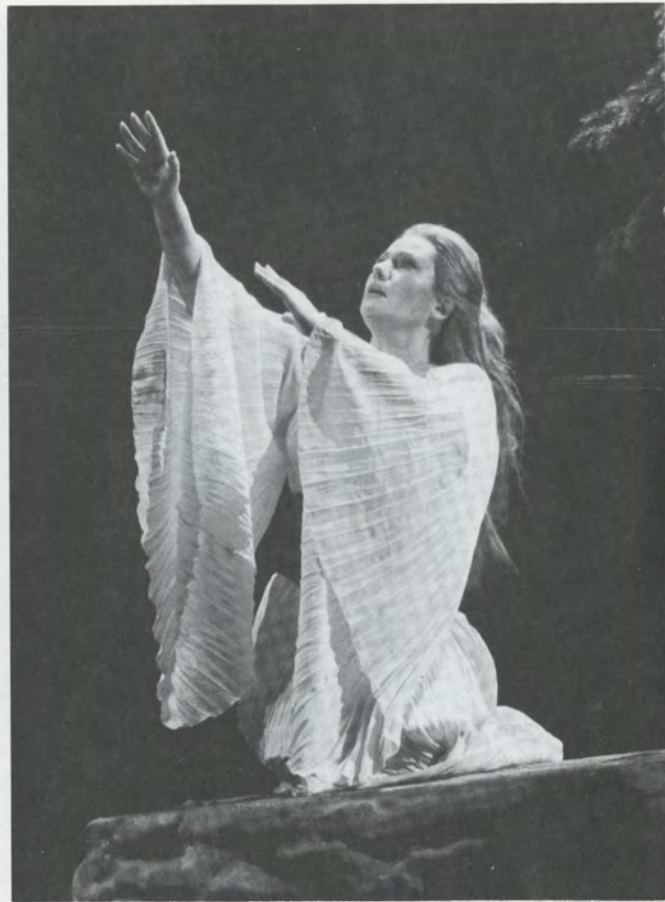
René Kollo



Helmut Pampuch



Helga Dernesch



Eva Marton

ACT III



Eva Marton



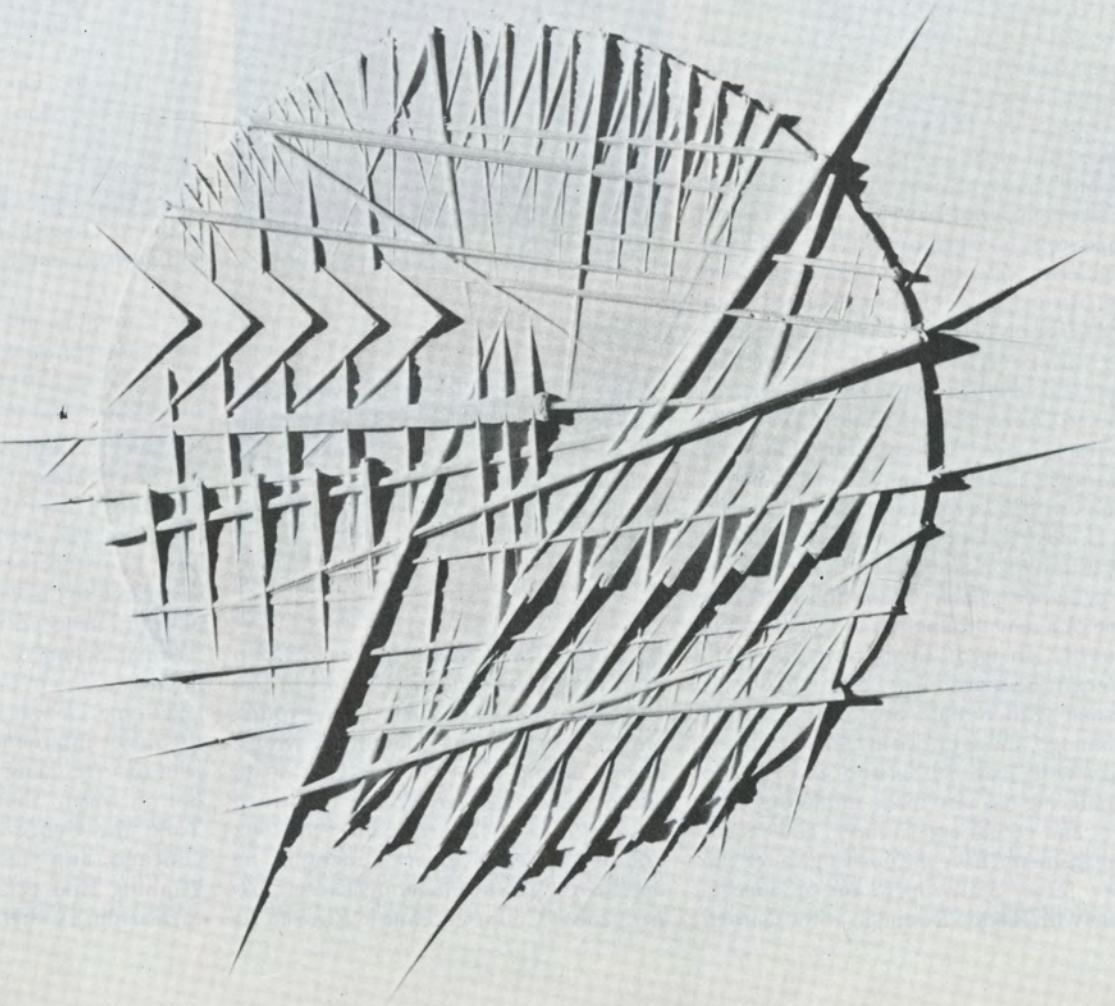
René Kollo, Eva Marton



René Kollo

OPERA PLAZA AND GHIRARDELLI SQUARE - SAN FRANCISCO

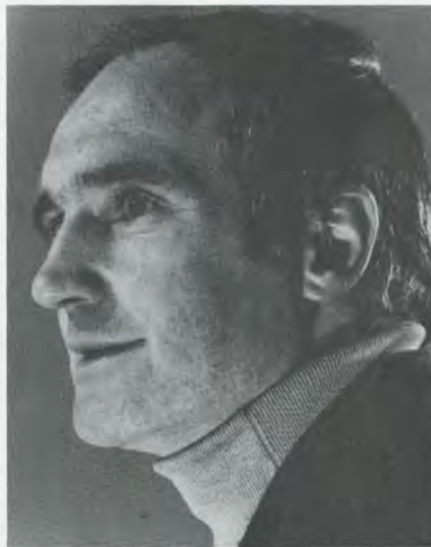
MODESTO LANZONE'S



continued from p.37

Mime in *Das Rheingold* and Siegfried and David in *Die Meistersinger*; and at the Bavarian State Opera in Munich as Monostatos in *The Magic Flute*, Pedrillo in *The Abduction from the Seraglio* and as Beppe. He participated in the world premiere of the three-act version of Berg's *Lulu* in Paris, where he also appeared as Monostatos and as Mime in *Das Rheingold* conducted by Sir Georg Solti. He traveled with the Paris Opera company to Milan for a repeat of *Lulu*, and has since gone on to numerous guest engagements with the houses of Amsterdam, Bordeaux, Genoa, Stuttgart, Hamburg, Lisbon and Rouen. His Bayreuth credits include performances in *Tristan und Isolde*, *Parsifal*, *Die Meistersinger*, and *Das Rheingold*, in which he sang Mime in 1978, '79 and '80 as well as for the film televised internationally last year. Other television and film credits include *The Bartered Bride* for German television, *Lulu* with the Paris Opera and, for Bayreuth, *Parsifal*, *Tristan und Isolde* and *Die Meistersinger*. Last year he sang Pedrillo in the highly acclaimed Giorgio Strehler production of *The Abduction from the Seraglio* in Venice and Naples. In January and February of this year he scored a major success as Mime in a new production of *Siegfried* at the Teatro Verdi in Trieste. Next year he will appear as Monostatos at La Scala in a production of *The Magic Flute* under Wolfgang Sawallisch.

Irish-born tenor **Francis Egerton** returns to San Francisco Opera as Mime in *Siegfried*. He made his American debut here in 1978, and in his first two seasons with the Company sang a wide variety of roles. A member of the Royal Opera at Covent Garden since 1972, his assignments there have included Iopas (*Les Troyens*), Beppe (*I Pagliacci*), Flute (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), Basilio (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), Bardolfo (*Falstaff*), Pong (*Turandot*), the Scribe (*Khovanshchina*) and the Captain (*Wozzeck*). For five seasons he was a member of Sadler's Wells Opera (now the English National Opera), where his roles ranged from the Gangster in *Kiss Me Kate* to the leading tenor roles in Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*, *Count Ory* and *The Italian Girl in Algiers*. For Scottish Opera his assignments have included the Witch in *Hansel and Gretel*, Flute, Mime in the *Ring* cycle



FRANCIS EGERTON

and, most recently, the travesty role of Dema in a new production of Cavalli's *L'Egisto*. He has participated in the festivals at Glyndebourne and Edinburgh, made his Canadian debut in Winnipeg singing the four tenor roles in *The Tales of Hoffmann*, and performed in the highly acclaimed production of *Falstaff* under Giulini in Los Angeles in 1982. He made his Italian debut as Pedrillo in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* in Palermo, and this year marked his first performances in Paris at Le Châtelet, singing Prince Guidon in *Le Coq d'Or*. His recording credits include numerous major projects for RCA, Decca (London Records), Philips and DG, and he was recently seen in the lead role of Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Gondoliers*, telecast nationally by the PBS network. Upcoming engagements include Bardolfo in concert performances of *Falstaff* with the Chicago Symphony under Sir Georg Solti in both Chicago and New York.

Bass **James Patterson** returns to San Francisco Opera for two roles during the 1984 Summer Season: Fafner in *Siegfried* and the King of Egypt in *Aida*. Currently an Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, he made his San Francisco Opera debut as a Customhouse Guard in the 1983 Summer Season production of *La Bohème* and sang Fafner in the last performance of *Das Rheingold*. Last Fall Season he undertook five roles: The Lackey in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Dr. Grenvil in both casts of *La Traviata*, a Monk in *La*



JAMES PATTERSON

Gioconda and both a Border Guard and Cherniakovsky in *Boris Godunov*. As a participant in the 1982 Merola Opera Program he appeared in productions of *Rigoletto* and *The Magic Flute*, and went on to portray Sparafucile in Western Opera Theater's 1982 touring production of *Rigoletto*. During the 1983 Showcase series he appeared as Ariadeno in *L'Ormino* and Collatinus in *The Rape of Lucretia*. Most recently he was seen in the 1984 Showcase production of *The Abduction from the Seraglio*, in which he portrayed Osmin. During the summer of 1981 Patterson was an apprentice artist with Santa Fe Opera, where he appeared as Simone in *Gianni Schicchi*. His concert credits include Herod in Berlioz's *L'Enfance du Christ* with the Marin Symphony and, during last year's Festival of Masses, the bass solos in the *St. Matthew Passion* and the Verdi Requiem under Robert Shaw.

Bass-baritone **Stanley Wexler** sings the first Alberich of his career in *Siegfried*. He made his Company debut in 1980, appearing in five operas during the Fall Season. In 1981 he portrayed Mozart's Figaro with Spring Opera and Western Opera Theater, and during the 1981 Fall Season was seen as Kromow in *The Merry Widow*. During the 1982 Summer Season he sang in *The Barber of Seville* and *Julius Caesar*, and that fall appeared in *Salome*. Last summer he sang the roles of Alcindoro and Benoit in *La Bohème*, the vehicle of his New York City Opera debut in November 1982. The young American singer has



STANLEY WEXLER



EDO DE WAART

performed in *Melusine* and *Salome* with Santa Fe Opera; *Arlucchino*, *Kleine Mahagonny* and *La Bohème* with New England Chamber Opera; and *Signor Deluso*, *War and Peace* and *Daughter of the Regiment* with the Wolf Trap Company. Wexler portrayed Leporello in *Don Giovanni* for Boris Goldovsky's opera company in 1975, and over the next two years appeared with San Francisco's Western Opera Theater in *The Portuguese Inn*, Dr. Bartolo in *The Barber of Seville*, and the title roles of *Don Pasquale* and *The Marriage of Figaro*. In 1977 he began an association with Kansas City Lyric Theatre that has included appearances in *H.M.S. Pinafore*, *Girl of the Golden West*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Aida*, *Don Giovanni* (title role) and, during the 1982 season, *The Merry Widow* and the American premiere of Mozart's *L'Oca del Cairo*. He appeared with the Minnesota Opera in 1979 and in December 1981 made his Houston Grand Opera debut as Don Pedro in *La Pèrichole*. In February 1982 he took on all four villains in *The Tales of Hoffmann* with Scholar Opera in Oakland. Other engagements include Kander's *The Happy Time* with the Lyric Opera of Kansas, his first Escamillo in *Carmen* with Augusta Opera in 1983, and Don Alfonso in *Così fan tutte* with Pocket Opera that same year. Since his New York City Opera debut, he has appeared with that company as Zuniga in *Carmen* and Danilo in *The Merry Widow*. Recent engagements include Red Shadow in *The Desert Song* with the Light Opera Company of Manhattan and Mahler's Eighth Symphony with the Syracuse Symphony.

Wexler lives in New York with his wife Rachel and their two sons, Django and Cody. His upcoming assignments at New York City Opera include Dr. Bartolo in *The Barber of Seville*, Baron Douphol in *La Traviata*, Sparafucile in *Rigoletto*, Colline in *La Bohème* and the title role of *Sweeney Todd*, directed by Harold Prince, all in 1984.

San Francisco Symphony music director and conductor **Edo de Waart** returns to San Francisco Opera to lead performances of *Siegfried* and *Aida*. He made his Company debut last summer with the first two installments of the *Ring*, *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*, and will return next summer for the complete cycle, including *Götterdämmerung*. Music director of the San Francisco Symphony since 1977, he began his conducting career at the age of 23, when he became assistant conductor of the New York Philharmonic under Leonard Bernstein. Returning to his native Netherlands, Maestro de Waart was appointed assistant conductor of the Concertgebouw Orchestra under Bernard Haitink. In 1967 he founded the Netherlands Wind Ensemble, and his celebrated recordings with that group quickly brought him international recognition. Appointed music director of the Rotterdam Philharmonic in 1973, he led that orchestra to international renown during his six-year tenure. In 1974 he accepted the post of principal guest conductor for the San Francisco Symphony. Since becoming music director, he has

established a practice of commissions and premieres each season, and three years ago he created the New and Unusual Music Series, which has become a model for the composer-in-residence programs now in operation with six American orchestras. Maestro de Waart is also responsible for the nation's first annual Beethoven Festival, the founding of the San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra and the reconstructed Pops season. His operatic assignments have included *The Flying Dutchman* at Santa Fe in 1971; *Parsifal* (1981) and *Arabella* (1982) with the Netherlands Opera; and the opening of the 1979 Bayreuth Festival with *Lohengrin*. He has also led performances of *Parsifal* with the Bavarian State Opera and *Ariadne auf Naxos* at Covent Garden. He has appeared as guest conductor of the world's greatest orchestras: the Berlin Philharmonic, the Boston Symphony, the Chicago Symphony, the Dresden State Orchestra, the Leipzig Gewandhaus and the Philadelphia Orchestra. Maestro de Waart's extensive list of recordings includes a complete *Der Rosenkavalier* on the Philips label, the company with which he established the San Francisco Symphony's first long-term recording contract. He also instituted a policy of annual touring and, under his direction, the Symphony has extended its activities year-round. He can be heard conducting the Symphony in weekly radio broadcasts over more than 200 stations nationwide. Maestro de Waart's guest-conducting engagements this summer include the Los Angeles Philharmonic at Hollywood Bowl, the Chicago Symphony at Ravinia, and the Boston Symphony at Tanglewood. On July 18 he opens the San Francisco Symphony Pops Series with an all-American program at the Civic Auditorium. In 1985, he assumes the position of music director and principal conductor of the Netherlands Opera.

Nikolaus Lehnhoff, director of San Francisco Opera's new production of Wagner's *Ring of the Nibelung*, returns here to stage the third opera of the cycle, *Siegfried*, after having directed the first two, *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*, for the 1983 Summer Season. He will present the entire *Ring* for the Summer Season of 1985. Born in Germany, he began his career as an assistant director at the Deutsche Oper

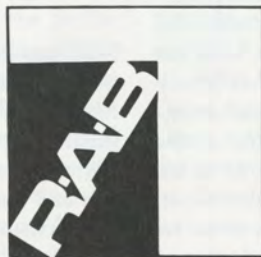


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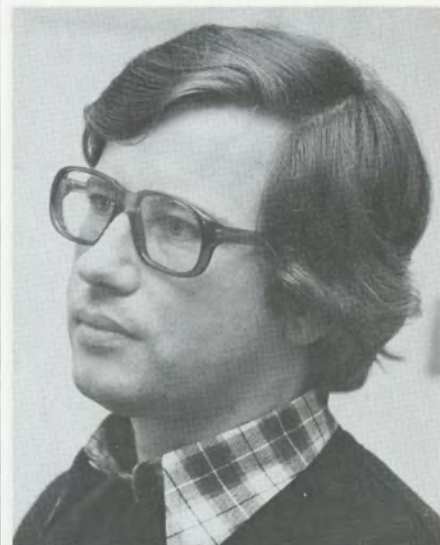
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NIKOLAUS LEHNHOFF

in Berlin. From 1963 to 1966 he was an assistant to Wieland Wagner at Bayreuth, and from 1966 to 1971 was an assistant director at the Metropolitan Opera. He made his debut at the Paris Opera with the 1972 production of *Die Frau ohne Schatten* conducted by Karl Böhm. He made his San Francisco Opera debut with *Salome* in 1974, returning here in 1976 to direct *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, again with Böhm. His staging of Strauss' allegorical fairy tale has won him critical praise in Stockholm and Düsseldorf, as well as in San Francisco, where he recreated his interpretation of the work in the historic performances of 1980 with Leonie Rysanek and Birgit Nilsson. In 1982 he directed the sensational and much-discussed production of *Salome* for the Fall Season. He has directed *Tristan und Isolde* at the Orange Festival in France, *Fidelio* in Bremen, *Elektra* for Chicago, *Tristan* in Frankfurt, and in Düsseldorf staged his first Mozart opera, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, which he also directed last season in Bonn. Lehnhoff's directorial credits include *Pelléas et Mélisande* in Nuremberg, Ravel's *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges* and Debussy's *La Chute de la Maison Usher* at the Berlin Festival, Marschner's *Hans Heiling* in Zurich, *Salome* in Rio de Janeiro, a highly praised *Così fan tutte* in Bonn and *Die Zauberflöte* with the American painter Susan Pitt. His most recent assignments include *Fidelio* with Hildegard Behrens and René Kollo for the Beethoven Festival in Bonn, which drew great acclaim and will be televised in Europe this June. This fall he will stage the world premiere of



JOHN CONKLIN



THOMAS J. MUNN

Rudolf Kelterborn's *Cherry Orchard* (after Anton Chekhov) for the reopening of the Zurich Opera House.

John Conklin, creator of the designs for San Francisco Opera's new production of Wagner's *Ring of the Nibelung*, returns here for the third opera of the cycle, *Siegfried*, and *Don Pasquale*, first seen here in 1980. The first two segments of the *Ring* cycle, *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*, were unveiled during the 1983 Summer Season. Conklin's *Un Ballo in Maschera*, with which he made his 1977 San Francisco Opera debut, was also seen during the Company's 1982 Fall Season. His Spring Opera Theater credits include *Orfeo* (1972), *Death in Venice* (1975 and '79) and *Julius Caesar* (1978). Long associated with Santa Fe Opera, Conklin has designed numerous productions for that company, including *Così fan tutte*, *Salome*, *Fedora*, *Eugene Onegin*, the first American production of the three-act version of *Lulu* in 1979 and *The Marriage of Figaro*. For the New York City Opera, Conklin has designed Rossini's *Il Turco in Italia*, the world premiere of *Miss Havisham's Fire* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Other design credits include projects for St. Louis Opera, the Washington Opera Society and Scottish Opera. In addition, he has created designs for a number of legitimate theater companies, including the New York Shakespeare Festival, the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis, the Arena Theater in Washington, D.C., the Long Wharf Theater in New Haven and the Hartford Stage Company. This summer, his pro-

duction of *Così fan tutte* will be seen at the Holland Festival. Additional upcoming productions include the American professional premiere of Verdi's *The Battle of Legnano* and the American premiere of Henze's *We Come to the River* for this year's Santa Fe season.

In his ninth year with San Francisco Opera, **Thomas J. Munn** is responsible for lighting all of the 1984 Summer Season productions. Since 1976, he has designed the lighting and special effects for over 70 San Francisco Opera productions. His assignments last year included new lighting designs for *Das Rheingold*, *Die Walküre*, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, the American premiere of *The Midsummer Marriage*, *La Grande Duchesse de Gérolstein* and *Boris Godunov*. He has also designed the scenery as well as the lighting for *Nabucco* and *Salome* in 1982, *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* in 1981, *Roberto Devereux* and *Pelléas et Mélisande* in 1979 and *Billy Budd* in 1978. In addition to his numerous design credits for the War Memorial stage, Munn has designed for Broadway, Off-Broadway and regional theater companies throughout the United States and Europe. His most recent projects have been for the Hartford Ballet, the Washington Opera, Houston Grand Opera and the Netherlands Opera. His television credits include San Francisco Opera productions of *La Gioconda* (for which he received a 1979 Emmy Award), *Samson et Dalila* in 1980, *Aida* in 1981 and the Pavarotti Concert in 1983. He is currently a consultant on new theater projects for the Netherlands Opera and Lake George Opera Festival.

Extra Musicians for *Siegfried*

1st VIOLIN

Inga Bruk
Elyn Pesavento

2nd VIOLIN

Rise Patt
Frank Bliss
Wendy Sharp
Peter Frejola

VIOLA

Nathan Ladyzhensky
Nicholas Marlowe
Patrick Kroboth

CELLO

Judiyaba
Melinda Wagner

BASS

Mark Drury
Kenneth Miller

FLUTE

Mary Hargrove

OBOE

Robin May

CLARINET

Clark Fobes

HORN

Laurence Ragent

HORN/WAGNER-TUBA

Carlberg Jones
Glen Swarts
Max Mazenko
Eric Achen

BASS TRUMPET

McDowell Kenley

TROMBONE

Hall Goff

CONTRABASS TROMBONE

Donald Robinson

PERCUSSION

David Rosenthal



Leonie Rysanek as Ortrud in her first assayal of the role at the San Francisco Opera in 1982.

Rysanek Returns

San Francisco Opera patrons will have the opportunity to experience a truly special event during the 1984 Summer Season when one of the opera world's most beloved artists makes a rare concert appearance on June 29 in the War Memorial Opera House. A favorite of local audiences since her eagerly anticipated American debut here in 1956, she is immediately recognizable to knowledgeable opera-goers merely by mentioning a few of the many roles for which she has become famous: Senta, Sieglinde, Lady Macbeth, the Empress—it could only be Leonie Rysanek, one of those rare singers who can elicit superlatives from the critics as readily as she evokes thunderous ovations. "Who else," asks Peter G. Davis in *New York* magazine, "generates so much theatrical intensity, gives of herself so generously, takes such dangerous risks, and still makes such a glorious sound with so exciting a voice?"

For nearly 28 years, San Franciscans

have known the answer. Since bowing at the War Memorial Opera House as Senta in 1956, Miss Rysanek has shared with us her wealth of musical and dramatic insight into 15 different roles, including those with which she has become most closely identified: Lady Macbeth (1957), Elisabeth in *Tannhäuser* (1958 and '73), Tosca (1976), Chrysothemis in *Elektra* (1973 and '79) and what are perhaps the brightest jewels in her operatic crown, Sieglinde (1956, '76, '81 and '83) and the Empress from *Die Frau ohne Schatten* (1960, '76 and '80). In 1982, Miss Rysanek selected San Francisco Opera as the site of the first Ortrud of her distinguished career.

San Franciscans, of course, are not the only ones to appreciate this magnificent artist, and the accolades that have been bestowed upon her indicate the unique position she holds in the hearts of opera-lovers all over the world. Holder of the prestigious title of Kammersängerin with both the Vienna Staatsoper and Munich

Opera, she also received the unique Lotte Lehmann ring from the members of the Vienna Staatsoper, and the San Francisco Opera Medal was awarded to her in 1976. Most recently, New York journalists nearly ran out of adjectives when they described the incredible ovation she received last February after the celebration of her 25th anniversary at the Met. Where Leonie Rysanek goes, excitement and love follow.

Miss Rysanek's concert of June 29 will be given at 8 p.m. in the War Memorial Opera House, accompanied by the San Francisco Opera Orchestra under the baton of Edo de Waart. The soprano is expected to sing arias and scenes from her German and Italian repertoire.

Tickets for this memorable occasion are available at the Opera House Box Office or can be charged by phone at (415) 864-3330. Ticket prices are: Rear Balcony, \$8; Front Balcony, \$12; Balcony Circle, \$15; Dress Circle, \$18.50; Grand Tier and Orchestra, \$25; Single Box Seat, \$35.

San Francisco Opera Guild

Presents

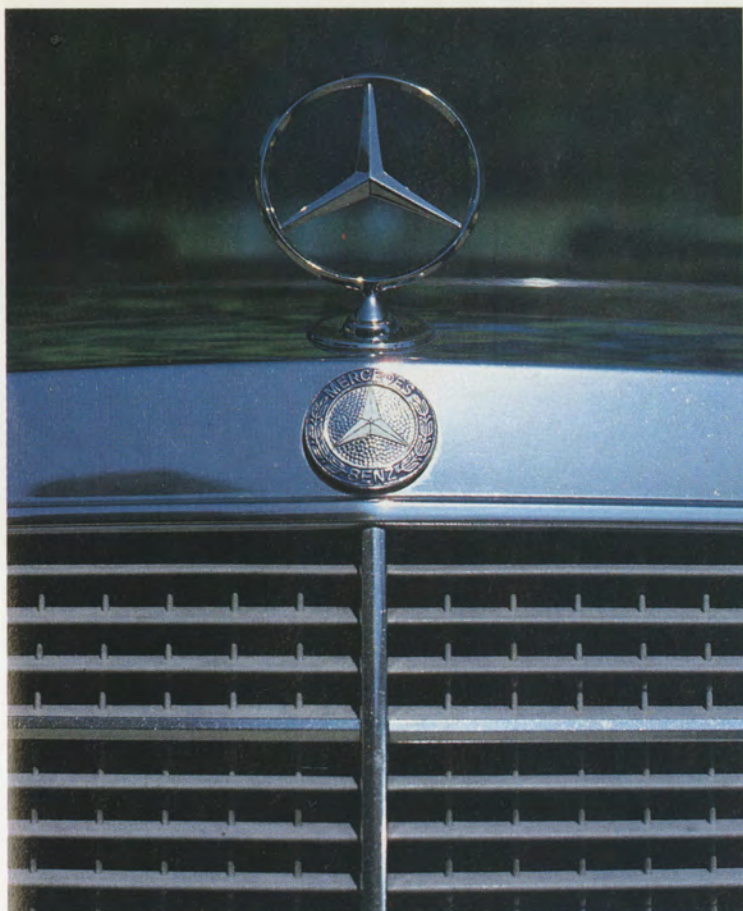
Backstage Tours —Summer Season

Tours of the Opera House are available to Guild members for \$2.00; to the general public for \$5.00. Advance reservations are required. For further information on membership and backstage tours, please call (415) 565-6432.

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The San Francisco Opera Guild offers an opera "Insight" with Leontyne Price on Monday, June 4 at 6 p.m. in the Herbst Theatre, Van Ness and McAllister, San Francisco. Tickets are available at the door for \$5.00. For further information, please call (415) 565-6432.

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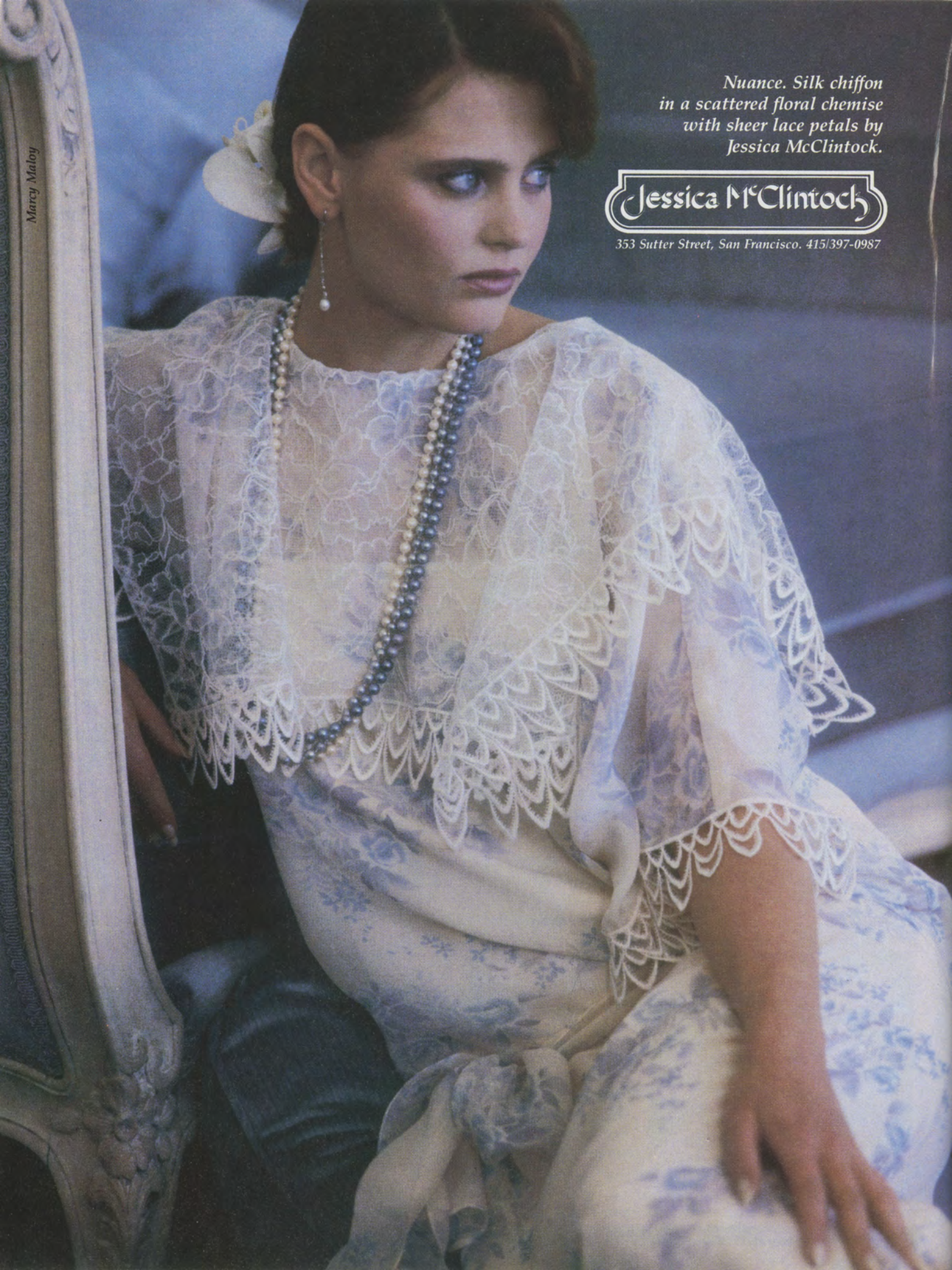
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wedding night she ties him up and hangs him on a nail. The next night Siegfried enters her chamber, engages her in a wrestling match, and so exhausts her that Gunther is at last able to claim his marital rights.

In the combat, Siegfried removes a ring from Brünnhilde's finger and gives it to his own wife, Kriemhild. Jealousy between the two ladies comes to a head over who has precedence entering the cathedral at Worms, and Kriemhild flourishes her new ring as a symbol of Siegfried's status. Brünnhilde, who did not recognize Siegfried at the time of the wrestling match, immediately demands that her honor be avenged and persuades Gunther and his kinsman, Hagen, to kill Siegfried, which they do.

This much we recognize as the plot, more or less, of Wagner's *Götterdämmerung*. However, there is much more to the *Nibelungenlied*. Many verses of it are spent on how Kriemhild, biding her time, marries Attila the Hun, moves to Austria and eventually, after twelve long years, gets revenge on Gunther, Hagen, and the whole Burgundian nation for the death of her first husband, possibly even sacrificing her son in order to start the conflagration.

It is clear then, that though the *Nibelungenlied* was a source of the myth that Wagner used for his greatest epic, it is not the only—or even the primary—source. Siegfried is not in love with Brünnhilde in the *Nibelungenlied*; indeed, he treats her abominably. Siegmund and Sieglinde, far from being long dead, or even brother and sister, are a wealthy, happily married couple who dote on their bold young son. The tragedy that occupies the first two acts of *Die Walküre* is nowhere hinted at in the *Nibelungenlied*.

What then, are the sources that Wagner called upon, and what did he glean from each of them? It would take a whole book to investigate the subject thoroughly, but even cursory examination turns up insights into the true genius that was Wagner's theatrical mind. For he was able to perform feats of concision and amalgamation that show *The Ring* to be as masterful a creation as any drama ever penned by man.

The *Nibelungenlied* was the product of a poet-minstrel, probably also a part-time cleric, who operated in the Middle Ages



Alberich woos Grimhilde. She is to become Hagen's mother.

out of one of the Danube courts, possibly Passau. His work supersedes all previous attempts at chronicling the story of the traditional German heroes because it not only has depth of character and incident, but is written in modern end-rhyme, rather than in the old German alliterative verse known as *Stabreim*. Far from being a murky pagan myth, the *Nibelungenlied* is in reality a medieval romance.

The other German source on which Wagner based his story has a Scandinavian name—*Thidriks Saga af Bern* (The Story of Dietrich of Bern)—but is largely based on Germanic myths. It was compiled around 1260 in the Norwegian city of Bergen from legends believed to have been carried to that place by North Ger-

man merchants. It covers not only the familiar materials of the *Nibelungenlied* but also deals with Siegfried's youth, as well as with a mythical King Wilkinus, who is not germane to our Wagnerian story. *Thidriks Saga* was valuable to Wagner not only for its information about the young Siegfried, but also because it has a more pagan, mythical aspect than the chivalrous *Nibelungenlied*.

Thidriks Saga follows the familiar *Götterdämmerung* plot fairly closely, except for some confusion of Scandinavian elements in the meeting of Brünnhilde and Siegfried. She is less comical than in the *Nibelungenlied*, and is truly disgraced when Siegfried, helping Gunther with his obstreperous bride, actually deflowers her

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himself, revealing that her great strength lay in her virginity. So add rape to Siegfried's other less-than-enchanted qualities. Another clue from this source is the parentage of Hagen, son of an elf by Gunther's mother, rather than just one of Gunther's kinsmen.

The early life of Siegfried is established as follows. His mother, Sisibe, dies after giving birth to him. His father, Sigmund, leaves him to be brought up in the forest by a smith called Mime, who tries to get the boy killed by exposing him to a dragon named Regin. Instead, Siegfried kills the dragon, cooks him and, as soon as he drinks the broth, understands the speech of some birds who advise him to kill Mime. Thus Wagner finds his first two acts of *Siegfried*. The last act is not yet clear, remember, for in *Thidriks Saga* the heroine is still Kriemhild (called Grimhild), not Brünnhilde.



For the rest of the *Ring* plot, Wagner used true Scandinavian sources, which not only follow the familiar German heroes, but introduce the gods. The first source, known as the *Poetic (Elder) Edda*, is a collection of myths compiled in Iceland some time in the thirteenth century by an anonymous writer or writers. Unlike the *Nibelungenlied*, it preserves an old Teutonic poetic form, the *Stabreim* (internal rhyme and alliteration rather than end-rhyme) that Wagner would use himself for the text of the *Ring*.

Once again, this source follows the German *Götterdämmerung* plot, but now Wagner found inspiration for the tragedy of *Die Walküre's* third act, and for the love duet in *Siegfried's* final scene. In the *Poetic Edda*, the Valkyrie Brynhild is punished by Odin (Wotan) for taking the wrong side in a mortal combat. She must sleep, circled by fire, until awakened by a man who knows no fear. Siegfried (called Sigurd, though we will continue to refer to him by

his Wagnerian name) passes through the fire, awakens her, and makes her his bride. This same plot line is also followed in the other two Scandinavian sources that Wagner used.

There is another new detail in the *Poetic Edda* which is also common to Wagner's other Scandinavian sources. This is the story of the Ring itself, which eventually becomes the plot of *Das Rheingold*. (It is significant to note that the literary sources led the composer backwards: the actual creation of the *Ring* text, which occupied Wagner from 1848 to 1853, began with *Siegfried's Death* (*Götterdämmerung*) followed by *Young Siegfried*, etc. However, the actual composition of the music proceeded in the correct chronological order, as it would have had to, given both Wagner's method of allusive leitmotifs, and the famous opening chord of *Das Rheingold*, from which the whole score grows.)

The story of the Ring is told to Siegfried by Mime (called Regin in the Scandinavian sources, not to be confused with the dragon Regin in *Thidriks Saga*). He relates how Loki (Loge) and Odin one day killed an otter which turned out to be a man in animal form. The man's family demanded gold which Loki obtained by robbing a dwarf named Andvari. Loki also stole the dwarf's ring, which Andvari told him brought death to the wearer. The otterman's family was paid with the gold and the ring, whereupon one of them, Fafnir (not a giant), promptly murdered another, and then turned himself into a dragon in order to guard the gold.

The second Scandinavian source of Wagner's *Ring* is the famous *Volsunga Saga*, compiled in Iceland circa 1250. Written in prose, it is a retelling of the Germanic myth of Siegfried (again called Sigurd), and it also devotes a full twelve chapters to the origins of the Volsungs, Siegfried's parents. Details from the *Volsunga Saga* give Wagner's plot richness and motivational coherence. For instance, it introduces Sigmund's sword, the fragments of which are preserved for her unborn son by Sigmund's wife. Regin (Mime), the smith, is unable to reforge the sword. Siegfried gives Brynhild Andvari's ring, and then takes it back when she becomes Gunther's bride. Gunther's sister, Gudrun, (remember, she is known as Kriemhild in the Germanic sources), gives Siegfried a magic potion which makes him forget Brynhild and fall in love with her.



Siegfried and Gutrune.

Finally, the *Volsunga Saga* supplied Wagner with material for the first two acts of *Die Walküre*, although it is material he needed to sift, shape, and conflate through a tremendous act of imagination in order to make it fit his scheme. Of the Volsungs, we learn that Sigmund's father, a warrior who has eleven children, is not Odin (Wotan) but is descended from him. Sigmund himself has three wives and children by each of them. But he also has a twin sister who is forced to marry a man she doesn't love. Odin appears at her

wedding and drives his sword into a tree. Sigmund draws the sword out and makes his sister his bride; she conceives a child by him. However, Siegfried, Sigmund's son, is actually born of another wife, not a sister, the one who preserves the fragments of the dead Sigmund's sword. Confused? Imagine what it must have been like for Wagner, seeking to create dramatic coherence out of this bewildering tale.

The final Scandinavian source is the *Prose (Younger) Edda* and is the only one of

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Mime finds Sieglinde, Siegfried's mother, in the forest.

the mythological sources which has a known author. He was Snorri Sturluson, an Icelandic bard, warrior, landowner, judge, historian, poet, and scholar who was born in 1178 and murdered in 1241. Snorri's work was written around 1220 in order to instruct poets in the ways of the old myths. His stories are filled with mythological and poetical details that give them stylistic character and literary merit; they are also the only comprehensive account available of the Scandinavian gods.

With the *Prose Edda*, Wagner was able to luxuriate in details about Odin, one-eyed and carrying a spear, who lives in the fortress of Vaholl with his wife, Frigg (Fricka) and her sister, Freyja, goddess of love. Here also appear Frey (Froh), Thor (Donner), and Loki (Loge), the trickster who is forever getting the gods into mischief. The Nornir (Norns) sing by the well of wisdom at the world ash tree; the Valkyriar drag the slain heroes to Vaholl; the Jotnar (giants) strive to overcome the gods; and the Dvergar (dwarves) manufacture magic rings, armor, and weapons.

The final link in completing the plot of the *Ring* concerns the creation of Alberich. In the Scandinavian stories, the dwarf with the golden ring is always called Andvari, and is in no way connected with the elf who was Hagen's father in *Thidriks Saga*. Few of Alberich's actions in Wagner's *Ring* appear in the five main sources, i.e. the *Nibelungenlied*, *Thidriks Saga*, the

Prose and Poetic Eddas, and the *Volsunga Saga*. So in order to create this important character who sets the action in motion and, as Black Alberich, is the psychological other side of Light Alberich, or Wotan, Wagner had to sift through a number of lesser sources and finally make a leap of faith.

There is an Alberich in the *Nibelungenlied*, a retainer of the "mighty princes" whom Siegfried fights for a hoard of gold before he arrives at Gunther's court. In the course of the battle, Siegfried slays the two princes, sons of a King Nibelung. Thus the hoard becomes known as the "Nibelung's gold." Alberich tries to avenge the deaths of his masters, but is instead overcome by Siegfried who receives from him a "cloak of invisibility" which he later uses to conquer Brünnhilde.

Numerous minor German epics, including *The Song of Siegfried of the Horn* and the *Book of Heroes* supply such details as the fact that King Nibelung is a dwarf, and also that Alberich (or Elberich), his steward or son, sexually overcomes the wife of another king through means of a "cloak of invisibility." Alberich also has brothers who dispute him for his treasure. All these details, subtly altered, are used by Wagner: Alberich becomes a dwarf-king; he begets Hagen on Grimhild, Gunther's mother and the wife of King Gibich; his brother Mime wants his treasure; he possesses a magic ring and a "cloak of invisibility," i.e., the Tarnhelm.

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Although we must give Wagner credit for having made a coherent whole out of this mass of confusing information, he did not do it without help. For, as with all creative geniuses, he was a man in the right place at the right time. Born in Leipzig in 1813, he grew up just in time to experience the recovery of its mythical and medieval past by the German people—at that time living in a series of duchies waiting to become a nation. The Romantic movement, which fomented this interest in the past, began with the publication by one Friedrich Heinrich von der Hagen (prophetic name!) of the *Poetic Edda* (in the original Icelandic) in 1812. It was followed by German translations of this *Edda*, *Thidriks Saga*, parts of the *Prose Edda*, and the entire *Volsunga Saga* in 1814 and 1815. The *Nibelungenleid* was then published (in middle German) and writers such as Karl Lachmann, Carl Simrock, and the Grimm brothers began to issue critical essays on these important texts.



In 1827, a modern translation of the *Nibelungenlied* was issued, while in 1829, Wilhelm Grimm brought out his cycle of German heroic legends, *Die deutsche Heldensage*. In 1835, Jacob Grimm offered *Deutsche Mythologie*, a scholarly and wide-ranging book that we know Wagner absorbed, as he did the other books mentioned above. Wilhelm Grimm collated every known Scandinavian and Germanic source, and from his probing suggestions about connective tissue, Wagner was able to finesse such details as Sieglind's correct identity and name, and the problems surrounding the creation of Alberich as a single character connected with the gods and the heroes.



Mime and the young Siegfried.

Jacob Grimm concentrated mainly on the Germanic aspects of the myths, going through extensive linguistic contortions to prove a point. Grimm's research allowed Wagner to homogenize his mythmaking into a wholly Germanic story. Since "German art" was one of the standards of Wagner's creative life, it was important for him to be able to feel that the *Ring*—despite the Scandinavian roots of *Das Rheingold* and much of *Die Walküre*—was purely German.

All that needs concern us today, however, is the brilliant manner in which the composer grappled with the ancient myths and made them relevant to modern life. The plot of *Der Ring des Nibelungen* may be perceivable from its respective sources, but the psychology of the characters we empathize with is Wagner's own invention. □

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Maidens' "Weia waga" song in *Das Rheingold*. The (orchestral) birdsong spurs Siegfried to musical experiments in instrument-making, with comically hideous results for which he atones with a full-scale performance of his repertory on his hunting-horn. The noise rouses: **Fafner**, the dragon. In their confrontation, themes of Dragon giant and sinuous worm are pitted against those of the Sword and the Horncall with likeable creative zest, but the real symphonic development only gets moving in Fafner's dying interrogation of Siegfried, a scene of some musical substance, full of musical and verbal information. Fafner dies, hearing the name of Siegfried (it cannot have meant anything to him, can it?), and the taste of hot dragon's blood miraculously enables the boy to understand the language of birds.

The scene of the **Woodbird** begins. First we have the comic dispute of Alberich and Mime, then the clever illusion where Mime utters lies, but we and Siegfried hear his true thoughts, thanks to the Bird's prompting. Alberich remains long enough in the neighborhood to witness the slaughter of his brother, which makes him laugh and withdraw quickly from the scene. Siegfried is left alone with the Bird and its plentiful information. Wagner at first wanted a boy treble for the Bird's voice, but eventually decided that the Bird represents Sieglinde's posthumous maternal influence, therefore requiring a woman's voice. There is a marvelous volatility to this final scene, of color, rhythm and thematic manipulation.

There has been plenty of fine and noble music in the first two acts, but the Introduction to the third act, which Wagner called "Wotan's Last Ride," touches a deeper note of tragic magniloquence. His instinct to call a halt to the composition of *The Ring* at the end of the second act of *Siegfried* was wise: his creativity needed to mature still further to encompass what was to come, in *Siegfried* as well as *Götterdämmerung*. *Tristan* and *Meistersinger*, composed in the intervening years, gave him that deeper creative response, and he returned to *Siegfried* like a giant refreshed.

This act falls easily into three scenes: *Erda*, then the *Overthrow of the Gods*, and finally *Brünnhilde*. "Wotan's Last Ride" is a gorgeous tapestry of familiar themes, woven to stirring as well as majestic purpose: Wotan, his Wanderer role, his



ROBERT MESSICK

Pierre Cayard of the Scenic Construction Department with the small-scale model of Fafner, the *Siegfried* dragon.

spear and horse, and his dilemma, involving Brünnhilde asleep and the forthcoming End of the Gods, primeval nature and Erda as Mother Earth—they pass before us, grander than ever, out of the darkness to which the scene has returned, along with other themes, not so easily named. It is in this exchange with Erda that Wotan becomes convinced that he must now retire and bequeath the world to Siegfried and Brünnhilde. He will do so joyfully, he admits, and a new, solemn theme of fulfillment breaks forth in full orchestra—it should sound, said Wagner, "like the proclamation of a new religion." Erda is sent back to her everlasting sleep. Wotan, beginning the next scene, *Overthrow of the Gods*, turns to meet, for the first time, his grandson and heir Siegfried who, led by the fluttering Woodbird, has arrived at the foot of the mountain on whose summit Brünnhilde lies asleep. Wotan cannot bring himself to abdicate without at least exchanging a few words with his succes-

sor. In this scene he is at his most mellifluously benign, even when Siegfried answers him rudely. At the last moment Wotan is tempted to pull rank in order to impress the boy, but he is altogether unsuccessful. The spear of Wotan's authority is smashed by the sword: Mankind has overthrown the gods. The magic fire still blazes around Brünnhilde on her rock, and the hero strides joyfully through it, during a high-spirited orchestral passage of symphonic argument. At last he steps out of the blaze onto the mountain peak now bathed in the gentle light of a cloudless, blue sky: orchestral first violins in unison rise from their bottom G to describe an arch of melody apparently as high as the dome of heaven, and closely linked with the sleeping:

Brünnhilde. Siegfried's immediate response to this first sight of a panoramic view is linked by Wagner to themes of domestic felicity (Fricka's designs on Valhalla), or perhaps ultimate wish fulfill-



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The dragon, taking shape in the San Francisco Opera Scene Shop: (above) the skull is being covered by a wire screen, (below) Elizabeth Jennings and Donna Mossholder are engaged in "ragging"—pieces of gauze dipped in colored glue are applied to the basic structure and the styrofoam teeth.

ment, and that enchanting, haunting melody of Wotan's separation from Brünnhilde, which Wagner brings back at moments of intense poignancy.

Siegfried finds Brünnhilde's horse Grane, then its erstwhile rider. He relieves the sleeper of the weighty armor, and is flabbergasted to behold at last a female human form. He "falls in love" (so we would say) immediately, and mistakes his mental and physical confusion for new-found fear, though we should not take his babbling seriously: Siegfried goes altogether fearlessly to his early grave, like all great heroes. There is a new theme of two high-pitched wind chords for Brünnhilde's Awakening (they recur at the very opening of *Götterdämmerung*,

even more momentously), and another jubilant tune ("Heil der Mutter") of gratitude for one another's existence—it is a variant of Wotan's downward-scale Spear theme; because he is the person responsible (Brünnhilde originally being the divine personification of Wotan's wishes).

Their long scene of duologue is one of mutual introduction and then, as I indicated earlier, about Siegfried learning how to woo a woman, and Brünnhilde discovering how, no longer being a divine being, she may respond like a woman to the pleasure of being wooed. At first, mastered by an unknown and all-compelling emotion, he tries to rape her, but is sensitive enough to desist while she



Isabelle Le Nestour, a San Francisco Opera Scene Shop "gauzer" works on *Siegfried* scenery.

explains what is wrong with his behavior in the glorious solo "Ewig war ich," which will be familiar to many from Wagner's "Siegfried Idyll" (the latter was composed as a birthday present to his wife Cosima after the birth of their son, whom they named Siegfried). This, and two other themes used subsequently in this scene, also occurring in "Siegfried Idyll," are thought to originate in a string quartet which Wagner sketched by Lake Starnberg when he and Cosima, then Mrs. von Bülow but subsequently his second wife, first declared their love for each other in 1864. This duet scene in *Siegfried* is related intimately to Wagner's life, more obviously so than in most great music, though there are precedents, in *Die Walküre* and

Tristan und Isolde, for such erotic autobiography in Wagner's music. The love of Brünnhilde and Siegfried will have a tragic, cataclysmic outcome in *Götterdämmerung*: it will happen because Siegfried's education in enlightenment did not extend to recognizing a bunch of crooks when he met them. For the moment, the enlightenment appears to be complete, under these radiant blue skies, and for the first time in *The Ring* a simultaneous vocal duet sounds not only appropriate, but completely inevitable, as if this were the first union of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Nature and Innocence are heroically united in blameless C major, the first moment of real optimism that *The Ring* has been able to express. □

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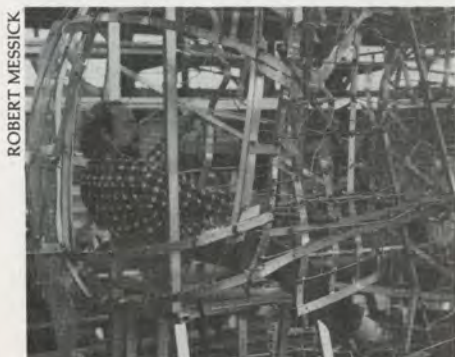
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ROBERT MESSICK

A Medallion Society visit to the San Francisco Opera Scene Shop is apt to reveal such intriguing sights as Dan Nelson enjoying a "test drive" inside Fafner's head.

Medallion Society Membership is open to donors contributing \$1,500 or more per year to San Francisco Opera. Inaugurated in 1983, the Medallion Society is divided into several levels based upon a member's level of contribution. As is only natural, the San Francisco Opera tries to offer tangible reflections of our gratitude to our friends who do the most to help us. Your support means a great deal to us. Since the Company already does everything possible to insure that performances are of the highest artistic standards, our way of thanking our most generous supporters is to enhance their understanding and enjoyment of those performances as best we can.

For instance, how did you spend your time just before the last opera performance you attended? Chances are you spent it driving around the congested Civic Center area, searching for an elusive parking space. It can certainly take the glow off an evening at the opera to rush in breathless seconds before the curtain goes up or, worse, to be a minute late and have

to stand until the first scene is over. Medallion Society members don't have to worry; they receive free, reserved parking when attending their opera subscription series.

After you have parked and entered the Opera House, there is the matter of where you sit. With the San Francisco Opera currently enjoying a subscription renewal rate as high as 85 percent, moving to a better location for your season tickets can take years. Medallion Society members, however, are given the highest priority for improved seat locations when they renew their subscriptions.

No matter how perfect your subscription seats are, you will often find yourself wanting additional tickets for opera performances. If you have out-of-town guests or are entertaining a business associate, what better way to impress them than to treat them to a performance by the opera company in which our city takes so much pride? That, however, is sometimes easier said than done. You can stand in line at the box office and hope something is available for the performance you want. You can scout classified ads in hopes someone has a ticket to sell. Or you can become a Medallion Society member and have access to a special ticket service phone line through which you will receive personalized attention to your ticket needs. A limited number of tickets will be held for Medallion Society members, and every effort will be made to accommodate ticket requests. The tickets may be charged by phone to American Express, Visa or MasterCard, and Medallion Society members may exchange tickets for another performance of the same opera, as long as the Medallion Ticket Service is given sufficient advance notice.

In addition, Medallion Society members receive priority seating at special events sponsored by the San Francisco Opera. The red carpet will always be rolled out for Medallion Society members.

Your enjoyment of any performance can be enhanced if you are more familiar with what goes on behind the scenes. Medallion Society members are invited to dress rehearsals, at which they will sit in box seats and witness those last-minute adjustments that are so vital in bringing a production to world-class standards.

Have you ever wondered how things

look from the other side of that great, gold curtain? The wonders of the backstage area of the Opera House will be revealed on personal tours for Medallion Society members, who may arrange a guided visit by calling a special information line. Of course, members will be allowed to bring a guest for this taste of life in the musical theater.

Some events will be given expressly for members of The Medallion Society. Each year, for example, a special operatic recital will be given by invitation only outside of the Company's Summer Festival and Fall Season. Medallion Society members have demonstrated their love of the vocal art; these "command performances" are our way of returning the affection.

All of these services and events will be provided for each member of the Medallion Society, but those whose contributions reach or exceed \$2,500 ("Sponsor" level) are accorded further privileges. Among these is a buffet lunch on the mezzanine (box) level of the Opera House, at which a special and informative presentation is delivered on one aspect of the Company's varied operations. This fall, orchestra manager Thomas Heimberg will provide members with an inside look at the acclaimed San Francisco Opera Orchestra. Far from being created overnight, this extraordinarily talented en-



ROBERT MESSICK

San Francisco Opera productions look very different from the other side of the proscenium. Medallion Society members, who may schedule personal Opera House tours for themselves and guests, catch a rare glimpse of backstage life, such as the erection of the Nibelheim from *Das Rheingold*, shown here in process.

semble has a fascinating history and plays an integral role in maintaining San Francisco Opera's prestigious reputation. A notably articulate and witty spokesman, Heimberg's presentation is certain to give

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Sponsor members of the Medallion Society are also treated to a special Opera Tour that will take you places most visitors never see, such as the vast Opera Scene Shop, where San Francisco Opera productions are constructed and stored, and the Opera Costume Shop, where our talented wardrobe department painstakingly recreates the elaborate fashions from every period of history.

What else could you possibly want to know about operations at San Francisco Opera? Whatever it is, why not ask the man in charge, Company general director Terence A. McEwen, when you dine with him in the Lower Lounge of the Opera House before a dress rehearsal? His articulate eloquence, long demonstrated on the Metropolitan Opera broadcasts and his popular local radio appearances, is sure to elucidate the most complex of art forms in a way few other people in the world are qualified to.

The Benefactor level of the Medallion Society (contributions of \$5,000 or more) brings with it even more perquisites. Benefactors are invited to a special cast party after a San Francisco Opera performance. There you will mingle with cast and crew, the many talented artists and artisans, seen and unseen, who make the magic of an opera performance happen.

San Francisco Opera will even arrange a special operatic recital for a business event or private function given by a Benefactor. The only requirement is that a piano be available at the site of the event. Nothing can brighten an occasion like the excitement of a live performance, and Medallion Society Benefactors will be able to offer their friends and business associates a truly special and memorable experience.

Throughout the year, Medallion Society members will be invited to additional happenings, private dinners and social events. As the circle of our closest friends, Medallion Society members will never forget just how special they are to us.

The feeling of membership is one of exclusivity, but The Medallion Society is open to anyone who contributes the required amount for membership. If you have been considering a donation to San Francisco Opera, or increasing the amount of your current donation, the time has never been better than now to reap a dazzling array of benefits, services and privileges. To those who heed our appeal for assistance, our thanks are both profound and tangible. □

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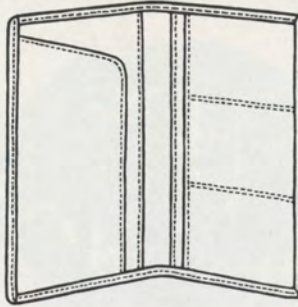
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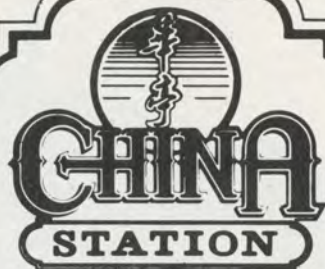
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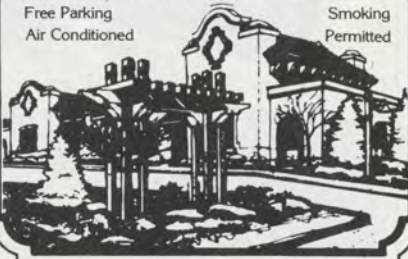
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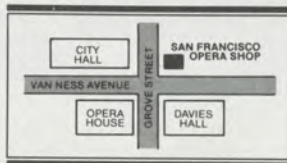
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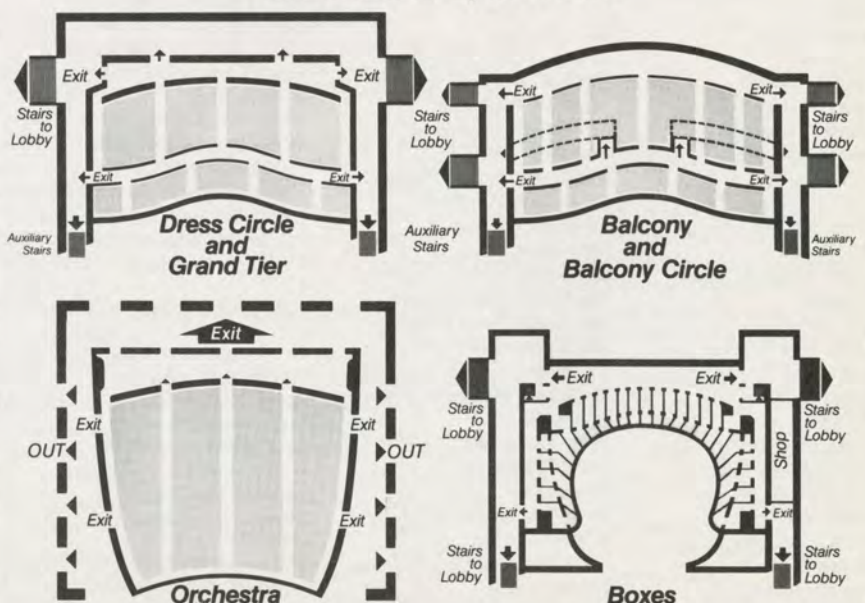
All tours leave from Davies Symphony Hall, Grove Street entrance.

General \$3.00—Seniors/Students \$2.00

For further information, please call (415) 552-8338.

San Francisco War Memorial and Performing Arts Center

War Memorial Opera House



Patrons, Attention Please! Fire Notice: There are sufficient exits in this building to accommodate the entire audience. The exit indicated by the lighted "EXIT" sign nearest your seat is the shortest route to the street. In case of fire please do not run—walk through that exit. (Refer to diagrams.)

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