

La Traviata

1983

Wednesday, October 5, 1983 7:30 PM
Saturday, October 8, 1983 8:00 PM
Tuesday, October 11, 1983 8:00 PM
Friday, October 14, 1983 8:00 PM
Tuesday, October 18, 1983 8:00 PM
Friday, October 21, 1983 8:00 PM
Saturday, October 22, 1983 2:00 PM (Family matinee)
Thursday, October 27, 1983 8:00 PM
Sunday, October 30, 1983 2:00 PM

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San Francisco Opera

FALL SEASON 1983

La Traviata

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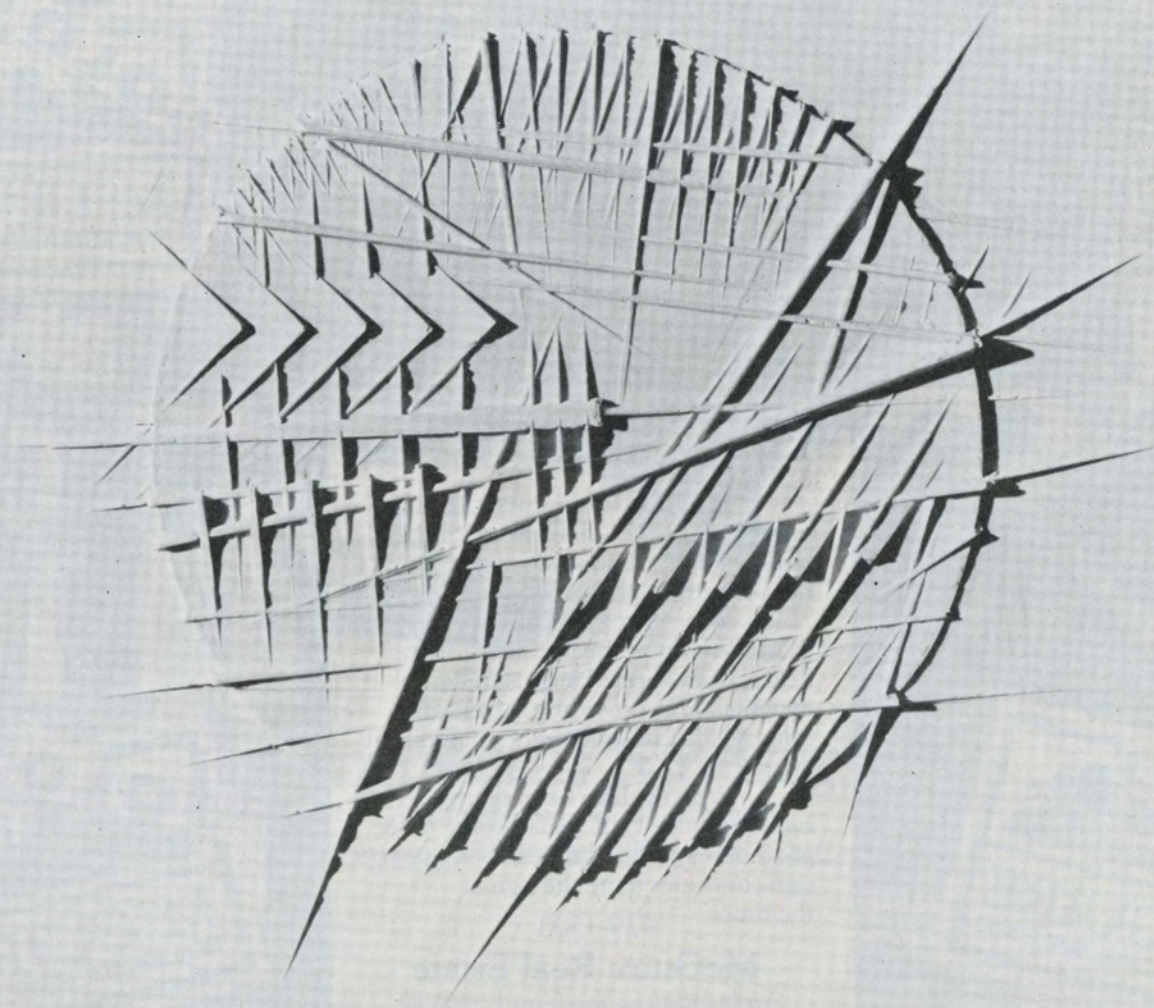
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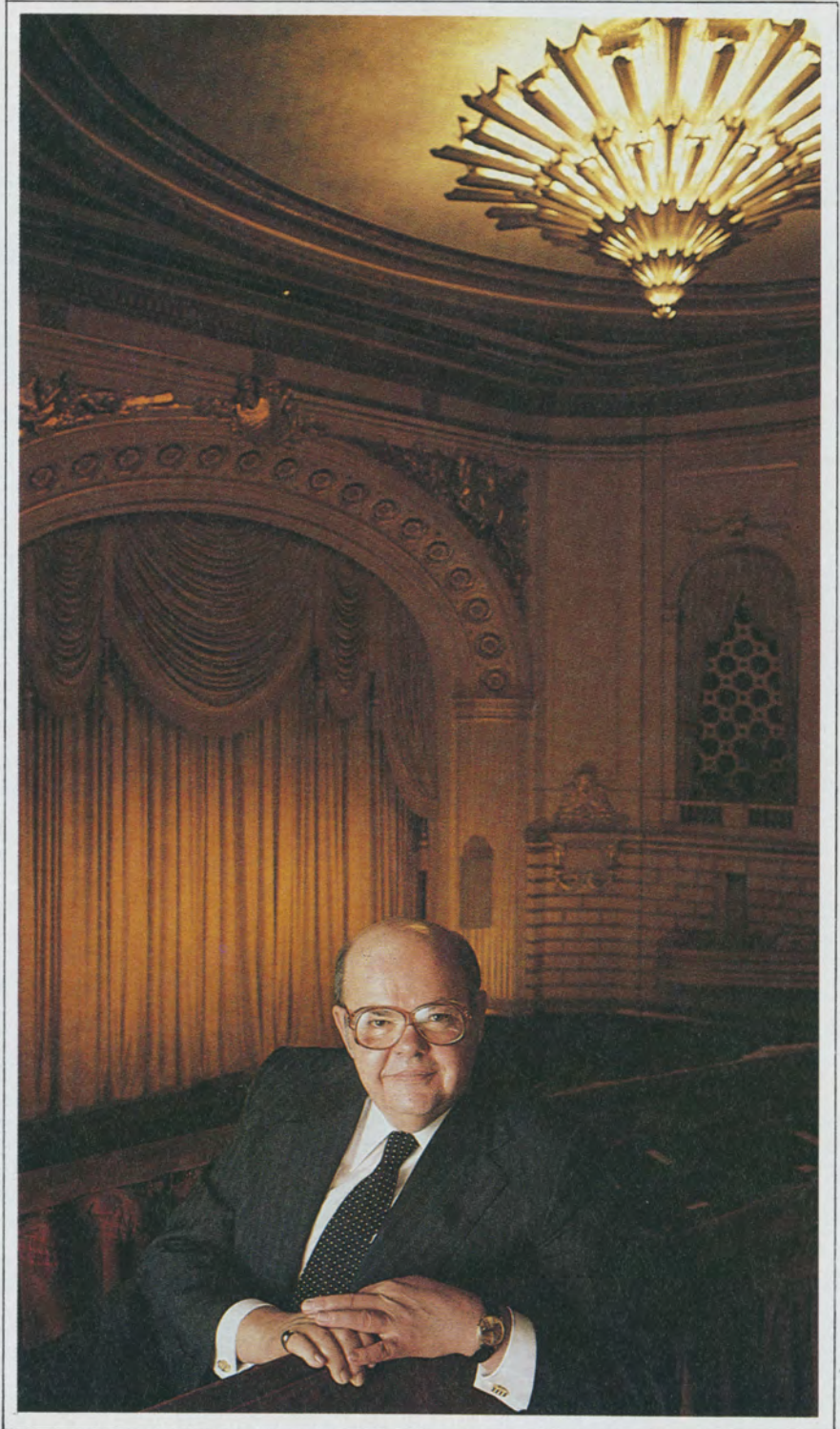
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General Director's Message

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

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

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



Ron Scherf



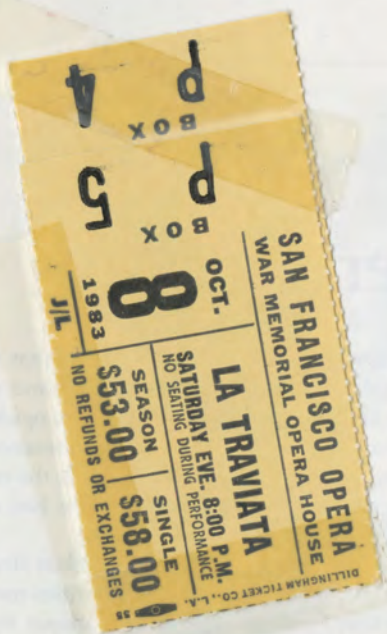
There's a sea of confusion out there. Savings and loans, investment houses and brokers; they are all starting to look and sound the same.

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San Francisco Opera

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FLOWERS IN A SILVER VASE, 1663. Willem van Aelst, Dutch, ca. 1625—after 1683. Oil on canvas, 67.6 x 54.5 cm. Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Herman Schuelein.

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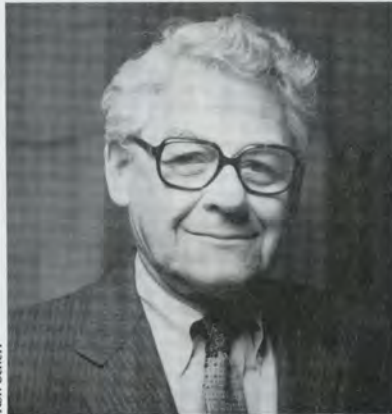
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From the President...



Ron Schert

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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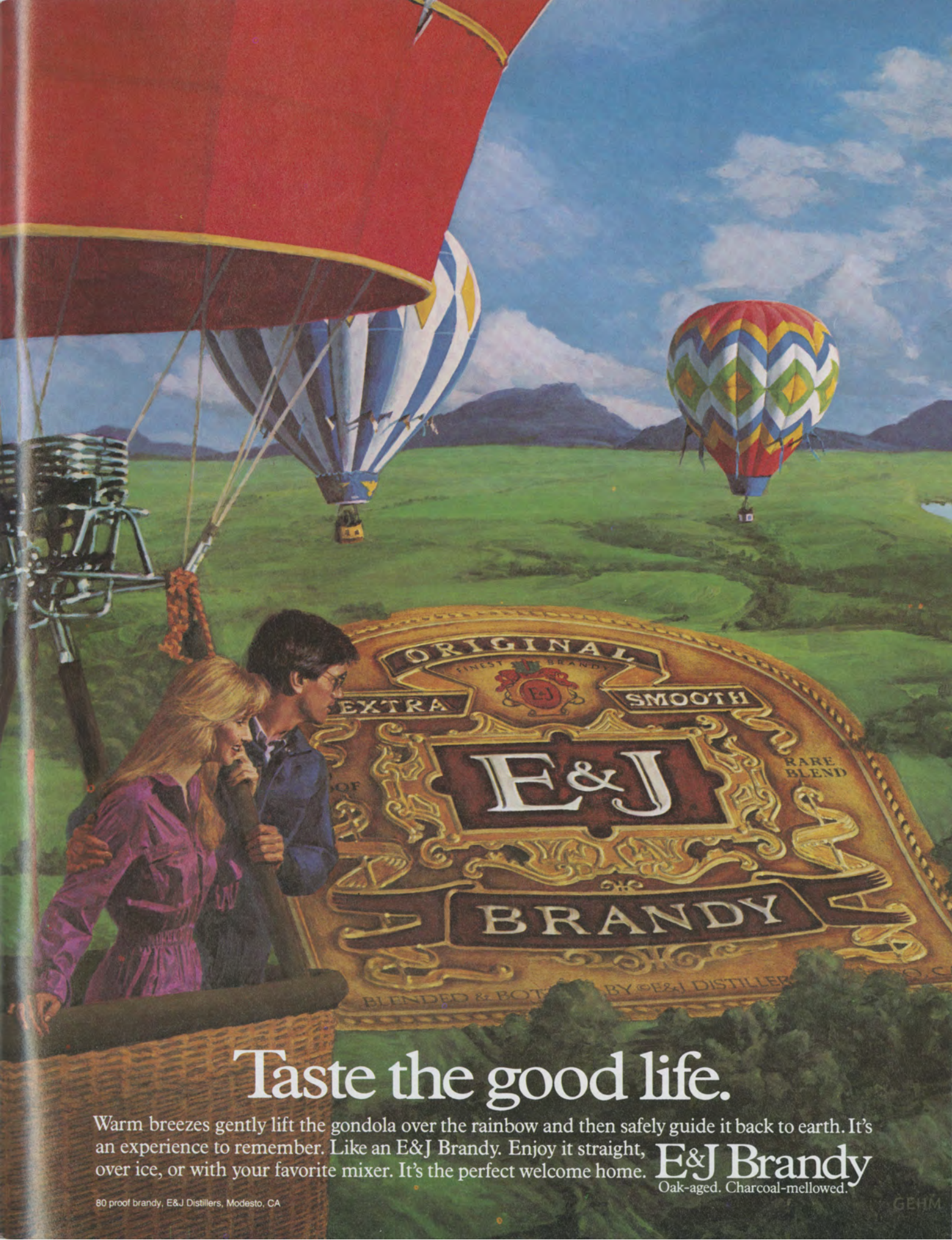
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(Continued on page 20)

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

stage manager who participated in the 1983 season is referenced.

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

Keep Pace with New Trends

Learn what's on the minds of California's leading critics and reviewers.

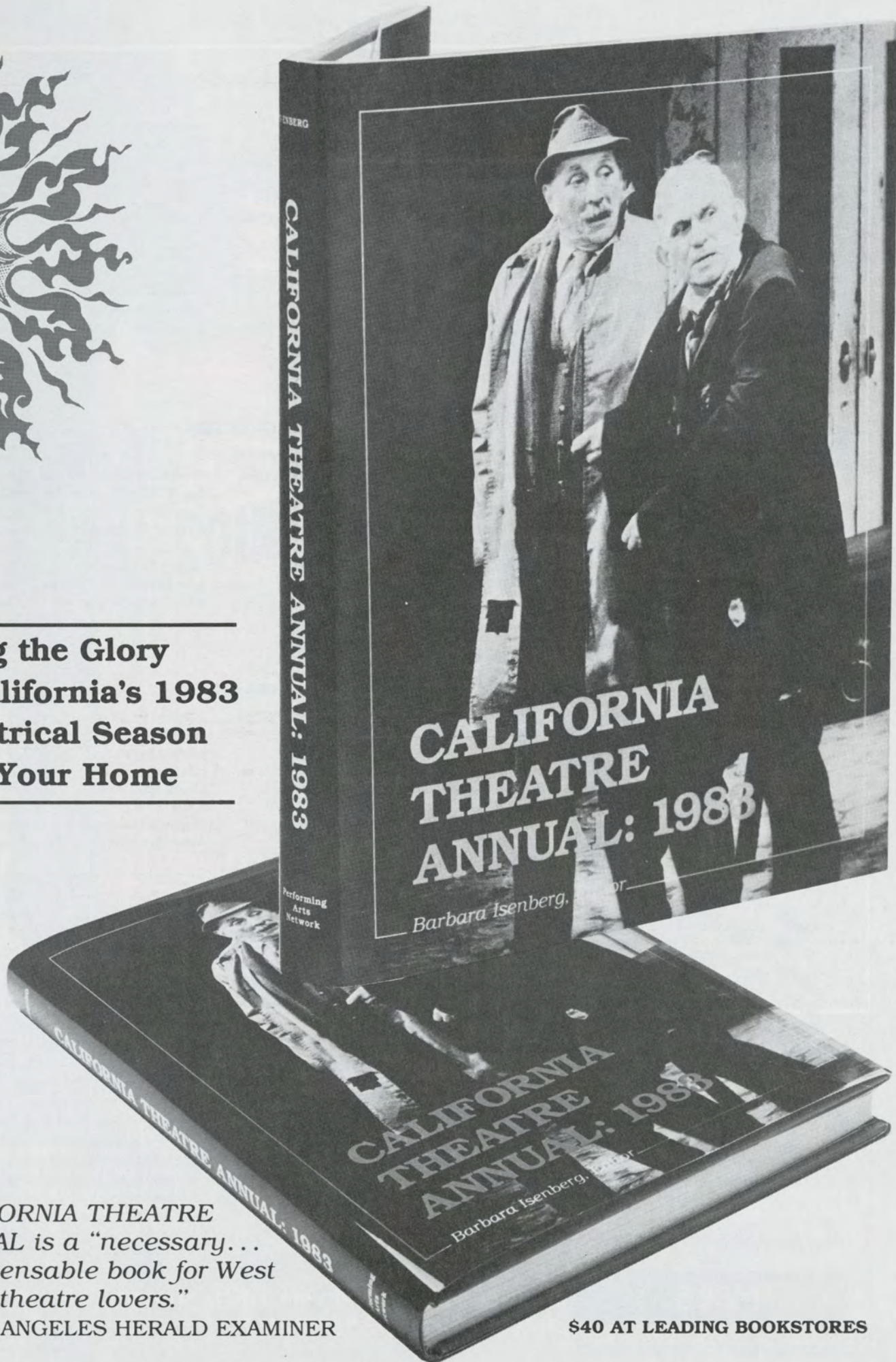
- People like Bernard Weiner and Steven Winn of the San Francisco Chronicle, Dan Sullivan and Sylvie Drake of the Los Angeles Times, Jack Viertel of the Los Angeles Herald Examiner, Welton Jones of the San Diego Union and more take you beyond the glitter and glamor to new discoveries about the 1983 theatrical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

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David Budd

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Shinji Eshima
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San Francisco Opera

1983 Fall Season

Opening Night

Friday, September 9, 7:00

Otello Verdi

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

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

Saturday, September 10, 8:00

Production New To San Francisco

Ariadne auf Naxos Strauss

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

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

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

Monday, September 12, 8:00

Otello Verdi

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

Tuesday, September 13, 8:00

Ariadne auf Naxos Strauss

Thursday, September 15, 7:30

Otello Verdi

Saturday, September 17, 8:00

Ariadne auf Naxos Strauss

Sunday, September 18, 2:00

Otello Verdi

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

Wednesday, September 21, 8:00

Ariadne auf Naxos Strauss

Friday, September 23, 8:00

Otello Verdi

Saturday, September 24, 8:00

Katya Kabanova Janáček

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

Sunday, September 25, 2:00

Ariadne auf Naxos Strauss

Tuesday, September 27, 8:00

Otello Verdi

Wednesday, September 28, 7:30

Ariadne auf Naxos Strauss

Friday, September 30, 8:00

Katya Kabanova Janáček

Saturday, October 1, 8:00

Otello Verdi

Sunday, October 2, 2:00

Ariadne auf Naxos Strauss

Tuesday, October 4, 8:00

Katya Kabanova Janáček

Wednesday, October 5, 7:30

La Traviata Verdi

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

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

Friday, October 7, 8:00

Katya Kabanova Janáček

Saturday, October 8, 8:00

La Traviata Verdi

Sunday, October 9, 2:00

Katya Kabanova Janáček

Tuesday, October 11, 8:00

La Traviata Verdi

Wednesday, October 12, 7:30

Katya Kabanova Janáček

Friday, October 14, 8:00

La Traviata Verdi

Saturday, October 15, 8:00

American Premiere

The Midsummer Marriage Tippett

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

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

Tuesday, October 18, 8:00

La Traviata Verdi

Wednesday, October 19, 8:00

The Midsummer Marriage Tippett

Thursday, October 20, 8:00

Samson et Dalila Saint-Saëns

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

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

Friday, October 21, 8:00

La Traviata Verdi

Saturday, October 22, 2:00

Family Matinee

La Traviata Verdi

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

Sunday, October 23, 2:00

The Midsummer Marriage Tippett

Tuesday, October 25, 8:00

Samson et Dalila Saint-Saëns

Wednesday, October 26, 7:30

The Midsummer Marriage Tippett

Thursday, October 27, 8:00

La Traviata Verdi

Friday, October 28, 8:00

Samson et Dalila Saint-Saëns

Saturday, October 29, 8:00

The Midsummer Marriage Tippett

Sunday, October 30, 2:00

La Traviata Verdi

Tuesday, November 1, 8:00

The Midsummer Marriage Tippett

Wednesday, November 2, 7:30

Samson et Dalila Saint-Saëns

Saturday, November 5, 8:00

Samson et Dalila Saint-Saëns

Sunday, November 6, 2:00

San Francisco Opera Premiere

La Grande Duchesse de Gêrolstein Offenbach

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

Tuesday, November 8, 8:00

La Grande Duchesse de Gêrolstein Offenbach

Wednesday, November 9, 8:00

Samson et Dalila Saint-Saëns



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Friday, November 11, 7:30

La Gioconda Ponchielli

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

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

Saturday, November 12, 8:00

La Grande Duchesse de Gérolstein Offenbach

Sunday, November 13, 2:00

Samson et Dalila Saint-Saëns

Tuesday, November 15, 7:30

La Gioconda Ponchielli

Wednesday, November 16, 7:30

La Grande Duchesse de Gérolstein Offenbach

Thursday, November 17, 8:00

Production New To San Francisco

Manon Lescaut Puccini

Production owned by Greater Miami Opera Association and Dallas Opera.

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

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

Saturday, November 19, 8:00

La Grande Duchesse de Gérolstein Offenbach

Sunday, November 20, 1:30

La Gioconda Ponchielli

Tuesday, November 22, 8:00

Manon Lescaut Puccini

Wednesday, November 23, 7:30

Production New To San Francisco

Boris Godunov Mussorgsky

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

Troyanos, Swenson, Petersen,

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

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

Thursday, November 24, 7:30

La Gioconda Ponchielli

Friday, November 25, 2:00

Special Holiday Weekend Matinee

La Grande Duchesse de Gérolstein Offenbach

Friday, November 25, 8:00

Manon Lescaut Puccini

Saturday, November 26, 7:30

Boris Godunov Mussorgsky

Sunday, November 27, 1:30

La Gioconda Ponchielli

Monday, November 28, 8:00

Manon Lescaut Puccini

Wednesday, November 30, 7:30

La Gioconda Ponchielli

Thursday, December 1, 8:00

La Grande Duchesse de Gérolstein Offenbach

Friday, December 2, 7:30

Boris Godunov Mussorgsky

Saturday, December 3, 7:30

La Gioconda Ponchielli

Sunday, December 4, 2:00

Manon Lescaut Puccini

Monday, December 5, 7:30

Boris Godunov Mussorgsky

Tuesday, December 6, 8:00

La Grande Duchesse de Gérolstein Offenbach

Wednesday, December 7, 7:30

Manon Lescaut Puccini

Thursday, December 8, 7:30

Boris Godunov Mussorgsky

Saturday, December 10, 8:00

Manon Lescaut Puccini

Sunday, December 11, 1:30

Boris Godunov Mussorgsky

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LA TRAVIATA

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Tuesday, October 18, 1:00 Tuesday, October 25, 1:00 Thursday, October 27, 1:00

Matinees for Senior Citizens and Disabled Patrons:

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

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1983 Fall Opera Previews

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



Betty Jane Nevis

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD

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

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

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD PREVIEWS

MARIN

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

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

THE MIDSUMMER MARRIAGE

James Keolker 10/13

LA GRANDE DUCHESSE

Jan Popper 11/3

MANON LESCAUT

Arthur Kaplan 11/10

BORIS GODUNOV

Blanche Thebom 11/17

NORTH PENINSULA

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

(Continued)



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PREVIEWS (Continued)

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

SOUTH PENINSULA

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

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

SAN JOSE OPERA GUILD

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

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

JUNIOR LEAGUE OPERA PREVIEWS

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

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

NAPA OPERA LECTURE SERIES

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

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

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

OPERA EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL PREVIEW SERIES

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

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

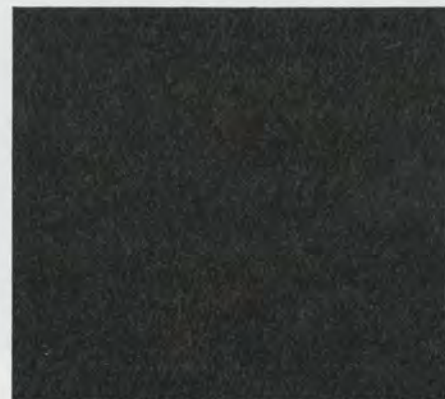
UC BERKELEY EXTENSION LECTURE SERIES

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

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

ROBERT GOODHUE'S FALL OPERA COURSE

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



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San Francisco Opera on Radio

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

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

9/30	Julius Caesar
10/7	Norma
10/14	The Barber of Seville
10/21	Turandot
10/28	The Marriage of Figaro
11/4	La Cenerentola
11/11	Cendrillon
11/18	Lohengrin (Saturday at 10 a.m. on KQED-FM)
11/25	The Queen of Spades

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San Francisco Opera, 1973: Beverly Sills as Violetta; Wieslaw Ochman as Alfredo.



La Traviata: Fiasco to Furore

by Charles Osborne

Giuseppe Verdi in 1858. Museo Teatrale alla Scala, Milan.

TWO of Verdi's most popular operas, *Il Trovatore* and *La Traviata*, were conceived and, to a large extent, composed almost simultaneously. *Il Trovatore* reached completion first, and was staged at the Teatro Apollo, Rome, on January 19, 1853. By this time, Verdi had agreed to have *La Traviata* ready for performance at the Fenice in Venice on March 6th: he had been at work on its composition during the *Trovatore* rehearsal period. After that opera's great success in Rome, the composer returned by sea via Genoa to Busseto and, with only weeks left before the date announced for *La Traviata*'s premiere, devoted himself wholeheartedly to its completion.

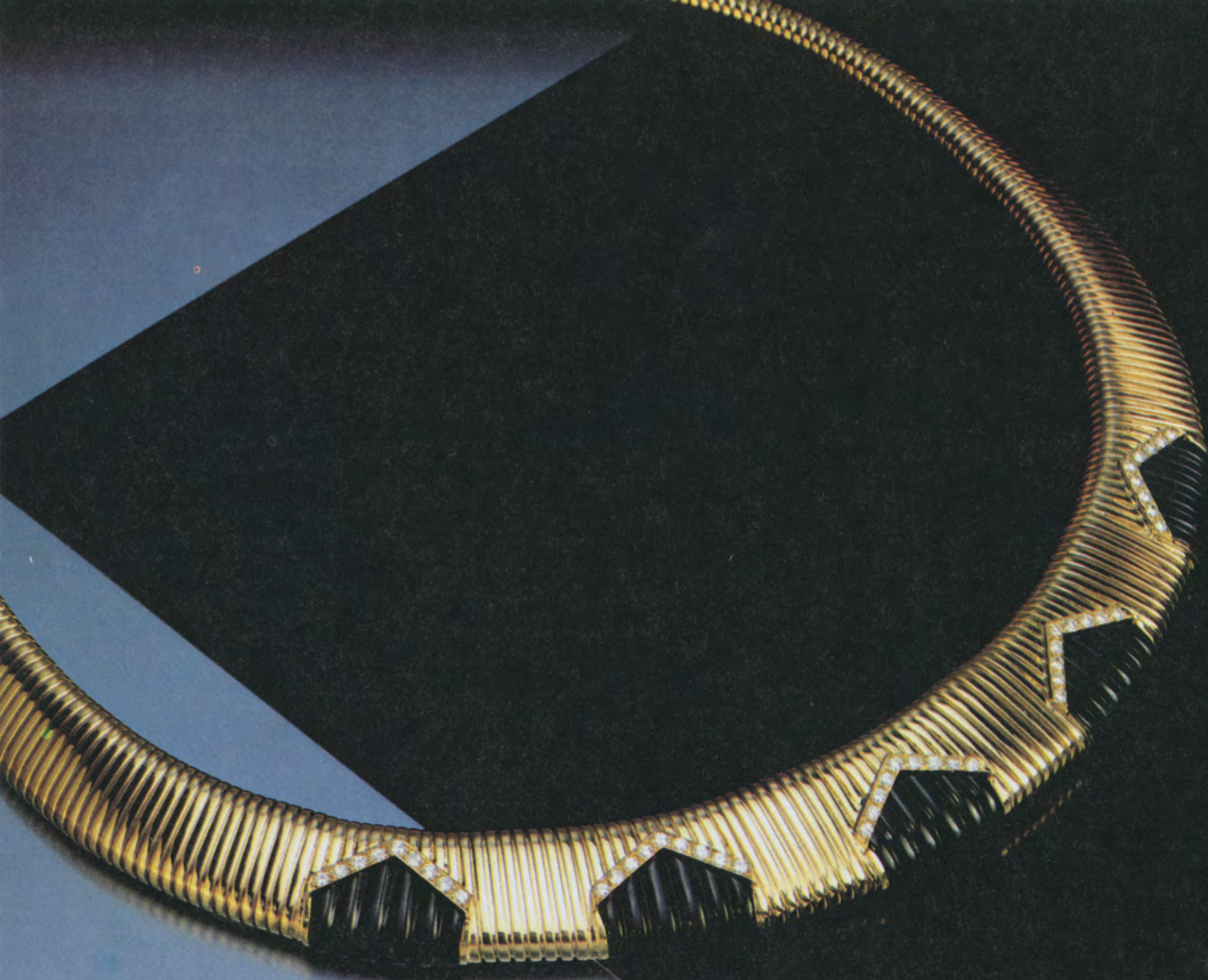
Verdi and Giuseppina Strepponi, with whom he lived and whom he was eventually to marry, were both unwell during these weeks, and the last act of *La Traviata*, a protracted death scene for Violetta, was written in an atmosphere of gloom which was highly suitable to its content. Verdi was nervous about the singers who had been engaged, especially the soprano, Fanny Salvini-Donatelli, of whom he had heard discouraging reports. His librettist, Francesco Maria Piave, who was staying with him at Sant' Agata, was instructed to convey to the management of the Teatro La Fenice the composer's conviction that, unless a new cast was found, the opera would fail. The weather at Sant' Agata played its part in adding to the general air of pessimism. "When it rains," wrote Piave to the Fenice's Secretary, "I assure you it's a case of looking at oneself in the mirror to see if one is still in human form, or whether one hasn't been turned into a toad or a frog."

It was made clear to the management of the Fenice that Verdi wanted the soprano Salvini-Donatelli to be replaced by Rosina Penco, who had been his Leonora in the Rome performances of *Il Trovatore*. Rosina Penco, however, was not available, and the date by which the composer was entitled to demand any changes of cast had already passed.



He was stuck with Salvini-Donatelli. When he received an anonymous letter from Venice, warning him that unless at least two of the three principals were replaced the performance would be a disaster, Verdi gloomily passed it on to Piave, adding: "I know, I know." He arrived in Venice on

Charles Osborne, author of a number of books on opera, lives in London but is a frequent visitor to the United States. His latest book, A Dictionary of Opera, will be published this fall by Simon & Schuster.



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Contemporary illustration by Focosi for the last act of *Traviata*, printed in the first edition of the score. *Verdi nelle immagini*, 1941.

Courtesy, Lim M. Lai

February 21st to orchestrate the opera and to rehearse it, and a mere thirteen days later, on March 6, 1853, *La Traviata* was given its first performance. The audience laughed throughout the final act as Fanny Salvini-Donatelli, an extremely stout and healthy-looking soprano, fought to convince them that she was dying of consumption; the tenor, Lodovico Graziani, was in poor voice; and the baritone, Felice Varesi who, as Verdi's first Macbeth in 1847 and *Rigoletto* in 1851, ought by this time to have trusted his composer, thought his role was unworthy of him and merely "walked through" it.

The morning after the first performance, Verdi wrote a laconic note to his friend and former pupil, Emanuele Muzio: "Dear Emanuele, *La Traviata* last night—fiasco. Was the fault mine or that of the singers? Time will be the judge." To Angelo Mariani, who was to conduct his *Aroldo* four years later, Verdi asserted that he was not upset by the verdict of the audience, and added: "I myself believe that the last word on *La Traviata* was not heard last night. They will hear it again—and we shall see! Meanwhile, dear Mariani, note the fiasco."

One of the reasons why Verdi had been drawn to Alexandre Dumas's *La Dame aux Camélias*, the play on which *La Traviata* was based and which he had seen in Paris the previous year when it was first produced, was that it dealt with a contemporary subject. Marie Duplessis, the model for the Dumas heroine Marguerite Gautier, had died only

four years earlier. But when Verdi's operatic version reached the stage, the action had been moved back to the early eighteenth century and the décor and costumes were those of the period of Louis XIV. It is curious that Verdi should have agreed to this, for while he was composing the opera he had written to a friend: "A subject from our own time. Another person would perhaps not have composed it because of the costumes, because of the period, because of a thousand other foolish objections, but I am delighted with the idea." He must have been overruled by the theater management with its strange ideas of propriety and the dignity of the Teatro La Fenice.

Verdi's letters about the fiasco were written before any of the newspaper reviews had appeared. The reviews, though mixed, were by no means entirely unfavorable. The critic of the *Gazzetta di Venezia*, after praising the orchestral performance and several numbers in the opera whose first act he found "full of beauties worthy of the palmy days of Rossini," refused to judge the work as a whole until he had heard a better performance. "In truth," he wrote, "a composer's invention is hard put to it if he has no one who is able or knows how to perform his music All the numbers which were not sung by Salvini-Donatelli . . . went overboard." The Venice correspondent of the *Milan Gazzetta Musicale* called the opera "a worthy product of that inexhaustible genius which has given to Europe *Nabucco*, *Ernani*, *Rigoletto*," and thought the last act "a



Above: Armand and Marguerite in an illustration to Dumas's *La Dame aux Camélias*. Engraving by H. Linton after Alphonse de Neuville. *Société des Amis d'Alexandre Dumas*. At right: Fanny Salvini Donatelli, the first interpreter of Violetta in *La Traviata*. *Verdi nelle immagini*, 1941.

perfect jewel from the very beginning of that tender prelude on the violins which so piteously prepares us for the tragic catastrophe."

Ten performances of *La Traviata* were given at the Fenice, after which, for more than a year, the opera was not staged anywhere else, for Verdi was unwilling to allow another production unless he could personally supervise it. He toyed with the idea of producing it in Rome, but was forestalled by a request from Venice to allow the opera to be staged there again. The request came, not from the Fenice, but from the Teatro San Benedetto, a theater smaller than the Fenice but almost equally distinguished. The impresario offered to engage the finest singers available, with Piave to direct the production, and unlimited rehearsal time. The Louis XIV period, however, was to be adhered to, for apparently it would have been tempting providence to display contemporary life on the operatic stage; it was to be many years before *La Traviata* was produced in mid-nineteenth century costumes.

After an initial hesitation, Verdi gave his consent to this second Venice production, and the Venetians heard *La Traviata* again on May 6th, 1854. This time the opera was an overwhelming success, a success which immediately spread. There were productions in many other Italian towns and in several other countries, and *La Traviata* was soon the most talked-about opera of its day. Verdi was, of course, delighted with its reception at the Teatro San

Benedetto. To Cesare de Sanctis, one of his Neapolitan friends, he wrote:

"You may as well know that *La Traviata*, which is being performed at the Teatro San Benedetto, is the same, exactly the same, as the one performed last year at the Fenice, apart from one or two transpositions of key and trifling changes which I made to suit it better to the capacity of these particular singers; the transpositions and changes will remain in the score because I consider the opera as having been written for the present cast. For the rest, not a single piece has been altered, not a piece added or taken away, not a musical idea changed. Everything which was heard at the Fenice was heard at the Teatro Benedetto. Then it was a fiasco; now it has caused a *furore*. Draw your own conclusions!"

(In fact, although Verdi's alterations are not particularly significant, they are somewhat more extensive than this letter to Cesare de Sanctis suggests.)

There are curious parallels between *La Traviata* and Verdi's own domestic situation, as there were also between the personal life of Alexandre Dumas the Younger and his *Dame aux Camélias*. Perhaps the parallels are not so curious in the case of Dumas, for it was because he had been a lover of Marie Duplessis, the famous Parisian courtesan who died of consumption at the age of twenty-three, that he wrote the novel which he later adapted for the stage. Armand Duval, who shares his creator's initials, was clearly intended as a self-portrait, for Dumas's first meeting with Marie Duplessis had taken place in conditions similar to those in which Marguerite and Armand meet in novel and play, and Dumas lived with Marie in the country



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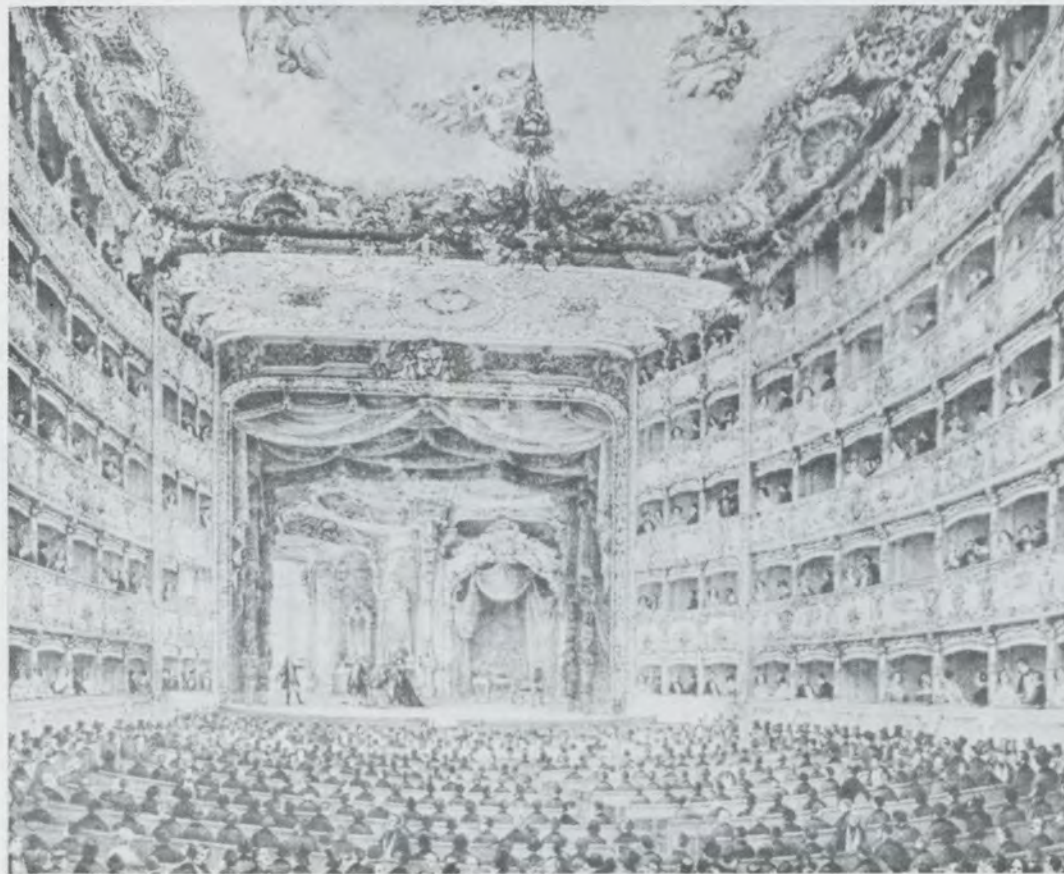
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outside Paris during the summer of 1845, just as Armand and Marguerite do. Surely one of the reasons why Verdi was drawn to *La Dame aux Camélias* was that he saw in it something of the emotional truth of his own situation. Giuseppina Strepponi was no courtesan, but she was the mother of two illegitimate children from an earlier relationship. (One child, a boy, is known to have been alive in 1849, aged eight. The other probably died in infancy.) And Verdi may have considered his ex-father-in-law, Antonio Barezzi, to be an equivalent of the elder Germont. It is certainly true that *La Traviata* occupied a special place in its composer's affections, and that it is a much more intimate and personal work than anything he had written previously. Asked shortly after its composition which of his operas he liked best, Verdi replied that as a professional he preferred *Rigoletto*, but as an amateur, *La Traviata*.

Piave's libretto follows the Dumas play fairly closely. He omits the second of the play's five acts, in which Marguerite makes her decision to live with Armand in the country, and dismisses Count de Giray. In doing so, Piave improves the form of the drama at the expense of its content, for at the end of Act I of the opera, Violetta, (Marguerite) has apparently determined to continue her life as a high-class courtesan, yet is next seen at the beginning of Act II (the play's Act III) living in domestic bliss with Alfredo (Armand). However, the four scenes of the opera add up to a satisfy-

ing musical and dramatic shape, and Dumas's Act II is not vitally necessary either to the plot or to the boldly sketched characterization.

What is especially remarkable about *La Traviata* is the way in which separate musical numbers arise from and merge into the general melodic background. Each of its four acts has a structural unity which is so apparent in performance that the opera could almost be described as a four-movement symphony for voices and orchestra. Not only is it one of Verdi's finest and best-loved operas, it is also one of the world's great music dramas. That it was not immediately given credit for its musical-dramatic qualities can only have been because of its immense wealth of melody. Much of its atmosphere of pathos derives from Verdi's extraordinarily expressive writing for the string section of the orchestra. Each of the great operas of his maturity has its own distinctive sound, and in *La Traviata* the dark, melancholy hues of *Il Trovatore* have given way to a warmer string sound, vibrant with feeling. The opera is so familiar to audiences today, its melodies so much a part of every opera-lover's experience, that it is not easy to stand back from the work and appraise it freshly. It is an opera in which all of Verdi's greatest gifts are deployed: his technical mastery, his clarity, his humanity, his psychological penetration, his sense of theater, and his unerring taste. □



Interior of the Teatro La Fenice in Venice, site of the first performance of *La Traviata*. Verdi nelle immagini, 1941.

Courtesy, Lim M. Lai



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Compiled and selected by Christopher Hunt

LA TRAVIATA is a tragedy of someone destroyed by the forces of convention. It may be, as Charles Osborne points out in his introduction elsewhere in this program, that the story struck certain highly sympathetic resonances with some timely events in Verdi's personal life. But his choice of Traviata also reflected concerns that figured throughout the composer's life. Verdi himself had no love for social convention—or indeed for any conventions. The selection of excerpts from his letters that follow—drawn from less-often quoted letters, and omitting those which are referred to in Mr. Osborne's article—is designed to reveal some of his own feelings about himself, his place in society, his career, and what he sought for in creating new operas. A fiercely independent man, Verdi revealed very little of himself directly in his correspondence; but his scorn for the mediocre, the average, the ordinary, and his pride in his own almost reclusive dislike for the superficial aspects of a public career, emerge with considerable strength.

To Pietro Masini Milan, 1837

Yesterday at last the impresario came and I presented myself immediately . . . he answered that he couldn't take the risk of producing a new opera, which might or might not be successful. At first I thought all this was just a lot of talk, to get people to pay court to him. But no matter what I said, I couldn't persuade him to discuss the matter, and his replies were always the same. If I hadn't been the first one to talk to him I would certainly have thought some enemy had prejudiced him against me. Depressed and enraged, I had to return without a spark of hope. Poor young people! What's the use of working and studying if there is never to be any encouragement?

To Salvatore Cammarano May 23, 1844

I have received the outline of Alzira . . . in the hands of a Cammarano it will make an excellent libretto. I am accused of liking a lot of noise and neglecting singing. Pay no attention to such talk. Just put plenty of passion into it, and you will see that I write quite passably.

To Giuseppina Appiani Venice,
Dec. 26, 1844

I Lombardi was a grand fiasco: one of the really classic fiascos. Everything displeased or was simply tolerated, except the cabaletta of the vision. That is the simple but true story; and I tell it without joy, but without sorrow either.

To Cammarano Milan, June 2, 1845

We artists are never supposed to be sick. We shouldn't always be such gentlemen. Impres-

Giuseppe Verdi at the time of composition of Rigoletto, Il Trovatore and La Traviata (1837-1853). Verdi nelle immagini, 1941.



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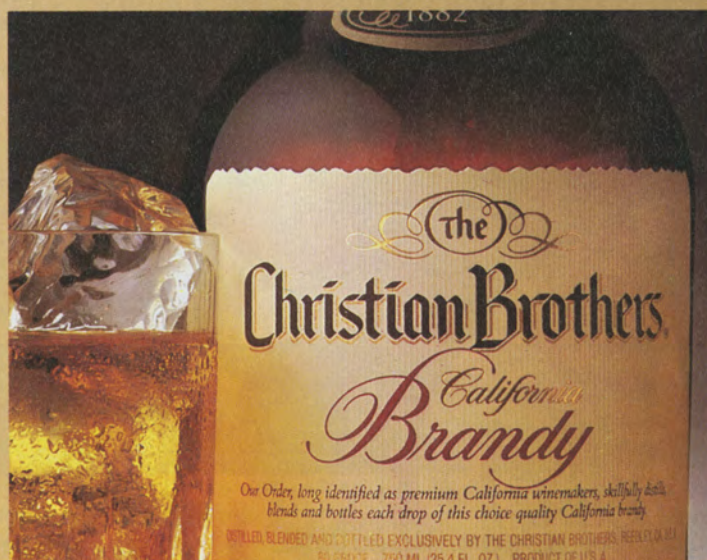
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rios believe us or don't believe us, just as it happens to suit them. I don't like the way Signor Flauto wrote to me. Even after talking with you, he still doubts that I am really sick and distrusts my medical certificates . . . I wish (and you must too) that these bickerings would stop, and that we wouldn't have to discuss the matter any more, for to tell the truth, I can't stand it any longer.

To Antonio Barezzi Milan, June 1845

I have read over the project for a theater (in Busseto) and with my usual frankness I will tell you that I don't think much of it . . .

I should not have been named at all in their petition, all the more because it gives me the appearance of being ambitious to have a theater named after me and a bust of myself put up in it, while most Italians know from experience how

To Appiani Paris, March 9, 1848

The great National Assembly which is to choose a government is set for the 20th of April. I still can't understand why it wasn't called earlier: I am too hard-headed, or perhaps too cynical.

I can't conceal from you that I'm having a wonderful time and that nothing has disturbed my sleep so far. I do nothing, go walking, listen to the most ridiculous nonsense, buy nearly 20 papers a day (without reading them, of course) to avoid the persecution of the vendors, for when they see me coming with a whole bundle of papers in my hand they don't offer me anything. And I laugh, and laugh, and laugh.

To Filippo Colini 1848

You know that I have never put myself under an obligation to anyone nor have I ever begged to



Verdi's birthplace at Le Roncole di Busseto. Verdi nele immagini, 1941.

strongly I combat such reclame, whenever I can.

To Clara Maffei London, June 9, 1847

. . . what I saw of Paris I rather liked, and I like particularly the free life one can lead in that country. . . .

To Appiani London, June 27, 1847

I can't wait to go to Paris, which has no special seduction for me but which I shall enjoy immensely because there I shall be able to live as I please!! When I think that I shall be several weeks in Paris without getting mixed up in musical affairs, without hearing anyone talk about music (I shall throw all publishers and impresarios out of the door) I almost swoon, so consoling is the thought . . . I go very little into society, very little to the theater, to spare myself annoyance.

have my scores accepted, or received favors or charity from anyone, not even when I badly needed them. You can therefore imagine that I am not going to put up now with even the slightest humiliation.

To Vincenzo Flauto Paris, Nov. 23, 1848

I am sorry if it looks as if I were being "touchy and precious," whereas I am extremely frank, decided, sometimes irascible, even savage if you like, but never touchy or precious . . .

You think my presence (in Naples) might influence the success? Don't believe it! I repeat what I said to you at the beginning, that I am a sort of savage, and if they noticed so many defects in me in Naples the first time, it would be no different a second time. It is true that I have been in Paris now for a year and a half (in the city where one is supposed to acquire good

(Continued on page 60)

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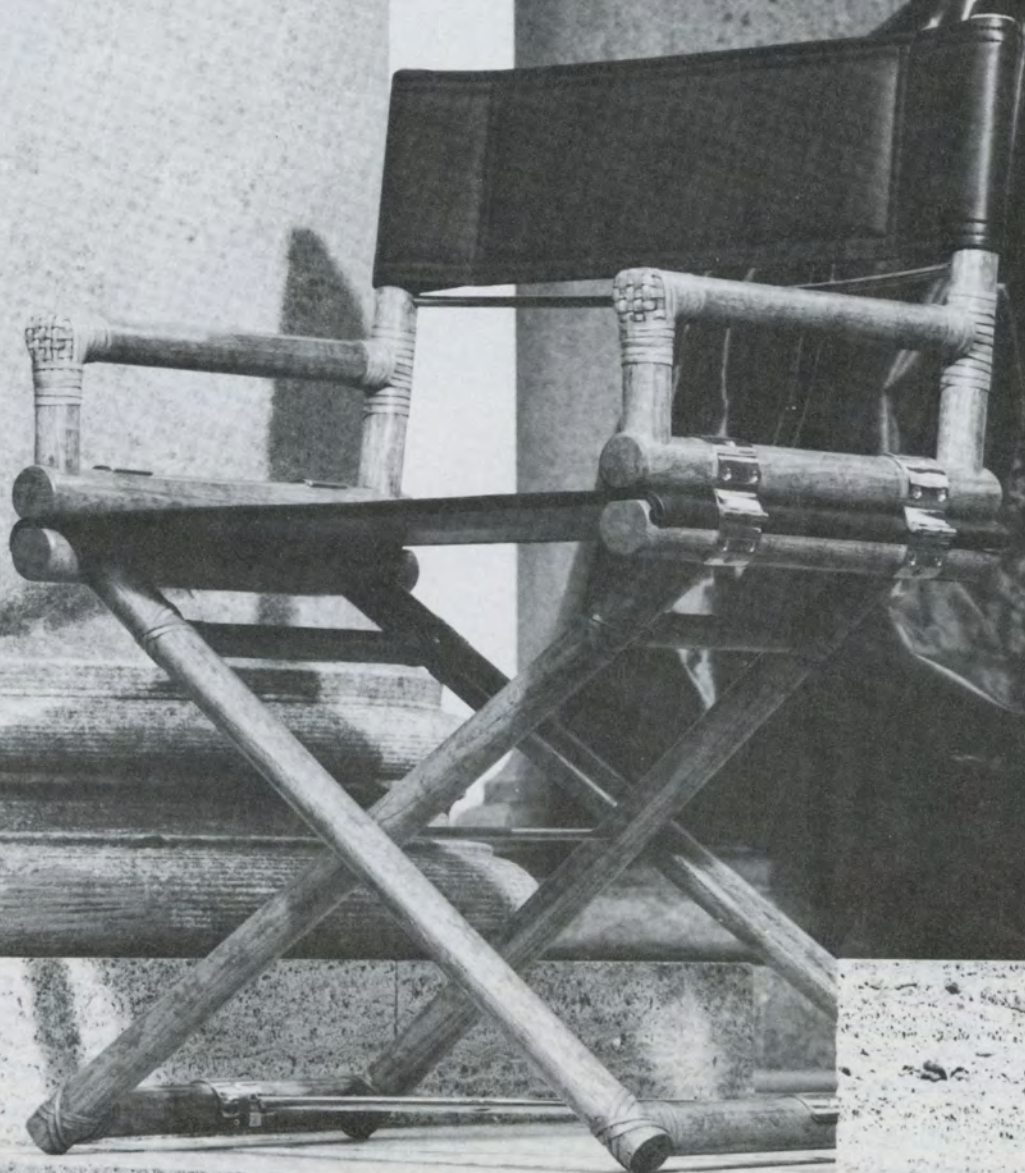
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Artist Profiles

Nelly Miricioiu



Romanian soprano **NELLY MIRICIOIU** makes her American opera debut as Violetta in Verdi's *La Traviata*, a role in which she recently appeared at the Paris Opera Comique with Alberto Cupido and Leo Nucci. After pursuing her studies at the Georges Enesco Conservatory, she won several international competitions in Barcelona, Athens, Paris, Geneva and Belgium, and was first prize winner in the 1979 's-Hertogenbosch competition in Holland. She was subsequently awarded a scholarship for further studies in Milan and Rome, making her operatic debut in her native land in 1970 as the Queen of the Night in *The Magic Flute*. Her British debut took place in 1981 as Violetta with Scottish Opera and she returned there the following year in the title role of Puccini's *Tosca*. Miss Miricioiu made her Covent Garden debut in 1982 as Nedda in *I Pagliacci* opposite Jon Vickers. Recent engagements include *Manon Lescaut* with Scottish Opera, the production that opened the 1982 Edinburgh Festival, *Lucia di Lammermoor* at La Scala, Violetta in her Frankfurt Opera debut and subsequent performances of *Manon Lescaut* with that company, as well as the triple role of Olympia-Antonia-Giulietta in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* at the Opera Comique. Future assignments include *Lucia di Lammermoor* at La Scala with Luciano Pavarotti in March of 1984.

A native of Philadelphia, soprano **WINIFRED FAIX BROWN** makes her San Francisco Opera debut as Violetta in Verdi's *La Traviata*, a role

Winifred Faix Brown



she recently portrayed to great acclaim with the Los Angeles Opera Theater. A participant in the Opera School of the Chicago Lyric Opera and Metropolitan Opera Studio, Miss Faix Brown was a national finalist in the 1978 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. During the 1979 Chicago Lyric Opera season, she traveled to the Cervantes Festival (Mexico) with that company as Norina in *Don Pasquale*, returning to Chicago as Rosalinda in *Die Fledermaus*. During 1981, she was heard in a concert performance of *William Tell* with Giuseppe Taddei in Gelsenkirchen, Germany, where she most recently appeared in *La Forza del Destino* and *Julius Caesar*. That same year, she sang in Mexico City and with the Portland Opera, where she will return later this season in *Così fan tutte*. Among her recent engagements is a highly acclaimed portrayal of Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* in Cologne under John Pritchard this September, the role she also sang at this year's Berlin Festival. In the U.S., she was heard in *La Traviata* with Opera/Columbus, as the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro* in Chautauqua, the title role of *Manon Lescaut* with Hawaii Opera Theater and Micaëla in Seattle Opera's production of *Carmen*. Included in her future engagements is Lucia in Miami Opera's production of *Lucia di Lammermoor*.

Internationally renowned soprano **KATIA RICCIARELLI** returns to the San Francisco Opera as Violetta in *La Traviata*, a role she sang

Katia Ricciarelli



last season at the Paris Opera. San Francisco audiences will remember her triumphant portrayals of three other Verdi heroines, the title character of *Luisa Miller* (1974), Amelia in *Un Ballo in Maschera* (1977) and Desdemona in *Otello* (1978). After winning the coveted Giuseppe Verdi Award in 1970, the Italian singer went on to appearances at all of the world's major houses. From 1972 to '74, she made debuts in Chicago in Verdi's *I due Foscari*, at La Scala as Suor Angelica, in Vienna as Liù in *Turandot*, and in Hamburg, London, Paris and New York (Metropolitan Opera) as Mimi in *La Bohème*. A favorite soprano of conductor Herbert von Karajan, she has appeared in many of the maestro's live and recorded projects. Last year she was seen at the Metropolitan Opera in *Luisa Miller* and, in the spring, sang Alice Ford with the Los Angeles Philharmonic in a production of *Falstaff* led by Carlo Maria Giulini. Other 1982-83 assignments included *Un Ballo in Maschera* at the Met; *Il Trovatore* at Covent Garden; *Luisa Miller* at the Vienna Staatsoper; *La Bohème* in Nice; *La Traviata* in Bonn and at the Paris Opera; and *Turandot* at the festivals of Orange and Vienna. Miss Ricciarelli's extensive discography on RCA, Philips and Deutsche Grammophon includes 10 complete operas by Verdi alone.

A native of Detroit, soprano **ADRIANA VANELLI** makes her San Francisco Opera debut as Violetta in the Family Matinee production of

Adriana Vanelli



Verdi's *La Traviata*. She made her professional opera debut as Cio-Cio-San in *Madama Butterfly* in 1980 with the New York Grand Opera under Maestro Vincent La Selva. Subsequent performances with that company included Mimi in *La Bohème* and the title role in Verdi's *Aida*. Miss Vanelli sang her first Liù in *Turandot* in 1981 with the Stamford State Opera and in 1983 performed her first Nedda in *I Pagliacci* with the same company. She also appeared with the Nevada State Opera as the Countess in Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro* and as Tosca in New Jersey. During the 1982-83 season she sang with the Chattanooga Opera in *Madama Butterfly* and portrayed her first Violetta with the New York Grand Opera. Miss Vanelli is the recipient of a 1983 National Opera Institute grant. Future engagements include Desdemona in an Indianapolis Opera production of Verdi's *Otello* that will also travel to Syracuse.

Soprano **NANCY GUSTAFSON** appears as Flora in *La Traviata*. The Illinois native made her Company debut during the 1983 Summer Festival as Woglinde in *Das Rheingold*, appearing also as Helmwig in *Die Walküre*. A winner of the 1982 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, Miss Gustafson participated in the 1982 Merola Opera Program productions of *The*

Nancy Gustafson



Magic Flute and *Rigoletto*, and received the Gropper Memorial Award in the 1982 San Francisco Opera Center Auditions Grand Finals. She appeared as Sicle in Cavalli's *L'Ormindo* during the Center's 1983 Showcase series, and has performed with such groups as the Chicago Opera Theater, Opera Midwest and at Harvard and Northwestern Universities. Recent engagements include a concert version of *The Merry Widow* with the Light Opera Works in Chicago, her Carmel Bach Festival debut as Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*, and the special concert for President Reagan and Queen Elizabeth II during the royal visit to California.

CARLA COOK makes her first appearances with San Francisco Opera as Glasha in *Katya Kabanova* and also appears as Flora in the Family Matinee of *La Traviata* and as Charlotte in *La Grande Duchesse de Gêrolstein*. The young mezzo-soprano appeared in the San Francisco Opera Center's 1983 Showcase productions of Cavalli's *L'Ormindo* and Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia*. Born in Salt Lake City, Miss Cook was a member of the 1982 Merola Opera Program, during which she appeared in *The Magic Flute* and *Rigoletto*. Third prize winner in the prestigious Munich International Competition last fall, she has performed with the Mississippi

Carla Cook



Opera Company, the Washington Civic Opera, the Utah Opera Company, the Lake George Opera and the Des Moines Metro Opera. Next year she will make her Seattle Opera debut as Waltraute in *Die Walküre*.

Mezzo-soprano **DONNA BRUNO** sings four roles during the 1983 Fall Season: Feklusha in *Katya Kabanova*; Annina in *La Traviata*; Amélie in *La Grande Duchesse de Gêrolstein*; and a Musician in *Manon Lescaut*. She made her San Francisco Opera debut during the 1983 Summer Festival as Siegrune in *Die Walküre*. A participant in the 1982 and 1983 Merola Opera Programs, she appeared in Merola productions of *The Magic Flute*, *Rigoletto* and *The Tales of Hoffmann*. The Chicago native has sung several seasons with the Lake George Opera Festival and the DuPage Opera Repertory Theater, where she portrayed Meg Page in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. She has been a winner in the 1982 and 1983 San Francisco Opera Audition Grand Finals, the 1979 National Association of Teachers Singing Competition and the 1982 American Opera Auditions in New York.

Italian tenor **ALBERTO CUPIDO** makes his American opera debut as Alfredo in Verdi's *La Traviata*. Highly renowned throughout Europe, Cupido has appeared extensively with the opera companies of Berlin, Hamburg, Vienna, Toulouse, Lyon, Zurich and Frankfurt, and has participated in numerous festival productions, including *La Bohème* at Glyndebourne, *Falstaff* at Bregenz and a concert performance of *Macbeth* at Ravinia. The 1982-83 season included two major debuts for Cupido: as Werther in a new production of the Massenet work at the Cologne Opera, and in *La Traviata* at the Paris Opera with Katia Ricciarelli and Leo Nucci. During that same season he appeared as Alfredo at the Vienna Staatsoper, in *Roméo et Juliette* in Strasbourg and at the Edinburgh festival; also in *Lucia di Lammermoor* and Werther at Opera Metropolitana in Caracas. Earlier this year he sang Rodolfo in *La Bohème* at the Winnipeg Opera, and appeared in Verdi's *Otello* and as Rodolfo at the Paris Opera. Future engagements include *Lucia di Lammermoor* with the Miami Opera,



Donna Bruno



Alberto Cupido

Walter MacNeil



Faust in Bonn, and appearances in Vienna, Berlin, Hamburg, Palermo, Venice and Brussels. His recordings include the Verdi Requiem with Leif Segerstam and, most recently, Donizetti's *Maria di Rudenz* with Katia Ricciarelli.

WALTER MACNEIL appears as Roderigo in *Otello*, Alfredo in the Family Matinee of *La Traviata* and as Edmondo in *Manon Lescaut*. A native of New York City, MacNeil portrayed the Duke in Western Opera Theater's 1982 fall tour of *Rigoletto* and made his San Francisco Opera debut during the 1983 Summer Festival as Froh in *Das Rheingold*. He has performed numerous leading roles with the New Jersey Opera and the Bronx Opera, and earlier this season made his Carnegie Hall debut singing with Marilyn Horne in Rossini's *Semiramide*. Most recently, he appeared as Ferrando in Mozart's *Così fan tutte* at the 1983 Carmel Bach Festival, and was heard as Cassio in Opera Colorado's production of *Otello* with James McCracken.

Making his San Francisco Opera debut, baritone **LEO NUCCI** sings the elder Germont in *La Traviata*. Born in Bologna, Nucci made his 1967 operatic debut at Spoleto in the title role of *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, going on to perform to great acclaim in the major opera houses of Europe. He made his Metropolitan Opera debut during the 1979-80 season in *Un Ballo in Maschera*. The following season he appeared in *Ballo* with the Paris Opera, Washington Opera, and in his Chicago Lyric Opera debut. Renowned for his versatility, Nucci's recent schedule includes the 1982 La Scala tour to Japan, where he sang in *Ballo*, *Don Carlo* and *La Traviata*; the Metropolitan Opera premiere and broadcast of *Luisa Miller*; Ford in the Los Angeles Philharmonic production of *Falstaff* led by Carlo Maria Giulini, which was repeated at Covent Garden and recorded for DG; *La Traviata* in Geneva, Vienna and Hamburg; and recordings of *Andrea Chénier* and *La Rondine*. Last season Nucci returned to the Met for *Ballo* (broadcast live), and appeared at La Scala and in Geneva in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, which he has recorded with Marilyn Horne. He opened the current Naples season as Rigoletto; other 1983-84 season assignments

Leo Nucci



include *La Forza del Destino* at the Met and *Simon Boccanegra* with Houston Grand Opera. Among the artist's numerous recordings on CBS, EMI-Angel, Decca-London and DG are *Aida*, *Don Carlo* and *Il Turco in Italia*.

Baritone **THOMAS WOODMAN** returns to the San Francisco Opera as Germont in the Family Matinee performance of *La Traviata*, and sings Chelkalov in *Boris Godunov*. Currently an Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, Woodman has performed with all the affiliates of the San Francisco Opera and made his Company debut during the 1980 Fall Season in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* and *I Pagliacci*. He has performed several roles in subsequent seasons, and was most recently heard in the 1982 Fall Season as Count Almaviva in the English-language production of *The Marriage of Figaro* and as the Herald in *Lohengrin*. While a member of Western Opera Theater, he sang Marcello in *La Bohème*, the vehicle of his Canadian Opera debut later this season. Earlier this year, he appeared as Mozart's Count with the Hawaii Opera Theater, participated in the concert for President Reagan and Queen Elizabeth II and sang the role of Jesus in Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* with the Festival of Masses, Robert Shaw conducting.



Robert Tate

Thomas Woodman



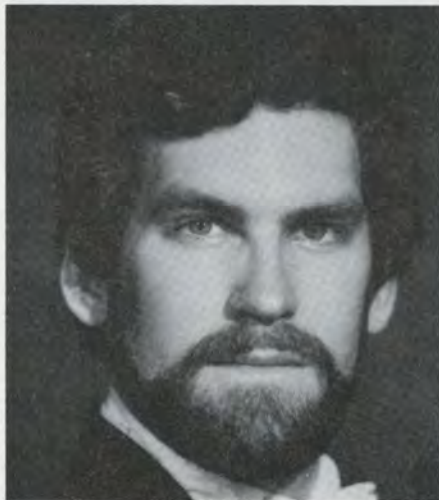
Tenor **ROBERT TATE** sings five roles during the 1983 Fall Season: Scaramuccio in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Gastone in *La Traviata*, the Messenger of the Philistines in *Samson et Dalila*, Nepomuc in *La Grande Duchesse de Gêrolstein* and Missail in *Boris Godunov*. After his 1979 Spring Opera Theater debut in the ensemble of *Death in Venice*, he appeared in the world premieres of Harbison's *Winter's Tale* and Mechem's *Tartuffe*, both under the auspices of the American Opera Project. Since his 1980 Company debut in *Samson et Dalila*, he has appeared in nine different productions, most recently as Parpignol in the 1983 Summer Festival production of *La Bohème*. During the 1982 San Francisco Opera Center Showcase series, Tate won plaudits in the travesty role of Cornelia in Scarlatti's *The Triumph of Honor*. He was recently heard as Ferrando in *Così fan tutte* and Lindoro in *Italian Girl in Algiers* with Pocket Opera. Last summer he sang Stravinsky's *Les Noces* with the Oakland Ballet and made his Wolf Trap debut as Ferrando.

Baritone **JOHN MATTHEWS** essays five roles during his debut season with San Francisco Opera: the Wigmaker in *Ariadne auf Naxos*; Kuligin in *Katya Kabanova*; Baron Doupol in the international cast of *La Traviata*; Baron Puck in *La Grande Duchesse de Gêrolstein*; and a Boyar



John Matthews

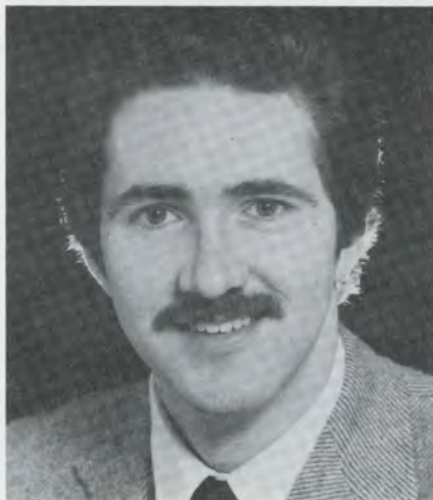
John MacAllister



in *Boris Godunov*. Earlier this year, the Los Angeles native appeared in the 1983 San Francisco Opera Center Showcase series as Osmano in *L'Ormindo* and Tarquinus in *The Rape of Lucretia*. During the fall of 1982, Matthews took his portrayal of Rigoletto on a nationwide tour with Western Opera Theater. On Western Opera's 1981 tour, he sang the roles of Marcello in *La Bohème*, Count Almaviva in *The Marriage of Figaro*, and Figaro in the English language production of *The Barber of Seville*. Matthews was the recipient of the Classical Vocalist of the Year Award from the United States Air Force while on tour of duty in the Orient, and has been a finalist in the Metropolitan Opera and San Francisco Opera auditions.

Bass **JOHN MACALLISTER** sings six roles during the 1983 Fall Season: the Herald in *Otello*; Marquis D'Obigny in *La Traviata*; Zuane in *La Gioconda*; the Innkeeper and a Sergeant in *Manon Lescaut*; and Nikitich in *Boris Godunov*. A finalist in the 1971 San Francisco Opera Auditions, MacAllister sang numerous roles with the Company during the seasons of 1973 and 1978, most recently appearing in *Salome* and *Dialogues of the Carmelites* in the 1982 Fall Season. With Spring Opera Theater, he was heard in *L'Ormindo* and Bach's *Passion According to St. Mat-*

James Patterson



thew. In recent years he has been featured with the San Jose Symphony in their productions of *Madama Butterfly*, *La Traviata* and *Carmen*, and with Bear Valley Music Festival in *The Barber of Seville*, *Gianni Schicchi* and *The Marriage of Figaro*.

Bass **JAMES PATTERSON** sings five roles during the 1983 Fall Season: the Lackey in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Dr. Grenvil in both casts of *La Traviata*, a Monk in *La Gioconda* and two roles in *Boris Godunov*—a Border Guard and Cherniakovsky. The young Canadian made his debut with the Company during the 1983 Summer Festival as the Customhouse Sergeant in *La Bohème* and as Fafner in the last performance of *Das Rheingold*. Currently an Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, he was recently heard in the Center's 1983 Showcase as Ariadeno in *L'Ormindo* and as Collatinus in *The Rape of Lucretia*. A participant in the 1982 Merola Opera Program, Patterson appeared in productions of *The Magic Flute* and *Rigoletto*, and toured with Western Opera Theater's 1982 production of *Rigoletto* as Sparafucile. Patterson was apprentice artist with Santa Fe Opera during the summer of 1981, when his assignments included Simone in *Gianni Schicchi*. As a concert artist, Patterson was recently heard as Herod in Berlioz's *L'En-*

Jacob Will



fance du Christ with the Marin Symphony and during the Festival of Masses was soloist in *The St. Matthew Passion* and the Verdi Requiem under Robert Shaw.

During the 1983 Fall Season, bass-baritone **JACOB WILL** appears as Montano in *Otello*, the Messenger in *La Traviata*, Baron Douphol in the Family Matinee of *La Traviata*, the 2nd Philistine in *Samson et Dalila*, a Sea Captain in *Manon Lescaut*, and the roles of Lavitsky and Mitiukh in *Boris Godunov*. He made his Company debut during the 1983 Summer Festival as the Customhouse Guard in *La Bohème*. A participant in the 1982 and 1983 Merola Opera Programs, he appeared in Merola productions of *The Magic Flute*, *Rigoletto*, and *The Tales of Hoffmann*. He is currently an Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center and was a finalist in the 1981 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions.

JEFFREY THOMAS sings five roles during the 1983 Fall Season: Giuseppe in *La Traviata*, Gastone in the Family Matinee of *La Traviata*, the 1st Philistine in *Samson et Dalila*, Isepo in *La Gioconda*, and a Lamplighter in *Manon Lescaut*. The young tenor made his San Francisco Opera debut during the 1981 Summer Festival as Vogelgesang in *Die Meistersinger* and has since returned in several roles, most recently as Remendado in the 1983 Summer Festival production of *Carmen*. He has portrayed Rameau's Pygmalion with Concert Royal in Mexico and has appeared in *Robin Hood* with New York's Ensemble for Early Music; in Menotti's *The Last Savage* at the 1981 Spoleto Festival USA; and has sung with Boston's Musica Viva. Earlier this season he sang the Evangelist in Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* at the Festival of Masses, Robert Shaw conducting, and made his European debut in Cesti's *Il Tito* in Innsbruck.

EVELYN CISNEROS makes her San Francisco Opera debut as a solo dancer in *La Traviata*. A native of Long Beach, California, Miss Cisneros joined the San Francisco Ballet in 1977 and has since performed featured roles such as the Sugar Plum Fairy in *Nutcracker*, Beauty in *Beauty and the Beast*, Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet*,


(Continued on page 57)



Jeffrey Thomas



Evelyn Cisneros



La Traviata

Photos taken in rehearsal by DAVID POWERS

Act I

La Traviata



Alberto Cupido

Winifred Faix Brown

Donna Bruno, Alberto Cupido

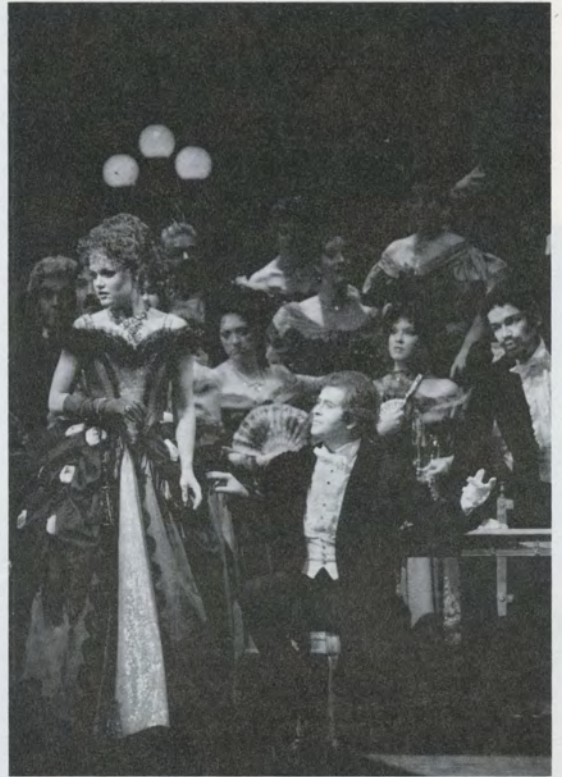


Cary Friedman, Los Angeles Times





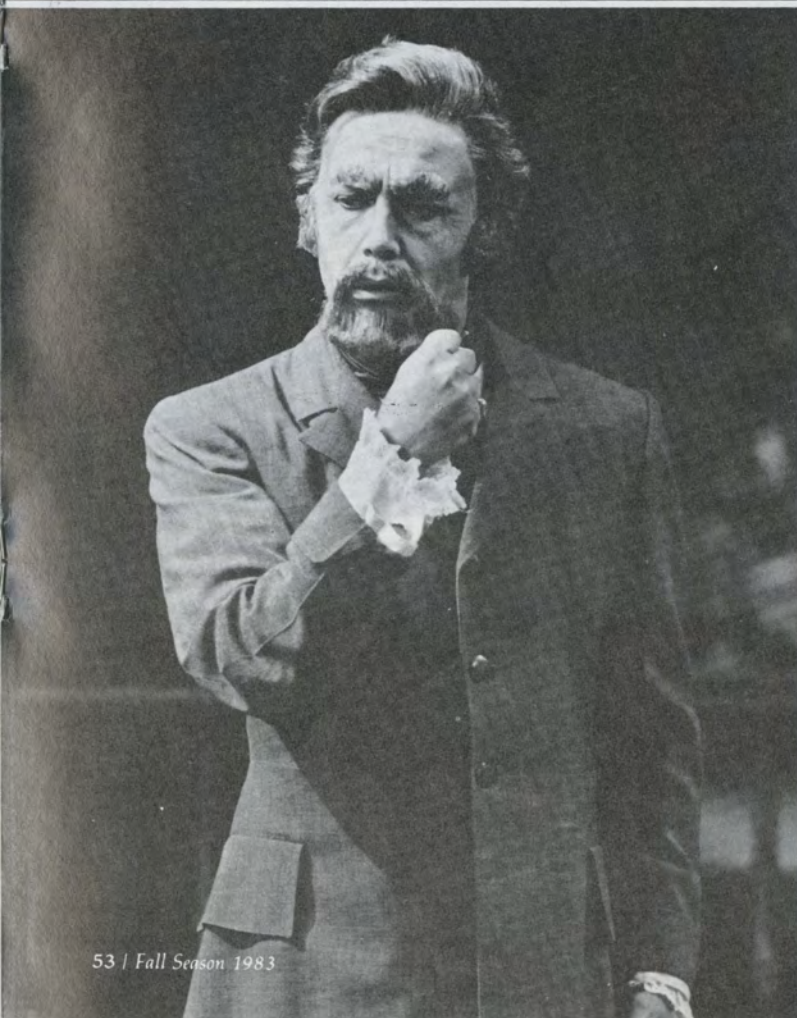
Eric Thorburn, Glasgow



Nancy Gustafson, *Alberto Cupido*

Nelly Miricioiu

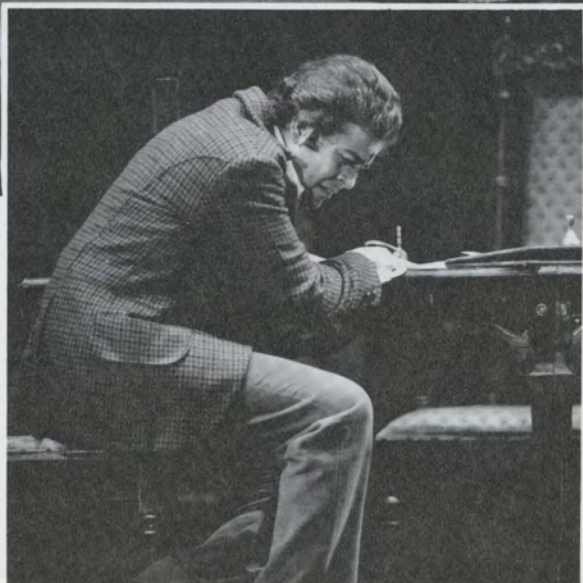
Leo Nucci





Leo Nucci, Alberto Cupido

Ricardo Bustamante, Evelyn Cisneros



Alberto Cupido

La Traviata

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

Opera in four acts by GIUSEPPE VERDI

Libretto by FRANCESCO MARIA PIAVE

Based on the play *La Dame aux Camélias*
by ALEXANDRE DUMAS fils

La Traviata

(in Italian)

Conductor

Richard Bradshaw

Kathryn Cathcart* (October 22)

Stage Director

Matthew Farruggio

Francesca Zambello* (October 22)

Designer

Toni Businger

Lighting Designer

Thomas J. Munn

Lighting Supervisor

Joan Arhelger

Chorus Director

Richard Bradshaw

Choreographer

Robert Gladstein*

Musical Preparation

Susanna Lemberskaya

James Johnson

Svetlana Gorzhyevskaya*

Terry Lusk (October 22)

Jeffrey Goldberg (October 22)

Prompter

Jonathan Khuner

Assistant Stage Director

Sharon Woodriff

Laurie Brent (October 22)

Stage Manager

Gretchen Mueller

CAST

(in order of appearance)

October 22

(Family Matinee)

Violetta Valery	Nelly Miricioiu** (Oct. 5)	Adriana Vanelli*
	Winifred Faix Brown* (Oct. 8, 11, 14)	
	Katia Ricciarelli (Oct. 18, 21, 27, 30)	
Flora Bervoix	Nancy Gustafson	Carla Cook
Marquis d'Obigny	John MacAllister	John MacAllister
Baron Douphol	John Matthews	Jacob Will
Doctor Grenvil	James Patterson	James Patterson
Gastone	Robert Tate	Jeffrey Thomas
Alfredo Germont	Alberto Cupido**	Walter MacNeil
Annina	Donna Bruno	Donna Bruno
Giuseppe	Jeffrey Thomas	Paul Gudas
Giorgio Germont	Leo Nucci*	Thomas Woodman
Messenger	Jacob Will	Kenneth Rafanan
A servant	Roger Andrews	Frederick Matthews

*Ladies and Gentlemen; Servants and Maskers;
Dancers and Guests*

Solo Dancers

*Evelyn Cisneros**

*Ricardo Bustamante**

**American opera debut *San Francisco Opera debut

First performance:

Venice, March 6, 1853

First San Francisco Opera performance:

October 4, 1924

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 5 AT 7:30

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 8 AT 8:00

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 11 AT 8:00

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 14 AT 8:00

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 18 AT 8:00

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 21 AT 8:00

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 22 AT 2:00 (Family Matinee)

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 27 AT 8:00

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 30 AT 2:00

The Family Matinee of October 22 features "supertitles," a new system of projecting translations of the Italian text, adapted and executed by Francesca Zambello and Jerry Sherk.

The Family Matinee of October 22 is performed in three acts, lasting three hours.

The costumes for this production were made possible by a much-appreciated grant from the Callison Foundation.

TIME AND PLACE:

Mid-19th century Paris and environs

ACT I Violetta's house

INTERMISSION

ACT II A villa near Paris

INTERMISSION

ACT III Flora's house

INTERMISSION

ACT IV Violetta's house

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

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

The performance will last approximately three hours and fifteen minutes.

La Traviata

Synopsis

ACT I—At a party given by Violetta Valery, a courtesan who is the toast of Paris, Alfredo, a young man from Provence, is introduced to the hostess, whose beauty and charm have enchanted him. When the guests go out to dance, Violetta, suffering from the early stages of consumption, is seized by a severe coughing spell and remains behind. Unnoticed by Violetta, Alfredo stays with her and first expresses his concern and then his love, which deeply affects Violetta, who allows him to return to see her the following day. After the guests leave, she reflects on his declaration of love and is torn by its impact on her.

ACT II—Violetta has forsaken her former life and is living happily with Alfredo in a small country house near Paris. Receiving an invitation to a ball at her friend Flora's house, she laughingly tosses it aside. Alfredo, upset to learn from the maid Annina that Violetta has been selling her jewelry to help pay their expenses, goes to Paris to get some money. Germont, Alfredo's father, arrives to persuade Violetta that she must give up Alfredo if she truly loves him. Their liaison is not only damaging his son's career, but is also jeopardizing his daughter's forthcoming marriage. Left alone, Violetta writes a farewell note to Alfredo, but he returns before she has finished. She hides the letter and conceals her true feelings from him. Alfredo tells her he has heard that his father is coming to visit them. On the pretext that the two men should be left alone, Violetta leaves, having arranged the delivery of the farewell letter to Alfredo by messenger. When the elder

Germont returns, he finds his son in despair and vainly tries to console him without revealing his role in Violetta's departure. When Alfredo sees Flora's invitation open on Violetta's desk, he rushes off to the ball.

ACT III—At Flora's party, Violetta and Baron Douphol arrive to find Alfredo, who has been lucky at the gambling table. He challenges Douphol to a game of cards and adds to his winnings. When the guests go to supper, Violetta, desperately fearing a duel between the two men, begs Alfredo to leave the party. He bitterly accuses her of faithlessness, which, remembering her promise to Germont, she does not deny. Alfredo calls back the guests and denounces her before them, throwing his winnings at her and proclaiming his debt paid in full. Germont, who has followed his son to Flora's house, arrives in time to witness the scene and denounces him for his ungentlemanly conduct.

ACT IV—Violetta, abandoned by all her friends, has been confined to bed by consumption. Despite her doctor's reassurances, she knows that she has only a short time to live. She is cheered by a letter of apology from Germont, who writes that Alfredo is returning to ask her forgiveness. But Violetta fears it will be too late. Alfredo rushes in and in the joy of reunion they make plans to leave Paris for the country. Her recovery is only temporary, however, and as Germont and the doctor arrive, Violetta collapses and dies.



Ricardo Bustamante



Creusa in *Medea*, and the Ballerina in George Balanchine's *Chaconne*. Miss Cisneros has also created leading roles in Michael Smuin's *A Song for Dead Warriors*, *The Tempest* and the "Ragtime" movement of *Stravinsky Piano Pieces*. She performed in the national telecast of *Dead Warriors* and *The Tempest* on the PBS *Dance in America* series and, in March 1982, danced in *Stravinsky Piano Pieces* in a live telecast from the White House. Miss Cisneros is also a frequent guest artist with other American companies.

RICARDO BUSTAMANTE makes his San Francisco Opera debut as a solo dancer in *La Traviata*. Born in Medellín, Colombia, he trained for eight years at the Academia de Ballet de Medellín and performed with the Caracas Ballet in Venezuela. San Francisco Ballet Director Michael Smuin discovered him on the Company's 1980 tour of South America and invited him to join the San Francisco Ballet School on scholarship. Named Company Apprentice in 1980, Bustamante became a member of the San Francisco Ballet the following year. Featured roles with that company include the Ribbon Candy Dancer in *Nutcracker*, the lead male roles in Smuin's *A Song for Dead Warriors*, Val Caniparoli's *Chansons de Sheherazade*, John McFall's *Badinage* and the title role in Maurice Béjart's *Firebird*.

RICHARD BRADSHAW returns to the War Memorial podium to conduct Verdi's *La Traviata*. During the 1982 Fall Season, he led the English-language performances of *The Marriage of Figaro*. Currently chorus director of the San Francisco Opera, Bradshaw joined the Company in 1977 and made his American conducting debut that season with the Family Matinee of Gounod's *Faust*. Subsequent conducting assignments have included *La Traviata*, *Julius Caesar* and the West Coast premiere of John Eaton's *The Cry of Clytemnestra* with Spring Opera Theater. For the San Francisco Opera Center Showcase series, he has led performances of Vivian Fine's *The Women in the Garden*, John Harbison's *Full Moon in March* and Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia*. A native of England, Brad-

Richard Bradshaw



shaw is conductor and director of the New London Ensemble and has appeared with most of the major British orchestras, including the Royal Philharmonic, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic and the London Mozart Players. From 1975 through 1977 he was chorus director at Glyndebourne, and for the 1979 International Verdi Congress in Irvine, California, he conducted the original version of *La Forza del Destino*, a work he will conduct for Seattle Opera early in 1984.

Making her San Francisco Opera debut conducting the Family Matinee of *La Traviata*, **KATHRYN CATHCART** has the distinction of being the first woman to conduct a San Francisco Opera production in the War Memorial. She made her San Francisco debut conducting Scarlatti's *The Triumph of Honor* during the 1982 San Francisco Opera Center Showcase series. Miss Cathcart received her initial opera training in New York with Boris Goldovsky, becoming a staff member of the Opera Institute for several years. During an eight-year stint as conductor/coach for the Cologne Opera, she also held the position of music director of the Cologne Opera Studio. She has been a guest conductor for Opera Colombia in Bogotá, and has led guest performances in Cologne, Stuttgart and Ulm. Miss Cathcart has served as musical assistant to such noted conductors as John Pritchard, Nello Santi, Richard Bonyngé, Gerd Albrecht, Wolfgang Rennert and Sir Charles Mackerras.

In his 28th season with the San Francisco Opera, production supervisor **MATTHEW FARRUGGIO** directs Verdi's *La Traviata*. Last Fall Season, he directed Puccini's *Tosca*, a work he staged for Spring Opera Theater in 1962 and the 1965 Fall Season. During the 1981 Fall Season he staged the Family Matinee of *Lucia di Lammermoor*, and in 1980 won critical acclaim for *Madama Butterfly*, a work he had previously staged for the Fall Seasons of 1968 and 1971, for the Merola Opera Program in 1963, '73 and '78, and for 1965 Spring Opera Theater. Other Fall Season projects include *The Barber of Seville* (1965), *Rigoletto* (1966), *La Bohème* (1967 and '69), *Il Trovatore* (1975), *La Forza del Destino* (1976),

Kathryn Cathcart



Faust and *Aida* (1977). He has directed a number of Spring Opera Theater performances in the War Memorial, and during this summer's Merola Program, staged *The Tales of Hoffmann* at Stern Grove. Farruggio has directed productions in Vancouver, Houston and Honolulu. In 1980 he staged *Aida* for Utah Opera, returned in 1981 for *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *I Pagliacci* and, most recently, staged *Girl of the Golden West* for that company.

FRANCESCA ZAMBELLO makes her San Francisco Opera debut directing the Family Matinee of *La Traviata*. Currently assistant artistic director of Opera Colorado, she worked on that company's inaugural season productions of *La Bohème* and *Otello*, presented in-the-round. She returns to Denver this season with *The Tales of Hoffmann* and *Turandot* and will direct their Young Artists' Program. Formerly apprentice in stage direction to Nathaniel Merrill at the Met under a National Opera Institute grant, she has worked as director and assistant director at the Chicago Lyric Opera, Opera Company of Boston, Opera du Québec, Wolf Trap, the Greater Miami Opera, where she staged numerous English-language productions. In 1982 she directed *Tales of Hoffmann* for Hous-



Matthew Farruggio

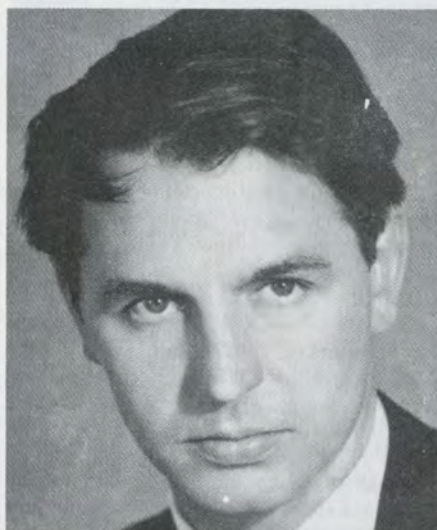
ton Grand Opera, *The Makropulos Case* for Milwaukee Skylight Opera, and *The Mikado* for the National Opera of Iceland. Next year she returns to Milwaukee for *La Calisto* and *The Magic Flute*, and to Iceland for *The Barber of Seville*.

TONI BUSINGER created the designs for *La Traviata*, seen here in 1969, '73 and '80. The Swiss scenic and costume designer made his American debut with the Company in 1966 with *Madama Butterfly*, a production revived here in 1968, '69, '71, '74 and '80. Other credits

Francesca Zambello



Toni Businger



season, *Viva la mamma* for the Vienna Festival and *Manon* for the Montreal Opera.

Currently assistant director and ballet master of the San Francisco Ballet, **ROBERT GLADSTEIN** makes his San Francisco Opera debut as choreographer for *La Traviata* and *Samson et Dalila*. As a member of San Francisco Ballet from 1960 to 1967, the California native danced leading roles and choreographed his first ballet for the Ballet '62 Summer Choreographers' Series. From 1967 through 1969 he was a member of American Ballet Theater, returning to San Francisco Ballet in 1970. Ballet master of the company since 1975, he became assistant director in 1981. In 1982 Gladstein was appointed consultant to the National Endowment for the Arts Dance Panel. He has created over 30 ballets, including *Gershwin* (1977), *Stravinsky Capriccio for Piano and Orchestra* (1978) and *Psalms* (1980). His works are in the repertoires of American Theater Players, Ballet West, Pacific Northwest Ballet and the Sacramento Ballet.

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

Robert Gladstein

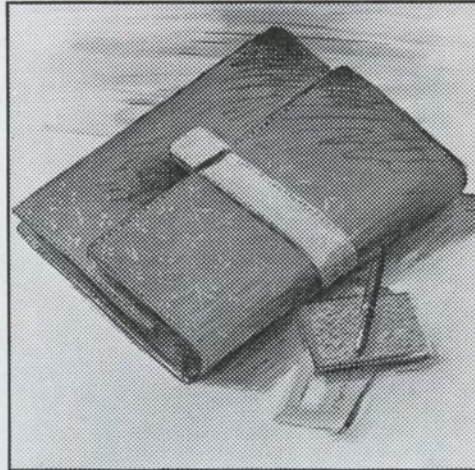


Thomas J. Munn



with the Company include *The Magic Flute* (1969 and '75) and *Don Giovanni* (1974, '78, and '81 Summer Festival). A designer for theater and television as well as opera, Businger made his theatrical debut at the Zurich Schauspielhaus in 1957. From 1973 to 1975, he was chief scenic designer of the Hamburg Staatsoper, and his designs have been seen in Austria, Finland, France, Holland, South Africa, Switzerland, West Germany, Yugoslavia and the United States. Recent credits include *Carmen* for the Netherlands Opera last year and, earlier this

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(Continued from page 45)

manners) but I confess that I am more of a bear than before.

I have been working constantly now for six years, and wandering from country to country, and I have never said a word to a journalist, never begged a friend, never courted rich people to achieve success. Never, absolutely never! I shall always despise such methods. I do my operas, as well as I can: for the rest, I let things

would like to be in Paris; now that I am in Paris I would like to be—where?—I don't know—on the moon. For the rest I enjoy here complete personal freedom, such as I have always desired without ever being able to obtain it. I don't visit anybody. I don't receive anybody, nobody knows me and I don't have the annoyance of seeing myself pointed at, as in Italian cities. I enjoy good health; I write a lot, my affairs go well;



Giuseppe Verdi in 1845. Verdi nelle immagini, 1941.

take their course without ever influencing public opinion to the slightest degree . . .

To Luigi Toccagni Paris, Jan. 24, 1848

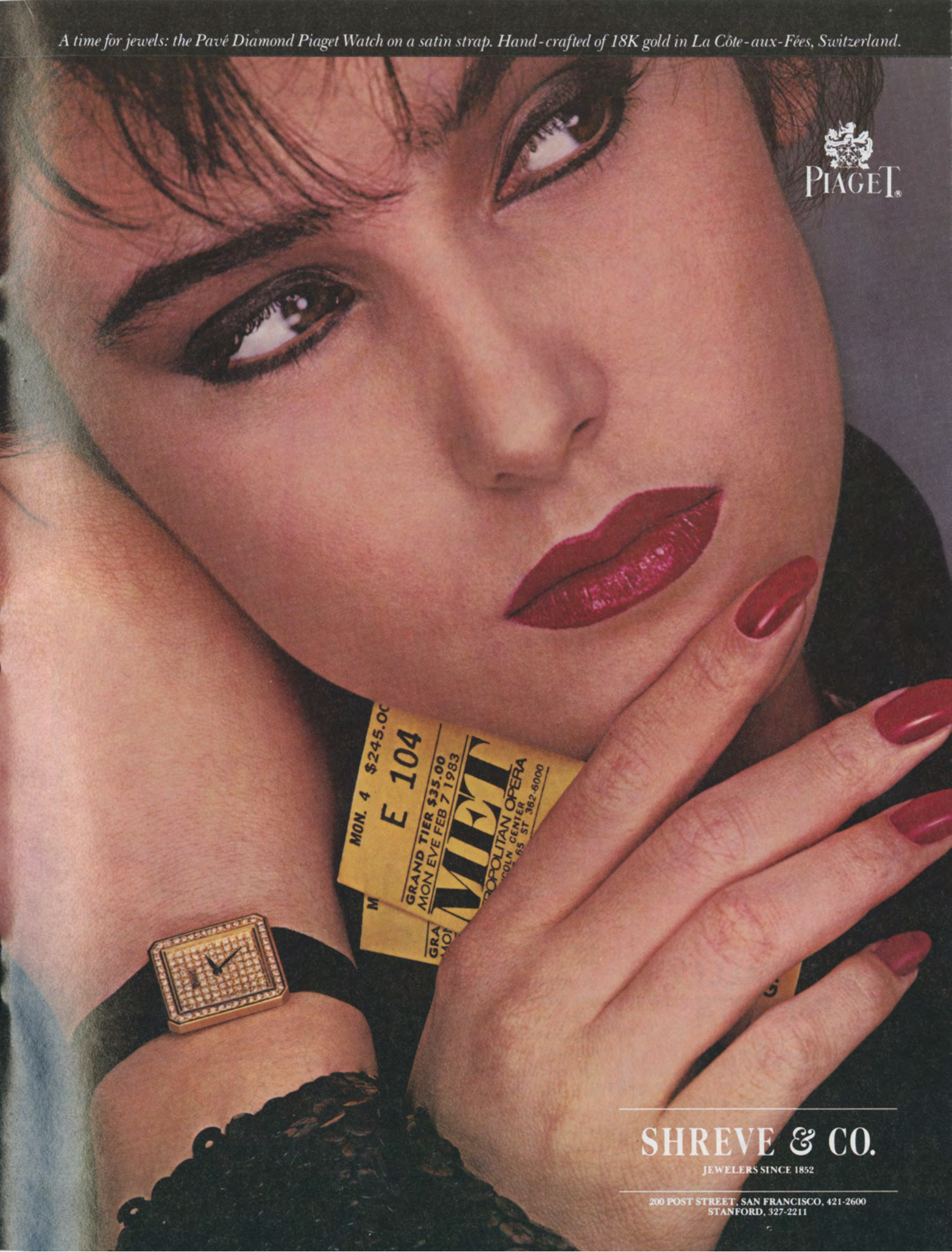
What do you want me to say about myself? That I am always the same, always discontented with everything? When fortune favors me I want it against me. When it is against me I want it to favor me; when I am in Milan I

everything goes well except my head, which I always hope will change, and which never does change.

To C.D. Marzari Dec. 14, 1850 (on receiving the proposed changes to the original libretto of *Rigoletto*, then called *Tribolletto*, as required by the censors of Venice and the authorities of the Teatro La Fenice)

(Continued)

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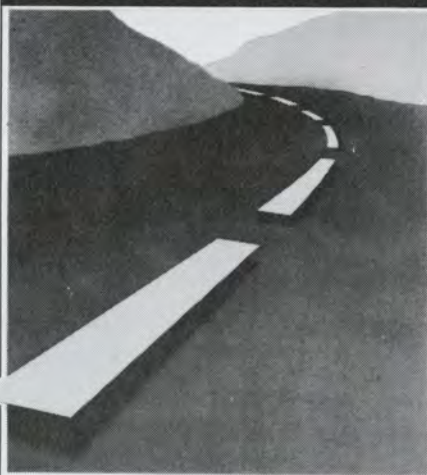


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I have had very little time to examine the new libretto. But I have seen enough to tell that in this garbled form it lacks both character and significance, and, finally, its most dramatic moments now leave one cold . . . In the fifth scene of Act I, all the rage of the courtiers against Triboletto doesn't make any sense. The old man's curse, so terrible and sublime in the original, is made ridiculous here, because the motive which drives him to utter the curse no longer has the same importance, and because it is no longer a subject who speaks so daringly to his king. . .

But may I say this: Why do they think they know more about it than I? Who can be sure? Who can say that this will be effective and that not? . . . I observe that they have avoided making Triboletto ugly and hunchbacked. A singing hunchback? Why not? . . . Can it be effective? I don't know, then neither, I repeat, does the person who proposed the change. That is just what seemed so wonderful to me: to portray this ridiculous, horribly deformed creature who is inwardly so filled with passion and love. It was precisely because of all those original traits that I chose the subject, and if they are cut out I shall no longer be able to compose the music. If they say that for the changed drama I can leave my music as it is, I reply that I don't understand such arguments. And I declare quite plainly that my music, whether beautiful or ugly, is never written at random, and that I always try to fit it to the character . . . my artistic conscience will never allow me to put this libretto to music.

To Cammarano April 4, 1851

If in opera there were neither cavatinas, duets, trios, choruses, finales, etcetera, and the whole work consisted, let's say, of a single number, I should find that all the more right and proper.

To Cesare De Sanctis Jan. 1, 1853

. . . I cannot conceal from you that I read all libretti that are sent to me with considerable dissatisfaction. It is impossible, or almost impossible, for anyone else to guess what sort of thing I want. I want plots that are great, beautiful, varied, daring . . . daring to an extreme, new in form and at the same time adapted to composition. If a person says that I have done such and such because Romani, Cammarano, or others did that . . . then we no longer understand each other. Precisely because those great men did it one way, I should like to have something different done.

To Antonio Somma Aug. 30, 1853

No one loves novel forms more than I do, but only such novelties as can be put to music. Of course, anything can be put to music, but not always to good effect. In composing music you need certain stanzas to write cantabiles, others to

write ensembles, others for largos, for allegros, etc., etc., and all varied enough so that none of it turns out cold or monotonous.

To Somma Sept. 9, 1853

As for the recitatives, if the scene is interesting they can even be rather long. I've done some very long ones, for example: the soliloquy in the first act of Macbeth, and the other soliloquy in the duet of the first act of Rigoletto.

To Somma April 22, 1853

. . . allow me to point out to you some of my own ideas, for whatever they may be worth. My long experience has confirmed me in the beliefs I've always held concerning dramatic effect, though in my youth I didn't have the courage to put them wholly into practice (for instance, ten years ago I wouldn't have dared to



Francesco Maria Piave, 1810-1876, librettist for La Traviata. Verdi nelle immagini, 1941.

do Rigoletto). To me, our opera nowadays sins in the direction of too great a monotony, so much so that I would now refuse to write on such subjects as Nabucco or Foscari, etc. They have but one burden to their song: elevated if you like, but always the same. To be more explicit, Tasso's work may be better, but I prefer Ariosto a thousand times. For the same reason I prefer Shakespeare to all other dramatists, including the Greeks. As far as dramatic effectiveness is concerned, it seems to me that the best material I have yet put to music (I'm not speaking of literary or poetic worth) is Rigoletto. It has the most powerful situations, it has variety, vitality, pathos . . .

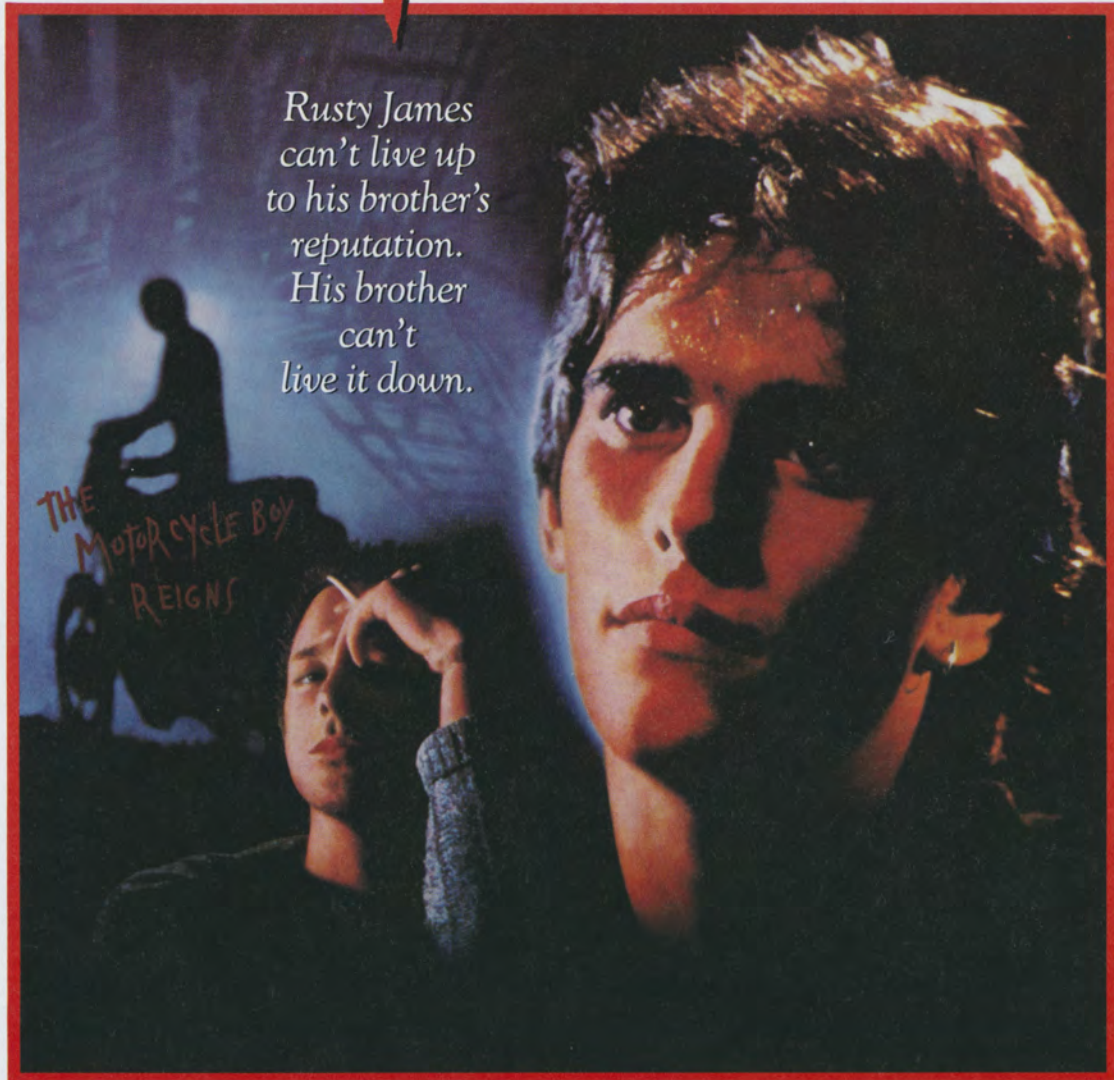
I take the liberty of telling you that though

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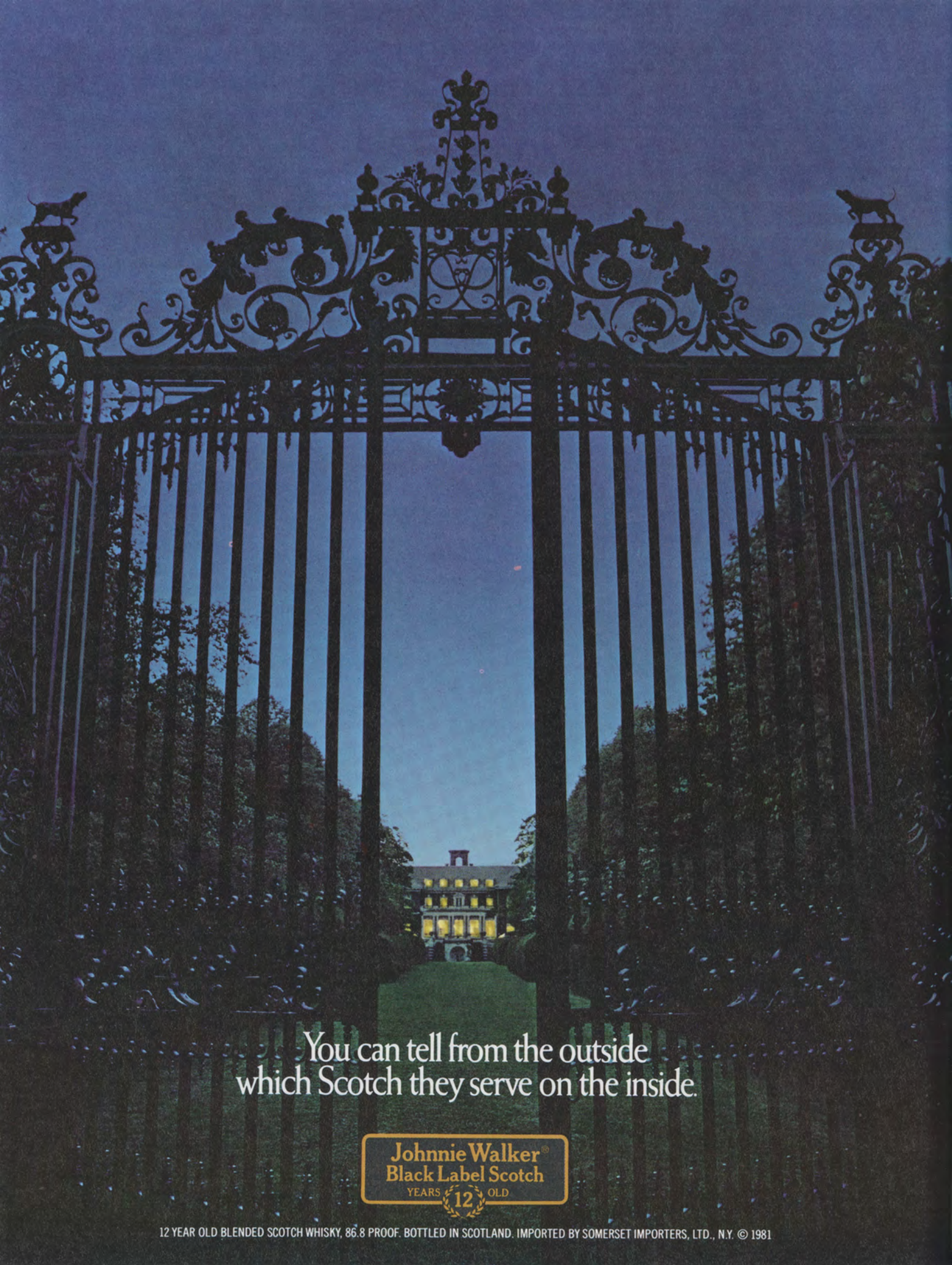
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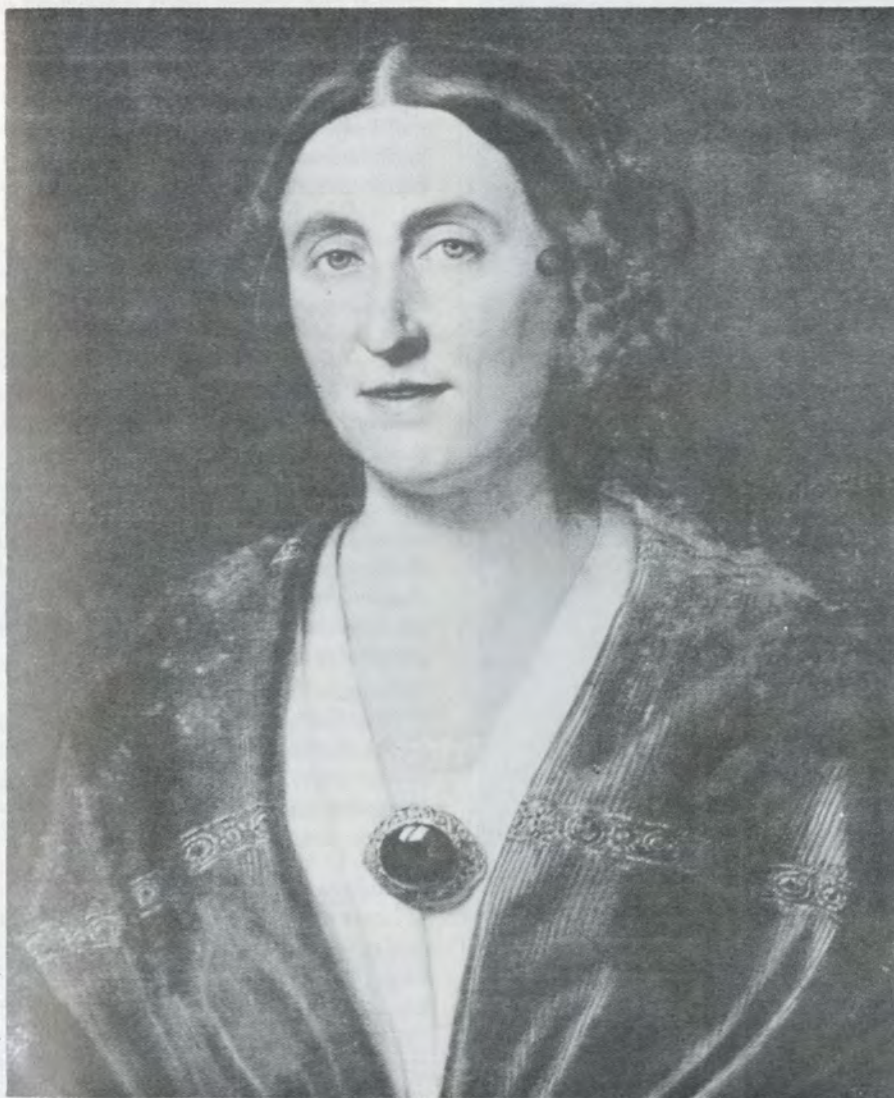
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Giuseppina Strepponi in an oil portrait by an unknown artist. The painting still hangs on a wall of Verdi's bedroom. Verdi nelle immagini, 1941.

the subjects you propose are eminently dramatic, I don't find in them the variety my crazy brain desires . . .

To De Sanctis Paris, Jan. 18, 1854

. . . as to the subject you suggest of Paolo, I can't do it because . . . it seems to be one of the usual things without novelty or variety. Novelty, novelty, the rock on which all young poets founder! They think they are touching the Heavens with their fingers when they can say "I write like Romani, like Cammarano" etc . . . Great Heavens! Precisely for that reason, they should do otherwise. When will a poet come who will give Italy an operatic text that has scope, power, freedom from convention, variety, that unites all these elements and is above all new!

To Appiani Paris, Feb. 25, 1854

The artist must give himself up to his own inspiration and, if he has true talent, he feels and knows better than anyone else what his needs are. I should feel perfectly confident to

compose any subject that moved me, even if every other composer condemned it as unsuitable for music.

To Teresa De Giuli-Borsi 1854

Where would (a new aria in Rigoletto) be put? Words and music can be written, but would make no effect without the right time and place . . . let me add that my intention was that Rigoletto should be one long series of duets, without arias or finales, because that is how I felt it. If anyone replies, "but you could have done this or that or the other", I can only say, "that may be, but I did not know how to do any better."

To Somma Paris, Jan. 24, 1855

That sestina you sent me is good; only, if you do four sestinas of ten syllables, the aria, or rather the rhythm, will be monotonous . . . retain that first sestina and write another too, if you wish, but after them, change the meter. The more variety of meter there is, the more variety there will be in the music. If this aria had even

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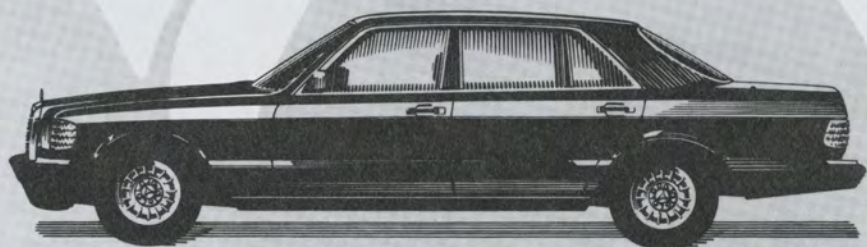
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three or four different meters it would not be bad: the more originality in the form, the better.

To Clarina Maffei Paris, March 2, 1854

I could say I lack a desire to write; or better, that I hate to sign a contract. But it is not as people have said, (that I don't write for La Scala) because I have contract obligations here through 1856 and after. I have no obligations after the opera I'm writing now (Vespri). Nor is it (as has also been said) any desire to grow roots here. Grow roots? Is it really possible? And what would be the use of it anyhow? For what purpose? For fame? I don't believe in it. For money? I make just as much and perhaps more in Italy. And I repeat, even if I wanted to do so, it would be impossible. I am too fond of my seclusion, my little piece of sky at home, and I refuse to doff my hat to any barons or counts or anyone else. Finally I don't have millions, and I shall never spend my hard-earned couple of thousand francs for publicity, clagues, and such vile horrors. And it seems they are necessary if you want to achieve success.

To Somma March 10, 1855

Now that you've finished Lear, could you find another subject which you could do for me at your leisure? A beautiful subject, original, interesting, with fine situations, and impassioned: passions above all!

To Somma April 7, 1856

I am not sure that the fourth act of Lear is good in the form you have sent it to me, but I do know that you can't impose that many recitatives, one after the other, on the audience, especially in the fourth act. These are not a composer's whims. I would be willing to set even a newspaper or a letter, etc. to music, but in the theater the public will stand for anything except boredom . . .

To Leon Escudier 1865 (concerning the revised edition of Macbeth)

You will laugh when you see that I have written a fugue for that battle!!! I, who detest everything that smacks of theory. But I assure you that in this case the fugue form is permissible. The mad chase of subjects and counter-subjects, and the clash of dissonances, the general uproar, can suggest a battle quite well.

To Giuseppe Piroli May 30, 1868

As for this perpetual bugbear of decadence which has arisen in every period from the time of Marcello, it is something quite ridiculous. In every case, one would have to make a thorough examination before pronouncing sentence. I am the last person to need to defend my own period or accuse others of the past, but it would be easy enough to point, even in certain operatic masterpieces of an earlier age, to the brainless conventionality of the numbers, the pedantry of the pezzi concertati, melody more often than not turning into singing exercises, false expression,

a hard, heavy, monotonous scoring without poetry and above all without purpose. We too have our failings, and they are considerable, but there is less conventionality, more dramatic truth in the form; and the ensembles speak a language proper to the passions expressed (an ugly language perhaps but it's a great step forward); the expression is more truthful; and above all, the scoring has a meaning and a purpose which it didn't have before.

To Filippo Filippi 1871 (on his proposal to go as a journalist to Cairo for the premiere of *Aida*)

I have the feeling that if this sort of thing goes on, art will no longer be art, but an empty trade, a pleasure journey, a hunt, a mere something that people run after, to which they would like to give, if not success, at least publicity at any price. What it makes me feel is disgust and humiliation! I always think with pleasure of my early days, when I came before the public with my works almost without a friend, without a soul to talk to me, without preparation, without the well-known influence. I was ready to take any bullets as they came, and more than happy if I succeeded in creating a musical impression. And now—what machinery for one opera! Journalists, soloists, choruses, directors, professors, etc.—each one must now contribute his mite to the structure of advertising.

To Count Opprandino Arrivabene July 16, 1875

There are those who want to be melodists like Bellini and harmonists like Meyerbeer. I wouldn't want either . . . and I should wish that when a young man sets out to compose he should never think of being either a melodist nor a harmonist nor a realist nor an idealist nor all the devilish ideas that such pedantry brings about. Melody and harmony should merely be the tools in the hands of the artist for the sake of making Music; and the day will come when there won't be any more talk of melody or harmony or German schools and Italian schools nor of the present nor of the future, and then perhaps the reign of art will begin.

To Arrivabene October 18, 1880

. . . why should anyone go and drag out a musician's letters? Letters which are always written hastily, carelessly, without his attaching any importance to them, because the musician knows he has no reputation to sustain as an author. Isn't it enough that he should be booed for his music? No, sir! The letters too! Oh, what a plague fame is! The poor little great celebrated men pay dearly for popularity. Never an hour of peace for them, either in life or in death. I leave you and go out into the fields. That is my present occupation. The weather is beautiful and I walk from morning till night. It is a very prosaic life, but it makes you feel very well. □

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ning by participating in the San Francisco Opera Center Auditions, held in regional centers around the country, aspiring opera singers progress through the Merola Opera Program, Western Opera Theater tours and the Showcase series, as well as Brown Bag Opera and American Opera Project presentations, before receiving Adler Fellowships and ultimately appearing in the international seasons of the San Francisco Opera.

Of course, the motives of the Center in grooming these talented youngsters for eventual stardom are not entirely altruistic; the parent Company sponsoring these diversified activities gains in two important ways. First, the San Francisco Opera develops productive relationships with singers for whose services many companies will someday compete. Equally important, the Center helps to create enthusiastic and discerning audiences without which even the most finely honed talent is useless.

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film and records may expose millions to opera for the first time, but they can only whet the public's appetite for the real thing—live opera.

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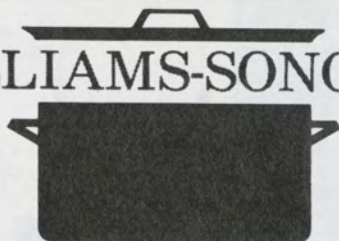
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presents two fully staged productions each year, one at Stern Grove, free to the public, and one at Villa Montalvo. The Merola Program itself culminates in the Grand Finals, a concert of arias and ensembles performed with full orchestral accompaniment before a capacity audience in the Opera House. No admission is charged, and the young performers win admirers not only for themselves but for the art form as well.

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workshops and master classes designed to fit the specific needs of the communities they visit. Once a child has tried on a character's wig, studied stage direction or engaged in the many pre- and post-performance activities organized by the Center, he or she will find opera to be a magical part of life.

Persons who are intimidated by the enormous scale on which grand opera is mounted will find the Center's Showcase series of performances, begun in 1982, especially appealing and easily accessible. Presented in the intimate surroundings of Herbst Theatre in the Veterans Building, Showcase productions emphasize innovative repertory and the vibrant theatrical experience that is the goal of any opera performance. For remarkably low prices, patrons can sample operatic offerings spanning the entire repertoire, from early baroque to premieres of new works presented under the auspices of the American Opera Project.

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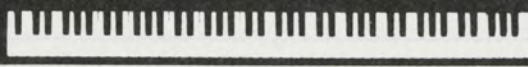


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Taking opera out of the War Memorial and into the streets is one of the San Francisco Opera Center's functions. Above: shoppers in San Francisco's Maiden Lane are treated to a scene from *Tosca* featuring tenor Dana Talley and soprano Rebecca Cook.

performances have been applauded enthusiastically since 1974 in city and state parks, schools, shopping centers, business districts, hospitals and nursing homes, and even at the San Francisco International Airport.

Thanks to the San Francisco Opera Center, not only are promising young talents being discovered and refined; new forums for displaying that talent are being developed. What was once thought of as an "irrational entertainment" (according to Ben Jonson) has become an important source of artistic satisfaction for countless thousands from every walk of life. Opera was created and is intended for everyone; through the Center's activities, everyone can now lay claim to that incredibly rich legacy of music and drama that is the magic of opera. □

Below: participants in the 1982 San Francisco Opera Center Auditions Grand Finals line up on the War Memorial stage for a stirring ensemble preceding the presentation of numerous cash awards.



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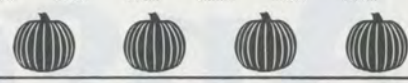
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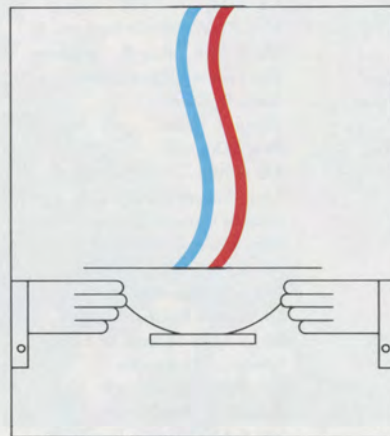
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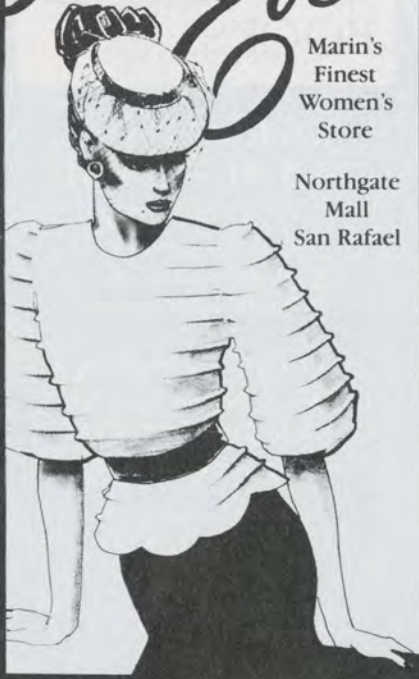
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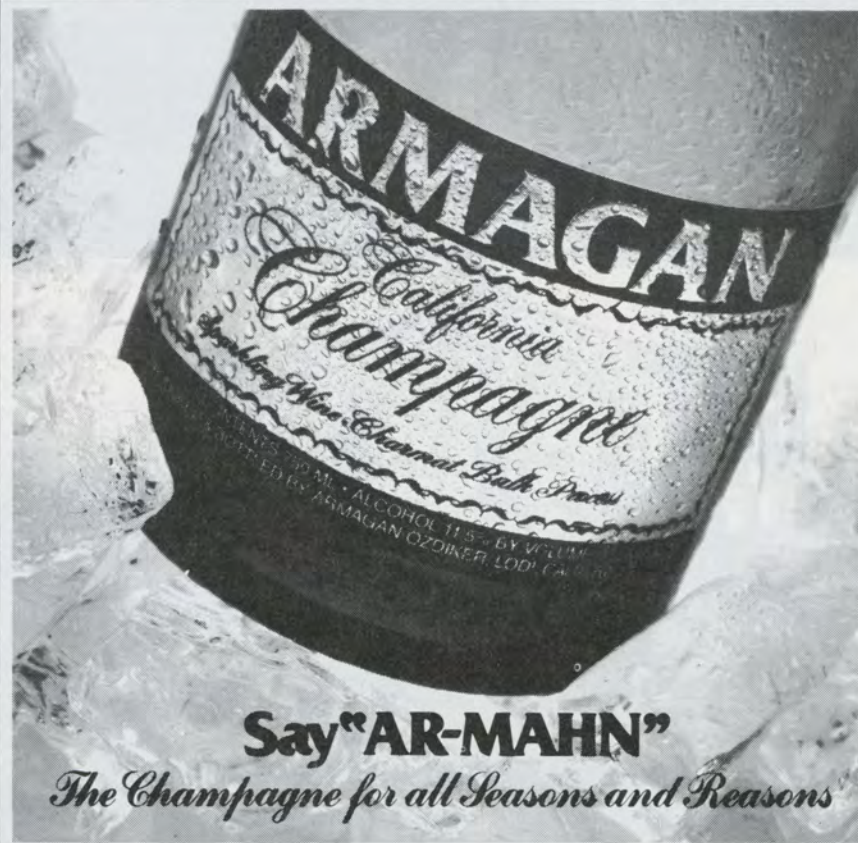
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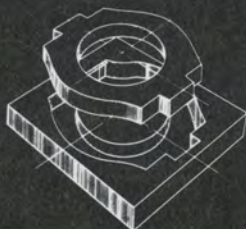


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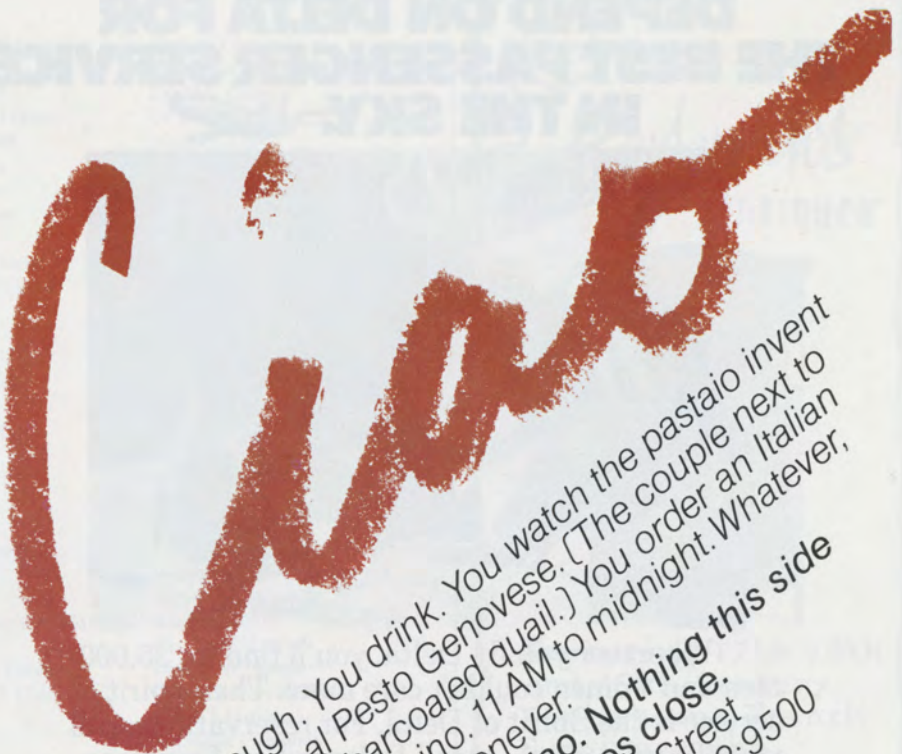
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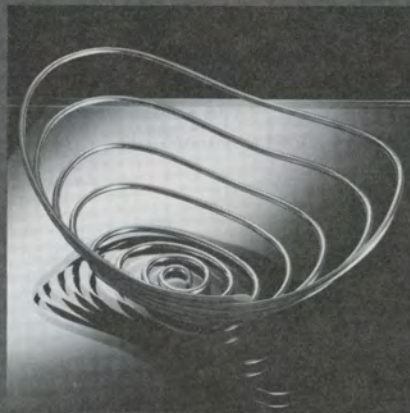
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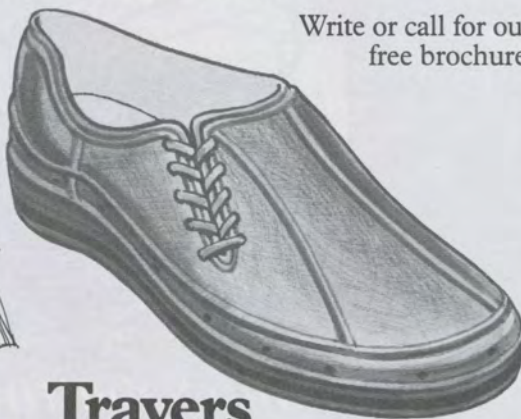
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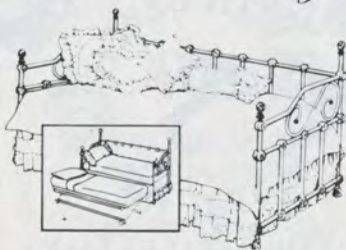
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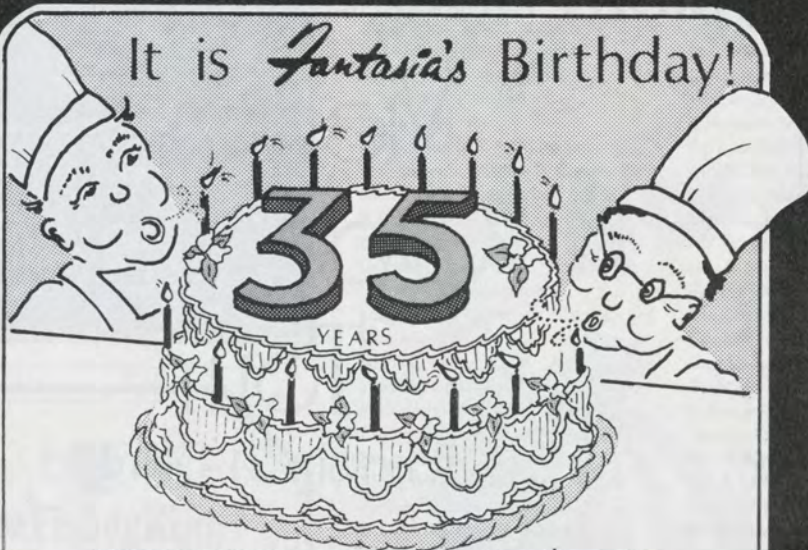
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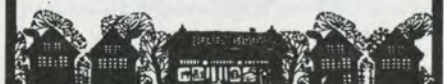
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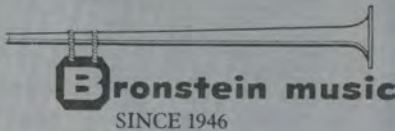
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Services

Bus Service

Many Opera goers who live in the northern section of San Francisco are regular patrons of the Municipal Railway special "Opera Bus."

This bus is added to Muni's north-bound 47 line following all evening performances of the Opera, Symphony, Ballet and other major events. The service is also provided for all Saturday and Sunday matinees.

Look for this bus, marked "47 Special," after each performance in the bus zone at Van Ness Avenue and Grove Street—across Van Ness from the Opera House.

Its route is as follows:

North on Van Ness to Chestnut, then left to Divisadero where it turns left to Union. It continues on Union over Russian Hill to Columbus, then left to Powell—then right to the end of the line at North Point.

Taxi Service

Patrons needing a cab at the end of the performance should reserve one with the doorman at the Taxi Entrance before the end of the final intermission.

Food Service

The lower lounge in the Opera House is now open one and one-half hours prior to curtain time for hot buffet service. Patrons arriving before the front doors open will be admitted at the Carriage Entrance.

Refreshments are served in the box tier on the mezzanine floor, the grand tier and dress circle levels during all performances.

Emergency Telephone

The telephone number 431-4370 may be used by patrons for emergencies only during performances. Before the performance, patrons anticipating possible emergencies should leave their seat number at the Nurse's Station in the lower lounge, where the emergency telephone is located.

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.

Watch That Watch

Patrons are reminded to please check that their digital watch alarms are switched OFF before the performance begins.

Ticket Information

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

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

Unused Tickets

Patrons who are unable to attend a performance may make a worthwhile contribution to the San Francisco Opera Association by returning their tickets to the Box Office or telephoning (415) 431-1210. Donors will receive a receipt for the full value, but the amount is not considered a contribution to the fund drive or fulfillment of a fund drive pledge.

Opera glasses are available for rent in the lobby.

Please note that no cameras or tape recorders are permitted in the Opera House.

Children of any age attending a performance must have a ticket.

Management reserves the right to remove any patron creating a disturbance.

For lost and found information, inquire at check room No. 3 or call (415) 621-6600, 9 A.M. to 4 P.M.

Performing Arts Center Tours

Tours of the San Francisco Performing Arts Center, which include the War Memorial Opera House, the Louise M. Davies Symphony Hall and the Herbst Theatre take place as follows:

Mondays, 10:00-2:30 on the hour and half hour.

Davies Hall only:

Wednesday 1:30/2:30—Saturday 12:30/1:30

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.

THE OPERA HOUSE MUSEUM, located on the south mezzanine (box) level behind the Opera Boutique, currently houses an exhibit on the San Francisco Opera Center. Featuring photographs and information on the talented young singers of the Center, the display, assembled by Christine Albany, provides an introduction to the many activities and events that make the San Francisco Opera Center unique among operatic training programs in this country.



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