Don Giovanni

1984

Wednesday, November 21, 1984 8:00 PM
Sunday, November 25, 1984 2:00 PM
Wednesday, November 28, 1984 7:30 PM
Saturday, December 1, 1984 8:00 PM
Tuesday, December 4, 1984 8:00 PM
Friday, December 7, 1984 8:00 PM
Sunday, December 9, 1984 2:00 PM

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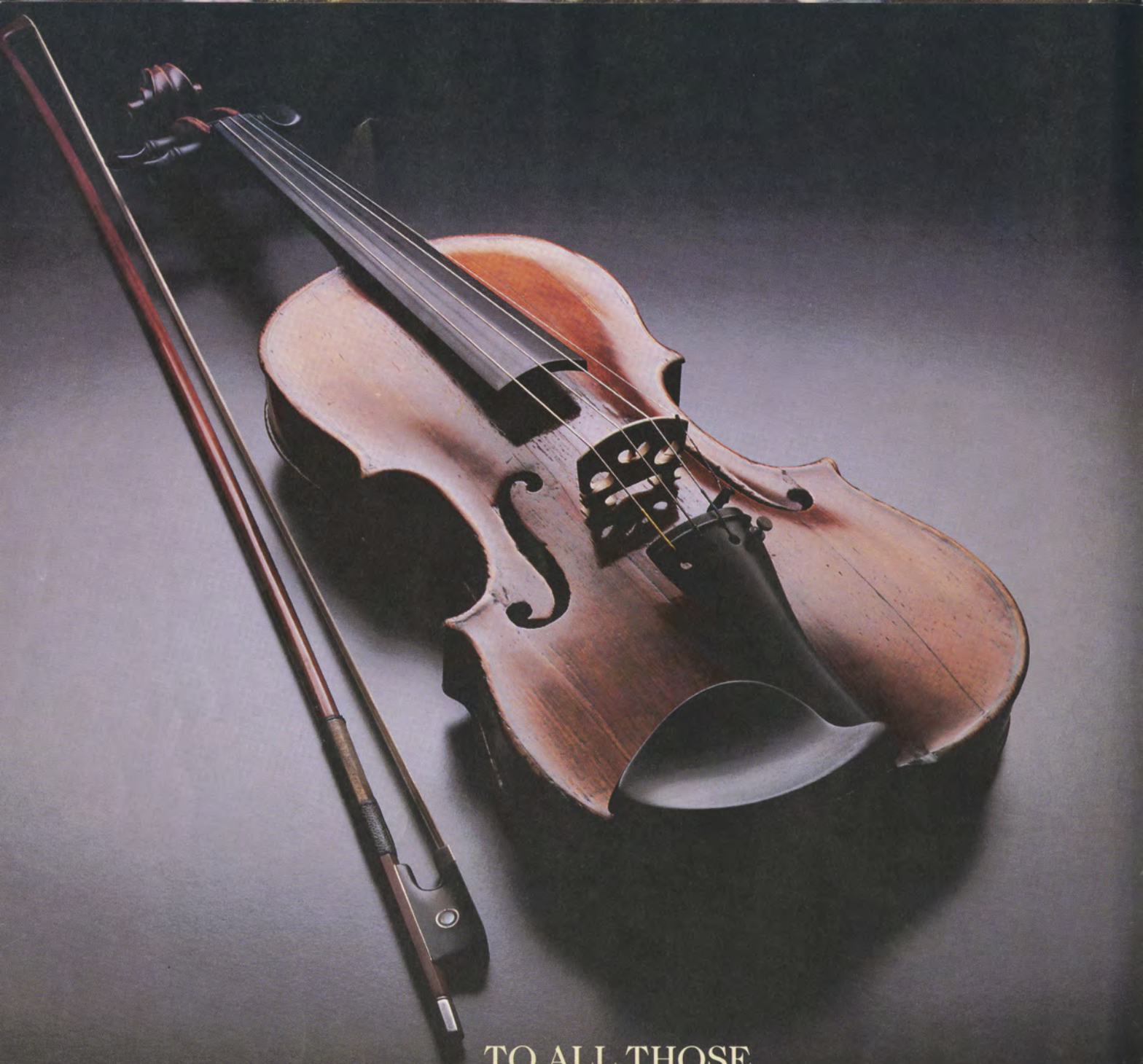
San Francisco Opera

FALL SEASON 1984

Don Giovanni

PERFORMING ARTS NETWORK PUBLICATION $1.50



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San Francisco Opera

Terence A. McEwen, *General Director*

Don Giovanni

FALL SEASON 1984

FEATURES

DEPARTMENTS

COVER:
Francisco de Goya, 1746-1828
Majas on a Balcony, 1808-12
Oil on canvas, 76¾ x 49½ in.
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
Bequest of Mrs. H.O. Havemeyer, 1929
The H.O. Havemeyer Collection

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

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San Francisco Opera Association

From the President


ROBERT MESSICK

Welcome to San Francisco Opera's 62nd consecutive Fall Season, a season featuring an exciting array of many of today's greatest singers in repertoire ranging from beloved classics to such less well known masterpieces as *Anna Bolena* and *Khovanshchina*, both being given here for the first time.

Great singers, like priceless jewels, need appropriate settings to show their brilliance to greatest advantage. To provide such settings requires more than the artistry of designers and the talents of the many people required to construct the scenery and costumes; it takes the generosity of numerous individuals and groups who underwrite the enormous costs of mounting grand opera on the scale our audiences deserve and have come to expect.

Assistance for production funding has come from a variety of sources: *Ernani* has been made possible by a generous gift in memory of George Quist, a member of the Opera Assocation Board of Directors from 1979 to 1982; presentation of *Khovanshchina* has been made possible through the generosity of the L.J. Skaggs and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation; and the expanded orchestra for *Elektra* was made possible through the generosity of Mr. and Mrs. Peter Hoefer, Mr. and Mrs. David Marsten, and Mr. Alex G. Spanos. Three productions were underwritten by generous donors in the past: *Madama Butterfly* was donated by the San Francisco Opera Guild, while *Rigoletto* and *Don Giovanni* were made possible in 1973 and '74, respectively, by generous gifts from the late James D. Robertson. The revival of *Madama Butterfly* is underwritten in part by Pacific Bell, while the remounting of *Don Giovanni* has been made possible in part by a gift from Mrs. Marion M. Miller. Our deepest thanks go to these generous "angels."

We have further cause to be thankful for the supertitles that will enhance our productions of *L'Elisir d'Amore* and *Khovanshchina*, as well as selected performances of *Madama Butterfly*, courtesy of a generous grant from Citicorp. In recognizing the public's positive responses to supertitles, Citicorp has demonstrated its innovative spirit and alert sensitivity to the need to broaden audiences for the performing arts.

Grand opera is the most expensive performing art form in existence and, with the addition of our Summer Season and a larger Fall Season commencing in 1981, we have incurred significant losses in recent years, as expected. Thanks to a generous matching grant of $500,000 from the Paul L. and Phyllis Wattis Foundation and the one-time matching gifts from directors and a limited number of other major contributors, we have received a sum which exceeds the loss for 1983, which was the purpose of this special fund drive. This fantastic result, however, is a one-time effort, and we must increase the amount of annual funds raised to cover current costs and to amortize the remaining accumulated deficit.

Financing our opera is a major undertaking. Our 1984 expenses related to carrying out our total opera program will approximate $18 million. Ticket sales are estimated to be about $10 million (just about the same as in 1983). The resulting ratio of ticket sales to costs, 55 per cent, compares favorably with other major companies in the United States, and is far better than that of major European companies. But from where do we get the difference of $8 million? A variety of sources—government grants, special events, income from our endowment and reserve funds, the San Francisco Opera Guild, production sponsorships—will provide about one-half of the gap. The other one-half, $4 million (or 40 per cent of the price of your seats), must be raised from our supporting public, if we are not to incur a loss. We are dependent on the generosity of thousands of contributors to continue presenting grand opera of the quality on which our reputation has been built—a quality that we are determined to maintain. If you are not a contributor, won't you please become one? If you are, please accept our thanks with our hope you will consider a significant increase this year.

Once again it is a pleasure to express 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. Their continued support has earned our deepest appreciation.

—WALTER M. BAIRD

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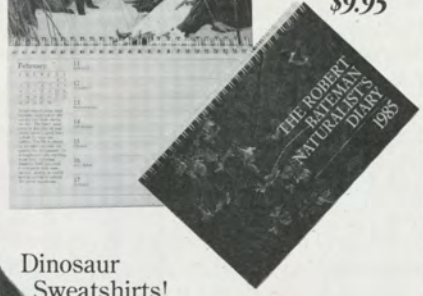

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General Director's Message

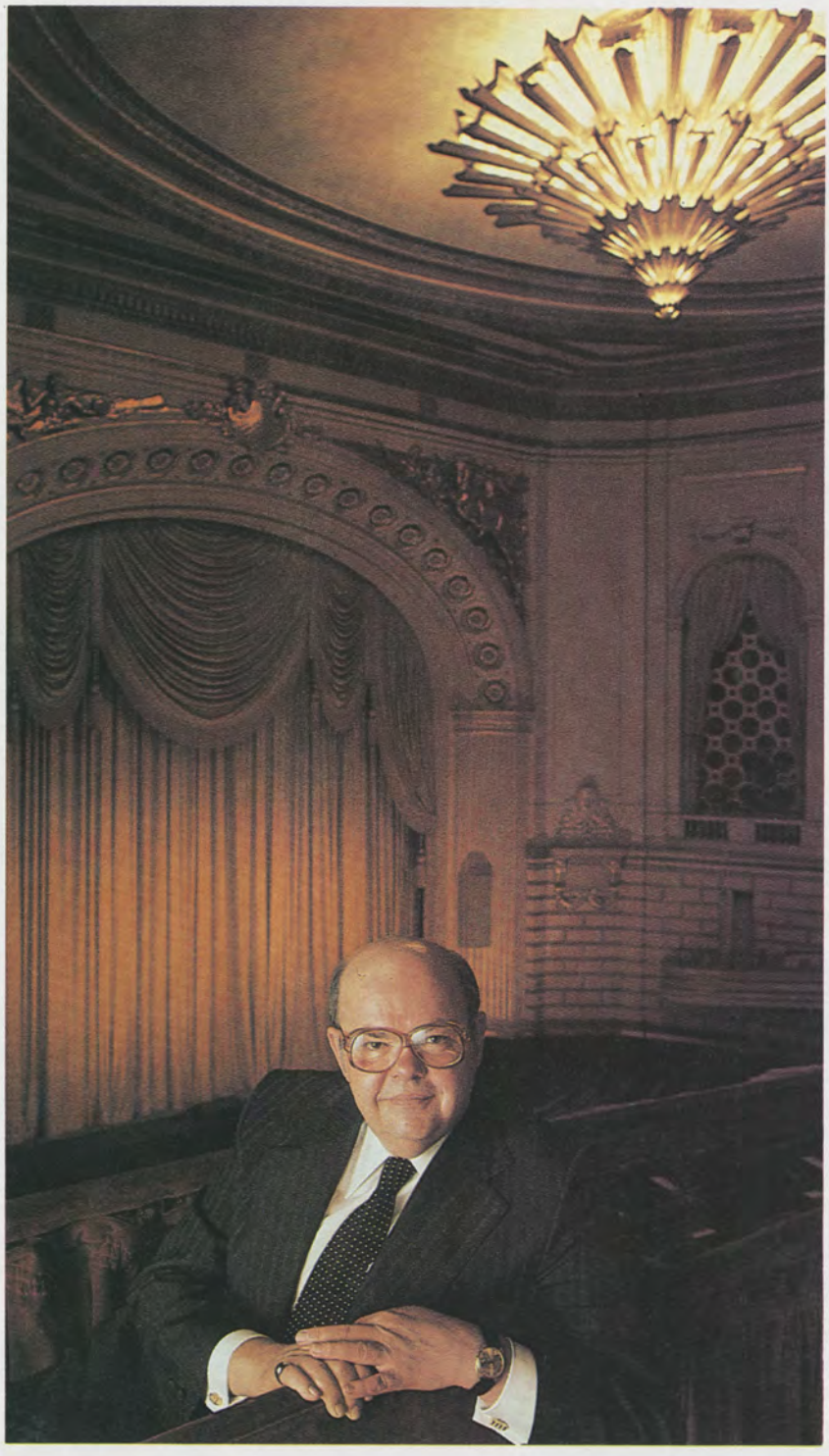
1984 is for us at the Opera House a year of consolidation, a year of artistic progress and administrative stability. We set ourselves some difficult goals and we are well on our way to achieving them.

This is the year we must stay within our budget and yet present to you the standard of artistic excellence that has become San Francisco's trademark. I hope by the end of the season, you will feel we have accomplished that.

It gives me immense personal satisfaction to see so many of the world's finest vocal artists on the Opera House stage this season, a roster that includes many of the superstars who have become household names, as well as some of today's most exciting and fastest-rising young operatic talents.

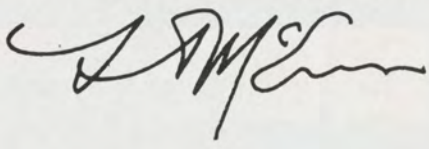
The operas in which they will be heard this season are drawn from the Italian, French, German and Russian repertoires, each exhibiting opportunities for superlative singing while making unique demands posed by widely disparate styles of lyric theater. From early Italian *bel canto* (both comic and tragic) to the landmark developments of Verdi; from Mozart's singular *dramma giocoso* to two verismo favorites; from the saga of 17th-century Russia to the devastating power of Greek tragedy, our 1984 Fall Season illustrates the broad spectrum of operatic expression. Such a season poses an enormous challenge to our Company's artistic resources, a challenge we have welcomed while in the course of preparing this season for you.

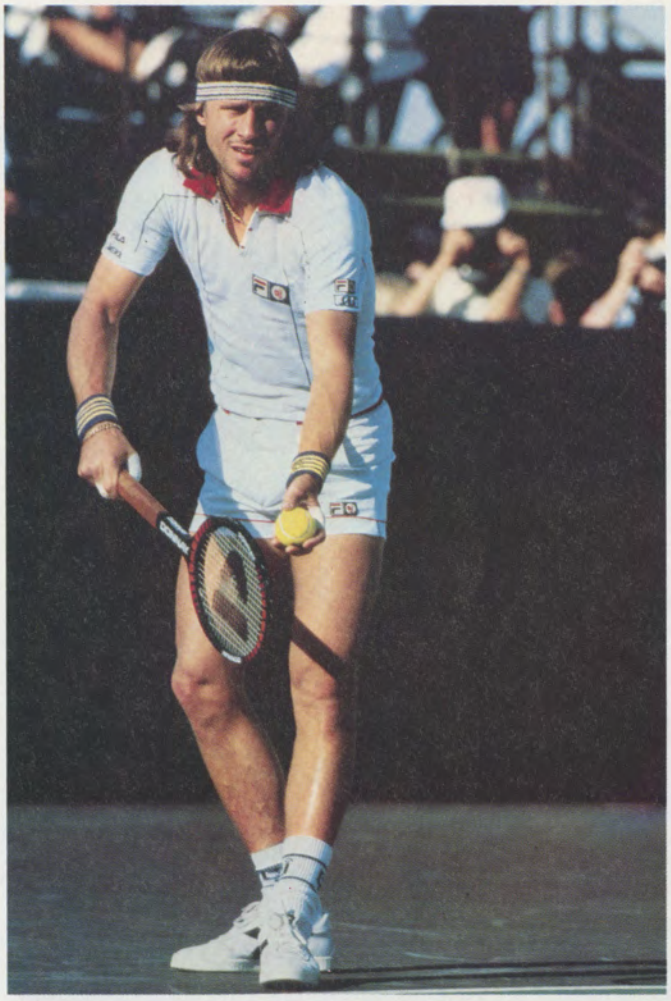
All of this is possible only because of the kindness and generosity—both public and anonymous—of our special friends. We are also happy to introduce to the Fall Season our use of supertitles, which are underwritten this fall by Citicorp. (We hope to extend the use of supertitles to more operas in the future, as funding becomes available.) Your enthusiastic reception of supertitles in the past has convinced us of our audience's desire to extract the maximum satisfaction from their operatic encounters. It is a heartening trend and it once again confirms our operagoers' reputation as the world's most dedicated opera audience.



RON SCHERL

That dedication is matched by the commitment of our entire staff, not only the artists and technicians whose work is visible on stage, but the many supporting personnel who help keep this great Company running smoothly. We are proud of our work and gratified by your recognition and assistance. It is with gladness that we anticipate the challenges and rewards of our ongoing artistic alliance with you.





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San Francisco Opera

Terence A. McEwen, *General Director*

1984 Fall Season

Opening Night
Friday, September 7, **9:00**
Ernani Verdi
This production is dedicated to the memory of George Quist, San Francisco Opera Board of Directors, 1979-1982.
Caballé, Zajic/Todisco, Milnes, Plishka, Harper, Will
Gardelli/Joël/Benois/Munn

Saturday, September 8, 8:00
Carmen Bizet
Nafé**, Erickson, Gibbons*, Bruno/Ciannella*, Carlson, Thomas, Malis, Patterson, Matthews
Navarro/Ponnelle/Calábria/Ponnelle, Juerke/Munn

Tuesday, September 11, 8:00
Carmen Bizet

Wednesday, September 12, 8:00
Ernani Verdi

Friday, September 14, 8:00
Carmen Bizet

Saturday, September 15, 8:00
Ernani Verdi

Monday, September 17, 8:00
Carmen Bizet

Tuesday, September 18, 8:00
Production new to San Francisco
La Sonnambula Bellini
Production sets owned by Seattle Opera Company.
von Stade, Howe, Rice/O'Neill*, Ramey, Tate, Patterson
Rescigno/Macdonald/Dehò*, Sormani*/Macdonald/Arhelger

Wednesday, September 19, 8:00
Ernani Verdi

Thursday, September 20, **7:30**
Carmen Bizet

Friday, September 21, 8:00
La Sonnambula Bellini

Saturday, September 22, 8:00
Ernani Verdi

Sunday, September 23, 2:00
Carmen Bizet

Tuesday, September 25, 8:00
La Sonnambula Bellini

Wednesday, September 26, **7:30**
Ernani Verdi

Thursday, September 27, 8:00
Carmen Bizet

Saturday, September 29, 8:00
La Sonnambula Bellini

Sunday, September 30, 2:00
Ernani Verdi

Tuesday, October 2, 8:00 **S**
L'Elisir d'Amore Donizetti
Ferrarini**, Swenson/Lima, Del Carlo, Duesing
Agler/Sciutti*/Darling/Sakellariou/Arhelger

Thursday, October 4, **7:30**
La Sonnambula Bellini

Friday, October 5, 8:00 **S**
L'Elisir d'Amore Donizetti

Saturday, October 6, 8:00
Madama Butterfly Puccini
This production was originally donated to the San Francisco Opera by the San Francisco Opera Guild.
Kincses* Rice, Gustafson/Cortez*, Krause, Thomas, Albert*, Will, Malis
Meltzer/Farruggio/Businger/Munn

Sunday, October 7, 2:00
La Sonnambula Bellini

Tuesday, October 9, 8:00 **S**
L'Elisir d'Amore Donizetti

Wednesday, October 10, 8:00
Madama Butterfly Puccini

Friday, October 12, 8:00
La Sonnambula Bellini

Saturday, October 13, 8:00 **S**
L'Elisir d'Amore Donizetti

Sunday, October 14, 2:00
Madama Butterfly Puccini

Tuesday, October 16, 8:00
Madama Butterfly Puccini
Mitchell, Rice, Gustafson/Cortez, Krause, Thomas, Albert, Will, Malis
Meltzer/Farruggio/Businger/Munn

Wednesday, October 17, **7:30 S**
L'Elisir d'Amore Donizetti

Thursday, October 18, 8:00
Elektra Strauss
Martin, Neblett, Crespin, Adler*, Gustafson, Bruno, Hillhouse*, Zajic, Swenson, Howe, Lancaster*/Bailey, Wimberger*, Patterson, Tate
Tate*/Resnik*/Siercke/Blatas*/Munn

Friday, October 19, 8:00
Madama Butterfly Puccini

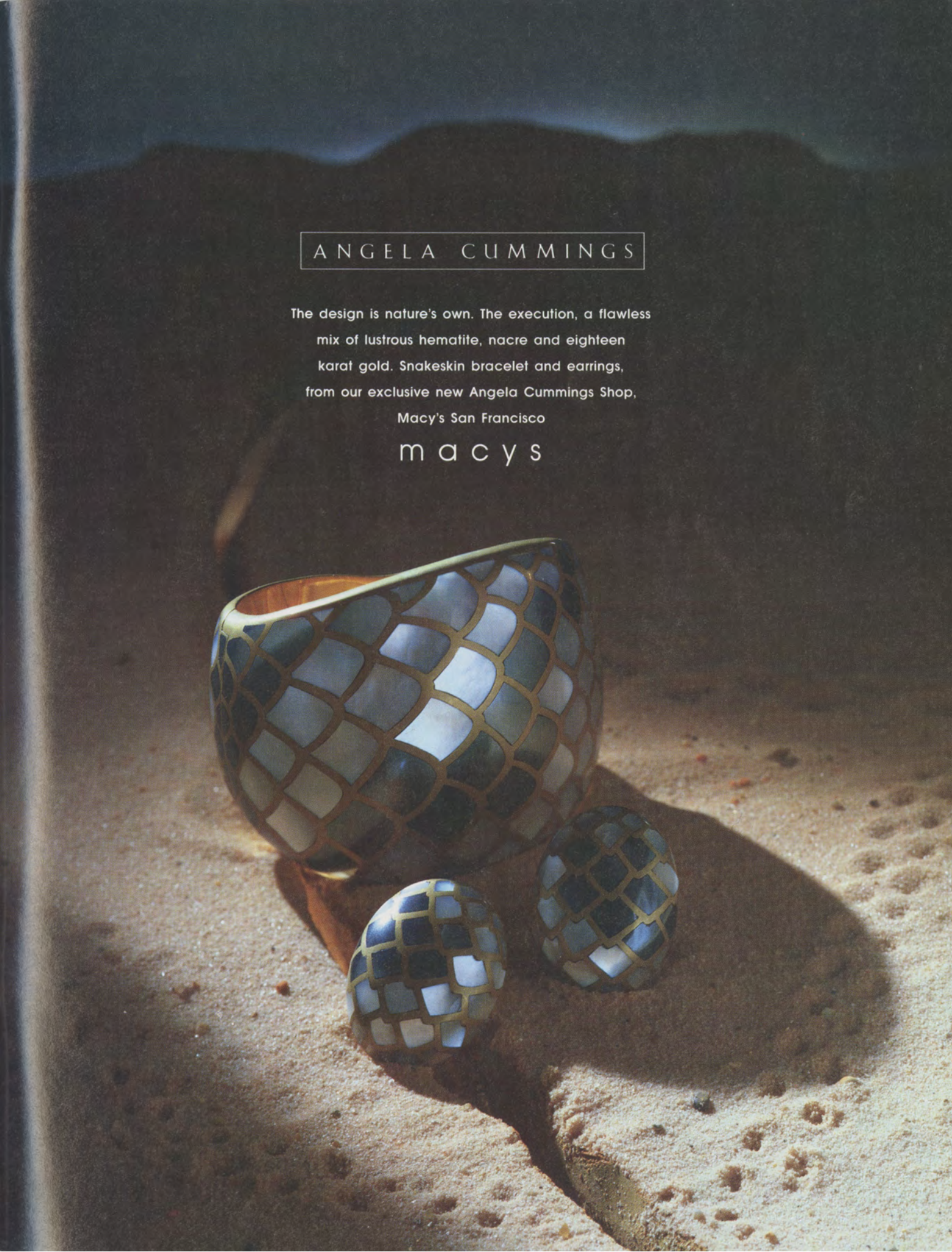
Sunday, October 21, 2:00 **S**
L'Elisir d'Amore Donizetti

Tuesday, October 23, 8:00
Elektra Strauss

Wednesday, October 24, **7:30**
Madama Butterfly Puccini

Thursday, October 25, 8:00
Production new to San Francisco
Anna Bolena Donizetti
This production of *Anna Bolena*, originated by the Canadian Opera Company, was made possible by a generous and deeply-appreciated gift from the Gramma Fisher Foundation,

The Archives for the Performing Arts invites you to view its exhibition of opera photographs by San Francisco artist, Ira Nowinski, currently on display in the War Memorial Opera House Museum. The exhibition, featuring a wide array of opera luminaries such as Montserrat Caballé, Luciano Pavarotti, Joan Sutherland, and Leontyne Price, is drawn from Nowinski's acclaimed book, "Backstage at the Opera." The Opera House Museum is located on the south mezzanine (box) level, adjacent to the Opera Boutique. Photographs for the exhibition, courtesy of the Stephen Wirtz Gallery, San Francisco.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Wednesday, October 24, **7:30**
Madama Butterfly Puccini

Thursday, October 25, 8:00
Production new to San Francisco
Anna Bolena Donizetti
This production of *Anna Bolena*, originated by the Canadian Opera Company, was made possible by a generous and deeply-appreciated gift from the Gramma Fisher Foundation, through the auspices of the Lyric Opera of Chicago.
Sutherland, Budai, Gettler*/Blake*, Langan, Thomas, Will
Bonynge/Mansouri/Pascoe/Stennett/Arhelger

Friday, October 26, 8:00
Elektra Strauss

Saturday, October 27, 8:00 **S**
L'Elisir d'Amore Donizetti

Sunday, October 28, 2:00
Anna Bolena Donizetti

Tuesday, October 30, 8:00
Madama Butterfly Puccini

Wednesday, October 31, **7:30**
Anna Bolena Donizetti

Thursday, November 1, 8:00
Elektra Strauss

Friday, November 2, 8:00
Madama Butterfly Puccini

Saturday, November 3, 8:00
Anna Bolena Donizetti

Sunday, November 4, 2:00
Elektra Strauss

Tuesday, November 6, 8:00
Anna Bolena Donizetti

Wednesday, November 7, **7:30**
Elektra Strauss

Friday, November 9, 8:00
Anna Bolena Donizetti

Saturday, November 10, 8:00
Elektra Strauss

Sunday, November 11, 2:00 **S**
Production new to San Francisco
Khovanshchina Mussorgsky
The San Francisco presentation of this production is made possible through the generosity of the L.J. Skaggs and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation.
Dernesch, Gustafson, Adler/Salminen*, Bailey, W. Lewis, Howell, Noble, Tate, Albert, Busterud, Malis
Albrecht/Frisell/Benois/Sulich/Munn

Tuesday, November 13, 8:00
Anna Bolena Donizetti

Wednesday, November 14, **7:30** **S**
Khovanshchina Mussorgsky

Saturday, November 17, 8:00
Rigoletto Verdi
This production was made possible in 1973 by a generous and much-appreciated gift from the late James D. Robertson.
Serra*, Richards, Zajic, Parrish/Wixell, Raffanti, Patterson, Albert, Malis, Busterud, Harper
Adler/Ponnelle, Thompson/Ponnelle/Schlumpf/Munn

Sunday, November 18, 2:00 **S**
Khovanshchina Mussorgsky

Tuesday, November 20, 8:00
Rigoletto Verdi

Wednesday, November 21, 8:00
Don Giovanni Mozart
This production was made possible in 1974 by a generous and much-appreciated gift from the late James D. Robertson.
Cook, Lorengar, Zimmermann/Brendel, Fissore, K. Lewis*, Will, Salminen
Chung/Copley/Businger, Munn/Munn

Friday, November 23, 8:00
Rigoletto Verdi

Saturday, November 24, 8:00 **S**
Khovanshchina Mussorgsky

Sunday, November 25, 2:00
Don Giovanni Mozart

Tuesday, November 27, 8:00 **S**
Khovanshchina Mussorgsky

Wednesday, November 28, **7:30**
Don Giovanni Mozart

Thursday, November 29, 8:00
Rigoletto Verdi

Friday, November 30, 8:00 **S**
Khovanshchina Mussorgsky

Saturday, December 1, 2:00 **S**
Family Matinee
Madama Butterfly Puccini
This production was originally donated to the San Francisco Opera by the San Francisco Opera Guild.
Hartliep, Bruno, Gustafson/MacNeil, Busterud, Tate, Patterson, Will, Malis
Johnson*/Farruggio/Businger/Munn

Saturday, December 1, 8:00
Don Giovanni Mozart

Sunday, December 2, 2:00
Rigoletto Verdi

Tuesday, December 4, 8:00
Don Giovanni Mozart

Wednesday, December 5, **7:30**
Rigoletto Verdi

Thursday, December 6, 8:00 **S**
Family Performance
Madama Butterfly Puccini

Friday, December 7, 8:00
Don Giovanni Mozart

Saturday, December 8, 8:00
Rigoletto Verdi

Sunday, December 9, 2:00
Don Giovanni Mozart

** American opera debut
* San Francisco Opera debut
S Performance with Supertitles

Repertoire, casts and dates subject to change

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Opera for Young Audiences
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Puccini/in Italian
Wednesday, October 17, 1:00 Wednesday, October 24, 1:00

Matinee for Senior Citizens and Disabled Patrons
Wednesday, October 31, 1:00

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Eva Marton
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"Here, in *Die Walküre* she was truly splendid." *Otie Nicholson, Opera Guide*

Helga Dernesch
"A fiery, regal Fricka." *John Ardoin, Dallas News*

Hanna Schwarz
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René Kollo
"The finest Siegfried singing today." *David Littlejohn, Times of London*

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"A handsome, impulsive, heroic and moving Siegmund,
with velvet in his voice." *Leighton Kerner, Village Voice*

William Lewis
"A brilliant Loge." *Alan Rich, California Magazine*

Helmut Pampuch
"A nasty, lively, highly theatrical Mime." *David Littlejohn, Times of London*

Walter Berry
"Stunningly effective in his first Alberich." *Bill Zakariasen, New York Post*

Thomas Stewart
"A master of the great role." *Andrew Porter, The New Yorker*

James Morris
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along with Kathryn Bouleyn, Linda Esther Gray, Mariana Paunova, Michael Devlin and John Tomlinson

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Y

PHOTOS BY RON SCHERL

Thomas Stewart

René Kollo, Eva Marton

Many words have been written about the first three installments of San Francisco Opera's staging of Wagner's *Ring of the Nibelung*. A few select ones are printed on the left. On this page, there are three images from *Das Rheingold, Die Walküre* and *Siegfried*. In June of 1985, all four operas of the monumental Wagner tetralogy will be given, in sequence, three times. Next summer, there will be only two festival presentations of the full *Ring* in the whole world: at Bayreuth and in San Francisco. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that world-wide interest is centering on San Francisco in June of 1985. A *Ring* brochure with all the relevant details will be reaching San Francisco Opera subscribers shortly; non-subscribers can obtain a copy by calling (415) 864-3330.

Be a part of San Francisco Opera's 1985 *Ring*—the opera experience of a lifetime!

Artists

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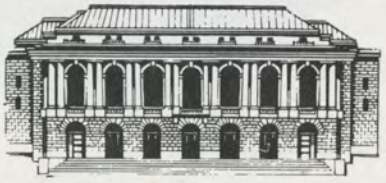

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The San Francisco Opera gratefully acknowledges a grant made by Mr. and Mrs. Lennart K. Erickson for the purchase of a Cimbasso.

1984 San Francisco Opera
Company (Continued)

Although our program magazines regularly list members of the Administration and Company (please see pages 13 and 14), we know that those lists are by necessity incomplete. In order to give recognition to the many skilled professionals whose work has contributed so greatly to the quality of San Francisco Opera productions, we provide, once a year, a list of everyone involved in our international seasons. In this issue, department heads are listed in front of the magazine, as usual; the many others, upon whom so much depends, are listed below.

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The Wattis Challenge

In March of this year the Paul L. and Phyllis Wattis Foundation offered the San Francisco Opera a $500,000 challenge grant, the purpose of which was to eliminate the 1983 deficit. We are deeply indebted to the Foundation for its insight and for its concern for the welfare of both the Company and the City, and to the generous donors who made it possible for us to receive this award. We wish to thank the donors listed below whose contributions, above and beyond their customary annual gift, helped us qualify for this grant.

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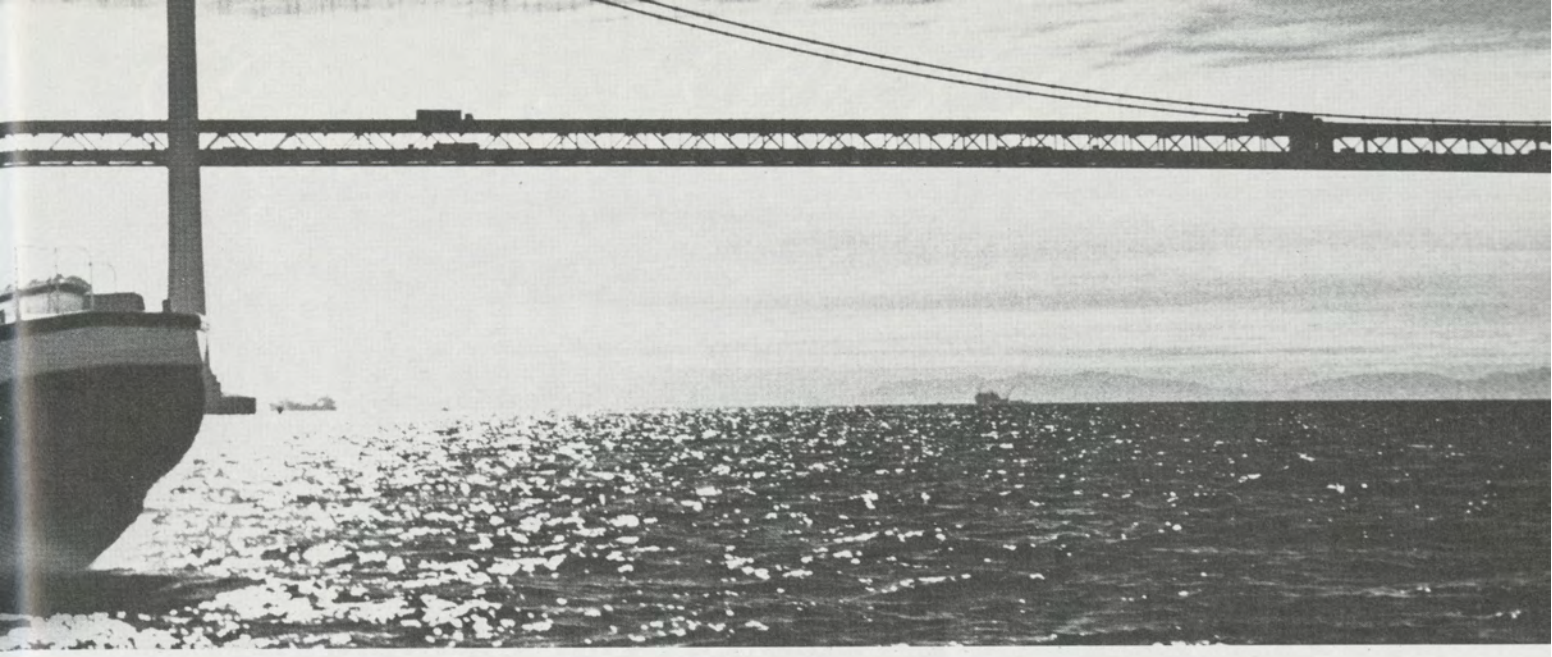

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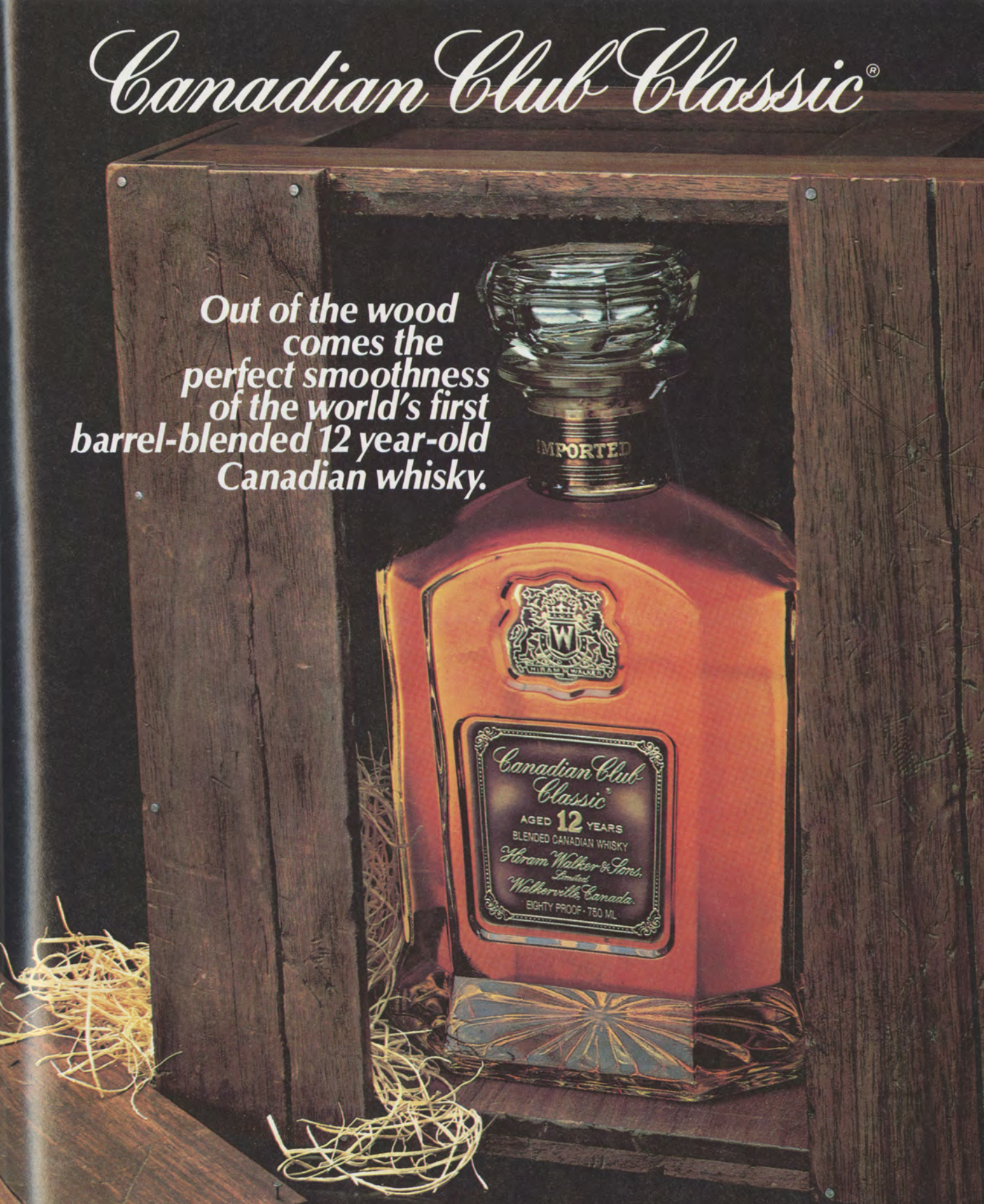

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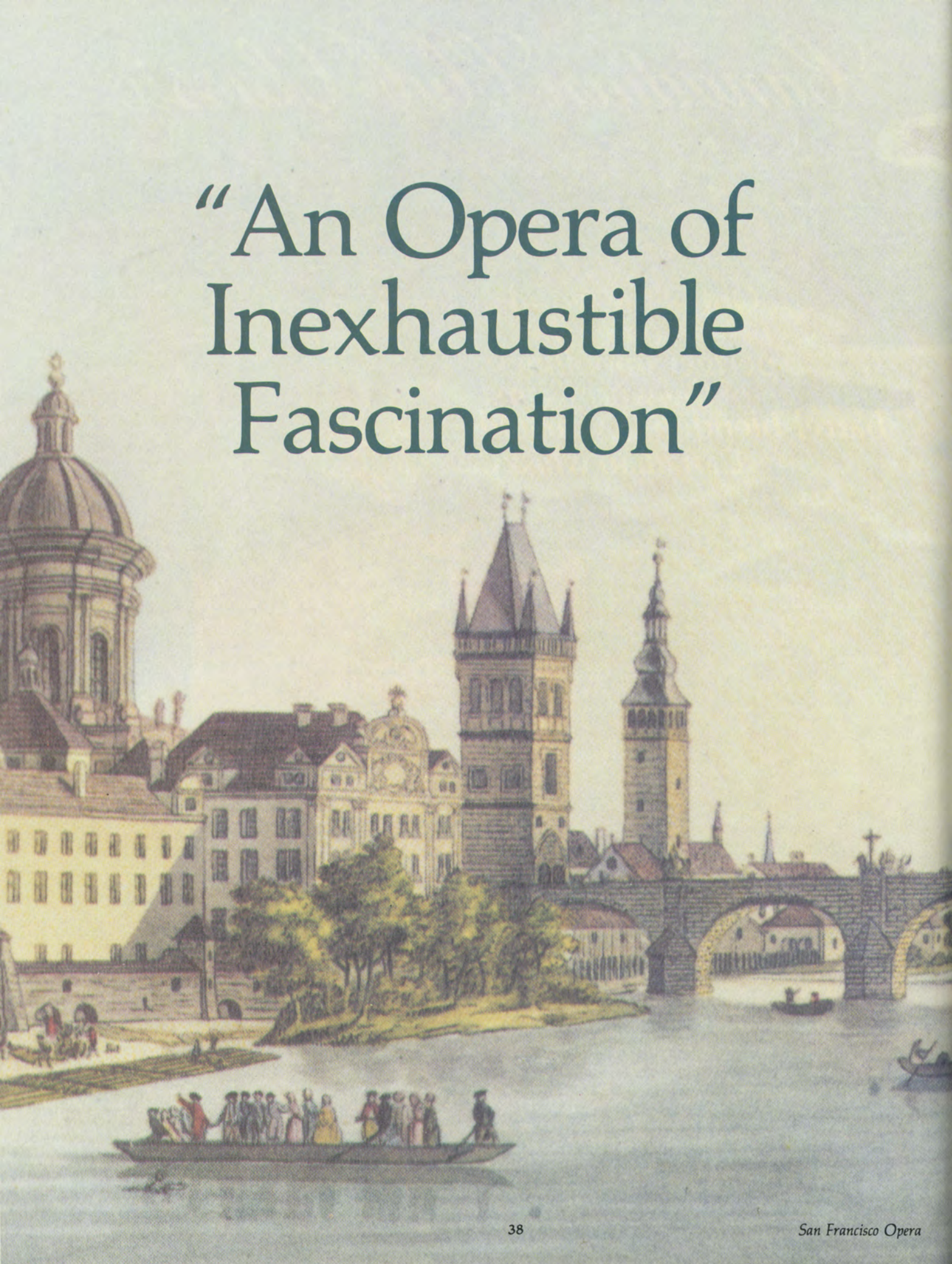

By WILLIAM MANN

The legendary figure of Don Juan is an archetype whose origins may well go back to cultures of the most remote past: wherever and whenever young men yearned for amorous success with more than one woman; whenever girls, nurtured on the ideal of chastity, dreamed of being pleasured by the perfect lover, such a prototypical wish-fulfilment was liable to be invented, even if it never existed. The philandering exploits of the Greek god Zeus come immediately to mind; but the infidelities of Zeus could not be condemned as sinful, since he was a god, and beloved of all gods. The fascination of Don Juan is not only that he had his way with a large number of women, but that, in doing so, he committed a blasphemy and was accordingly brought to divine retribution.

It cannot be fortuitous that the Don Juan story was first written down in Spain, a Catholic country concerned equally with nobility of soul and breeding, female chastity, and the dual concepts of sin and painful retribution. In such a country where religious faith has for centuries centered on the parallel cults of Christ's crucifixion and the virginity of his mother, girls and boys were kept rigorously apart, marriages formally arranged in every detail before bride and groom were allowed to meet, and then only in the presence of their assembled families. The bedroom was a monastic chamber, sexual activity confined to the reproduction of the species. It was impossible for a boy and girl to be left together for an instant until after their wedding. Such inhibition must sometimes provoke sensual imagination to invent a hero who defied the established code. So, Don Juan was born, and even welcomed by ecclesiastical and secular authority as a dreadful example of the painful and everlasting punishment meted out by heaven to those who ignore God's commandment about fornication.

The first dramatic version of the Don Juan story was written by a Spanish monk, Gabriel Téllez (1571-1648) who called himself Tirso de Molina and entitled his play in verse *El Burlador de Sevilla* (The Playboy of Seville); it was published in 1630, but had been acted in Spain for a number of years prior to that. Earlier popular ballads exist to indicate that the legend was current before Tirso's play. The reprobate was named Don Juan Tenorio (Bernard Shaw accordingly called the equivalent hero of his *Man and Superman* John Tanner), the action set in the reign of Alfonso XI (1312-1350). Don Juan is first discovered in Naples where he seduces Doña Isabela by disguising himself as her betrothed Don Octavio. Juan escapes with his servant Catalinón, by boat, swimming ashore at Tarragona where Juan seduces the fishermaid Tisbea, then abandons her. In Seville the Comendador Don Gonzalo de Ulloa is welcomed home from victory in the wars

---

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

View of the Charles Bridge in Prague, the city where *Don Giovanni* had its first performance in 1787. Engraving by J. Balzer after a contemporary painting by Scotti de Cassano.

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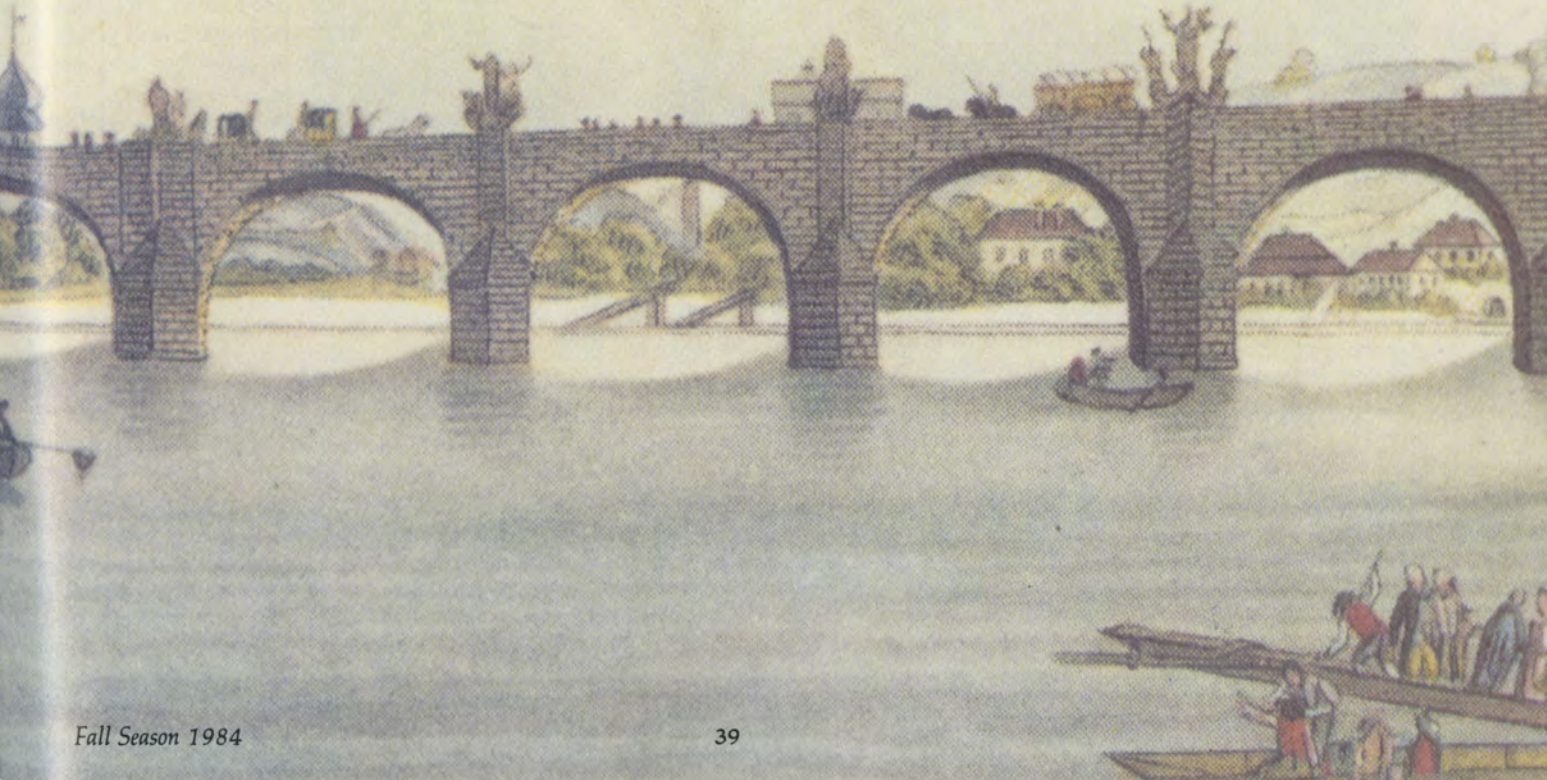

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by the King of Castile who betrothes the Comendador's daughter Doña Aña to Don Juan, scion of a most noble family. Juan borrows a cloak from Aña's favorite suitor, enters the palace and ravishes Aña but is stopped on his departure by her father whom he kills in a duel. The King has a statue erected in Don Gonzalo's memory. Juan is next found at a village wedding party outside Seville, where he beats up the husband Batricio and seduces the wife Aminta. Isabela, arrived from Italy, meets Tisbea, and they travel together to Seville to proclaim their wrongs. Juan, visiting a church, finds the Comendador's statue, pulls its stone beard, and invites it to supper. The stone guest fulfills the invitation and, in turn, commands Juan to sup in church on the morrow. There, Juan is fed on scorpions, vipers, gall and vinegar, strangled and consigned to hell. At court, the living parties learn his fate from Catalinón, and are suitably partnered off by the King.

This first version of the legend already includes much of the content assembled for Mozart's opera by his librettist, Lorenzo Da Ponte. The Don Juan legend was known in Italy since at least 1652, when Onofrio Giliberti's prose play *Il Convitato di Pietra* (The Stone Guest) was published in Naples. Reports of a moralizing church drama entitled *Il Ateista Fulminato* (The Atheist Struck by Lightning), dating from about 1600, may derive from the same sources as those of *El Burlador de Sevilla*. The story became a favorite theme with strolling extempore comedians called *Commedia dell'Arte*, whose popularity had spread from Italy to France, Germany and Austria during the 16th century. One such company was playing a (textually improvised) version of *Il Convitato di Pietra* in Paris during 1657. Molière, much influenced in his plays by the *commedia dell'arte*, wrote his own dramatic prose version as *Le Festin de Pierre*, in 1665. His Don Juan is a stiff, cold cynic, an epigram forever on his lips, lacking the gaiety and irrepressible bravery that distinguish Tirso de Molina's hero and render him attractive as well as deplorable. Molière's comedy introduces the character of Donna Elvira, but omits Anna and Ottavio; Da Ponte kept both plays on his desk

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Konstantin Stanislavsky (right) as Don Giovanni and A. Fedotov as Leporello in Molière's *Dom Juan, ou Le Festin de Pierre*, presented in Moscow in 1889-89.

while writing his *Don Giovanni*, and borrowed some of Molière's lines. He also referred to Carlo Goldoni's *Don Giovanni Tenorio* (1736), another personal and sophisticated recension of the subject as treated by *commedia dell'arte* troupes. Goldoni spurned magical effects on stage, and had his reprobate struck by lightning in the end, for his intention was to restrain the slapdash farce to which Tirso's original had descended.

The play of *The Stone Guest* had by no means lost its public appeal; rather, it was giving birth to new versions, sometimes written down and printed, more often textually improvised to an established scenario, turning up wherever the *commedia dell'arte* companies left their mark. The various female objects of Don Juan's predatory ways might come and go; but always, there had to be a murder of the old man, the return of his statue to supper with Juan, and the final retribution; always, the servant's recital of his master's numerous conquests in love. In 18th-century Germany and Austria, where new versions multiplied in every season, this servant was established as the star of the show; he might be called Hanswurst or Kasperle, Sganarelle, Gracioso, Tri-

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In 1950, *Don Juan Tenorio* by José Zorilla was presented in Madrid with sets and costumes designed by Salvador Dali.

velin, Pasquariello, Arlecchino, Hasenfuss, or Lipperl ("little Philip"). *Hase* means "hare," and Da Ponte called the servant Leporello, again "little hare" but this time in Italian, though the name also suggests the Viennese Lipperl. Operatic versions of the legend were rife in Italy during the 1770s and 1780s, some of them also produced elsewhere, including Vienna.

It was surely professional pride, as much as anything, which encouraged Da Ponte to propose the subject for a new opera which was commissioned from Mozart in February 1787 for production in Prague at the beginning of the forthcoming season. As Court Poet to the Holy Roman Emperor, Joseph II of Austria, Da Ponte had access to recent opera texts and, with his experience, knew how to improve on them. The most successful of those recent *Don Giovanni* operas fired him in particular: it was the work of Giovanni Bertati, a personal and professional *bête noire* of Da Ponte's.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) had, before *Don Giovanni*, collaborated with Da Ponte on only one opera, *Le Nozze di Figaro* (1786). Its success in Prague, after a lukewarm reception in Vienna, occasioned the commission which resulted in *Don Giovanni*. Mozart's new opera had been commissioned by Pasquale Bondini's Italian opera company based in Prague's National Theater, to celebrate the marriage of the Emperor's niece, Archduchess Maria Theresia, with Prince Anton Clemens of Saxony (eventually the Emperor Franz II). It was to be another comic opera which should appeal as much to Prague audiences as *Le Nozze di Figaro* had done; it was to be suitable for the royal couple, and it was not to strain the resources of Bondini's available cast which consisted of three sopranos, a tenor and three basses. The first performance was planned for October 14th, 1787. Mozart returned to Vienna with the commission on about the 12th of February. As Da Ponte completed each scene, or a handful of scenes, he passed it on to its composer. He recalls that the libretto for Mozart was completed after 63 days, perhaps by early May. Mozart was accustomed to work out music in his head before writing it down, and his father several times remarked how the boy would do anything sooner than sit down to a sheaf of music-paper, though when he did, the task was quickly accomplished. Posterity has no exchange of letters between him and Da Ponte: they

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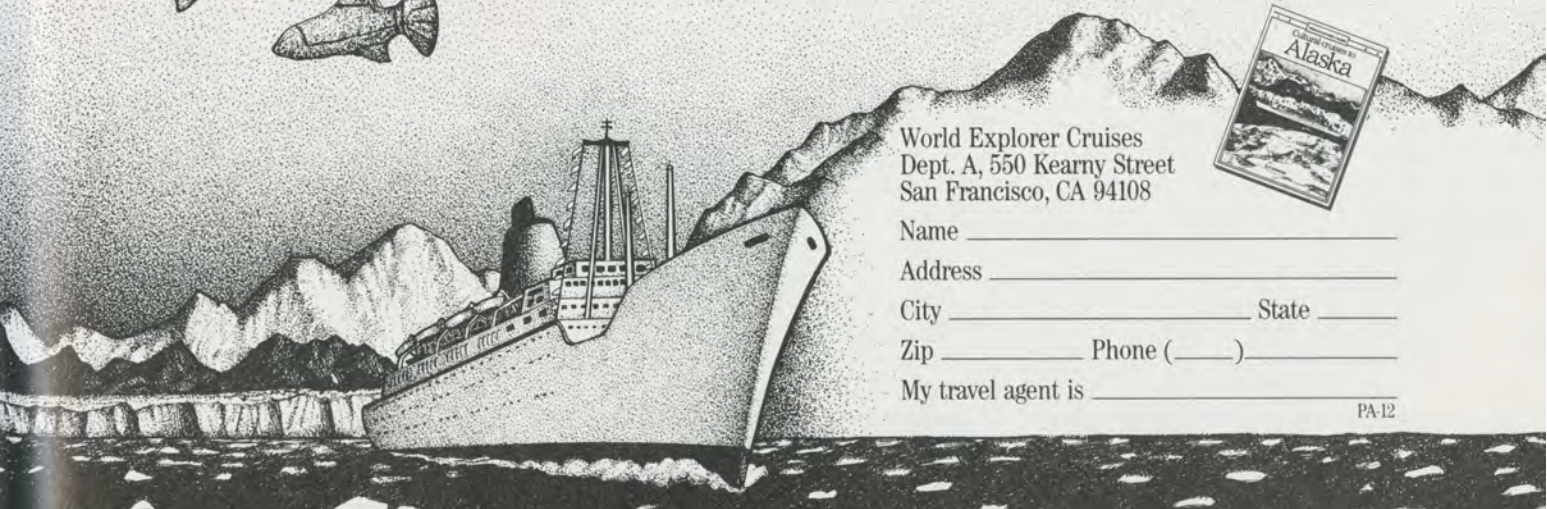

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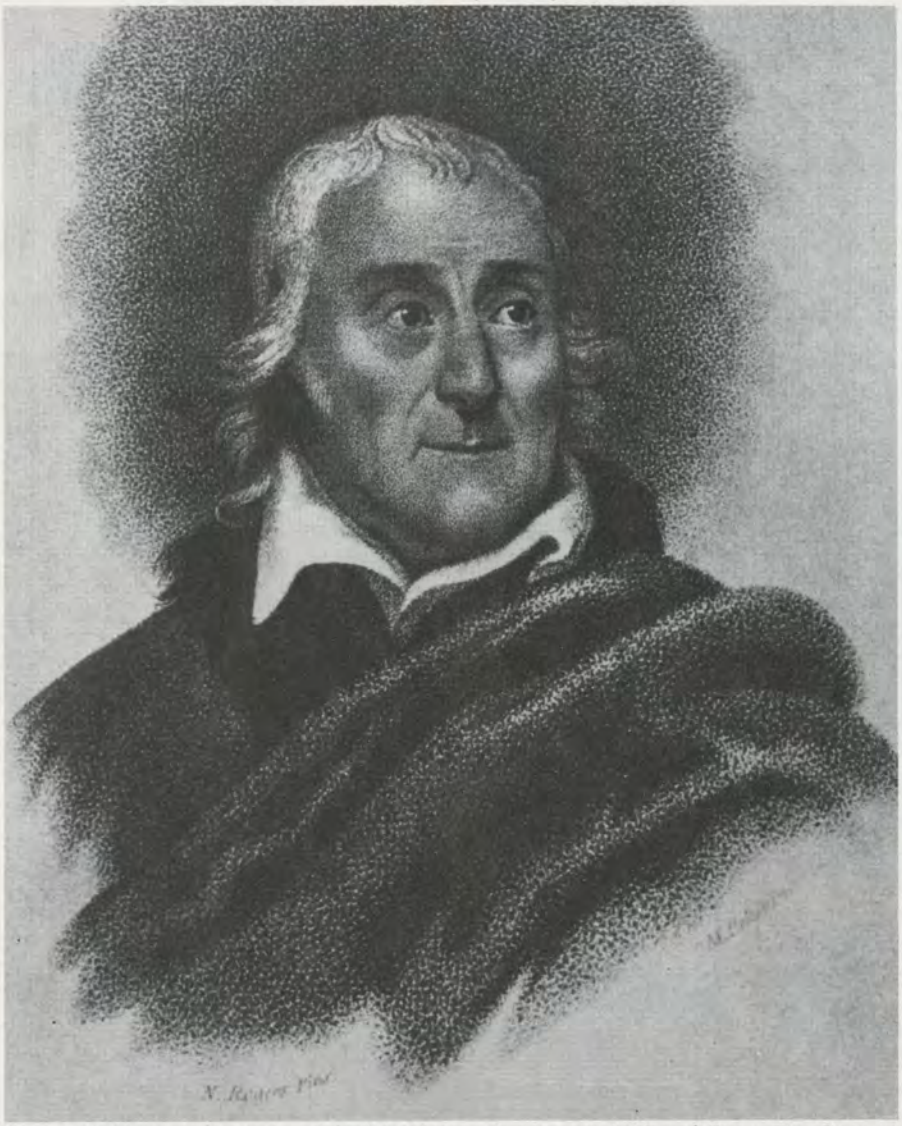

Lorenzo Da Ponte, 1749-1838, author of the librettos for Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro, Don Giovanni* and *Così fan tutte.*

both lived in Vienna and could work out the fine details of an opera libretto together in person. Elsewhere, his correspondence shows how exigent about his libretti he was, constantly demanding textual alterations until he was satisfied with diction, characterization and formal balance. It may be supposed that between March and May he was absorbing the libretto and planning its music, and that between June and the end of August he wrote down as much of the opera as could be composed before he arrived in Prague for rehearsals. He would be expected to send those completed portions of the score to Prague in early September for study by the performers. In Mozart's day a composer was expected to tailor each operatic aria to the special qualities of the singer engaged for the part. Fortunately, Mozart had met most of the *Don Giovanni* cast when he visited Prague to hear them sing *Le Nozze di Figaro.* Study of the manuscript score, which is in the library of the Paris Conservatoire, has shown which numbers were composed in Vienna and which in Prague. He did not send ahead the passages involving chorus, because he was not sure what choristers would be available, nor was he certain of the stage wind band which he wanted to play during Giovanni's supper, so he left till later the whole of the second act finale. I surmise that he was not acquainted with Giuseppe Lolli, who was to double the parts of Masetto and the Commendatore, since the latter's principal solo music occurs in the finale of Act Two, and the former's only aria, "Ho capito," was likewise composed in Prague. The Don Ottavio, Antonio Baglioni, had been away in Venice during Mozart's previous visit to Prague, singing the name part in the Bertati-Gazzaniga *Don Giovanni*; but Mozart wrote his aria "Il mio tesoro" in Vienna and must therefore have encountered him some other time. Mozart also left the composition of the opera's overture, as was his custom, until all the rest of the music was completed. During the rehearsals the Don Giovanni, Luigi Bassi, complained that his part included no major aria; Mozart could have protested that there were already two, the brilliant "Fin ch'han dal vino" and the conspiratorial "Metà di voi" which exploited Bassi's admired gift for mimicry; nevertheless, he added Don Giovanni's "Deh, vieni alla finestra" (and put mandolinists forever in his debt), perhaps because unlike the other two arias, but like the Duet "La ci darem," it would show off Bassi's capacity for honeyed, amorous singing. The story may encourage us to believe a contemporary description of Bassi as "very handsome and very stupid." Mozart also decided during rehearsals to begin Act Two, not with the recitative which he had composed, but with a duet "Eh va, buffone." He could still ask for extra verses, since Da Ponte had also traveled to Prague for the occasion. The Mozarts, husband and wife, arrived there four days before him, on October 4th: ten days were evidently supposed time enough to learn, rehearse and mount a full-length new opera. Mozart, however, found that few arrangements had been made for preparation of the work, that the singers were

continued on p. 76

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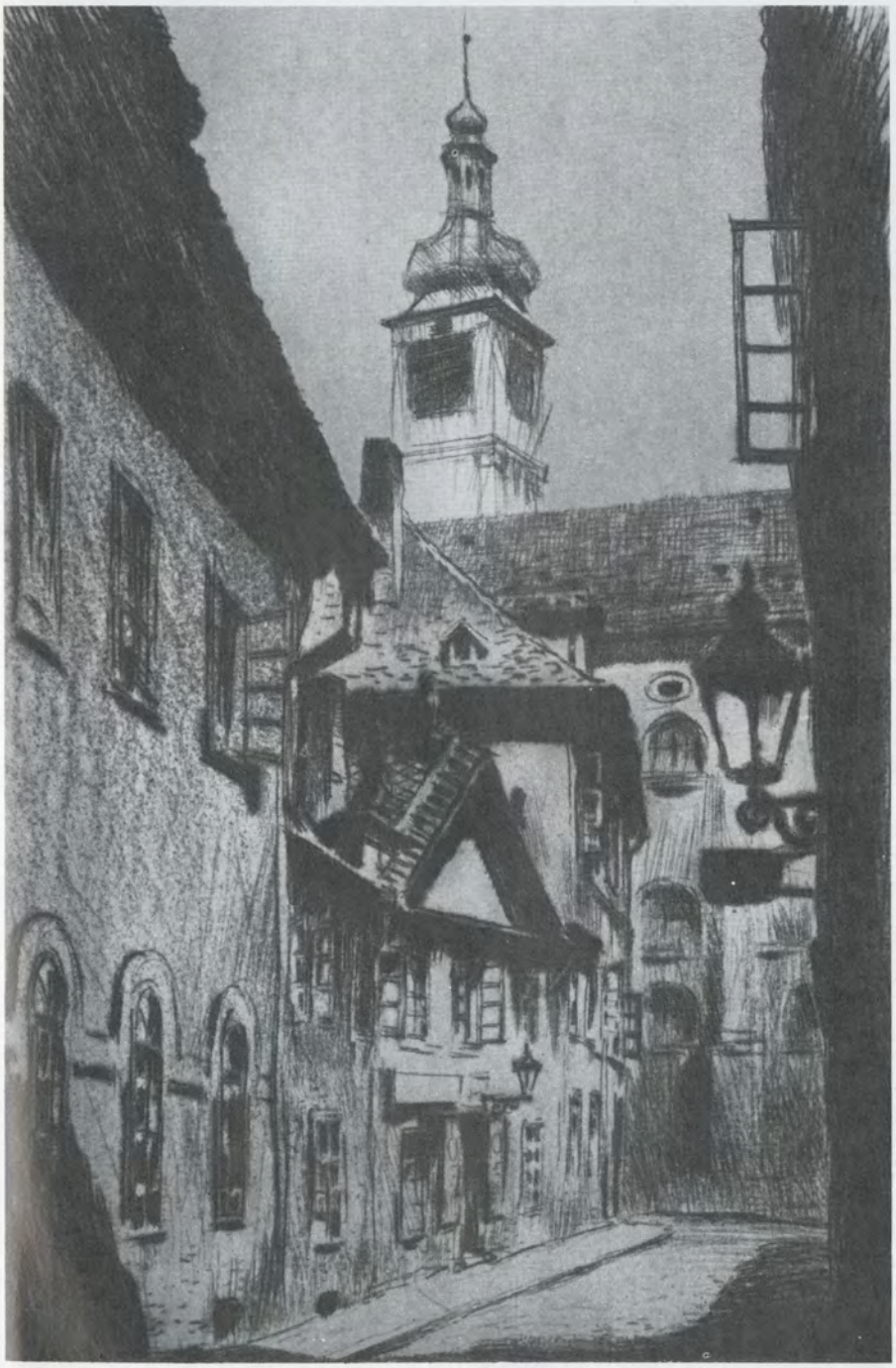
Mozart and Don Giovanni, Vagabond Companions: A Personal View



"U Templu" Inn in Prague, re-named "The Mozart Cellar" because the composer was a frequent guest there during his stays in the Bohemian city. The building was torn down in 1911. Engraving by K. Dostal, 1956.

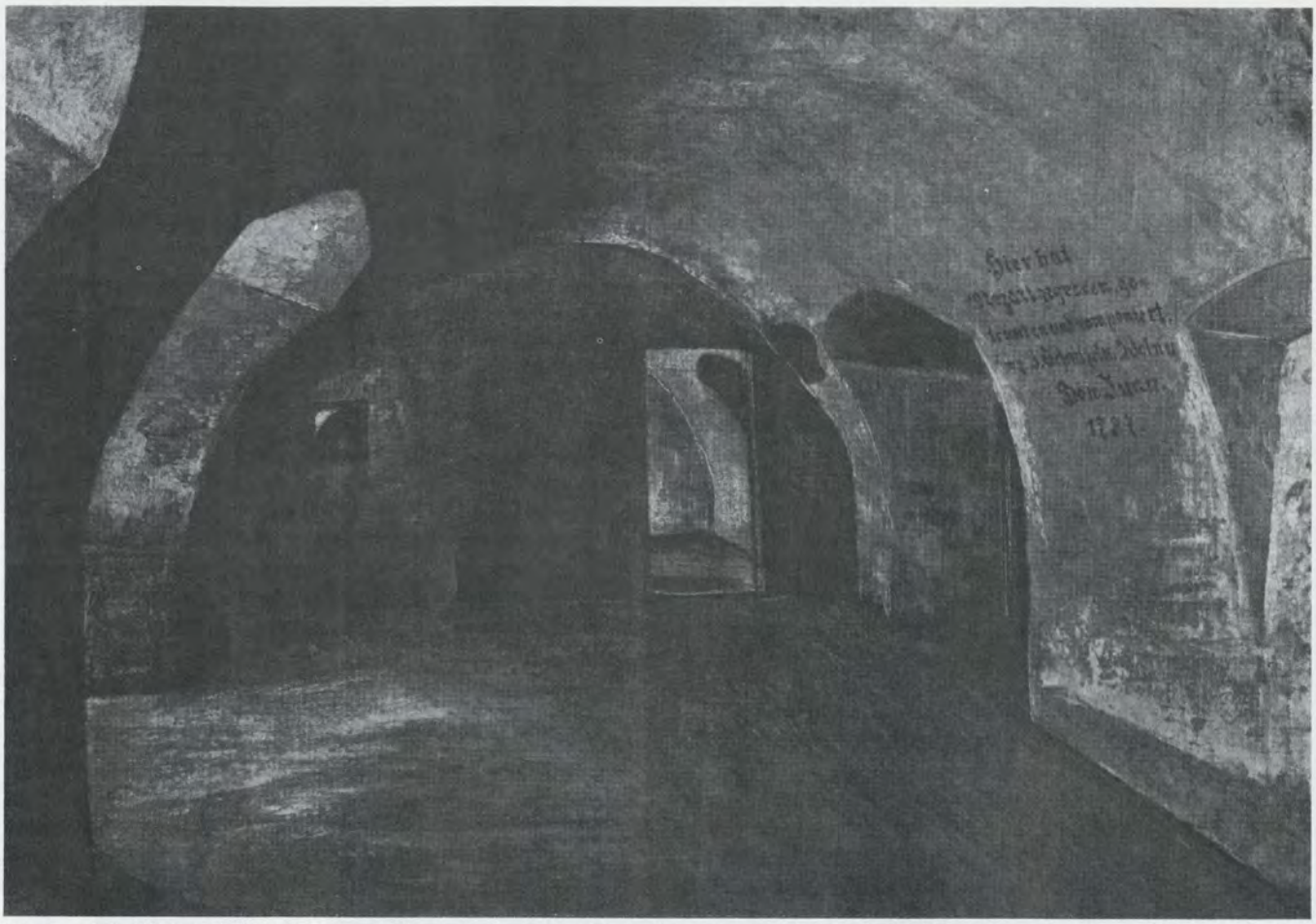
By ROY LISKER

Mozart's life perfectly bridges the period between two major European wars. He was born in 1756, the beginning of the Seven Years' War. He died in 1791, two years after the volcanic eruption of the French Revolution. These were events that shaped history, with political, geographic and ideological consequences that remain vital issues even today.

Mozart grew up in the shadow of the Seven Years' War. This foretaste of our own century of world wars spread from a border dispute between Prussia and Austria over the province of Silesia, to a conflagration costing 850,000 lives and ranging across the four corners of the globe: Austria, France, England, Prussia, Poland, the British colonies in North America, Canada and India.

Yet, while the world crackled in the

Roy Lisker "has been, and still is, both consecutively and concurrently, a mathematician, composer, violinist, street musician, novelist, essayist, journalist, poet, jailed war resister, wanderer, stick-in-the-mud, and stoned guest."



PRAGUE, NATIONAL MUSEUM, MUSIC DEPARTMENT

Interior of the "U Templu" Inn in Prague. Oil painting by J. Minařik, made in 1911, just before the building it housed was torn down. On the wall is an inscription that reads: "Here Mozart ate, drank and composed, e.g. Schnitzel, wine and Don Juan. 1787."

flames of colonial competition and expansion, Mozart devoted himself to the study of music in the blissfully serene oasis of Salzburg. His teacher was one of the finest music teachers who ever lived, the stern, doting and mercenary Leopold Mozart, whose student and son was one of the greatest musical geniuses of all time.

In 1763, a few short months after the end of this worldwide catastrophe, Leopold Mozart and his two children, Wolfgang and Nannerl, sallied forth on the winds of his own perceived destiny: to conquer the world of music through the dazzling accomplishments of his gifted children. It is Nannerl who really attests to his extraordinary gifts as a teacher. A harpsichordist of indifferent ability, he yet trained her into a prodigy not unworthy of appearing in concert together with her astronomically endowed brother.

After that, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was almost constantly on the road until around the age of 22. It was largely this, yet not exclusively this, that would inculcate him with an ineradicable bohemian spirit, that would make him a rootless wanderer for the rest of his brief, rich span of days. Yet, we must also take into account the nature of the age.

A thousand years of history stood poised on the verge of crumbling into ruins. Mozart poured out his soul into matchless and immortal music in the generation that saw the inevitability of the end of feudalism and the rise of modern bourgeois society.

The cracks in the foundations of European civilization were widening. Although only a few discerning individuals were able to give explicit descriptions for the causes of unrest (Diderot, Paine, Beaumarchais), yet there must also have been, buried in the collective unconscious of the age, a premonition of the coming debacle that drove persons of intellectual temperament and sensitive character to rootlessness, abandon and early death.

Realistically assayed in relation to the complete historical background, Mozart's misfortunes, though they still sadden us, no longer shock us. His historical position is in fact unique, very different, for example, from his two greatest contemporaries, Haydn and Beethoven. Conditions of time and place conspired to crush him between the gears of history, tearing his life asunder through contradictory and opposing forces: between the Seven Years' War and the French Revolution; between the pious conservatism of Maria Theresia and the "englightened despotism" of Joseph II; between Catholicism and Freemasonry; between the self-infatuating fame of the child prodigy on the road and the nastiness and stupidity of artistic intrigue at the court of Vienna; between the passing away of the old system of aristocratic patronage and the rise of the middle class as the new music-supporting audience.

In our attempts to understand the saga of fruitless job-hunting, capricious travel, economic desperation and marginal homelessness that runs through Mozart's career, we soon discover that there are two questions to be speculated upon:

Why did the courts of Europe so often turn a cold shoulder to this outstanding genius? And,

Why, in the few instances in which he was offered respectable posts, did he always find some pretext for turning them down?

In considering the first question, we ought to examine the mental climate of Europe's aristocracy just prior to the French Revolution. The tendency toward "enlightened despotism" described by the history books should not be allowed to give us the impression that these monarchs and their consorts were easy in their consciences. The terror of the reckoning that was about to descend produced a stifling atmosphere in the elite establishment wherein fear, despair and guilt were combined in varying degrees. Had not Louis XV on his death bed, said, "Après moi, lé déluge"? Given such a state of mind, the last thing these princes and monarchs wanted hanging around their courts was a genius.

At this time of mounting insecurity, geniuses were a visible, living evidence of the unpleasant truth that maintained real worth had very little to do with royal blood. It was all too natural for free-thinkers, pamphleteers and potential revolutionaries to point to the existence of a Mozart as the most compelling of arguments for the universal rights of man. It comes as no surprise to learn that they were not comfortable in having him around.

Was it not, in the balance, a relatively paltry thing to neglect, starve and humiliate a Mozart, considering that in this same period, the crowned heads of Europe were massacring and enslaving millions of persons in Africa and the New World, erecting colonial empires on the backs of the stricken civilizations of Asia, and embarking on that road of fratricidal blood-letting that would, in less than two centuries, turn most of Europe into a cemetery, from Spain to Stalingrad?

Turning now to the other question, why Mozart ended up rejecting so many offers that, from one point of view or another, appeared to have been reasonable—we can only make appeal to the history of music in the context of over three centuries and ask if it were possible at that time for a composer of Mozart's capabilities, to have lived for very long at any great distance from the Viennese musical world.

Other candidates for a Mozart city of residence were few and far between. Eighteenth-century England, after the all too brief spurt of energy injected by the presence of Handel, had become a musical graveyard by Mozart's time.

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REBECCA COOK


PILAR LORENGAR


MARGARITA ZIMMERMANN

Soprano **Rebecca Cook** returns to San Francisco Opera as Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*. First-place winner in the Grand Finals of the 1978 San Francisco Opera Auditions, she participated for two years in the San Francisco/Affiliate Artists-Opera program. During the 1979 Spring Opera season, she performed in the ensemble of *Death in Venice* and sang Mary Seaton in Thea Musgrave's *Mary, Queen of Scots*. That fall she made her San Francisco Opera debut as the Fifth Maidservant in *Elektra* and Fiordiligi in the English-language performances of *Così fan tutte*. In 1980 she performed the leading role of Lady Katharine in Friml's *The Vagabond King* with Spring Opera Theater and created the role of Mariane in the world premiere of Kirke Mechem's *Tartuffe* for the American Opera Project, returning for Fall Season productions of *Die Frau ohne Schatten, Jenůfa, The Magic Flute* and *Arabella*. That same year, Miss Cook made her Carmel Bach Festival debut as the Countess in *The Marriage of Figaro*, repeating the role in 1981 for Spring Opera Theater and for the 1982 Fall Season English-language performances of that work. Her 1981 Fall Season assignments included Micaëla in *Carmen* and Gerhilde in *Die Walküre*, and in 1982 she won acclaim when she stepped in on short notice to portray Amelia in *Un Ballo in Maschera* for an ailing Montserrat Caballé. She also won ovations at that year's Opera in the Park concert in Golden Gate Park with Miss Caballé and Ermanno Mauro. It was as Micaëla that she made her 1982 European opera debut with the Zurich Opera at the personal invitation of Jean-Pierre Ponnelle, and in 1983 she began an affiliation with the National Theater of Mannheim. She opened the 1983-84 season there as Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* and appeared as Hanna in *The Merry Widow*, Giulietta in *The Tales of Hoffmann*, Nedda in *I Pagliacci*, and Euridice in *Orfeo ed Euridice*. Other Mannheim credits include Pamina in *The Magic Flute*, Saffi in *Der Zigeunerbaron*, Mimì in *La Bohème*, Mozart's Countess, Amelia in *Ballo*, and Rosalinde in *Die Fledermaus*. Last season she made a highly successful debut with Hawaii Opera Theatre, portraying the Countess and Tatyana in *Eugene Onegin*. Miss Cook's many concert engagements include performances with the Dallas Symphony and the Carmel Bach Festival.

Internationally acclaimed Mozart specialist **Pilar Lorengar** returns to San Francisco Opera in one of her signature roles, Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni*. The Spanish soprano began her career singing zarzuelas in her native country and made her formal operatic debut at the 1956 Aix-en-Provence Festival singing Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro* and that same summer bowed at Glyndebourne as Pamina in *The Magic Flute*. In 1958 she made her first appearance at the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires, portraying Pamina under the baton of Sir Thomas Beecham, and that same season began her long association with the Deutsche Oper in Berlin, of which she has been a member ever since. She made her 1961 Salzburg debut as Ilia in *Idomeneo*, and soon proceeded to make debuts at the world's great opera houses, including Milan's La Scala, the Royal Opera House at Covent Garden, the Vienna Staatsoper, and with the companies of Brussels, Paris, Hamburg and Munich, among others. She made her American debut with San Francisco Opera in 1964, singing four roles: Liù in *Turandot*, Desdemona in *Otello*, the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro* and Micaëla in *Carmen*. Since then, local audiences have applauded her as Eva in *Die Meistersinger*, Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*, Mélisande in *Pelléas et Mélisande*, the title role of *Madama Butterfly*, Elsa in *Lohengrin*, and Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*. Miss Lorengar made her Metropolitan Opera debut as Donna Elvira in 1965 and has returned to that house frequently in a variety of leading soprano roles. She has also appeared with the companies of Chicago, Dallas, Miami, Denver, Cincinnati, and Washington, D.C., as well as at the Ravinia Festival. Her extensive tours have taken her to Japan, Israel, South America and South Africa. At the 1983 Salzburg Festival, Miss Lorengar and Placido Domingo gave a triumphant concert of zarzuela arias, a program they repeated last August to an SRO audience here at the War Memorial. A major recording artist, she is featured on a number of albums and complete operas for London records, including *Don Giovanni, The Magic Flute, La Traviata*, and, most recently, Gluck's *Iphigénie en Tauride*. Next year Miss Lorengar, who holds the title of Kammersängerin with the Deutsche Oper in Berlin, will sing Tosca at the Sydney Opera House.

The role of Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* is sung by **Margarita Zimmermann**. The Argentinian mezzo-soprano made her San Francisco Opera debut as Rosina in the 1982 Summer Season production of *The Barber of Seville*. After her first appearance in a 1976 recital of Rossini arias at the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires, she made her European debut in 1977 in Salzburg, singing Mozart arias at the Mozartwoche. In 1979 and '80 she had several assignments at the Lyons Opera, including Idamante in *Idomeneo*, Jocasta in *Oedipus Rex* and, for the 1980 Berlioz Festival, Didon in *Les Troyens*. She made

continued on p. 59

Bravo!

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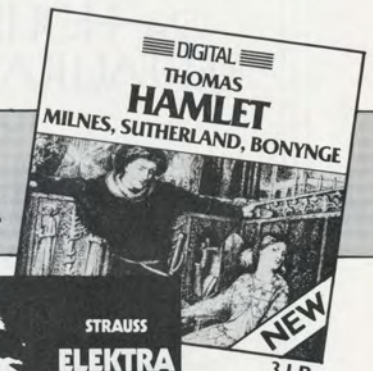

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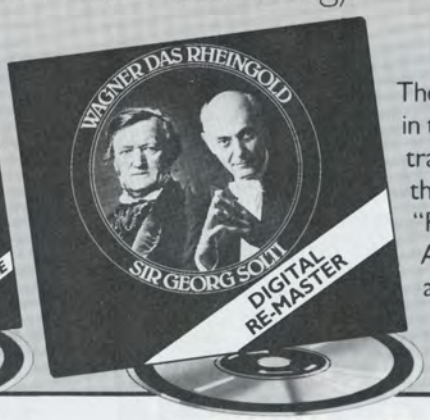

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The original production was made possible in 1974 by a generous and much-appreciated gift from the late James D. Robertson.

The revival of this production was made possible, in part, by a generous gift from Mrs. Marian M. Miller.

The costumes for this production were made possible, in part, by a grant from the Callison Foundation.

Opera in two acts by WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

Text by LORENZO DA PONTE

Don Giovanni

(in Italian)

Conductor
Myung-Whun Chung

Production devised and directed by
John Copley

Original Design by
Toni Businger

Lighting Design and Scenic Supervision by
Thomas J. Munn

Sound Design
Roger Gans

Chorus Director
Richard Bradshaw

Recitative Accompaniment
Mark Haffner

Musical Preparation
Mark Haffner
Jeffrey Goldberg
Svetlana Gorzhevskaya
James Johnson

Prompter
Jonathan Khuner

Assistant Stage Director
Francesca Zambello

Stage Manager
Jerry Sherk

Choreographic Assistance
Dana Sapiro

Scenery constructed in
San Francisco Opera Scenic Studios

Costumes executed by
San Francisco Opera Costume Shop
and Malabar, Ltd.

First performance:
Prague, October 29, 1787

First San Francisco Opera performance:
October 10, 1938

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 21 AT 8:00
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 25 AT 2:00
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 28 AT **7:30**
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 1 AT 8:00
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 4 AT 8:00
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 7 AT 8:00
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 9 AT 2:00

CAST

(in order of appearance)

Leporello	Enrico Fissore
Donna Anna	Rebecca Cook
Don Giovanni	Wolfgang Brendel
The Commendatore	Matti Salminen
Don Ottavio	Keith Lewis*
Donna Elvira	Pilar Lorengar
Zerlina	Margarita Zimmermann
Masetto	Jacob Will

Peasants, servants
Corps de ballet

*San Francisco Opera debut

TIME AND PLACE: Seville in the middle of the seventeenth century

The opera will be performed with one intermission.

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 and one-half hours.

Don Giovanni/*Synopsis*

The action, which spans 24 hours, takes place in Seville.

ACT I

Late at night, Leporello is keeping watch while his master, Don Giovanni, is attempting to seduce the daughter of the Commendatore, Donna Anna. Having realized the man in her bedroom is not her fiancé, Don Ottavio, Anna raises the alarm. The Commendatore rushes to her defense. Don Giovanni slays the old man in a duel and flees. Anna has in the meantime found Ottavio, and the two steel themselves for revenge. In the early morning, master and servant run into a distraught Donna Elvira. She is a former conquest from Burgos and still loves Don Giovanni, but he desires only to escape her entreaties. Leporello is left to explain his master's ways in hard numbers. Around midday, Don Giovanni and Leporello happen upon a rustic pre-nuptial celebration for Masetto and Zerlina. The latter excites Giovanni's fancy, and he invites everyone to his villa—the better to snare the youthful morsel. The seduction is interrupted by Elvira, who denounces him and sweeps Zerlina away. Anna and Ottavio arrive, not yet recognizing Don Giovanni as the murderer. When Elvira interrupts again, Giovanni attempts to pass off her hysterics as madness, but the suspicion is planted. After he leaves to "help" Elvira in her distress, Anna realizes the truth, recounts the events preceding her father's death, and concludes with a spirited call for vengeance. Ottavio is then left alone to plead devotion to Anna's peace of mind. Meanwhile, not in the least deterred, Don Giovanni orders Leporello to prepare a lavish party for all the villagers. He is reminded to add more names to his famous list—Zerlina's among them. The guests begin to arrive as daylight wanes. Zerlina vainly tries to soothe a worried, jealous Masetto. Don Giovanni renews his wooing of Zerlina, but the sharp-eyed fiancé intervenes. As Giovanni leads the young couple into the villa, Anna, Ottavio and Elvira enter with masks. They are quickly invited by the master to join the festivities. With the party in full swing, Don Giovanni inveigles Zerlina into an adjoining room. Her cries, however, bring everyone to her assistance. Don Giovanni tries to make Leporello seem like the offending villain, but no one is taken in. The three guests unmask, and the tone of the party turns suddenly accusatory. Surrounded and condemned, Don Giovanni's adventures seem at an end. But by a sudden maneuver, he slips through the crowd and vanishes into the streets of Seville.

ACT II

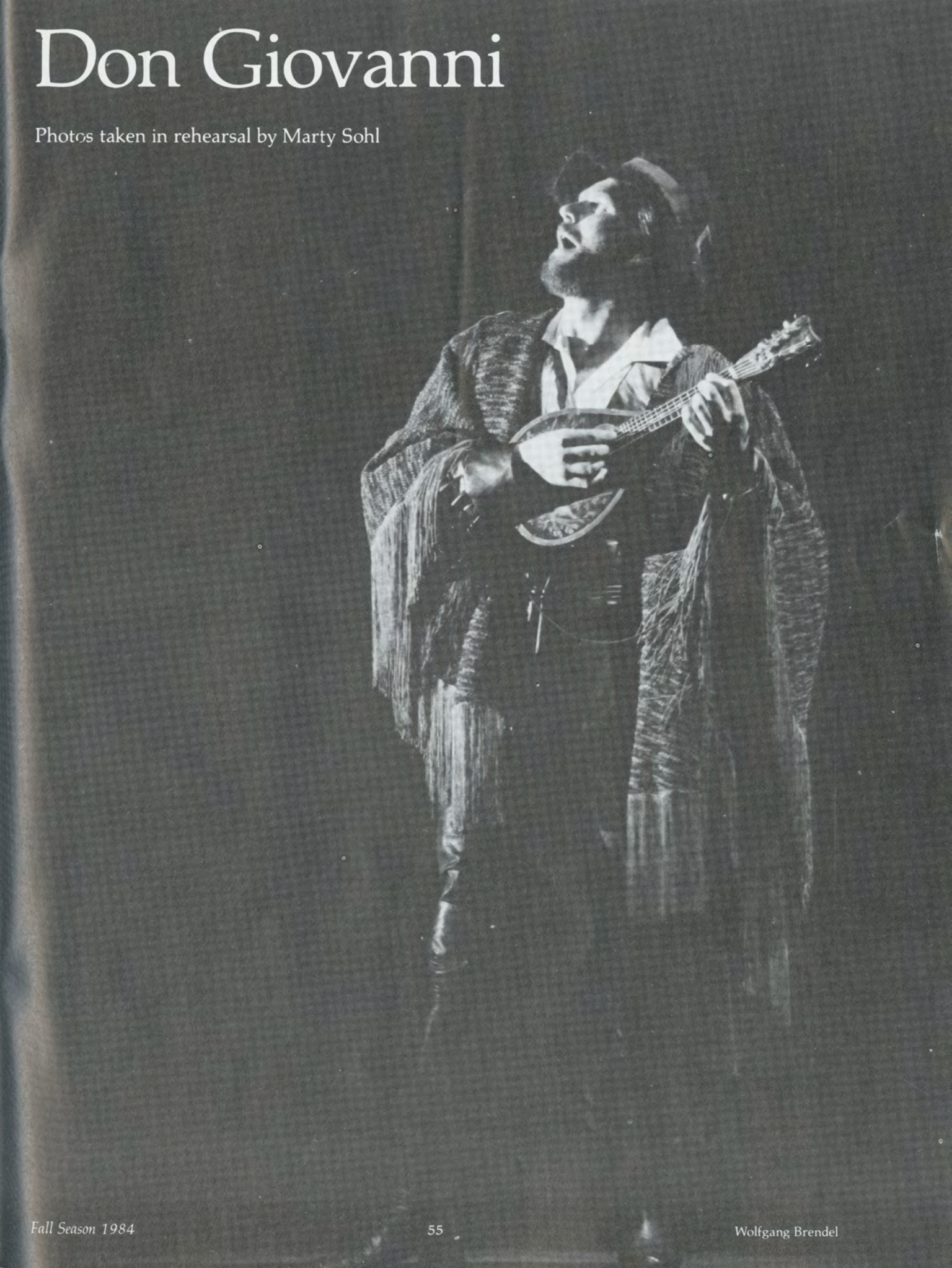
Later that evening, Don Giovanni, after soothing a disgruntled Leporello with some coins, hatches his latest plot, this one aimed at Elvira's maid and requiring master and servant to exchange clothes. Elvira is lured away by the man she thinks is her beloved. The real Giovanni is left to serenade the maid with his mandolin. Just then an armed Masetto and his followers arrive in search of the fugitive. The supposed Leporello sends them off in all directions, personally disarms Masetto and beats him. Zerlina finds Masetto crestfallen and aching and tries to cheer him. Leporello, still disguised as Don Giovanni, is trying to maintain the deception of Elvira when Anna and Ottavio and, a few moments later, Masetto and Zerlina converge upon them. Threatened with a speedy death, Leporello reveals his identity. Everyone is dumbfounded; Anna retires, dizzied by the events. Chattering profuse apologies, Leporello manages to escape. Ottavio asks that Anna be informed of his determination to punish Don Giovanni. Elvira expresses her outrage and still-lingering love for Don Giovanni. It is now about 2 A.M., and Don Giovanni and Leporello have sought refuge in a cemetery. Their raucous conversation is interrupted by a ghostly voice from the statue over the Commendatore's grave. In response to a doomful warning, Don Giovanni invites the statue, through Leporello's terrified mediation, to come to Don Giovanni's villa for a pre-dawn supper. To the servant's horror, the invitation is accepted. The two return to the villa to prepare. Ottavio seeks to console Anna, suggesting marriage. Temporarily rejected, he charges Anna with cruelty. Anna protests her love and begs for patience. Don Giovanni is gorging himself while a wind band serenades him with popular operatic tunes of the day (including a snippet from *Figaro*). Elvira storms in with one last attempt to persuade Don Giovanni to change his ways. She is met only with mockery, and she leaves in despair. Elvira is frightened as she leaves, as is Leporello when he goes to see what is wrong. Nearly speechless with terror, Leporello announces the arrival of the Commendatore. In deadly jest, the Commendatore asks if, according to the rules of hospitality, Don Giovanni will dine with him. Arrogant to the end, Giovanni accepts. Pressing further, the Commendatore demands repeatedly that Don Giovanni repent his sins, but he is refused again and again. As the scene reaches its climax, Don Giovanni is destroyed.

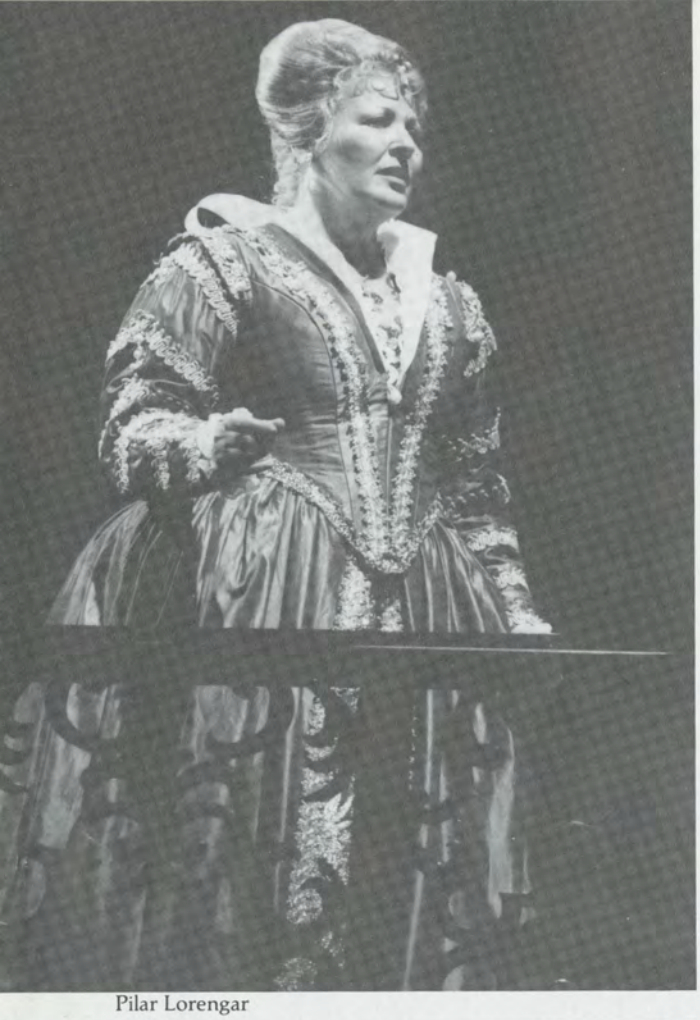
EPILOGUE. The other characters return after this cataclysm, and Leporello tells them what has happened. They all point out the moral of the opera:

This is the evil-doer's end.
Sinners finally meet their just reward,
and always will.

Don Giovanni

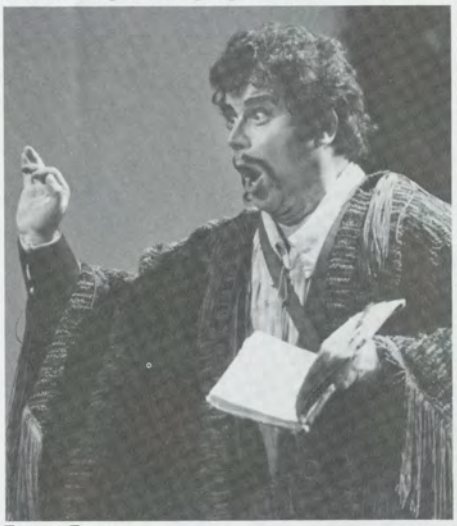
Photos taken in rehearsal by Marty Sohl





Pilar Lorengar

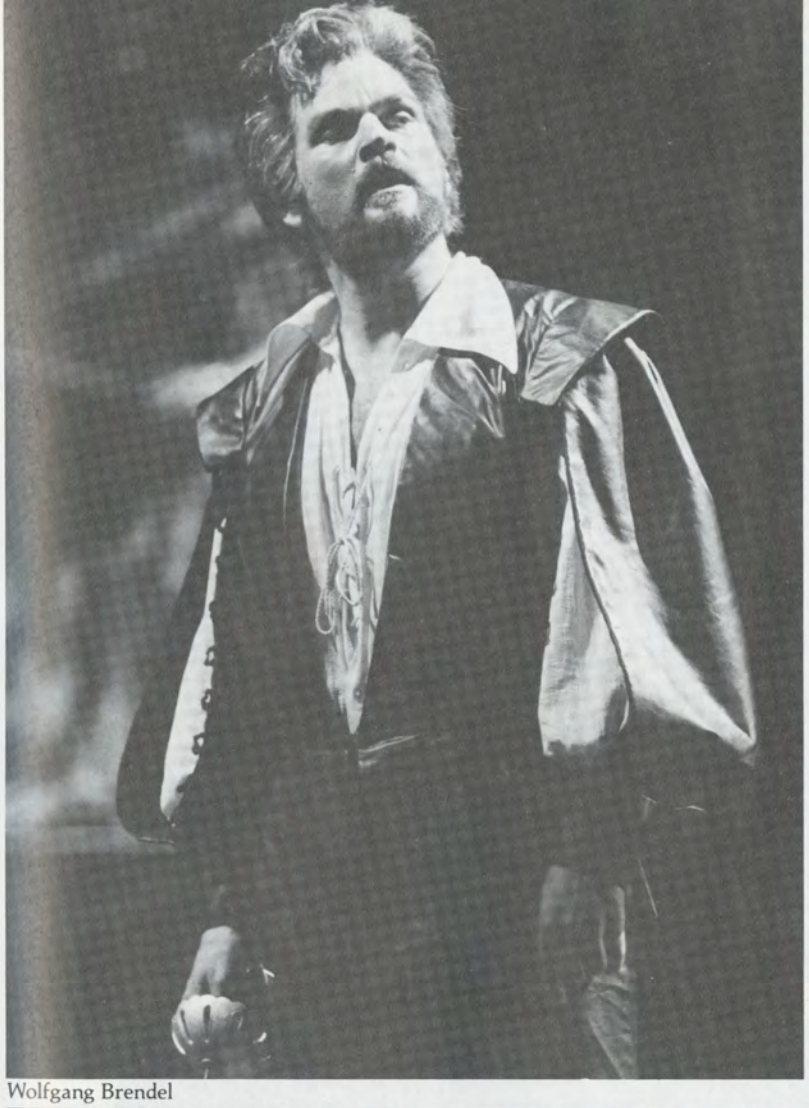
Pilar Lorengar, Wolfgang Brendel



Enrico Fissore

Wolfgang Brendel

Enrico Fissore, Wolfgang Brendel



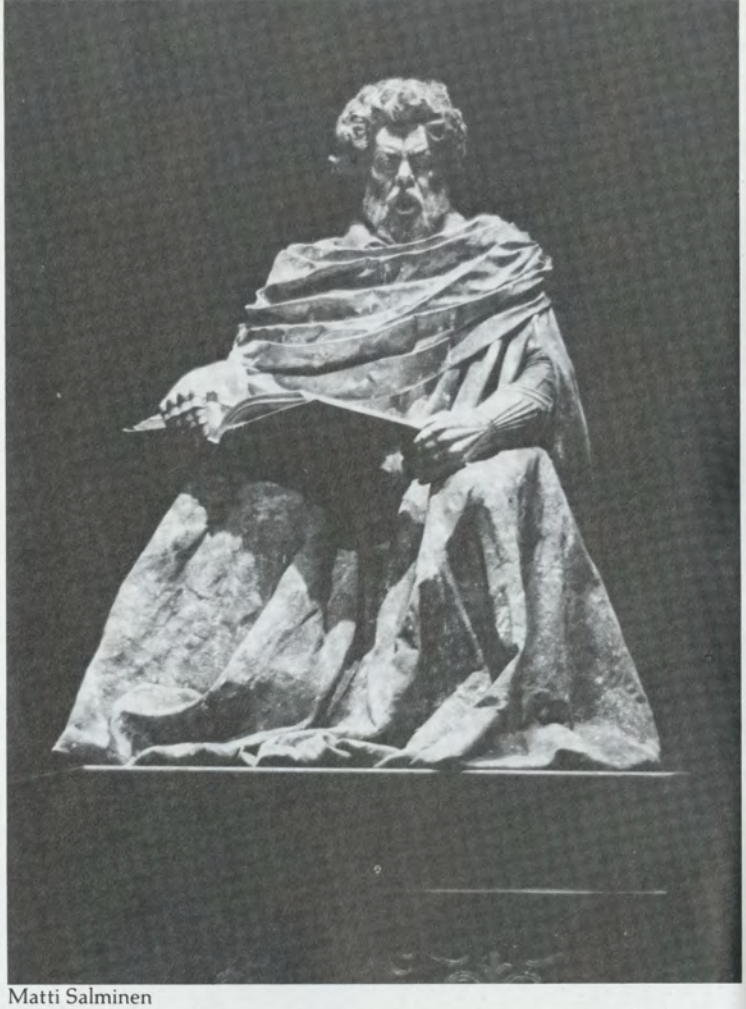
Wolfgang Brendel

Rebecca Cook

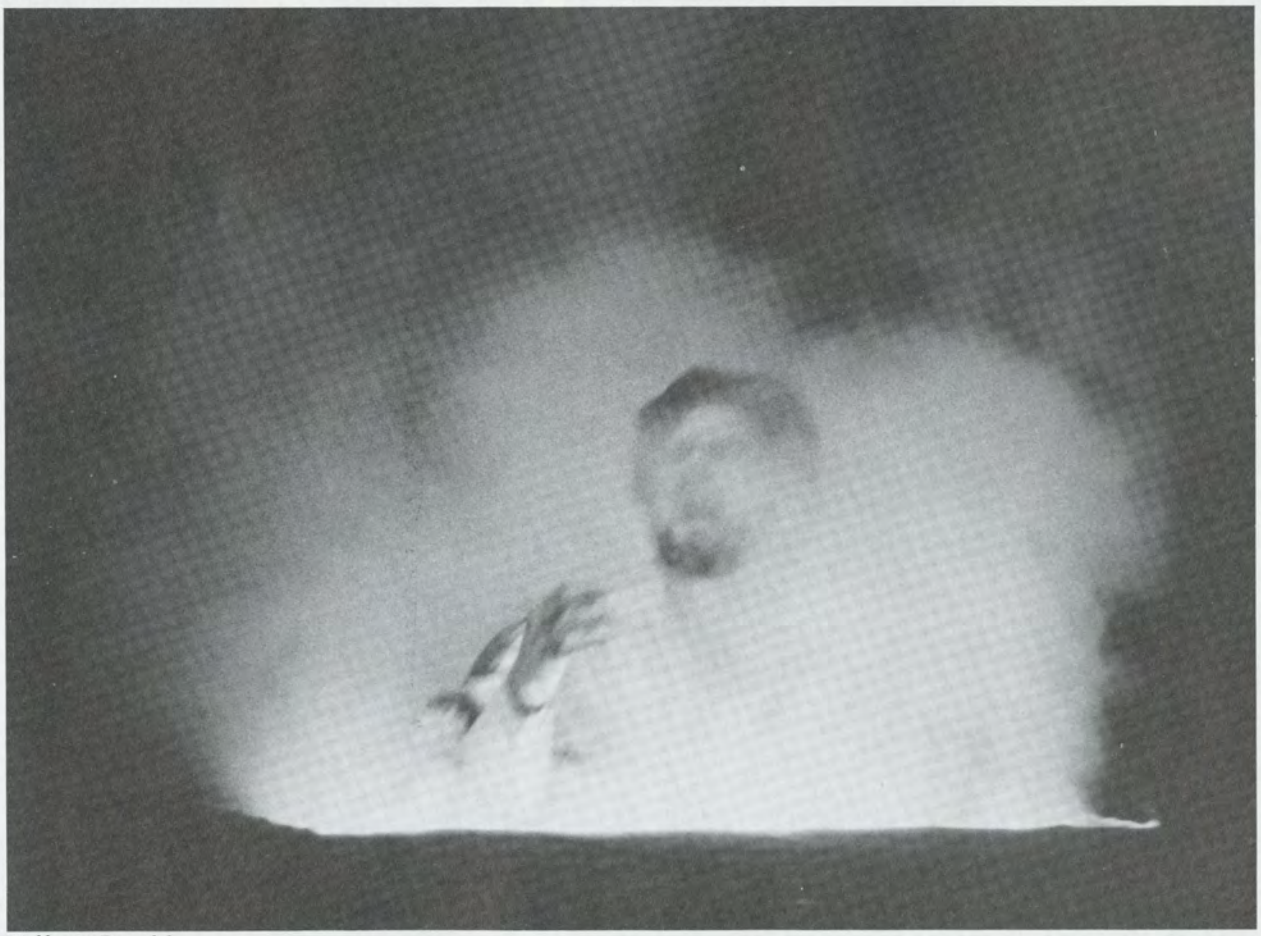
Rebecca Cook, Keith Lewis

Jacob Will, Margarita Zimmermann

Rebecca Cook, Keith Lewis



Matti Salminen



Wolfgang Brendel

WOLFGANG BRENDEL

continued from p. 50

her American debut in 1979 singing Dalila to Jon Vickers's Samson in the Miami Opera's production of *Samson et Dalila.* The following year she sang Dido in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* in Buenos Aires and returned the following year as Dorabella in *Così fan tutte.* The same year, 1981, marked her Covent Garden debut as Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro* under the baton of Sir Colin Davis. She made her 1981 Paris recital debut in the series known as "Les Lundis de l'Athénée," and has returned every year for subsequent recitals in that series. In 1982 Miss Zimmermann appeared in *Don Quichotte* at La Fenice in Venice with Ruggero Raimondi under Georges Prêtre. Miss Zimmermann, who lives in Venice, sings frequently at La Fenice, where this year she sang in Schumann's *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* and Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice.* She made her Paris Opera debut as Carmen in the Piero Faggioni production of that work in 1983. Earlier this year she appeared as Charlotte in *Werther* in Philadelphia; other 1984 engagements include the title role in Handel's *Julius Caesar* in Rome, and Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder* in Venice. Next season at the Théâtre Musical de Paris (Châtelet) she will appear in Rossini's *Maometto II* and Schumann's *Faust* scenes, in addition to a number of recitals and concerts in Venice and with RAI in Milan. Her discography includes Rossini's *Maometto II* on Philips, Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle* with José Carreras and Katia Ricciarelli, Vivaldi's *Cattone in Utica,* Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater,* Albinoni's *Nascita dell' Aurora* in a live recording from La Fenice and, to be recorded next March, *La Jolie Fille de Perth* with June Anderson and Alfredo Kraus under Georges Prêtre.

Popular German baritone **Wolfgang Brendel** sings the title role of *Don Giovanni,* a role he has performed to great acclaim in Munich, Hamburg, Amsterdam, Vienna, Mannheim, Karlsruhe, Berlin and, in Prague, at the Tyl Theatre where the work received its world premiere. Brendel made a highly praised San Francisco Opera debut in 1979 as Rodrigo in *Don Carlo* and sang the High Priest in the 1980 Opening Night production of *Samson et Dalila,* returning as Ottone in *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* for the 1981 Summer Season. In the 1981 Fall Season he was lauded for his performance as Count di Luna in *Il Trovatore.* He first appeared on the opera stage in Kaiserslautern—where he sang his first Don Giovanni, among numerous other roles—and was immediately engaged by the Munich Staatsoper, the company he considers his home base and where he has been leading baritone since 1971. It was in Munich that he was invited by Carlos Kleiber to sing Germont in *La Traviata,* his first Italian role, and his great success in the part was a decisive influence on the course of his career. Brendel's extensive list of credits in Munich includes Renato in *Un Ballo in Maschera,* Rodrigo in *Don Carlo,* Marcello in *La Bohème,* Don Carlo in *La Forza del Destino,* Dr. Falke in *Die Fledermaus,* Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte,* Amfortas in *Parsifal,* Germont in *La Traviata,* Valentin in *Faust,* Pelléas in *Pelléas et Mélisande,* Wolfram in *Tannhäuser,* the title roles of *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and *Eugene Onegin,* and the Count in *Le Nozze di Figaro.* It was in this last role that he made his 1975 Metropolitan Opera debut and his debut at La Scala in 1981. He has also made numerous guest appearances in Berlin, Düsseldorf, Frankfurt, Hamburg, Amsterdam, Geneva, Prague, Vienna, Zurich and at the festivals of Salzburg and Edinburgh. In 1977 he became the youngest singer ever to be named Kammersänger at the Bavarian Staatsoper. He bowed at the Lyric Opera of Chicago as Miller in *Luisa Miller* in 1982, and has just returned from appearances there in the title role of *Eugene Onegin.* During the 1983-84 season he was heard in Munich in *Arabella, Parsifal* and a live television production of *The Magic Flute.* Upcoming engagements include repeat performances of *Parsifal* in Munich, Brahms's *Deutsches Requiem* with the Philadelphia Orchestra, the title role of *Eugene Onegin* with Houston Grand Opera, and the role of Ford in concert performances of *Falstaff* with the Chicago Symphony under Sir Georg Solti in Chicago and New York's Carnegie Hall. Next summer, Brendel makes his Bayreuth Festival debut as Wolfram in *Tannhäuser.* His discography includes complete recordings of Nicolai's *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and Weber's *Der Freischütz,* both

Richard K. Miller
(1926-1984)

Until his untimely death on September 27, 1984, Richard K. Miller, Chairman of the Board of the San Francisco Opera Association, served the Opera with a rare dedication, one that stemmed from a lifelong passion and concern for his favorite art form.

A Vice-president of Pacific Gas and Electric Company, Richard K. Miller was a member of the Opera Board since 1965 and was on the Executive Committee of the Board since 1967. At the time of his election as Chairman, in 1982, he was head of the Endowment Fund Committee.

His love for San Francisco Opera began early. His father, Robert Watt Miller, served as President of the San Francisco Opera Association from 1937 to 1942 and again from 1951 until 1966. Born and raised in San Francisco, Richard Kendall Miller began attending San Francisco Opera in 1935, at the age of nine. His devotion to the lyric theater and to this Company in particular grew through the years, and his supportive attention to the needs of San Francisco Opera distinguished his years of service as a member of the Board.

Richard K. Miller was admired and respected by everyone in the Company who came into contact with him. An active philanthropist, he was involved in numerous Bay Area charitable organizations. The example he set in both his personal and professional life will not be soon forgotten by the city and opera company that he served so well and unselfishly.

San Francisco, October 1984.

ENRICO FISSORE

KEITH LEWIS

under Rafael Kubelik; Paër's *Leonora; The Magic Flute* under Bernard Haitink; Brahms's *Deutsches Requiem* under Giuseppe Sinopoli; *I Pagliacci*, in which Brendel sings the role of Silvio; and a recital of French, Italian and German arias.

Bass-baritone **Enrico Fissore** is Leporello in *Don Giovanni*, a role he has sung in Vienna, Stuttgart, Turin, Dublin and Nancy. He made his professional opera debut at Milan's Teatro Nuovo in the title role of *Don Giovanni* and went on to specialize in works by Rossini and Mozart, as well as a number of 17th- and 18th-century composers including Monteverdi, Cavalli, Vivaldi, Caldara, Handel, Haydn and Salieri. A frequent guest artist in houses throughout Europe, he sings regularly in Vienna, Munich, Geneva, Hamburg, Bonn, Barcelona, Lyons, Nancy and Bordeaux, as well as the festivals of Salzburg, Spoleto, Glyndebourne, Dubrovnik and Bregenz. His extensive repertoire encompasses Mozart's Figaro as well as Guglielmo and Don Alfonso in *Così fan tutte*; Dulcamara in *L'Elisir d'Amore* and the title role of *Don Pasquale*; the title role of *Gianni Schicchi*; and 16 roles by Rossini, including 11 different parts in *Cenerentola, L'Italiana in Algeri, Il Turco in Italia, The Barber of Seville, La Gazza Ladra, La Cambiale di Matrimonio* and *Semiramide*. He has worked with such distinguished conductors as Tullio Serafin, Gianandrea Gavazzeni, Vittorio Gui, Peter Maag, Giuseppe Patanè, John Pritchard, Anton Guadagno, Wolfgang Sawallisch and James Levine, among others. Fissore made his major American debut in San Francisco Opera's 1982 Summer Season production of *The Barber of Seville*, earning high praise for his portrayal of Dr. Bartolo. It was as Melitone in *La Forza del Destino* that he made his triumphant Metropolitan Opera debut during the company's centennial season. His assignments this year have included appearances as Bartolo in the Canary Islands, Dandini in *Cenerentola* in Caracas, the world premiere of Corghi's *Gargantua* at the Teatro Regio in Turin, Leporello in Bonn and the title role of *Don Pasquale* for the Donizetti Festival at Brescia and Pavia. He has also participated in the first two Rossini Festivals in Pesaro. Future engagements include Bartolo in Philadelphia, Stravinsky's *Renard* next spring with the Cleveland Orchestra under Dohnányi both in Cleveland and at Avery Fisher Hall in New York, and a Swiss television production of Scarlatti's *Dirindina*. He was recently seen in the national "Live from the Met" telecast of *La Forza del Destino*, a performance that will be released on a commercially available videocassette.

New Zealand tenor **Keith Lewis** makes his San Francisco Opera debut as Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni*, a role he sang at Glyndebourne in 1978 and '82 and recorded for EMI under Bernard Haitink. In 1976 Lewis won the Kathleen Ferrier Memorial Competition and since then has been in demand in England and Europe as well as Australia and New Zealand. He appeared in Peter Hall's production of *Don Giovanni* both on tour and at the 1978 Glyndebourne Festival, also appearing with that company on tour as Ferrando in *Così fan tutte* in 1978 and at the 1979 Festival as Giove in Monteverdi's *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria*, a production that was recorded by CBS records. He made his Paris Opera debut in 1977, appearing as Tom Rakewell in *The Rake's Progress*, and returned to that company to open the 1983-84 season in Rossini's *Mosè*. In 1980 he appeared as Nadir in Bizet's *Les Pêcheurs de Perles* at the Sydney Opera House and at the Victoria State Opera, returning to the latter for the title role of Gounod's *Faust* and as Lensky in *Eugene Onegin*. Lewis also appeared in *Così fan tutte* in Bordeaux and *La Clemenza di Tito* in Nantes. In the autumn of 1983 he was Tamino in *The*

MATTI SALMINEN

JACOB WILL

Magic Flute with the English National Opera, and returned to that company in the spring of this year to sing Count Almaviva in *The Barber of Seville* at the London Coliseum. In September of this year he made his American debut in performances of Bach's *Magnificat* with the Minnesota Orchestra under Neville Marriner, and went on to make his Chicago Symphony debut in Handel's *Messiah* conducted by Sir Georg Solti, a performance that has been recorded by London Records. His assignments this year include Matteo in *Arabella* for the 1984 Glyndebourne Festival, Lensky in Frankfurt, Ferrando in Berlin, and two productions at Covent Garden: *The Barber of Seville* and Bellini's *I Capuleti e i Montecchi.* He has appeared in concert with all of Britain's leading orchestras, and his concert appearances include Britten's *War Requiem* at the Royal Festival Hall, Haydn's *Creation* at the Barbican Centre under Jeffrey Tate and Verdi's Requiem in Stuttgart under Giuseppe Sinopoli. He recently recorded the Berlioz Requiem under Gary Bertini for EMI.

Finnish bass **Matti Salminen** makes his San Francisco Opera debut as Prince Ivan Khovansky in *Khovanshchina,* continuing as the Commendatore in *Don Giovanni.* He was a member of the chorus of the Finnish National Opera when he suddenly replaced an ailing colleague as King Philip in *Don Carlos.* His success was so great that he eventually sang all of the major bass roles in the Finnish Opera's repertoire. In 1970, he made his Stuttgart debut as the Commendatore in *Don Giovanni,* followed by an engagement in Nuremberg as Pogner in *Die Meistersinger.* Shortly thereafter he appeared as Sarastro in Jean-Pierre Ponnelle's production of *The Magic Flute* in Cologne, where he became a company member in 1972. His roles there have included King Philip in *Don Carlos,* Sir Morosus in Strauss' *Die Schweigsame Frau,* Osmin in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail,* King Marke in *Tristan und Isolde,* Rocco in *Fidelio* and Don Basilio in *The Barber of Seville,* to name only a few. He bowed at La Scala as Fafner in *Das Rheingold* with the Munich Opera under Wolfgang Sawallisch in 1973 and the following year made his Covent Garden debut as Fasolt in a new production of *Das Rheingold.* Beginning in 1975, Salminen participated in cycles of operas by Mozart and Monteverdi in productions created by Jean-Pierre Ponnelle in Zurich and subsequently filmed for television. His Bayreuth Festival debut came in 1976, when he sang Fafner, Fasolt and Hunding in the Chéreau/Boulez production of Wagner's *Ring,* reprising the last two roles for the internationally telecast film version. His 1978 Salzburg debut was in Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* conducted by Herbert von Karajan, with whom Salminen subsequently sang the Grand Inquisitor in *Don Carlo* at the Vienna Music Festival and at the Vienna Staatsoper. In 1981 he sang the title role of *Boris Godunov* in Geneva and bowed at the Metropolitan Opera as King Marke and Sarastro. In 1982 he returned to Bayreuth as Titurel in *Parsifal* and King Marke, roles he repeated in 1983, and appeared as Ramfis in a new production of *Aida* in Berlin, as well as in various productions in Zurich, Buenos Aires and Barcelona. In 1983 he appeared with the Finnish National Opera at the Metropolitan Opera House, where he sang the Peddler in *The Red Line.* Recent engagements have taken him to Munich, Vienna, Paris, Geneva, and La Scala in Milan.

Bass-baritone **Jacob Will** undertakes four roles during the 1984 Fall Season: Iago in *Ernani,* the Imperial Commissioner in both casts of *Madama Butterfly,* Rochefort in *Anna Bolena,* and Masetto in *Don Giovanni.* The young singer bowed with San Francisco Opera as the Customhouse Guard in the 1983 Summer Season pro-

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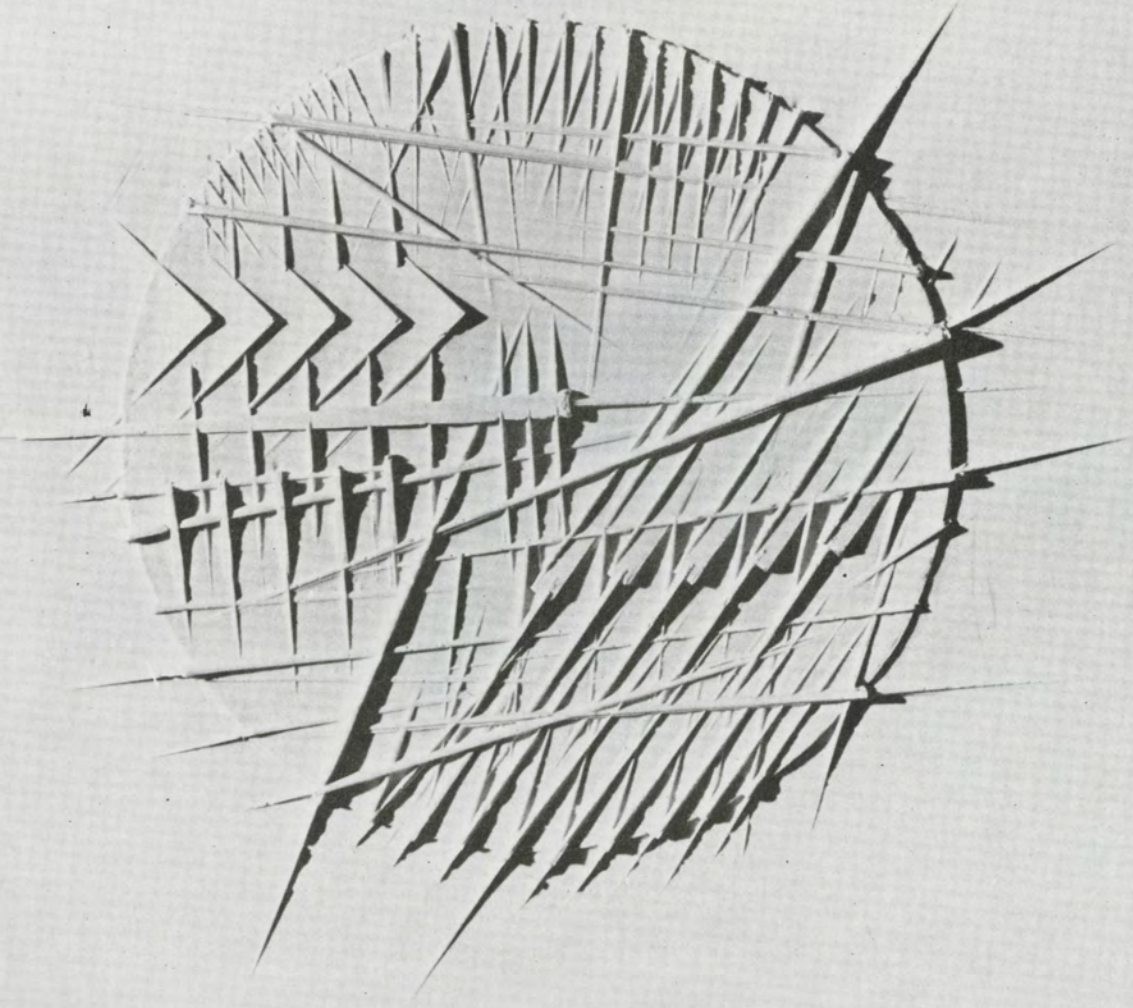

MYUNG-WHUN CHUNG

duction of *La Bohème*, and returned last fall to sing seven roles in five operas. Born in South Carolina, Will was a participant in the 1982 and '83 Merola Opera programs, during which he appeared at Stern Grove as the Speaker in *The Magic Flute* and Dr. Miracle in *The Tales of Hoffmann*, and at Villa Montalvo as Count Monterone in *Rigoletto*. Will is currently in his second year as an Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center. He has also appeared in *Madama Butterfly* with the Columbia Lyric Opera and in Rossini's *La Gazzetta* in the American Opera Auditions in Cincinnati. At the most recent Carmel Bach Festival, he won high praise for his performances in Haydn's *Orlando Paladino*, Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* and Mozart's Mass in C minor.

Korean-born **Myung-Whun Chung** returns to San Francisco Opera to conduct *Don Giovanni*, the opera he led earlier this year in Copenhagen. The young maestro made his Company debut conducting *Madama Butterfly* in 1980 and returned during the 1982 Summer Season for *Turandot*. He has been a performer since the age of seven, at which time he appeared as piano soloist with the Seoul Philharmonic. As a concert pianist, Chung had already performed with important orchestras in New York, London and Berlin and had won several major international competitions when he entered the Juilliard School of Music to further his conducting studies. His conducting of the Juilliard Opera Center's production of *Madama Butterfly* won him rave reviews from the New York press. In 1978, Chung began a three-year association with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, becoming Carlo Maria Giulini's assistant and subsequently associate conductor of the orchestra. During that time he also made numerous guest appearances on the podiums of such orchestras as the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Cleveland Orches-

JOHN COPLEY

tra, the London Philharmonic, the National Symphony and the Royal Philharmonic. After several successful collaborations with the Israel Philharmonic, Chung was invited by Zubin Mehta to spend three weeks with the New York Philharmonic earlier this year. European organizations he has conducted include the Bavarian Radio Orchestra in Munich, the Berlin Philharmonic, the London Symphony, L'Orchestre de Paris, the Royal Philharmonic and the Vienna Symphony. Currently principal conductor of the Saar Radio Symphony Orchestra in Saarbrücken,he has also made two films for Polytel with the Southwest German Radio Symphony. His assignments this season include concerts with the Boston Symphony, the National Symphony Orchestra and the Toronto Symphony. His piano activities include a United States tour with the Chung Trio, in which he performs with his sisters, violinist Kyung-Wha Chung and cellist Myung-Wha Chung. Future opera plans include his Metropolitan Opera debut in 1986, and productions of *Rigoletto* in Monte Carlo and *L'Italiana in Algeri* in Geneva.

Stage director **John Copley** returns for his third season with San Francisco Opera to direct Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, a work he has staged for the Royal Opera at Covent Garden. He made his San Francisco Opera debut during the 1982 Summer Season with a highly praised production of Handel's *Julius Caesar* and returned in the Fall Season of 1983 for the widely acclaimed American premiere production of Tippett's *The Midsummer Marriage*. Copley spent several years early in his career as a stage manager for musicals in London's West End before becoming assistant and then principal resident producer (director) at Covent Garden, a position he still holds. His productions there have included *La Bohème, Werther, Così fan tutte, Le Nozze di Figaro, Ariadne auf Naxos* and *L'Elisir*

TONI BUSINGER

THOMAS J. MUNN

d'Amore, as well as the two largest galas mounted at Covent Garden, marking the occasions of England's entry into the Common Market and Queen Elizabeth's Silver Jubilee. He also staged Dame Janet Baker's farewell performances in *Alceste* at Covent Garden and in *Mary Stuart* with the English National Opera at the London Coliseum. Other ENO credits include *Julius Caesar, Der Rosenkavalier, La Belle Hélène, Il Trovatore* and *Werther*. His work has also been seen at La Scala in Milan, the Welsh National Opera, Scottish Opera, Netherlands Opera, the Greek National Opera and festivals at Drottningholm, Aix-en-Provence, Ottawa, Munich, Athens, Wexford and Wiesbaden. Among the 18 productions he has directed in Australia are *Jenůfa, Macbeth, Manon, Manon Lescaut, Così fan tutte, Le Nozze di Figaro, The Magic Flute* and *Don Carlos*. In North America, his directing credits include productions for the Canadian Opera Company, the Vancouver Opera, New York City Opera, the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Dallas Opera and the Washington Opera at Kennedy Center.

Designer **Toni Businger** made his San Francisco Opera debut in 1966 with the production of *Madama Butterfly* seen this Fall Season and previously revived in 1968, '69, '71, '74 and '80. He also created the original design for *Don Giovanni* as seen here in 1974, '78 and the '81 Summer Season. Other projects for San Francisco Opera have included *La Traviata*, first mounted in 1969 and revived in 1973, '80 and '83; and *The Magic Flute* (1969 and '75). A designer for theater and television as well as opera, Businger made his theatrical debut at the Zürich 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 and Yugoslavia, besides the United States. His operatic credits include *Carmen* for the Netherlands Opera, *Viva la Mamma* for the Vienna Festival and *Manon* for the Montreal Opera.

In his ninth year with San Francisco Opera, **Thomas J. Munn** is responsible for lighting seven productions this fall: *Ernani, Carmen, Madama Butterfly, Elektra, Khovanshchina, Rigoletto* and *Don Giovanni*. Since 1976, he has designed the lighting and special effects for over 70 San Francisco Opera productions. He created the lighting for all of the 1984 Summer Season productions (*Don Pasquale, Siegfried, Aida* and *Die Fledermaus*) and his 1983 assignments included new lighting designs for *Das Rheingold, Die Walküre, Ariadne auf Naxos, La Grande Duchesse de Gérolstein, Boris Godunov* and the American premiere of *The Midsummer Marriage*. He has also designed the scenery as well as the lighting for *Nabucco* and *Salome* in 1982, *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* in 1981, *Roberto Devereux* and *Pelléas et Mélisande* in 1979 and *Billy Budd* in 1978. In addition to his numerous design credits for the War Memorial stage, Munn has designed for Broadway, Off-Broadway and regional theater companies throughout the United States and Europe. Recent projects include productions for the Hartford Ballet, Netherlands Opera and Lyric Opera of Chicago. His television credits include San Francisco Opera productions of *La Gioconda* (for which he received a 1979 Emmy Award), *Samson et Dalila* in 1980, *Aida* in 1981 and the Pavarotti concert in 1983. He is currently a consultant on new theater projects for the Netherlands Opera.

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Sexist Pig

By J.B. HANDELSMAN

When Lorenzo Da Ponte offered to Mozart his libretto based on the Don Juan legend, both men cackled over it shamelessly. Before rushing to judgment, one must see this from a historical standpoint. Shameless cackling at the expense of women was considered acceptable behavior in the eighteenth century, at least by men, who of course were writing all the operas. And in seventeenth century Spain, where the story takes place, male insensitivity had become a national sport rivaling the corrida. A prolific lovemaker was greeted with all the honor accorded a famous matador; and should he be victorious in both fields, he might be undecided whose ear to present to whom.

Womanizing in those days was time-consuming, unpaid work, and therefore reserved to the nobility, whose lofty incomes gouged out of the peasantry gave them the leisure and the means to travel extensively. Less than half of Don Giovanni's 2065 conquests (in contemporary American terms, runs batted in) had been accomplished in Spain. He had to go all the way to Turkey for ninety-one of them; and he must have voyaged by sea from Venice to Constantinople, uncharacteristically passing up the opportunity of ravishing large numbers overland in Yugoslavia and Greece.

Giovanni is sometimes portrayed as an idealist, ever seeking the perfect woman, in whose arms he will find such sweet gratification that he will cease his restless philandering. This idea is what the British call a load of old codswallop. Considering his youth and the multitudes racked up in so short a period, he could hardly have have spent more time with each victim than it takes to eat a paella, let alone recognize perfection.

It grew so repetitious that he made a game of it, going through the alphabet again and again. Hence, at the start of the opera we find him pursuing an A, perhaps for the two-hundredth time. We have just heard the overture, which Mozart wrote at dinner in two minutes, between the soup and the entrée.

The curtain rises on Leporello, grumbling at the injustice of his amorous master getting all the exercise while he, the servant, hangs about putting on weight night and day ("Notte e giorno faticar").

Don Giovanni now suffers a blow to his batting average as the enraged Donna Anna chases him into the courtyard, threatening to expose him as a basically apprehensive person with anxieties about his virility. Her father the Commenda-

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J.B. Handelsman is a cartoonist and writer whose work appears with alarming regularity in The New Yorker *and* Punch.

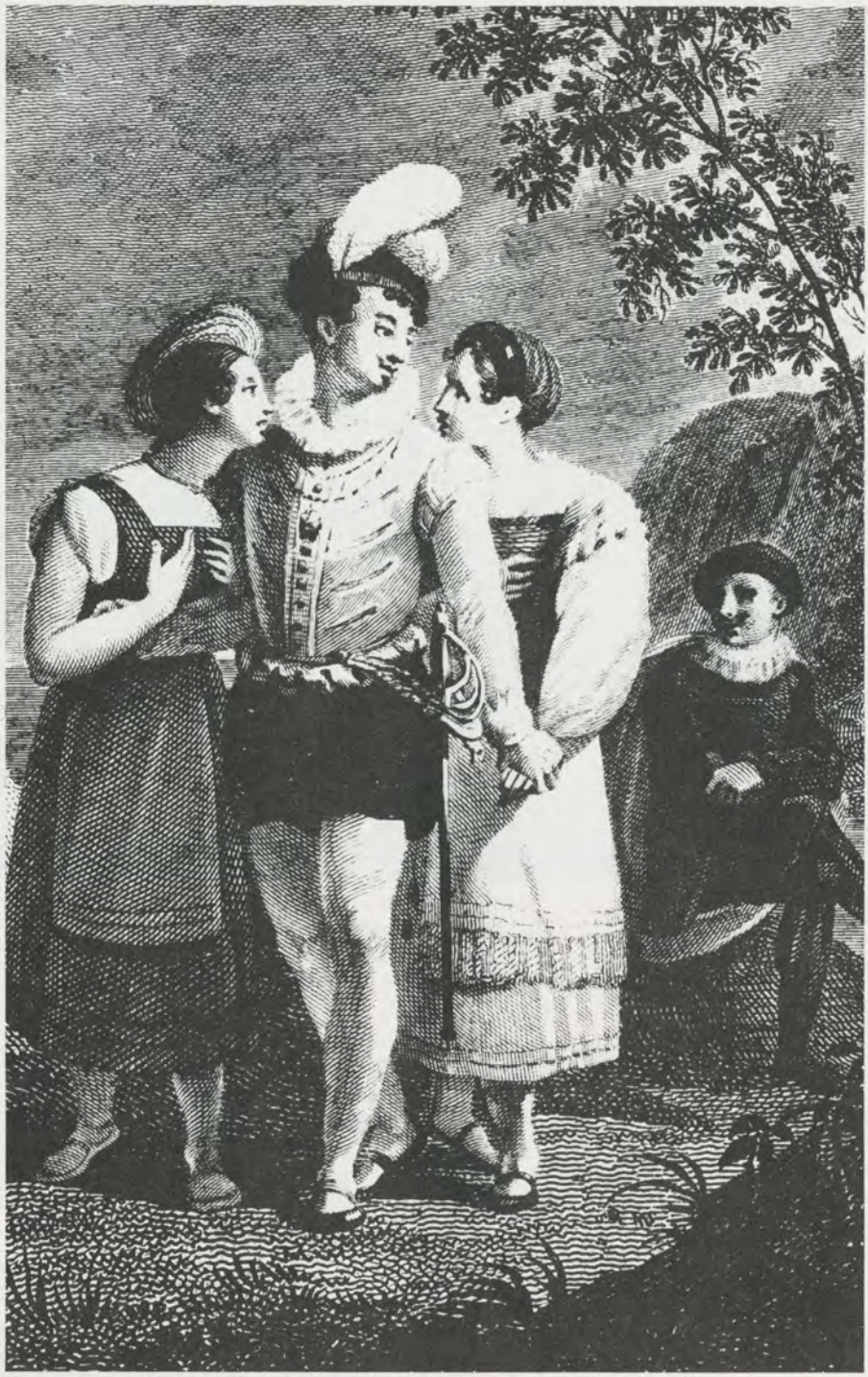
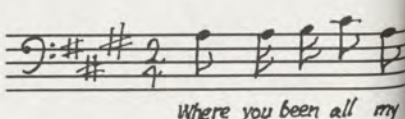


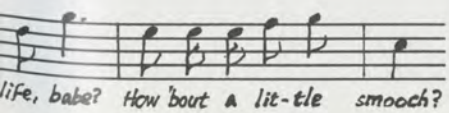
Illustration for Molière's *Dom Juan*. Engraving by Bosc and Devilliers, after Desenne.



tore, roused from dreams of past glories, appears and challenges the intruder; he, too, has an image to protect. He would have been better advised to call the police; the villain might then have been identified in a lineup and the entire opera averted. However, the two insecure men fight and the Commendatore is killed. This is Don Giovanni's second great mistake. The first was to attempt to force his attentions upon a feminist. And here she comes again, with her pathetic fiancé Don Ottavio, who just happened to be at hand. Really? Where was he when all the raping and screaming and duelling were going on? Cowering under his bed? This seems likely, as he soon reveals himself a wimp of the first order, asking the grieving Anna to be consoled with the thought that he will henceforth be her father figure—at least, he supposes so ("hai sposo")—a suggestion she repulses with "Ah! Vendicar, se il puoi" (Ah! Go peddle that stuff if you can).

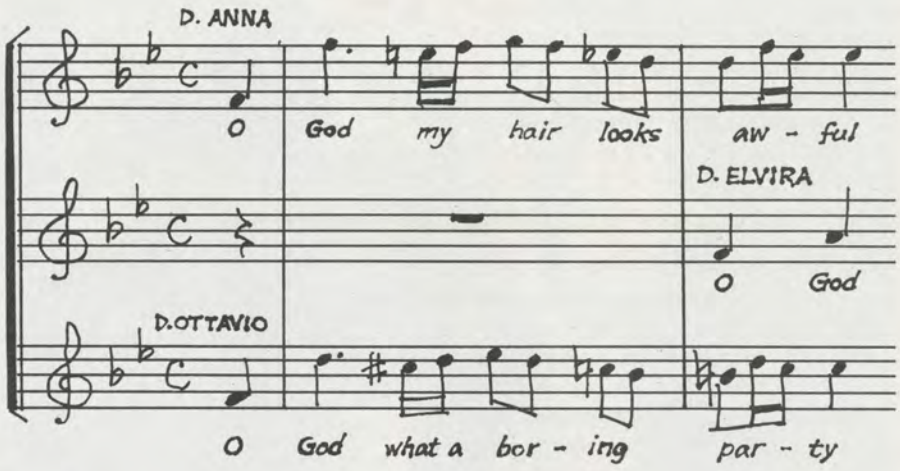
Don Giovanni no sooner hits the road than he descries a woman bloodthirstily declaiming that when she finds the heartless wretch who betrayed her, she will tear out his heart. Undeterred by this contradiction, he offers his services; but she is none other than the neurotic Donna Elvira, who has already been serviced. In love as in politics, anyone whose work brings him into contact with a great many people cannot be expected to remember all of them, but to Giovanni's credit he does recall her name after a bit; then, seeing that she is in a violent mood, he decamps, leaving Leporello to explain that, like 2064 others, she has been made a sap of ("Voi sapete quel che fa").

The arrival of a furrow of peasants—if you can think of a better collective noun, use it—now attracts the Don's attention. They are celebrating the betrothal of two of their number, Masetto and Zerlina. The libertine is aroused by her name. It has literally been weeks since he had a Z! The rustics are packed off to his castle, despite the bridegroom's bucolic misgivings, and Giovanni proceeds to woo the maiden in his most irresistibly subtle manner:



But the rake makes little progress. Elvira appears, whisks away the nearly overcome Z, and the frustrated lover hardly has time to adjust his clothing when he has to deal with Anna and Ottavio, and again with the shrieking Elvira, who bounces wildly on and offstage as if controlled by rubber bands. He attempts to diagnose her as anal-retentive with severe personality disorder, but they — well on the way to paranoia themselves — find her behavior perfectly normal. Worse, Anna recognizes his voice as that of the assassin, and poor Don Ottavio is expected to prove his worth by getting himself killed as well. In an aside, the terrified tenor confesses that his beloved sets a very difficult pace ("Dalla sua pace").

Hoping for a reversal of the bad luck that has dogged him all day, Don Giovanni decides to throw a party. It proves to be as dull as most parties, and attracts the dullest of guests: the inevitable Anna, Ottavio, and Elvira, who arrive masked, although the audience at least is not fooled for a moment. Like so many of us before surrendering to spurious festivities, they offer up a prayer:



Zerlina, having semi-pacified Masetto by begging him to thrash her (imagine Donna Anna making such a request! She would be more likely to knock Ottavio's block off—and he would love it), and still longing to be seduced by an aristocrat before lapsing into humdrum connubiality down on the farm, permits herself to be led offstage by Giovanni. But she lacks the courage of her inclinations. She screams. (Or possibly *he* screams. Or one of the stagehands.) The three avengers, whose minds were made up anyway, make them up again. They have all the evidence they need (none): a dastard who makes unauthorized love must be a murderer as well. And why not a litterer, or a chronic double parker? By the standards of present day jurisprudence, such flimsy prosecution would result in a thundering "case dismissed." Nevertheless, Don Giovanni is forced to flee from his own party, and so ends Act I.

In the second act we find the Don again on the road, still with the old one-track mind. He plans to woo Elvira's maid, although he has probably not yet gone home to change his shirt. To effect this, he must get rid of Elvira herself. He and Leporello swap garments, and the poor psychotic (in the first act she was merely neurotic) is induced to descend and be made love to by Leporello, whom she mistakes for his master. She is no longer able to distinguish individual identities—a frighteningly rapid mental deterioration. When they have gone, Giovanni serenades the maid with his usual charm ("Come on down, hot lips"), is interrupted by Masetto and his gang, sends the gang away, beats Masetto—not so much for his threats as for spoiling the seduction—and departs. Masetto believes his injuries were inflicted by Leporello; hardly anyone here seems very good at recognizing faces and voices. Zerlina comforts her bruised future spouse with her generally untrustworthy caresses.

Almost the entire cast now meet fortuitously. Leporello, still wearing his master's clothes, is taken by the others for Don Giovanni. Most of them wish to kill him. Even Don Ottavio behaves bravely (seeing, of course, that his opponent is unarmed). Leporello explains that he is really himself, but as they have scores to

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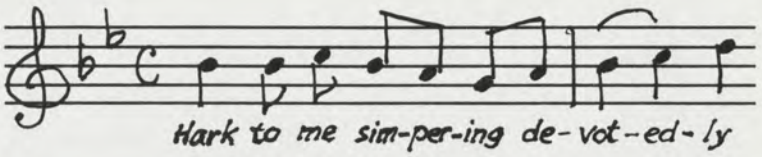
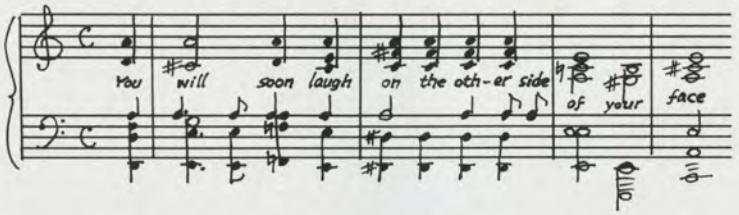
THE WORKS!

settle with him as well, he—with a sound reliance on their gullibility and slow reflexes—escapes.

Anna having gone indoors, Ottavio assures his bored companions of his doglike fidelity to her:



Why Don Giovanni and his servant, coming from different directions and still without clean shirts, should each suddenly decide to visit a cemetery is not clear, but they do. As Don Giovanni gleefully recounts his latest adventure, he is interrupted by the statue of the slain Commendatore:



Since very few people have had the privilege of being addressed by a monument, Giovanni naturally suspects the presence of a ventriloquist. Upon being convinced that it is all on the level, he invites the sculpture to supper. The invitation is accepted, and off they go to start cooking the rice. And change their shirts.

While they are thus occupied, Don Ottavio suggests to Donna Anna that they wed the following day, to rid her of her grief. He seems to have a touching faith in the curative power of matrimony, but what he really hopes to cure is his own celibacy, which is making him extremely fidgety. But she turns him down again, though with a tantalizing hint that she can be only too spicy ("Troppo mi spiace"). How he must envy Don Giovanni, that hardened criminal!

The latter has now hired an orchestra to accompany his meal. Next to women, his favorite diversion is to try to chew on pitch. Donna Elvira storms in, wildly exhorting him to mend his ways; but he thinks his ways are lovely, and she storms out again, telling him that he remains, even with a haircut, the greatest lecher in the world ("Restati, barbaro, nel lezzo immondo").

Shrieks from Elvira and Leporello and an ominous pounding at the door herald the arrival of the marble masterpiece. The Commendatore has come to supper. But, with his stony innards, he cannot eat mortal junk food, and he invites his host back to his place for a celestial meal. Don Giovanni accepts, but there is a catch: he must repent. This he cannot do, of course. Is he to turn into a Don Ottavio on the spot? Has the man of stone got rocks in his head? Defying heaven and earth—and you really have to admire him!—the miscreant is dragged to hell.

At this point the rest of the cast arrive, too late as usual, to apprehend the villain. Frustrated (and, in one case, probably relieved), they content themselves with insipid moralizing. Ottavio again proposes to Anna, and is put off for another year. One may speculate that she is now mourning for Don Giovanni. In any case, she is understandably in no hurry to see Don Ottavio's vacuously adoring face each morning over breakfast. Donna Elvira will enter a convent, bad news for the Church. Leporello will visit the pub to recruit a less obsessed master. Everyone is disgustingly holier-than-thou, or anyway holier than the departed Don Giovanni. This is to conceal their envy. And he can well be envied: he is the kind of callous boor we would all like to be, living in the fast lane and having a marvelous time (*tempo meraviglioso*).

Illegal, of course. The others would be happy—but not *too* happy—to settle for *allegro ma non troppo.* ■

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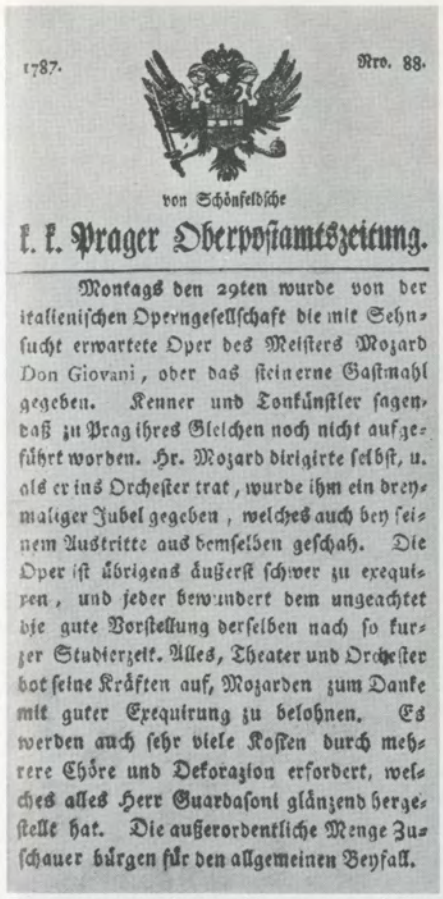
Fascination *continued from p. 44*

lazy, and the stage staff slow to learn their duties. Three days of each week, moreover, were unavailable for rehearsal because of the regularly scheduled opera performances. Mozart had five days, not ten, in which to prepare *Don Giovanni* for its premiere. With its many ensembles, unfamiliar music, and elaborate stage action, *Don Giovanni* could not be ready for performance within so short a time. The premiere was postponed by ten days, and by the Emperor's command, *Le Nozze di Figaro* was performed in honor of the royal newlyweds, with Mozart himself conducting. A few days later, one of the singers became indisposed and the first performance was again set back to the 29th of October. Mozart composed the overture on the night of October 27-28, just in time to have the orchestral parts copied before the final dress rehearsal that day, at which time he also entered *Don Giovanni* in his "Catalogue of My Own Works." Da Ponte was unable to attend the first performance; he had been recalled to Vienna. Mozart, who conducted, was cheered each time he entered or left the orchestra pit; newspaper reports were adulatory, and subsequent performances frequent. Mozart and Da Ponte had indeed trumped the success of *Figaro* in Prague.

It followed them back to Vienna. Soon after Mozart's return in mid-November, the Emperor appointed him Court Composer, in succession to Gluck, and ordered a production of *Don Giovanni* at the Burgtheater. It took place on May 7, 1788, and required a significant quantity of musical revision. To satisfy the Viennese taste for farce, Da Ponte and Mozart added a scene in Act Two after Leporello's escape, in which Zerlina recaptures him, ties him to a chair and threatens him with a razor; their duet "Per queste tue manine" is musically delightful though the situation is too much for serious-minded modern Mozart-worshippers, and it is seldom seen on stage. As his Viennese Donna Elvira, Mozart had the excellent Catarina Cavalieri, his first Constanze in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* and the mistress of Salieri: for her he added the aria "Mi tradì quell'alma ingrata," nowa-



1787. Nro. 88.

von Schönfeldsche

k. k. Prager Oberpostamtszeitung.

Montags den 29ten wurde von der italienischen Operngesellschaft die mit Sehnsucht erwartete Oper des Meisters Mozard Don Giovani, oder das steinerne Gastmahl gegeben. Kenner und Tonkünstler sagen, daß zu Prag ihres Gleichen noch nicht aufgeführt worden. Hr. Mozard dirigirte selbst, u. als er ins Orchester trat, wurde ihm ein dreymaliger Jubel gegeben, welches auch bey seinem Austritte aus demselben geschah. Die Oper ist übrigens äußerst schwer zu exequiren, und jeder bewundert dem ungeachtet die gute Vorstellung derselben nach so kurzer Studierzeit. Alles, Theater und Orchester bot seine Kräften auf, Mozarden zum Danke mit guter Exequirung zu belohnen. Es werden auch sehr viele Kosten durch mehrere Chöre und Dekorazion erfordert, welches alles Herr Guardasoni glänzend hergestellt hat. Die außerordentliche Menge Zuschauer bürgen für den allgemeinen Beyfall.

First report on the world premiere of *Don Giovanni*, printed in the *Prague Post* of November 3, 1787.

Rough translation: The eagerly awaited opera of the Master Mozard (sic), Don Giovani (sic), or the Stone Guest, was presented on the 29th by the Italian Opera Company. Connoisseurs and musicians say that its like has never before been performed in Prague. Mr. Mozard himself conducted and, as he entered the orchestra, was received with fiery acclaim, which was repeated when he left it. The opera itself is, incidentally, extremely difficult to execute, and all admired the excellence of the performance in spite of this difficulty and the limited preparation time. Everyone, in the theater and the orchestra, gave of their best in order to show gratitude to Mozard and reward him with a superior performance. High costs were also incurred due to the number of choristers as well as the decor, which was brilliantly provided by Mr. Guardasoni. The extraordinarily large audience accounted for the general enthusiasm.

days regarded as the apogee of Elvira's part, and her moment of profoundest self-revelation. (The Prague Elvira did not have a beautiful voice, otherwise Mozart would surely have demanded such a scene for the character.) Francesco Morella, the Vienna Don Ottavio, was not up to the taxing florid Prague aria, so in its stead "Dalla sua pace" was inserted into the middle of the first act, suavely lyrical rather than would-be-heroic. A legend that, in this Vienna production, the opera ended with Giovanni's descent to hell, omitting the final sextet, depended on an annotated libretto of the time; it has since proved unauthentic, though it encouraged 19th-century performers to do likewise in the interests of a wholly serious *Don Giovanni*.

In his reminiscences written decades later, Da Ponte recalled that Mozart wanted to make *Don Giovanni* a serious piece, and had to be dissuaded. His music includes much that we can call unequivocally serious: the beginning of the overture, which prefigures the arrival of the Commendatore's statue to have supper with Giovanni, remains tremendous even if you know it by heart. Donna Anna's grief and vengeful fury are grandly noble, in their utmost earnestness.

Don Giovanni himself is portrayed in

COURTESY, T.A. McEWEN

Henrietta Sontag as Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*, Paris, 1826.

full color and at full stature: a hero and a star, not to be jeered at, not even to be despised, and not to be pitied either. Though many may disapprove of his conduct, some men will secretly admire and envy him, sharing his embarrassment when plans go amiss in his amorous escapades—there are plenty of these. Indeed, Da Ponte fixed the scenario of his *Don Giovanni* so that the prince of lechers is never once seen being successful with a lady. This was probably the Abbe's *pudeur*, protecting his audience from witnessing so shameful a crime as seduction, though some believe that it represents Da Ponte's revenge on a rival practitioner, implying that Giovanni was doomed to die on the first day he failed in his *raison d'être.*

Da Ponte's libretto is certainly a comedy: it exploits his favorite ploy of taking noble characters, involving them in a piquant situation, and then making fun of their predicament. The Trio in Act Two "Ah taci, ingiusto core" when Giovanni and Leporello swap clothes and woo Donna Elvira on her balcony, is a prime example and Mozart rose sublimely to it, as he does again in the magnificent sextet, "Sola, sola in buio loco," ending with the capture of Leporello in Donna Anna's courtyard. The comedy in both these is activated by Leporello's involvement with aristocratic goings-on, as it is in the Cemetery Scene when Leporello, at the point of his master's sword, has to invite the Commendatore's statue to supper with his murderer—what ambiguity of solemnity and ludicrousness there is in Mozart's music for this duet/trio. There is the same ambiguity in Giovanni's solo, "Metà di voi," where he, disguised as Leporello, instructs the belligerent yokels in ambushing his actual self. The music here is furtive and mercurial; jocular rather than dangerous. Usually we enjoy the joke of the hero hoodwinking his would-be assassins; enjoy the panache and brio with which he deludes and deploys them before he gives Masetto a vicious drubbing. Yet Mozart's music for this aria also suggests the suspense of aristocratic Giovanni's dangerous presence, among potential assassins, disguised as a common manservant and pretending to talk like one, as far from heroism or courtly

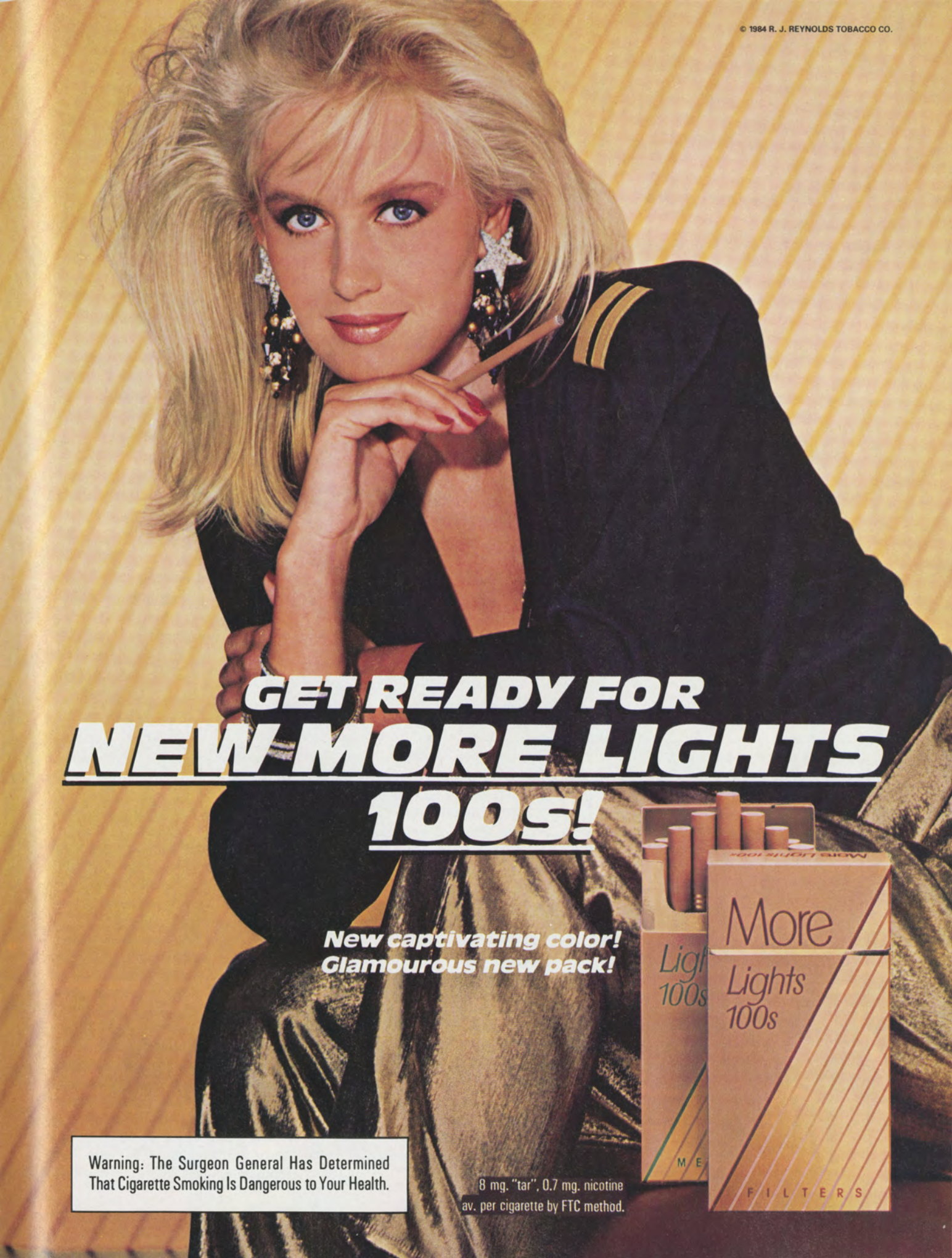
elegance as can be—enjoying himself the more because he's dancing on a naked sword with a blunderbuss in his back.

The quartet in Act One, "Non ti fidar, o misera," is also comic in effect, though all the characters are noble. The catalyst here is Donna Elvira. She wears a respectable prefix, but her manner on stage is implicitly hysterical, that of a victim to uncontrollable passion, well over the top, and therefore not quite a lady (well-bred people keep their feelings always under control, so they claim). In late 19th-century Germany, she was habitually characterized and dressed like a more or less ambitious prostitute; I do not know how far back this tradition stretches. Da Ponte treats her unkindly, making her endure the mockery of Leporello's Catalogue Aria, then hear Giovanni's claim (to Anna and Ottavio) that she is mentally unhinged, and making her fall ignominiously for Leporello's ridiculous impersonation of the dashing hero. Her eruption into the Supper Scene is grotesquely graceless, scarcely less so than her exit, pursued by a statue. When at last she vows to enter a convent, those of us who know Molière's *Festin de Pierre* may shake our heads, knowing that in Molière she was initially abducted from a convent by Don Juan. We cherish her extra Vienna solo, because its music explains her plight: she has only found herself through Giovanni's liberating ardor, and cannot enjoy life without it. Without "Mi tradì," Donna Elvira is hardly more than a puppet, the Judy who manages to survive Punch. That already speaks in her favor, and Mozart makes her more interesting than Donna Anna, a better value than Zerlina, though more foolish and absurd than either in what befalls her. There are more laughs in her role than in any other except that of Leporello, the resident comedian, unless the director chooses to fire at that sitting target, Don Ottavio. Mozart does not make fun of him in his two arias (only one in the Prague version) and elsewhere only on the basis that he is a nobleman, and is therefore to be taken seriously.

Don Giovanni is an opera of ambivalences; of who and what is serious or amusing. Mozart himself was the master of ambivalence in all his music: at some moment in one of his piano concertos, or string quintets, as well as his stage music, we are moved greatly—and are not sure of whether to weep or laugh. Perhaps that is what Busoni meant when he wrote about Mozart "together with the problem, he gives the solution"; though with the problems Mozart sets there are never less than two solutions to any conundrum posed at the beginning. *Don Giovanni* is not an exception: for a stage director sympathetic to music, it presents one of the theater's most inspiring challenges. For any audience, it is an opera of inexhaustible fascination. ■

COURTESY, LIM M. LAI

Hans Hotter as Don Giovanni in the 1950s.



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BERTRAMKA, MOZART AND DUŠEK MEMORIAL

Villa Bertramka near Prague, home of Mozart's friends Josefa and František Dušek. It is here that the composition of *Don Giovanni* was completed. Watercolor by A. Kirnig, 1887.

Companions *continued from p. 49*

Paris repelled him: fortunately or unfortunately, depending on one's point of view. The aristocrats were rude to him, the big city fatiguing and dirty, he liked neither its despots nor freethinkers, and, not for the first nor the last time in musical history, he discovered that the musical taste of the nation was bad. Yet Mozart was, in fact, offered an excellent job in Paris: organist at Versailles, with six months of vacation each year and no strings attached. He did not hesitate to turn it down, although the reasons that appear in his letters home appear unconvincing.

These suggestions are not intended to be definitive; they are bound to appear controversial to some. Had Mozart lived a little longer, it is just conceivable that he might have found employment in Italy. Yet that same magnet of Vienna that drew Mozart inexorably to its cold, false heart, had been draining Italy itself for the past 150 years. Starting with Ferdinand II in the middle of the 17th century, Italian musicians traveled in great numbers to exploit imperial posts and other opportunities in the musically vibrant Austrian capital. Italy's position of supremacy in European music, gained in the high Renaissance, had steadily been eroding through the late baroque into mannerism and entrenched conservatism.

Why should a Mozart go to Italy, if music itself was fleeing Italy and moving to the Germanic nations?

So Mozart, like Beethoven and Schubert, was stuck in the noble city of music, Vienna, which heaped so much insult upon them in their lifetimes, all for the greater glory of their art.

* * *

It was that man of many parts and accomplished poet, Lorenzo Da Ponte, anti-clerical sensualist abbot and forcibly baptized Venetian Jew, who suggested the theme of Don Giovanni to Mozart. The choice of subject must have involved something more than simple caprice, as the opera *Don Giovanni* shows no signs of yielding its laurel as the most popular opera ever penned.

Despite its light-hearted character and even slightly risqué tinge, *Don Giovanni* is not lacking in intellectual content, both in the libretto and the music. It is not accurate to picture Mozart the composer as a total musician absorbed in the particulars of his craft and incapable of conceiving or transmitting ideas of more general philosophical value. The same conflict of passion versus reason that serves as the *leitmotif* for the 18th century, pitting Voltaire against Rousseau, Pope against Blake, Franklin against Mesmer, finds its ultimate expression in the myth of the

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demiurgic sexuality of Don Juan and the final cruel retribution for his sins.

Commentators note that the Don Giovanni conceived by the poet is not always the same person that appears in the music. Da Ponte's Don Giovanni is a pitiable mixture of arrogance, violence, devilish charm and folly. His buffoonery plays off the foil of the simple-minded Leporello, perhaps more than should be necessary. We in the audience are given to understand that this swaggering cad is about to be packed off to hell for sins he isn't even capable of committing any more: every one of Don Giovanni's amorous exploits in the course of the highly ambiguous time span of the opera ends in failure.

Mozart's music, however, gives Don Giovanni a considerable dignity amounting to tragic stature, which is not present in the libretto. This rapturous singer, bewitching seducer and beguiler of hearts, is not, after all, immune to the stirrings of conscience, nor totally incapable of sincere passion, nor deaf to all suffering. We hear all of this in the music. Without it, the opera would be lacking in that rounded psychological fullness which gives it immortality. We cannot rejoice in the horrible finish of Don Giovanni de Tenorio because, as with all truly tragic heroes, he takes a bit of ourselves to hell with him.

Mozart transposes to his hero his own love of beauty, attributing to him as well his own destiny: to wander restlessly over the earth in search of that perfection of beauty which can exist nowhere but in heaven.

For if Don Giovanni, or the frequently dramatized Don Juan before him, is depraved and lecherous, he is also cultivated in his sensibilities. When he deems himself ravished by the flush on a peasant girl's cheek (as, for example, Zerlina), his delight is sincere. Sincere, that is, until he has crushed the bloom and destroyed the thing he sought. Like a Tantalus or a Midas, he is goaded, almost obsessed, with the urge to render inaccessible that beauty for which his lusting heart hopelessly thirsts.

We are reminded, though only up to a point, of Mozart himself, wandering from one city to another, taking an almost fanatical delight in destroying one career opportunity after another, searching for the ideal combination of social and musical context he could never find.

It is not difficult to understand the fascination of the 17th through 19th centuries for Don Juan as archetypal hero/anti-hero. Don Juan signifies many things at once, many of them clearly associated with the decadence of the *ancien régime* and

the heralding of a new age. On the far negative side, he epitomizes the aristocracy in its worst imbecile decadence: Henry VIII of England, Isabeau of Bavaria, Louis XV, Catherine of Russia, George III of England, incontinent and immoral, unable to deny themselves anything, resolutely pursuing their pampered lusts under the cover of royal privilege.

More generally, he epitomizes the abuse of the "droit de seigneur" already scathingly satirized by Mozart and Da Ponte in Figaro: the right of the nobleman to the bed of his servant's bride.

Don Juan serves, furthermore, as a metaphor for the ongoing rape of the rest of the world by Europe's conquistadores, missionaries, slave-traders, soldiers of fortune and pirates.

And yet: despite this clear identification of Don Giovanni with the monstrous crimes of the crumbling order, there is much about him that remains sympathetic. He is not afraid to enjoy life, he is no sanctimonious hypocrite. Part of the victory gained over his victims is moral as well as physical. He is preferable in several of his aspects to the strait-laced Don Ottavio, the weepy Donna Anna, the belligerent and jealous Masetto, the clinging Donna Elvira. Placed in the context of courtly stuffiness and courtly convention, Don Giovanni breathes a spirit of life.

For Mozart, and Da Ponte too, saw clearly that the democratic, scientific world of equal justice for all, heralded on all sides by poet, prophet, humanitarian and scholar alike, would also usher in the demise of the artist; that the possibility of dedicating one's life to the creation of great works of beauty would be overwhelmed by the necessity of catering to mass mediocrity, the lowest common denominator of understanding, education and taste, to mercantilism and advertising, to the cultish worship of grim and faceless statistics, to the total dehumanization of the much vaunted new, free citizen. Mozart was one of the first to receive the bitter taste of the disenfranchisement of the artist in the wake of the abdication of the aristocratic ethos. With the passing away of Don Giovanni, and all the evils associated with his name, his creators deplored the passing away in the same moment of the spirit of celebration, ceremony, of love and cultivation of the arts that were part of his heritage as well. Henceforth, the artist would be subject to the caprice of fate, sometimes lucky, even fabulously so, yet more often a homeless beggar adrift in the bourgeois landscape, hovering on the fringes of respectable society. ■

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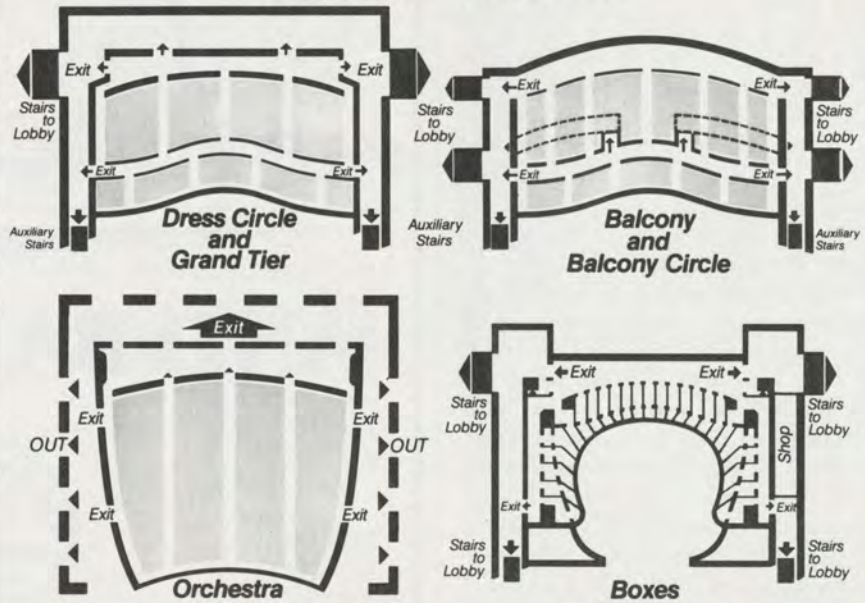

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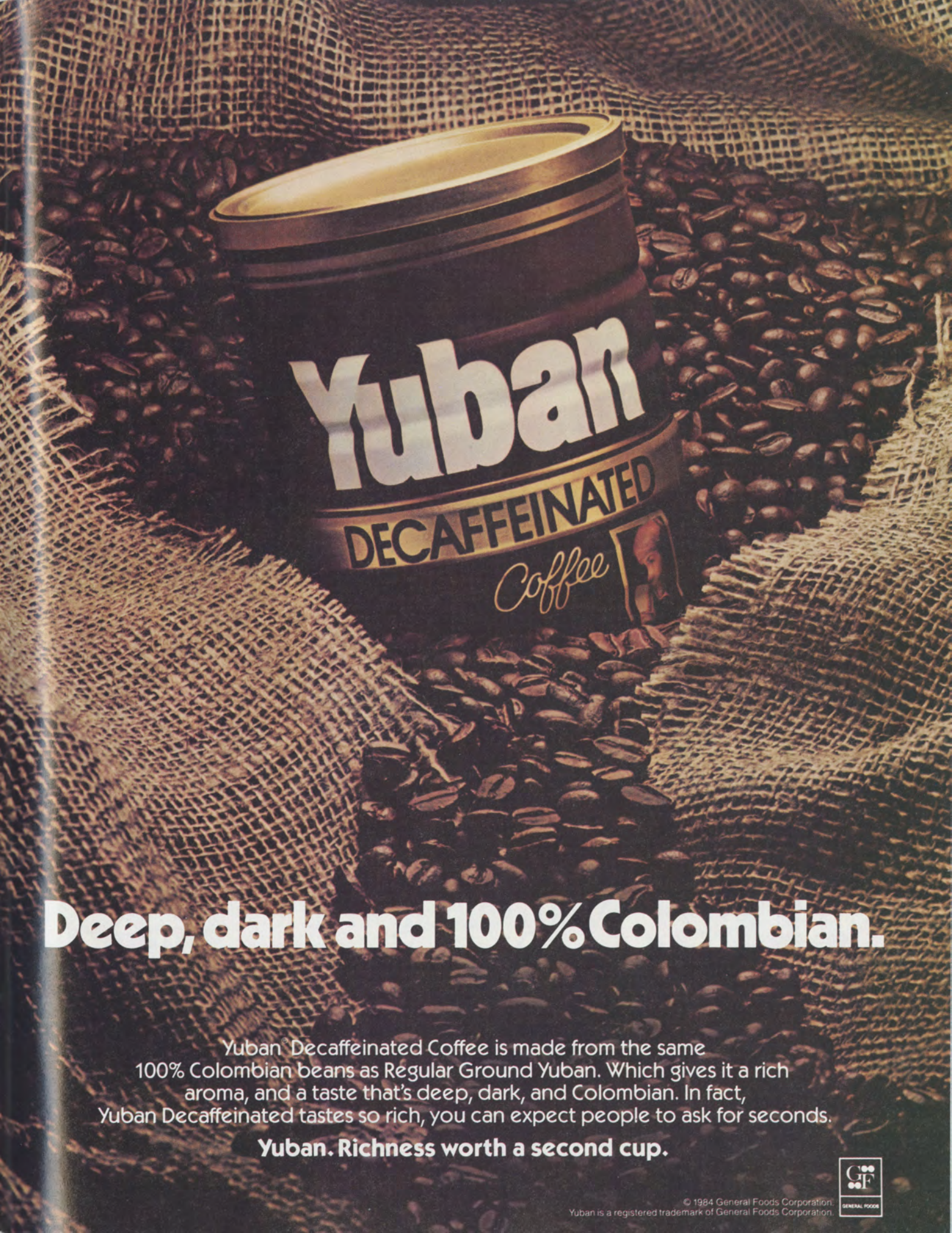

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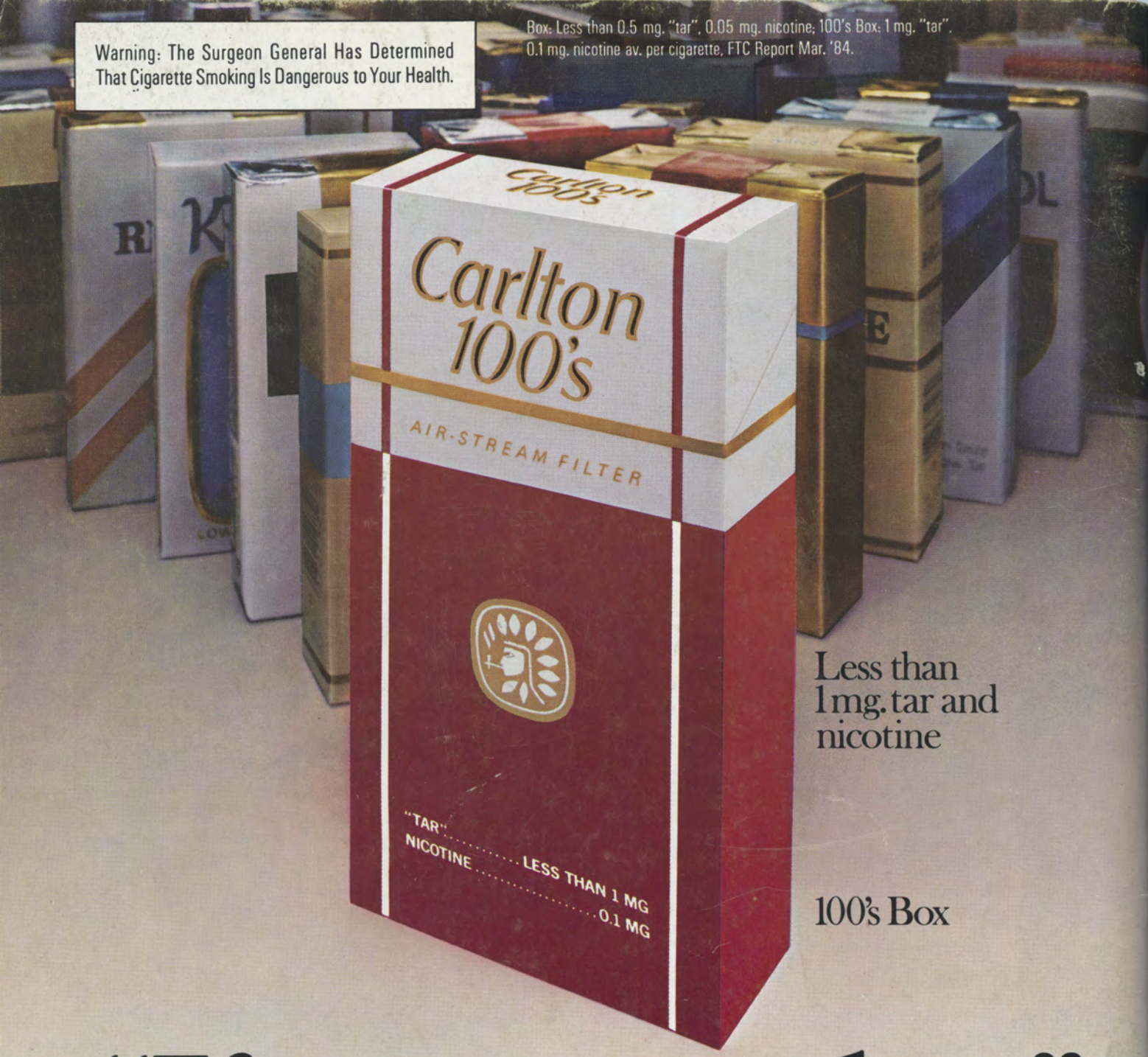

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