

La Sonnambula
(The Sleepwalker)

1984

Tuesday, September 18, 1984 8:00 PM

Friday, September 21, 1984 8:00 PM

Tuesday, September 25, 1984 8:00 PM

Saturday, September 29, 1984 8:00 PM

Thursday, October 4, 1984 7:30 PM

Sunday, October 7, 1984 2:00 PM

Friday, October 12, 1984 8:00 PM

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FALL SEASON 1984



La Sonnambula


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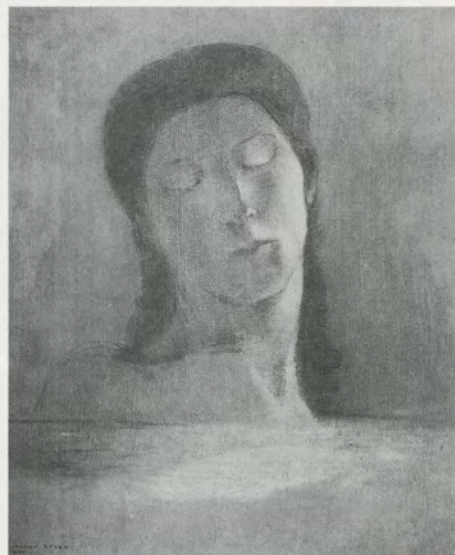
Terence A. McEwen, *General Director*

La Sonnambula

FALL SEASON 1984

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Maria Malibran, one of the most celebrated interpreters of Bellini's sleepwalker, carved a career during her brief life that is the stuff of which legends are made.
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Wherein the author explains everything.



COVER:

Odilon Redon (1840-1916)
Les Yeux Clos (Closed Eyes), 1890.
Oil on canvas, 44 x 36 cm, Musée du Louvre, Jeu de Paume.
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Editor: Koraljka Lockhart
Art director: Frank Benson
Editorial assistants: Robert M. Robb, John Schauer

Editorial offices: San Francisco Opera,
War Memorial Opera House, San Francisco, CA 94102
Telephone: (415) 861-4008

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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 Association 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 Hoefler, 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.

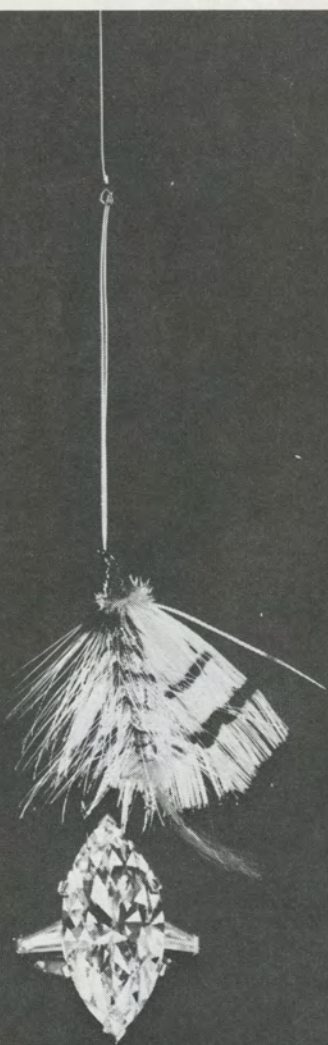
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General Director's Message

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.

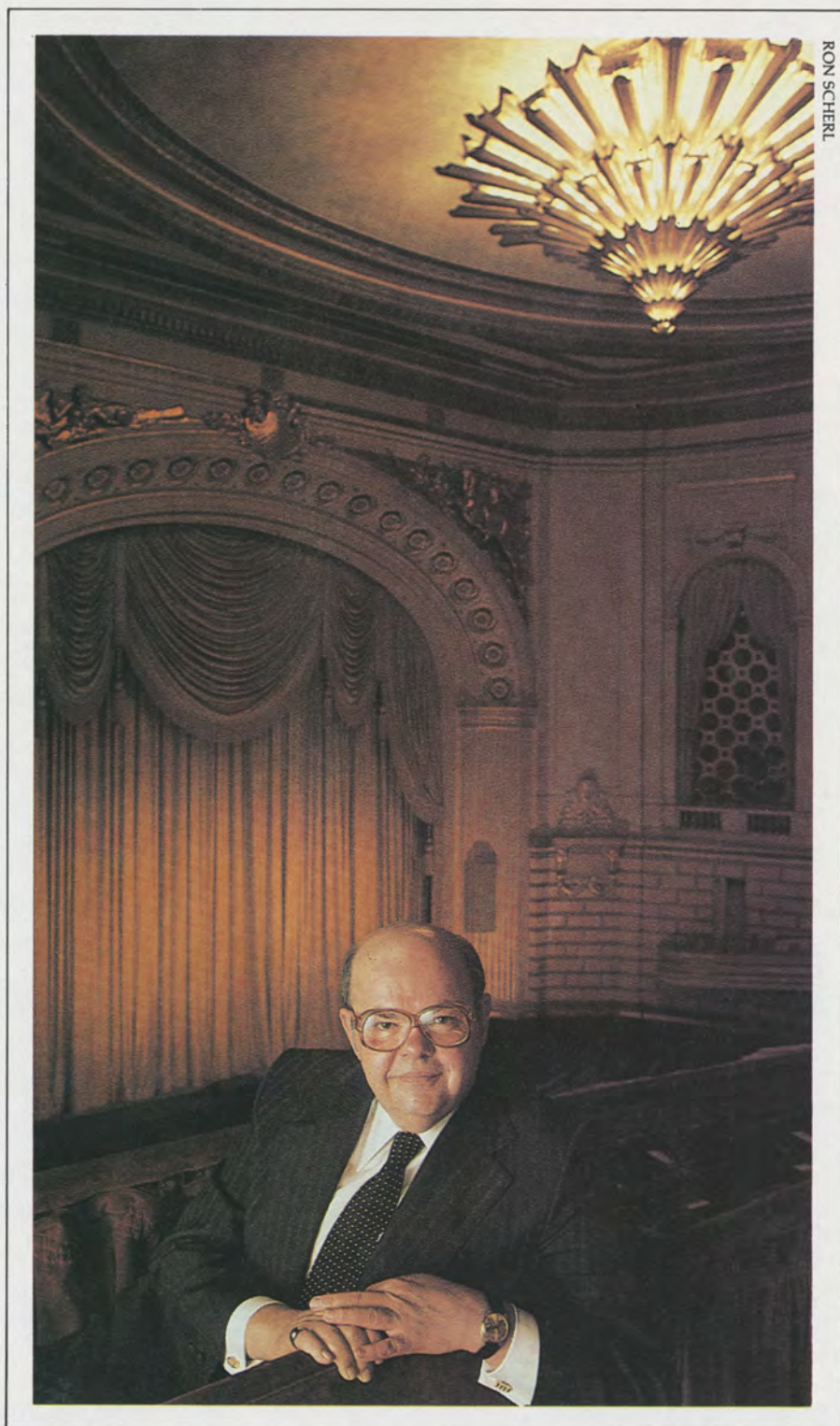
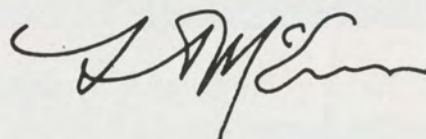
The operas in which they will be heard this season are drawn from the Italian, French, German and Russian repertoires, each exhibiting opportunities for superlative singing while making unique demands posed by widely disparate styles of lyric theater. From early Italian *bel canto* (both comic and tragic) 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.

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 recogni-

tion and assistance. It is with gladness that we anticipate the challenges and rewards of our ongoing artistic alliance with you.



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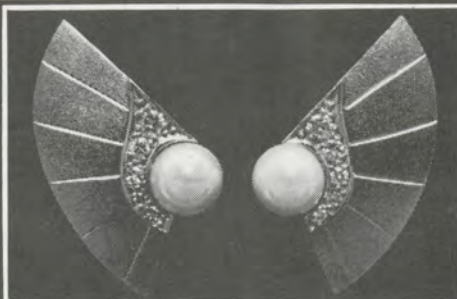
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Jay Johanni
Gregory Lara

Debra Rose
Katherine Warner

Ian Leffler
Karstyn McCoy
Dennis McDonald

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Kathy Anderson
Candida Arias-Duazo
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John Beauchamp
Manfred Behrens
Michael Bloch
David Burnakus
Ric Cascio
Raymond Chavez
Patrick Daugherty
Dale Emde
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Lisa Louise Glenister
Liya Hoefling
Christina Jaqua
Marena Lane
Lola Lazzari-Simi
Cecilia MacLaren

Cameron Henley
Dennis Jones
Conrad Knipfel
Robert Logue
Gregory Marks
Henry Metlenko
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Steven Oakey
Stephen Ostrow
Autris Paige

May Murakami
Anna Marie Riesgo
Bonnie Shapiro
Sally Winnington
Susan Witt
Wendy Zaro

Robert Price
Jeffrey Putnam
Kenneth Rafanan
Robert Romanovsky
Karl Saarni
Kevin Skiles
Marc Smith
James Starkey
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Mark Ziemann

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Cathleen Ellis
Jennifer Ellis
Erica Fitschen
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Andrew Mak
Michael Molina
Jonathan Olmsted
Jeffrey Pulley
Nicholas Safrit
Bernard Savant

John Paul Savant
Kelsey Siegel
Benjamin Silverman
Lyndon Ubana
Alexander Villanueva
Stanford White
Samuel Yan
Samuel Yen

SUPERNUMERARIES

Hetty Alvarez
Lorna Bridges
Huguette Combs
Carol Dunlap
Joan Imbeau
Nina Izotoff
Esther Jennings

Paisley Knudsen
Donna Martin
Jan Moody
Holly Morrison
Claire Nice
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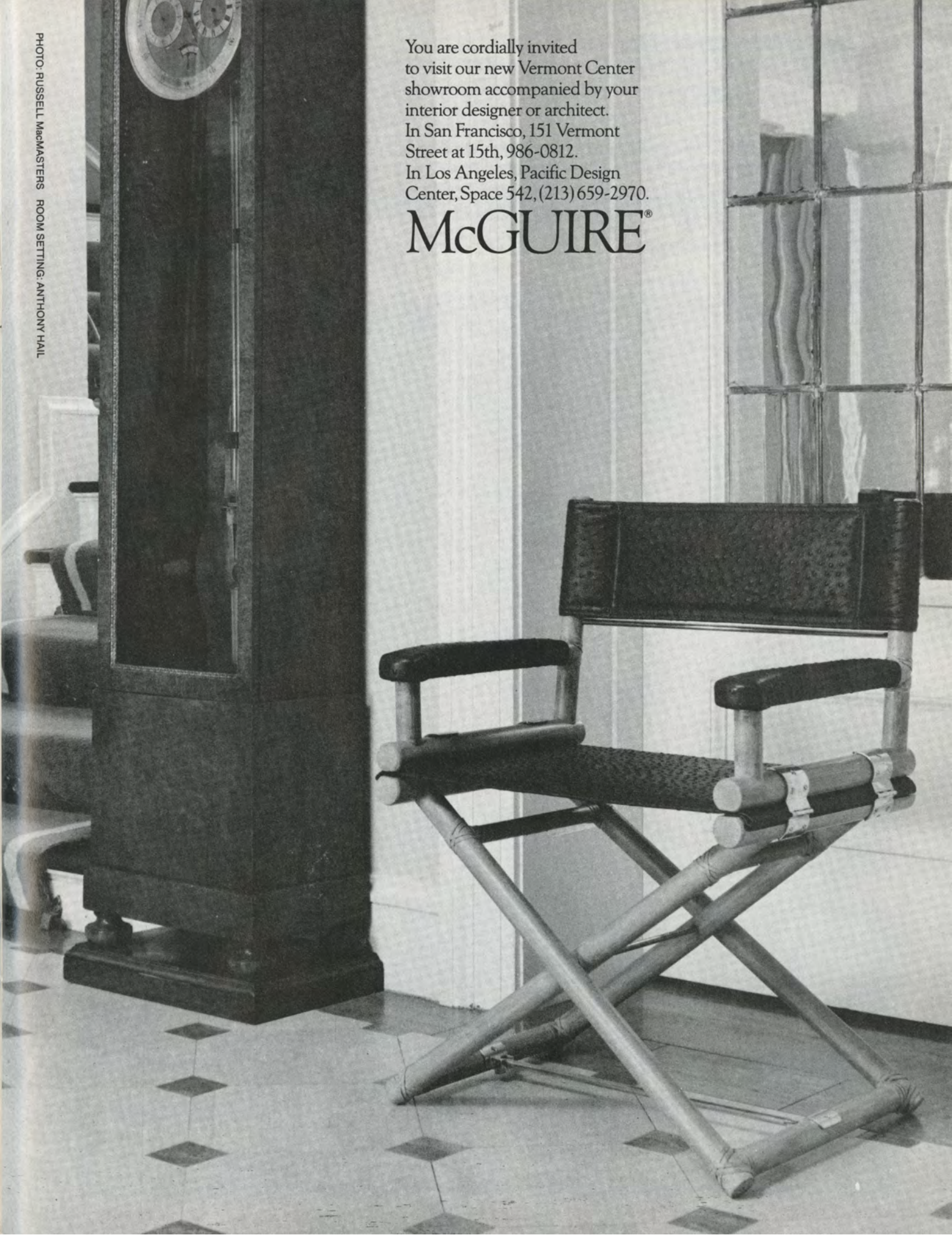
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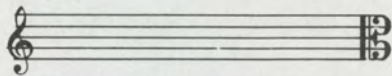
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Barbara Riccardi
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Leonid Igudesman
Janice McIntosh

2nd VIOLIN

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Virginia Price-Kvistad
Lev Rankov
Eva Karasik
Lani King
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Alison Avery
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Asbjorn Finess
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Samuel Cristler
David Budd
Helen Stross
Victoria Parr

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Jon Lancelle
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Philip Karp

FLUTE

Alan Cox *Principal*
Alice F. Miller
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James Walker

OBOE

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Raymond Dusté

ENGLISH HORN

Raymond Dusté

CLARINET

Philip Fath *Principal*
Joanne Burke Eisler
Gregory Dufford

BASS CLARINET

Gregory Dufford

BASSOON

Rufus Olivier *Principal*
Jerry Dagg
Robin Elliott

CONTRA BASSOON

Robin Elliott

HORN

William Klingelhoffer *Principal*
David Sprung *Principal*
Carlberg Jones
Brian McCarty
Paul McNutt

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James Miller *Principal*
Edward Haug
Timothy Wilson

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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/Pavarotti, 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



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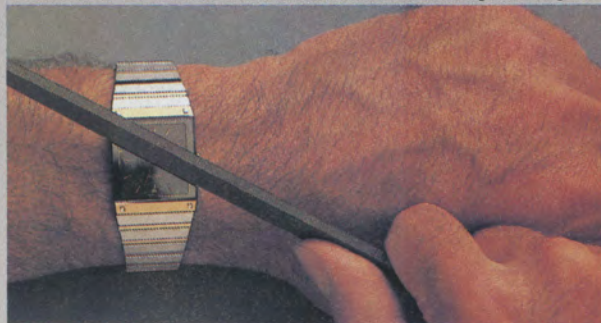
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Friday, October 12, 8:00
La Sonnambula Bellini

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,
through the auspices of the Lyric Opera of
Chicago.
Sutherland, Budai, Gettler*/Blake*, Langan,
Thomas, Will
Bonyngel/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.
Dernes, 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

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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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/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

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MADAMA BUTTERFLY

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

These matinees will be performed with SUPERTITLES™ by Jerry Sherk and Francesca Zambello, San Francisco Opera, which are provided through the generosity of CITICORP.

1984 Fall Opera Previews

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

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD

Opera Insights held in the Herbst Theatre, Veterans Building, Van Ness and McAllister, in San Francisco. All panel discussions begin at 6 p.m.; doors open at 5:30 p.m. Series subscription for Guild members is \$12; Non-Guild members \$20; Individual tickets are \$5. For further information, please call (415) 565-6432. Programs are subject to rehearsal changes.

Frederica von Stade/Samuel Ramey	9/19
"The Art of Bel Canto" Richard Bonyngel	
Nicola Rescigno/David Agler	10/10
Regina Resnik/Jeffrey Tate	10/24
Gerd Albrecht/Sonja Frisell/	11/7
Susanna Lemberskaya	

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD PREVIEWS

MARIN

Previews held at Park School Auditorium, 360 E. Blithedale, Mill Valley; refreshments served at 7:30 p.m., previews at 8:00 p.m. Series registration is \$20.00 for 6 previews (\$15.00 for students and seniors). Single tickets are \$4.00 (\$3.00 for students and seniors). For further information, please call (415) 388-6789.

ERNANI	
Francesca Zambello	9/6
LA SONNAMBULA	
Robert Jacobson	9/13
L'ELISIR D'AMORE	9/20
Francesca Zambello	
ELEKTRA	10/11
Michael Mitchell	
ANNA BOLENA	10/18
James Keolker	
KHOVANSCHINA	11/1
Dale Harris	

NORTH PENINSULA

Previews held at St. Andrew's Lutheran Church Meeting Hall, El Camino Real and 15th Avenue, San Mateo. Lectures begin at 7:30 p.m. Series registration is \$20.00; single tickets are \$6.00. For further information, please call (408) 735-3757.

LA SONNAMBULA	
Robert Jacobson	9/12
L'ELISIR D'AMORE	9/27
Francesca Zambello	

ANNA BOLENA	
James Keolker	11/11
KHOVANSCHINA	
Dale Harris	11/25

SOUTH PENINSULA

Previews held at the Palo Alto Senior Center, 450 Bryant Street, at 8:00 p.m. (with the exception of 11/20, which will be held at the Palo Alto Cultural Center, 1313 Newell Road and the 10/2 Opera Gala which will be held at the Lucie Stern Community Theater, 1305 Middlefield Road, in Palo Alto). Series registration is \$18.00; single tickets are \$4.00. For further information, please call (415) 941-3890.

LA SONNAMBULA	
Robert Jacobson	9/11
L'ELISIR D'AMORE	9/18
Francesca Zambello	
FALL OPERA GALA	
Ramona Rockway	10/2
ANNA BOLENA	10/23
James Keolker	
KHOVANSCHINA	10/30
Dale Harris	
DON GIOVANNI	11/20
Ramona Rockway	

SAN JOSE OPERA GUILD

Previews will be held at the Saratoga Community Center (Senior Wing), 13777 Fruitvale Ave., Saratoga. Series is open to the public at a cost of \$4.00 per lecture, \$3.00 for students and senior citizens (free of charge to San Jose Opera Guild members). For further information, please call (408) 741-1331.

ERNANI	10 a.m. 9/7
Arthur Kaplan	
LA SONNAMBULA	10 a.m. 9/14
Robert Jacobson	
L'ELISIR D'AMORE	7:30 p.m. 9/25
Francesca Zambello	
ELEKTRA	7:30 p.m. 10/10
Michael Mitchell	
ANNA BOLENA	7:30 p.m. 10/17
James Keolker	
KHOVANSCHINA	10 a.m. 11/2
Dale Harris	

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SONOMA COUNTY CHAPTER

All previews held at 10:30 a.m. at various locations (see below). Series registration is \$12.00 for 3 previews. Single tickets are \$5.00. For additional information, please call (707) 539-7157.

LA SONNAMBULA	9/12
Robert Jacobson	Piper-Sonoma Vineyards 11447 Old Redwood Hwy Healdsburg
ELEKTRA	10/17
Michael Mitchell	Vintners Inn 4350 Barnes Rd. Santa Rosa
KHOVANSCHINA	11/5
Dale Harris	El Dorado Hotel 405-1st St. West Sonoma

JUNIOR LEAGUE OPERA PREVIEWS

All Junior League opera previews will be held in Herbst Theatre in the Veterans Building, Van Ness at McAllister. Lectures begin at noon and there is no admission charge. For information, please call Peggy Olsen at (415) 342-7030.

ERNANI	9/11
Arthur Kaplan	
LA SONNAMBULA	9/18
Robert Jacobson	
ELEKTRA	10/16
Michael Mitchell	
ANNA BOLENA	10/22
James Keolker	
KHOVANSCHINA	10/31
Dale Harris	

NAPA OPERA LECTURE SERIES

"Adventures in Opera" is a 10-week course, now in its 12th year. The course, which accompanies the Saturday and Sunday series at the San Francisco Opera, will be held at 7:30 p.m. in St. Mary's Episcopal Church, 1917 Third Street, in Napa. Ernest Fly will again teach the course. Cost for the entire series is \$20.00. Individual lectures will be \$3.00. For further information, please call (707) 224-6162.

ERNANI	9/13
CARMEN	9/20
LA SONNAMBULA	9/27
MADAMA BUTTERFLY	10/4
L'ELISIR D'AMORE	10/11
ANNA BOLENA	10/18
ELEKTRA	10/25
KHOVANSCHINA	11/1
RIGOLETTO	11/8
DON GIOVANNI	11/15

OPERA EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL PREVIEW SERIES

Previews of operas of the 1984 Fall Season will be given by Michael Barclay, director of Opera

Education International, both in San Francisco and Hillsborough.

Hillsborough: Lectures will be presented on Monday evenings at 7:30 p.m. in the auditorium of the Crocker School, 2600 Ralston Avenue, at Chateau Drive. Series admission is \$55; individual admission at the door is \$6.00.

LA SONNAMBULA	9/10
L'ELISIR D'AMORE	9/24
MADAMA BUTTERFLY	10/1
ELEKTRA	10/8
ANNA BOLENA	10/22
KHOVANSCHINA	10/29
RIGOLETTO	11/5
DON GIOVANNI	11/19

San Francisco: Lectures are given in the auditorium of the Dr. William Cobb School, 2725 California Street, between Scott and Divisadero, at 7:30 p.m. Series subscription for five opera previews is \$27.50; individual admission at the door is \$6.00. For further information on both Hillsborough and San Francisco previews, please call (415) 526-5244.

ERNANI	9/6
LA SONNAMBULA	9/13
ELEKTRA	9/27
ANNA BOLENA	10/11
KHOVANSCHINA	11/8

ROBERT GOODHUE'S FALL OPERA COURSE

Ten two hour classes on all the fall operas (one class per opera). There is a choice of four sections: Section A (Mondays at 6:15 p.m., August 13 to November 26); Section B (Thursdays at 6:30 p.m., August 23 to November 15); Section C (five classes from 10:00 a.m. to noon and five classes from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. on August 25, September 15, October 6, October 20 and November 14); Section D (Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m., August 22 to November 14). Cost for the course is \$60.00; individual classes are \$7.00 if space permits. Classes are held at 13 Columbus Ave., San Francisco. For further information, please call (415) 956-1271.

HILLBARN THEATRE

Semi-staged dramatic readings of plays that served as inspiration for operatic masterpieces will be held in the Green Room of the Hillbarn Theatre, 1285 E. Hillsdale Blvd., in Foster City. All performances are on Sunday evenings at 7:30. Tickets are \$5 for individual performances, \$16 for the complete series. For information and reservations, please call (415) 349-6411.

HERNANI/Hugo	9/9
MADAM BUTTERFLY/Belasco	9/23
ELEKTRA/Sophocles	10/7
LE ROI S'AMUSE/Hugo	10/21

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Amisra

Alto flauto, y con gusto en sus...

La Sonnambula: An Introduction By Andrew Porter

In 1830, a group of Milanese music lovers decided to sponsor an opera season of unusual interest and splendor. They obtained the Teatro Carcano, close to La Scala. To lead their company, they engaged the leading prima donna and tenor of the day, Giuditta Pasta and Giambattista Rubini, supported by several other singers of distinction. They commissioned new operas from those two rising young composers, Gaetano Donizetti and Vincenzo Bellini; the celebrated poet Felice Romani was to be the librettist for both. Donizetti's

(left) When the London music publisher Novello occupied the noble premises in Wardour Street, designed to suggest a Cathedral library, Roubliac's great statue of Handel (now in the Victoria and Albert Museum) presided over the antechamber. On a landing outside the office of *The Musical Times*, which I was editing, there hung this sketch of Maria Malibran as Amina in the last scene of *La Sonnambula*, with a phrase of the recitative before "Ah, non credea" as pencilled caption. ("Oh! flowers, yes, ye are still mine; still I can kiss ye.") It's by Lucy Adams. When Novello quit the premises, the sketch disappeared; fortunately, I'd had it photographed. In the lower left corner there was a glassine envelope containing a lock of Malibran's hair.—*Andrew Porter*



Vincenzo Bellini, 1801-1835. Bellini's *La Sonnambula* was the very first opera ever given in San Francisco. Presented by the Pellegrini opera troupe, it had its premiere at the Adelphi Theatre (Clay between Kearny and Montgomery) on February 12, 1851.

subject was *Anna Bolena*, and Bellini's *Hernani*, based on Victor Hugo's revolutionary Romantic drama.

For Donizetti, this was a *rentrée* to Milan; his *Chiara e Serafina* had been less than

a success at La Scala, eight years earlier. A northerner, born in Bergamo and trained in Bergamo and Bologna, he had been working mainly in Naples. Bellini was a southerner, born in Catania and trained in Naples, but after the Neapolitan success of *Bianca e Gernando* he had come to Milan and at La Scala had produced, with considerable success, *Il Pirata* (1827) and *La Straniera* (1829). The failure of *Zaira* (also 1829), composed for the inauguration of Parma's new opera house, was the only major setback of Bellini's career, but, as he put it, "*Zaira* had its revenge in *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*," a Romeo-and-Juliet opera incorporating music from *Zaira*, which he brought out with success in Venice in March 1830.

In May of that year, he was stricken

Andrew Porter is the music critic of The New Yorker. Thirty years ago, he was one of the scholar-critics who helped to launch the bel-canto revival, in opera houses and on campuses, and to insist on the importance of primary sources, not the familiar but inaccurate texts; and collected materials for a study—still unwritten—of Bellini.

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with a serious, near-fatal fever, and he passed the summer in convalescence on Lake Como, amid idyllic and peaceful surroundings. Pasta had a villa there, the Villa Roda at Blevio (it had formerly belonged to Mme Ribier, the Empress Josephine's wealthy dressmaker), which had become a meeting-place for intellectuals, writers, and artists. Bellini stayed at the Villa Passalacqua at Moltrasio, opposite Blevio. Romani was there too, possibly at the Villa Roda, probably at the Villa Passalacqua. And the new opera was planned. On July 15, Bellini wrote from Como: "*Hernani* pleases me well, and so it does Pasta and Romani, and everyone who has read it; at the beginning of September I set to work." But a November letter, written when he was back in Milan, paints a less rosy picture: "The poet and the countryside drove me mad: the countryside because one had to send specially to Milan for everything one wanted, and the poet because, still pondering on how he should handle the subject, has not yet been able to begin the libretto; and here we are at November 17, and I have not yet composed one note."

December 26, the traditional day for the start of the opera season, arrived. At La Scala, *I Capuleti* had its Milanese premiere, with great success; it ran for twenty-five performances. At the Carcano, Donizetti's *Anna Bolena* had a still greater triumph. (It was a big night: rather as if San Francisco had two grand opera companies, and one gave the premiere of a new opera by Leonard Bernstein while the other gave the local premiere of, say, Roger Sessions's *Montezuma*—with Leontyne Price and Domingo in one cast, and Joan Sutherland and Pavarotti in the other.) And by that time, Bellini had already abandoned work on his *Hernani*.

Why? It's not an easy question to answer. For four years, 1882-86, the columns of the *Gazzetta Musicale di Milano* rang with argument on the subject, and today it's hard, as one reads through the old controversy, to reach any firm conclusion. Romani's widow, Emilia Branca (writing with a suspicious wealth of detail, some of it verifiably wrong, more than a half-century after the event), declared that "the music [of *La Sonnambula*] was written in large part before the words," and that after the triumphant premiere of *Anna Bolena*, Bellini, despairing of being able to produce an opera seria that would rival it, went to Romani and begged him

for a new libretto "on a pastoral subject." In fact, *La Sonnambula* had already been announced on December 23. On January 3, Bellini wrote to a friend: "Know that I am no longer composing *Hernani*, since the subject matter would need modification at the hands of the police, and so Romani, to avoid compromising himself, has abandoned it, and now he is writing *La Sonnambula*, or *I Due Fidanzati Svizzeri*, and I began the *introduzione* last night: you see, I have to write this opera, too, in a short space of time, since it must be staged by February 20 at the latest." And in 1834 he referred to "my *Hernani* which was banned."

DAGUERRETYPE COURTESY OF LIM M. LAI



Adelina Patti as Amina in *La Sonnambula*.

Big operatic decisions, like most decisions in life, are seldom made for one reason alone. Let me suggest that three considerations, working to the same end, may have effected the change from *Hernani* to *La Sonnambula*. First, the composer's reluctance to compete on the ground where Donizetti triumphed; his unattractive jealousy of his colleague is well documented. Second, censorship: Hugo's *Hernani* was famous as an inflammatory play; Romani may well have pondered in vain how to make it acceptable to Hapsburg censorship. And third, the fact that Bellini's own style was changing. He is characterized today as the composer of, above all, long, lyrical melodies: Norma's "Casta Diva,"

Amina's "Ah, non credea," Elvira's "Quì la voce sua soave." But in fact he first made his name, in *Il Pirata* and *La Straniera*, as a composer whose energy, passion, even violence of declamation had brought a new note into Italian opera. Donizetti and Verdi then went on to develop this *canto d'azione*, while Bellini himself cultivated a milder, often elegiac vein. The turning point came in *I Capuleti*; there a contemporary critic rightly detected, amid the energetic, martial episodes, "a completely new genre, not noisy, but pensive, harmonious, and very gentle."

The work on *Hernani* was not wasted. Some of the music, later that year, went into *Norma*. (Norma and Adalgisa's "Sì, fino all'ore" was composed for Don Carlo and Elvira—same words, and same lead singer: Pasta's role was to have been Carlo, the part Sherrill Milnes sings in Verdi's opera on the subject.) As a postscript to the episode, we have Romani's remark when, many years later, he saw Verdi's *Ernani*, with a Piave libretto: "Oh, the pity of it! Such a fine subject—and so badly handled!"

Romani seldom invented plots of his own. *La Sonnambula* was derived from a three-act ballet scenario by Scribe, *La Sonnambule, ou l'Arrivée d'un Nouveau Seigneur*, which, with music by Hérold and choreography by Jean Aumer, had been done at the Paris Opéra in 1827. The critic of *Le Corsaire* recognized that it was "by no means an ordinary ballet, but a little drama, perfect as a whole, delightful in detail, characterized by two situations, one lively and bold, the other moving and pathetic, which would have ensured the success of an ordinary, spoken play." The ballet was widely performed. (In London, at the King's, it shared a bill with *Il Pirata*, the first Bellini opera to be done in England.) Scribe's action was set in Provence, near Arles; Romani moved it to Switzerland. He changed the names, but he changed little else. Even his dialogue is often a translation of the mimed "dialogue" in the script.

Romani did at one stage seek to introduce a new idea: that Amina should be the love-child of Count Rodolfo. His libretto drafts survive at the Accademia Chigiana, in Siena, and there we find Amina singing:

La mia madre sciagurata
fu sedotta . . . e abbandonata,
E morì qual fior reciso
di vergogna e di dolor.



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Jenny Lind, "the Swedish nightingale," was a phenomenally successful Amina in *La Sonnambula* in the years following Malibran's death.

Chiude un sasso il triste arcano,
è sepolto colla madre.
Da tre lustri io chiedo invano
Alla terra e al ciel un padre . . .
Solo io peno, e ai gridi miei
non risponde umano cor . . .

(My unfortunate mother was seduced and abandoned, and like a plucked flower she died of grief and shame. The sad secret went with her to the tomb. For fifteen years I have sought from heaven and from earth a

father, but in vain . . . I suffer alone, and no human heart answers my laments.)

And the Count replies:

Ah! dal cielo udità sei
Ah! ti è reso il genitor.
Ei bandito dai parenti
più non vede il suol natio,
eri tu ne' suoi tormenti
la sua speme, il suo desio . . .

**They say that behind every great man there's a woman.
But in this case it's ridiculous.**



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Amelita Galli-Curci posing in her *Sonnambula* costume.

(Ah! Heaven has heard you, your father is returned to you. He, banished from his parents, saw his native place no more. Amid his torments, you were his hope, his desire.)

But it was a bad idea—if Rodolfo were Amina’s long-lost father, he would hardly be tempted, even for a moment, one hopes, to “take advantage of her” when she strays, sleepwalking, into his room—and it was dropped. Traces remain, however. In Bellini’s autograph we find, when the sleepwalking Amina first appears, the Count’s remark:

Lo forosetta ell’è che al mio pensiero
Si leggiadre richiama amate forme

(The country beauty it is who recalls
to my mind that image so charming
and beloved.)

This has been replaced, however, by:

Quest’è la villanella
Che dianzi agli occhi miei parve si
bella.

(This is the country girl who just now
seemed so fair to my eyes.)

But unchanged, however, are the lines of
the cabaletta to Rodolfo’s “Vi ravviso,”

which are pretty well meaningless except
in terms of that discarded idea:

Tu non sai con quei begli occhi
come dolce il cor mi tocchi,
qual richiami ai pensier miei
adorabile beltà.

Era dessa, ah qual tu sei,
sul mattino dell’età.

(You do not know how with those
fair eyes you sweetly touch my heart,
how you recall an adorable beauty to
my thoughts. She was just as you are
in the morn of her life.)

Pasta was also the first Norma, a
famous Medea (in Mayr’s opera), a Donna
Anna as well as a Fiordiligi and a Cherubino.
Gentleness and limpid simplicity are
not all that is required of the heroine.
“The character of Amina,” Romani wrote
in an interesting passage reprinted by his
widow,

“although at first it may seem easy to re-
present, is perhaps more difficult than a
great many others that are deemed highly
important. The actress must be playful,
ingenuous, and innocent, and at the same
time impassioned, sensitive, and loving.
She must have a cry for joy and a cry for
sorrow, an accent for reproach and another
for entreaty, must embody in every
motion, every glance, every sigh a certain
idealized quality, commingled with realism,
such as we see in some paintings by
Albani, such as we find in some of Theocritus’s
idylls. Her singing, moreover,
must be simple and at the same time freely
decorative, at once spontaneous and carefully
controlled, perfectly accomplished
yet free from any trace of study. Thus was
the role created by Bellini’s poetic intellect,
and thus was it executed by Giuditta
Pasta.”

The day after the first performance, on
March 5, 1831, Bellini wrote to a friend:
“Herewith the joyful news of the resounding
success that my opera had last night at
the Carcano. . . . I assure you that Rubini
and Pasta are two angels, who excited the
public to an enthusiasm bordering on mad-
ness.” Later that year, Pasta and Rubini
took the opera to London and to Paris, but
its extreme popularity in England dates
from the Drury Lane and Covent Garden
performances of 1833-35, given in Eng-
lish, with Maria Malibran as their heroine.



Rosina Storchio in the *Sonnambula* sleepwalking scene.

Bellini heard Malibran in 1833, and left a
vivid account of the evening:

“Words fail me to express how my poor
music was massacred, torn to shreds,
flayed by these ---- Englishmen, all the
more since it was sung in the language of
birds, or parrots, of which I understood
not one syllable. Only when Malibran was
singing did I recognize *La Sonnambula*. But
in the allegro of the final scene, she gave
such delight and expressed the phrase
with such truth that, forgetting that I was
in an English theater, and throwing over-
board the modesty that a composer, even
though he may not feel it, should pretend
to display, I was the first to yell “Viva!
Viva! Brava! Brava!” and to applaud as
loudly as I could. This southern, positively
volcanic transport of mine, unheard of in
this cold, calculating country, surprised
the blond sons of Albion and provoked
their curiosity . . .”

When his identity was discovered, the
composer was hauled up to the stage for
an ovation of his own. After the perfor-
mance, Malibran approached him and,
“flinging her arms round my neck, greeted
me in the highest transport of joy with my
four notes ‘Ah, m’abbraccia!’ My emotion
was at its peak. I thought I was in Para-
dise.” From this date, Bellini was infatu-
ated with the bewitching Malibran. His old
friend Pasta (who was at Covent Garden,

continued on p. 64

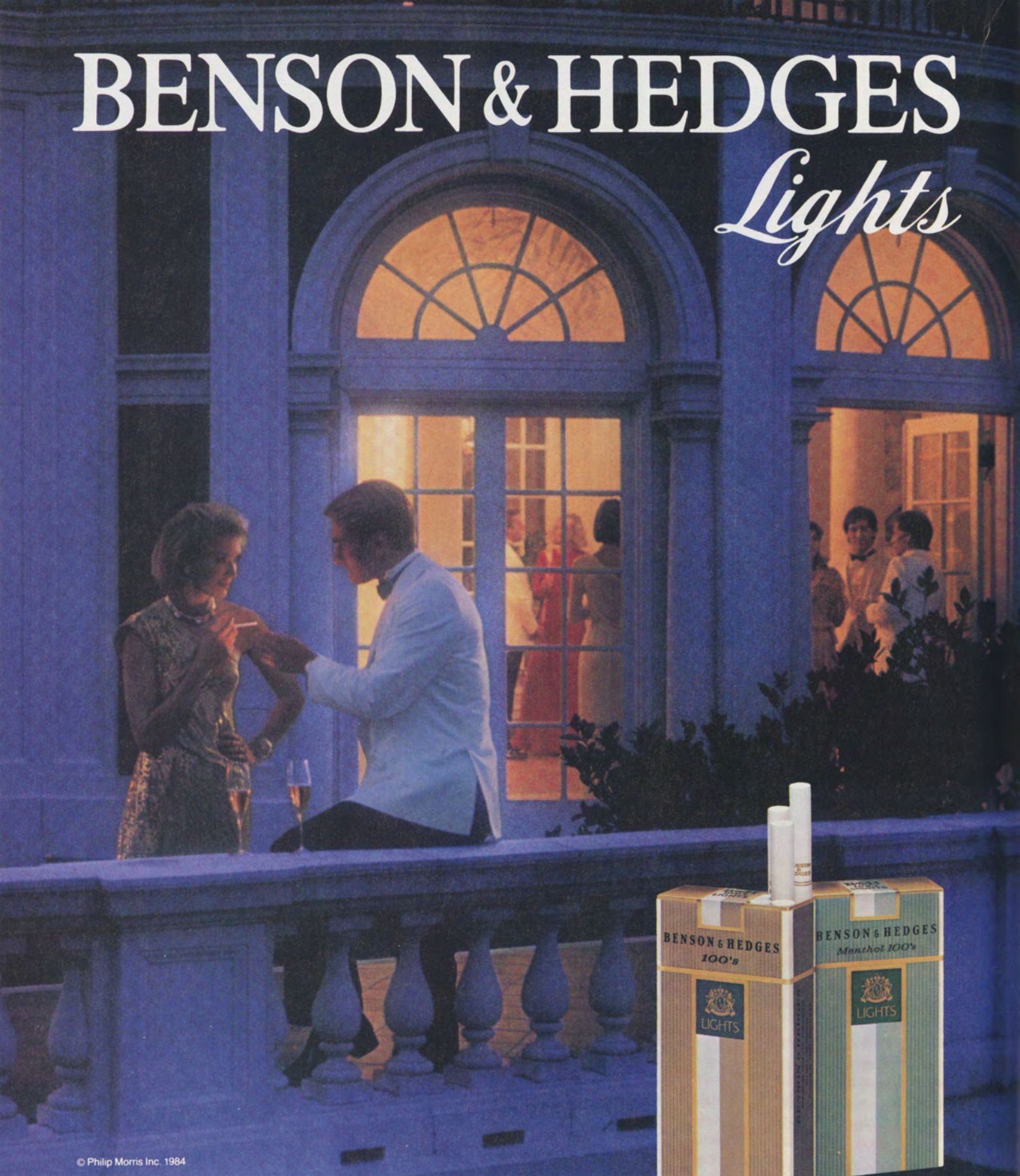
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By JOHN SCHAUER

In April of 1833, Vincenzo Bellini was in London, where a production of *La Sonnambula* was being presented at the Drury Lane Theatre. The principal attraction was the London debut of the renowned Paris-born Spanish singer Maria Malibran, whom Bellini had never heard. Although he was horrified at the production in general, he was overwhelmed by the prima donna and wrote to his friend Francesco Florimo:

Only when la Malibran sang did I recognize *La Sonnambula*. In the allegro of the last scene, especially on the words “Ah! m’abbraccia,” she put so much feeling and expressed the phrase with such realism that . . . I was the first to cry at the top of my lungs: “Viva! Viva! Brava! Brava!” and to clap my hands as hard as I could.*

The composer’s demonstrative response brought his presence to the attention of the cheering audience, which coaxed the composer onto the stage.

The first person who came to meet me was la Malibran, who, throwing her arms around my neck, sang to me my four notes “Ah! m’abbraccia” in an indescribable transport of joy and said nothing more. My emotions were as

* All direct quotations are taken from Howard Bushnell’s admirable and affectionate study, *Maria Malibran: A Biography of the Singer*, published in 1979 by the Pennsylvania State University Press.

Maria Felicita García Malibran, 1808-1836.



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Maria Malibran as Desdemona in Rossini's *Otello*. Lithograph from a painting by Decaisne.

'high as the roof. I thought I was in Paradise. I couldn't say a word, I was stunned. I don't remember what happened next.

Bellini's delight was not atypical; at the tender age of 25, Maria Felicita Malibran-García was already the most celebrated singer in an age that abounded in artists now considered legendary. By the time of her tragic death in 1836, Maria had, in little more than a decade, carved a career that has never been matched.

Maria was the daughter of Manuel García, the Spanish tenor who at his peak was the pre-eminent and highest-paid tenor in Europe. Perhaps best known today for creating the role of Count Almaviva in Rossini's *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, he was a charismatic and volatile personality whose temperament would soon be matched by that of his eldest daughter, who was born on March 24, 1808. He undertook her musical education, teach-

continued on p. 56



FREDERICA VON STADE

Mezzo-soprano **Frederica von Stade** returns to San Francisco Opera to sing the title role of *La Sonnambula* for the first time. She began her career with a contract she won in the Metropolitan Opera Auditions and made her 1970 debut with the Met in *Die Zauberflöte*. She has since returned to sing many of her most famous roles with the Met, including Rosina in *The Barber of Seville*, Adalgisa in *Norma*, Octavian in *Der Rosenkavalier* and Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, the vehicle of her 1972 debut with San Francisco Opera. The previous year she had scored a great personal triumph as Sesto in Spring Opera Theater's production of Mozart's *Titus*. Her subsequent San Francisco Opera credits include Dorabella in *Così fan tutte* (1973), Rosina (1976) and the title role of *La Cenerentola* (1974), which she sang in the same Jean-Pierre Ponnelle production for a film televised nationally last January. In 1973 she appeared in the Paris Opera production of *Le Nozze* that inaugurated the regime of Rolf Liebermann and she has returned to that company frequently, being the only American artist to appear with them on their 1976 visit to the United States. She made her debut at La Scala in Milan during the 1975-76 season, singing Marguerite in a concert performance of Berlioz's *La Damnation de Faust*, return-

ing in later seasons as Cherubino, Rosina and Cenerentola. During La Scala's 1976-77 tour to the United States, Miss von Stade was once again the only American artist on the roster. She has appeared in the world's major houses, including Covent Garden, the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires and with the companies of Hamburg, Munich and Brussels. Her American credits include performances with Houston Grand Opera (including the world premiere of Pasatieri's *The Seagull* and the American premiere of Rossini's *La Donna del Lago*), Santa Fe Opera and Washington Opera, with whom she appeared in the American premiere of Monteverdi's *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse* at the Kennedy Center. She is well known to the audiences of such music festivals as Salzburg, Edinburgh, Glyndebourne and Holland, and she has been acclaimed as a recitalist and concert artist throughout the world. She has made over two dozen recordings on a number of record labels, and she has been seen on "Live from the Met" telecasts of *Idomeneo* and *Hansel and Gretel*. She is the first vocalist to become a performing member of the prestigious Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, and in 1983 she was honored with an award presented at the White House by President Reagan in recognition of her contributions to the arts.

Soprano **Francesca Howe**, a well-known Bay Area performing artist, returns to San Francisco Opera after a long absence as Lisa in *La Sonnambula* and a Trainbearer in *Elektra*. With a repertoire that ranges from Monteverdi to Berio, Miss Howe has won acclaim in performances with the Carmel Bach Festival, San Francisco Symphony and the Cabrillo Festival, as well as San Francisco Ballet, Oakland Ballet, Pacific Ballet and, in New York, Contemporary Ballet. She has won special recognition for her series of appearances with Pocket Opera, having sung leading roles in no fewer than eight Handel operas with that group. For three seasons she performed with the Netherlands Opera in Monteverdi's *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* un-



FRANCESCA HOWE

der the direction of Alan Curtis, with whom she has also performed Purcell's *The Fairy Queen* and Rameau's *Pygmalion* and *La Naissance d'Osiris*. She has also appeared on concert tours with Curtis on harpsichord and baroque flutist Frans Brueggen. An active concert soloist, Miss Howe performed many of the standard as well as lesser-known oratorios, symphonies and concert masses. Her assignments in 1983 included Ravel's *Sheherazade* for San Francisco Ballet, Stravinsky's *Les Noces* with the San Francisco Symphony, and the role of Tatiana in Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* with Pocket Opera. Other ballet projects have included Barber's *Hermit Songs*, Berio's *Sequenza III* and Wilde's *The Happy Prince* for Pacific Ballet and, for Oakland Ballet, Stravinsky's *Les Noces* and Poulenc's *Les Biches*. This October she will perform Mozart's C Minor Mass with the San Francisco Ballet on their tour to Hawaii.

This Fall Season mezzo-soprano **Laura Brooks Rice** adds the roles of Teresa in *La Sonnambula* and Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly* to her repertoire. The Atlanta native, who made her 1981 San Francisco Opera debut as Grimgerde in *Die Walküre*, was seen here last fall as Dryade in *Ariadne auf Naxos* and Barbara in *Katya Kabanova*. Oth-

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LAURA BROOKS RICE

er Company assignments include Marcelina in *Le Nozze di Figaro* and Dorothée in *Cendrillon* during the 1982 Fall Season, and Gringerde and Flosshilde in *Das Rheingold* for the 1983 Summer Season, when Miss Rice went on in mid-performance as Dorabella in *Così fan tutte* for an ailing colleague. An Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center in 1982 and '83, she appeared in Showcase productions as Rosina in Scarlatti's *The Triumph of Honor*, as Gertrude Stein in *The Women in the Garden* and in the title role of *The Rape of Lucretia*. As an apprentice with Central City Opera in 1980, she appeared in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Candide* and Marschner's *Der Vampyr*. A winner of the 1981 Metropolitan National Council Auditions, Miss Rice was also a winner of the New York regional San Francisco Opera Auditions that same year and participated in the Merola Opera Program, portraying Meg Page in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* at Stern Grove. With the Opera Orchestra of New York, she has been heard as Cerinto in Boito's *Nerone* at Carnegie Hall. An active concert artist, she has appeared frequently with the symphony orchestras of San Francisco and Atlanta. Other concert engagements include Mahler's *Resurrection* Symphony with the San Antonio Symphony, the Verdi Requiem under Robert Shaw for the 1983 Festival of Masses and a special program presented on the occasion of the visit of Queen Elizabeth II to California.

Welsh tenor Dennis O'Neill makes his San Francisco Opera debut as Elvino in *La Sonnambula*, a role he sang with great success at Covent Garden in 1981. Born in



DENNIS O'NEILL

South Wales, O'Neill spent two seasons as principal tenor for the State Opera of Australia before returning to Great Britain in 1977 to make his British debut with Scottish Opera, where he has distinguished himself in such roles as Rodolfo in *La Bohème*, The Duke of Mantua in *Rigoletto*, Alfredo in *La Traviata*, Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Nemorino in *L'Elisir d'Amore*, Fenton in *Falstaff* and the title role of *Werther*. It was as Alfredo that he bowed with the Welsh National Opera during the 1979-80 season. He has since been seen with that company in *Un Ballo in Maschera*, *Rigoletto* and as Arturo in *I Puritani*. O'Neill made his Covent Garden debut in *Norma* and has since performed in Royal Opera productions of *Arabella*, *I Pagliacci*, *La Bohème*, *Rigoletto*, *Macbeth*, *Madama Butterfly* and *Die Fledermaus*. During the 1982-83 season he made his debut at the Vienna Staatsoper, singing Alfredo in *Traviata*. Subsequent engagements with that company include *La Bohème* and *Madama Butterfly*. He has also won plaudits for his performances as Alfredo in Hamburg, and at the Glyndebourne Festival as the Italian Singer in *Der Rosenkavalier*, a role he sings this season in a new Covent Garden production under Sir Georg Solti. He made his American debut in *Lucia di Lammermoor* with Dallas Opera during the 1982-83 season, and earlier this year was heard with the English National Opera at the Metropolitan Opera House, where he portrayed the Duke in the much-discussed ENO production of *Rigoletto* in which O'Neill first appeared when it was unveiled in 1982. Other ENO assignments have included Belmonte in *The Abduction from the Seraglio*

continued on p. 52

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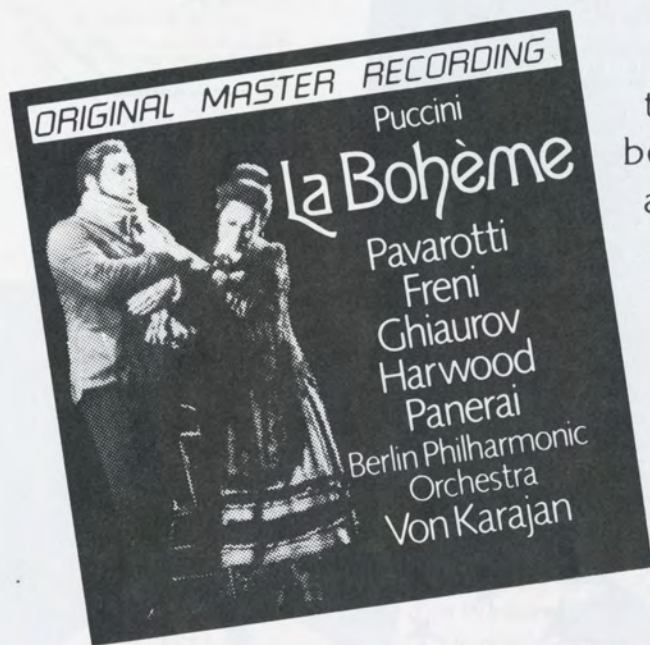


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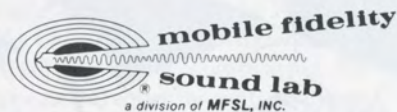
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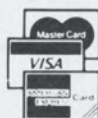


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La Sonnambula

Opera in three acts by VINCENZO BELLINI
Text by FELICE ROMANI

La Sonnambula

(in Italian)

Conductor

Nicola Rescigno

Stage Director

Brian Macdonald

Set Designers

Enzo Dehò*

Marialuisa Sormani*

Costume Designer

Walter Mahoney

Lighting Designer

Joan Arhelger

Chorus Director

Richard Bradshaw

Musical Preparation

Kathryn Cathcart

Terry Lusk

Svetlana Gorzhevskaya

Philip Eisenberg

Prompter

Philip Eisenberg

Assistant Stage Director

Paula Williams

Stage Manager

Jerry Sherk

Production settings owned by
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Costumes executed by the
San Francisco Opera Costume Shop

First performance:
Milan, March 6, 1831

First San Francisco Opera performance:
October 11, 1960

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FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 21 AT 8:00
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25 AT 8:00
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 29 AT 8:00
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 4 AT 7:30
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 7 AT 2:00
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 12 AT 8:00

CAST

(in order of appearance)

<i>Lisa,</i> hostess of the village inn	Francesca Howe
<i>Alessio,</i> a young villager	James Patterson
<i>Amina,</i> a village maiden	Frederica von Stade
<i>Teresa,</i> proprietess of the mill and Amina's foster mother	Laura Brooks Rice
<i>A notary</i>	Robert Tate
<i>Elvino,</i> a young farmer betrothed to Amina	Dennis O'Neill*
<i>Count Rodolfo,</i> lord of the manor	Samuel Ramey
<i>Villagers and peasants</i>	
<i>Corps de ballet</i>	

*San Francisco Opera debut

TIME AND PLACE: Early 19th century;
a village in Switzerland

ACT I The village square

INTERMISSION

ACT II The Count's room at the inn

INTERMISSION

ACT III Scene 1: A mountain trail
Scene 2: The village square

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

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

The performance will last approximately three hours.

La Sonnambula/Synopsis

ACT I

On the outskirts of a Swiss village, peasants gather for the betrothal of Amina, an orphan girl, to Elvino, a wealthy young farmer. Only the innkeeper Lisa, jilted by Elvino, resents the celebration; she curtly rebuffs her current suitor, Alessio, who joins the others in a serenade extolling the couple. Amina arrives breathless with excitement and thanks her friends for their kindness; embracing her foster mother, Teresa, she expresses the joy the day has brought her. A notary enters with news that her fiancé will shortly follow. Elvino, explaining that he stopped to pray at his mother's grave, takes Amina's hand and gives her his mother's wedding ring with a posy of flowers. The lovers sweetly vow eternal devotion. No sooner has Elvino set the wedding for the next morning, however, than a mysterious, well-dressed stranger arrives. (It is Count Rodolfo, son of the late lord of the manor and long supposed dead.) When he recalls the scenes of his youth, the curiosity of the villagers increases. He praises Amina's beauty and says she reminds him of someone he loved long ago, thus inciting Elvino's jealousy. As twilight falls, Teresa warns everyone that the hour approaches when a phantom haunts the village; the others in turn describe the apparition to Rodolfo. Disbelieving, he leaves for Lisa's inn as the others disperse. Amina remains behind with Elvino, who confesses he is jealous even of the breezes that caress her. The lovers bid each other a tender good night.

ACT II

In his room at the inn, Rodolfo comments that he is content to spend a night in so sympathetic a town. Lisa brings news that he has been recognized as the Count, and the villagers are coming to pay their respects. A brief flirtation between them ends when they hear a noise at the window. Lisa hides herself, dropping her handkerchief. Amina sleepwalks through a rooftop window, dreaming of her marriage. Though Rodolfo is tempted to steal a kiss, he refrains, charmed by the "phantom." Lisa slips out, sees her rival and hurries off. Amina, calling

Elvino's name, sinks back on the Count's bed in deep slumber; Rodolfo prudently leaves as the villagers arrive, led by Alessio. Elvino, summoned by Lisa, discovers Amina in her compromising situation before she awakens, and despite her protestations of innocence he denounces her, seconded by all save Teresa. The engagement broken, Amina faints as Elvino rushes out.

ACT III

On their way to ask the Count's help in proving Amina's innocence, her friends pause at a clearing in the woods. Amina and Teresa soon follow, bent on the same mission. Seeing her former sweetheart's farm in the distance, Amina recalls her lost days of joy. Elvino enters in despair, but when Amina approaches him he again reviles her. Distant voices shout that the Count can prove Amina's innocence; the name of his supposed rival drives Elvino to wrest his ring from the girl's finger. He bears her no hatred, he tells her, and then rushes away crying he can never forget her.

At dawn, by Teresa's mill, Lisa tells Alessio she intends to marry Elvino. The villagers congratulate her as Elvino arrives for their wedding. To clear Amina's name, Rodolfo steps forth to explain she is a somnambulist. Elvino, unconvinced, prepares to depart with Lisa, but Teresa emerges from the mill, urging quiet; Amina, exhausted with grief, has fallen into a deep sleep. Lisa flaunts her victory, prompting Teresa to turn the tables on her by taking forth the handkerchief, which she found in the Count's room. As Elvino looks toward Rodolfo in bewilderment, Amina is seen sleepwalking on the mill roof. The villagers gasp a prayer as the girl momentarily loses her footing. Safely across, Amina laments that her wedding day will never come; she takes Elvino's flowers from her bodice and compares them to her faded love. The contrite Elvino replaces his ring on her finger and kneels at her feet. At Rodolfo's signal, the villagers awaken Amina, who voices delight at finding her happiness restored.

La Sonnambula

Photos taken in rehearsal
by Marty Sohl





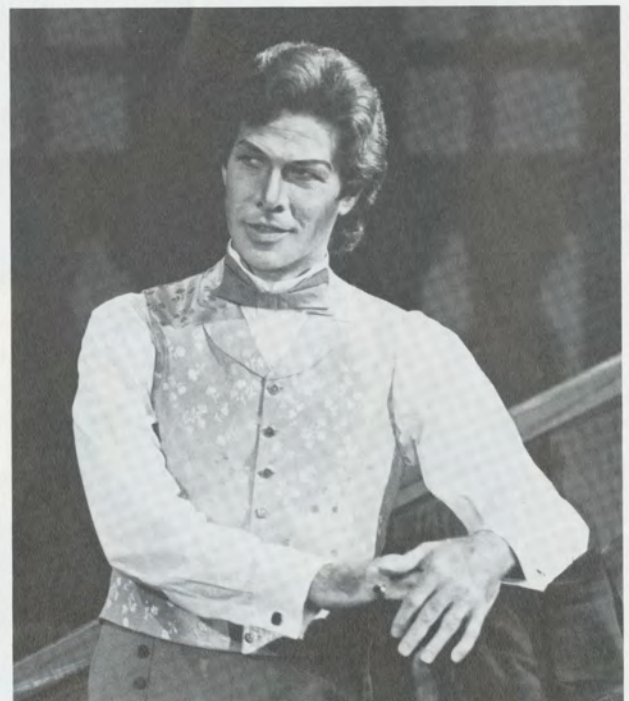
Dennis O'Neill, Frederica von Stade



Frederica von Stade, Laura Brooks Rice



Dennis O'Neill, Frederica von Stade



Samuel Ramey



Frederica von Stade, members of the San Francisco Opera Ballet



Francesca Howe



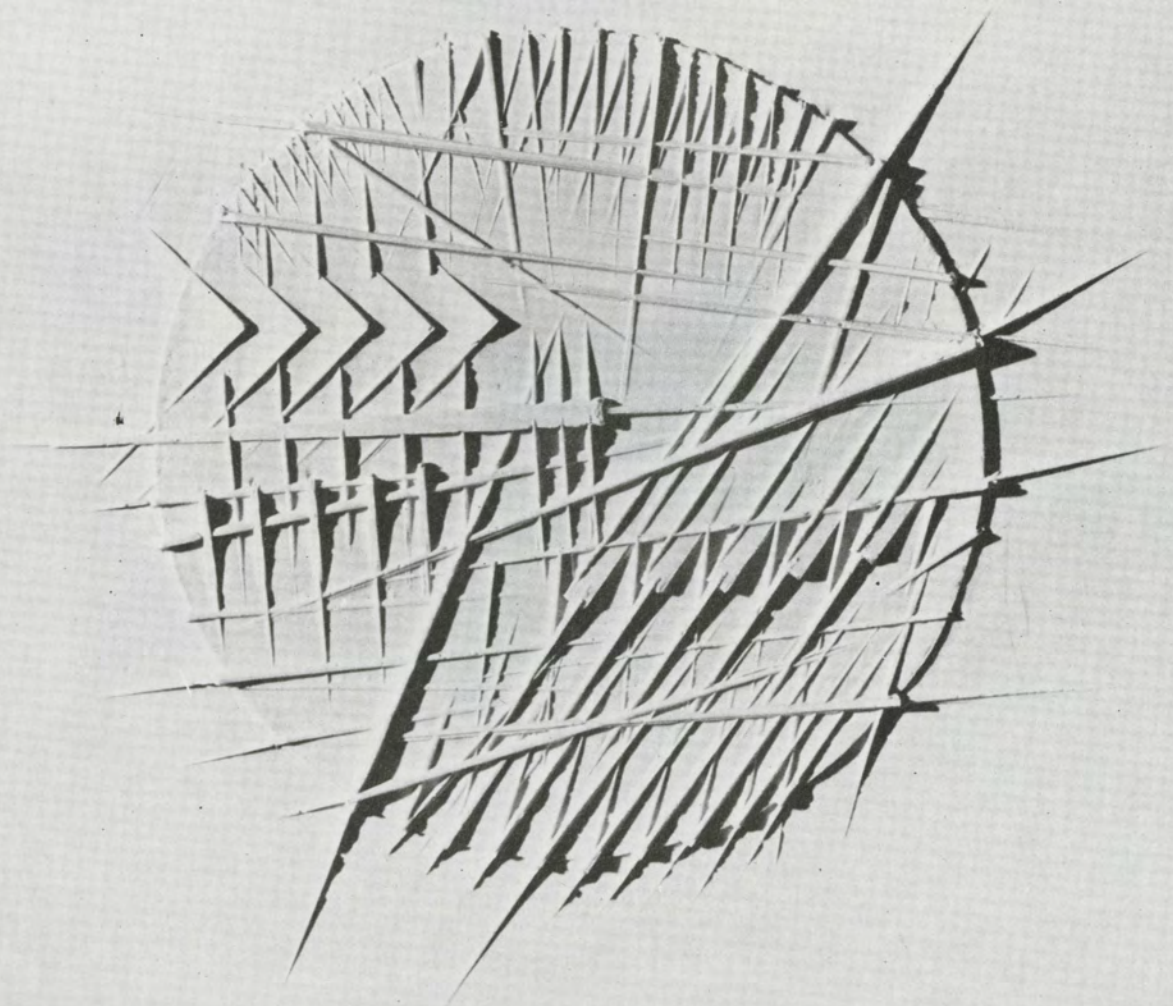
Francesca Howe, James Patterson



Frederica von Stade

OPERA PLAZA AND GHIRARDELLI SQUARE - SAN FRANCISCO

MODESTO LANZONE'S





SAMUEL RAMEY

continued from p. 42

and Alfredo in *La Traviata*. His concert work includes numerous appearances with the London Symphony Orchestra under Claudio Abbado. Future engagements include *La Traviata* at the Paris Opera next spring, his Lyric Opera of Chicago debut as Tybalt in *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* in 1985, and his first assignment at the San Diego Opera that same season, singing Nemorino in *L'Elisir d'Amore*.

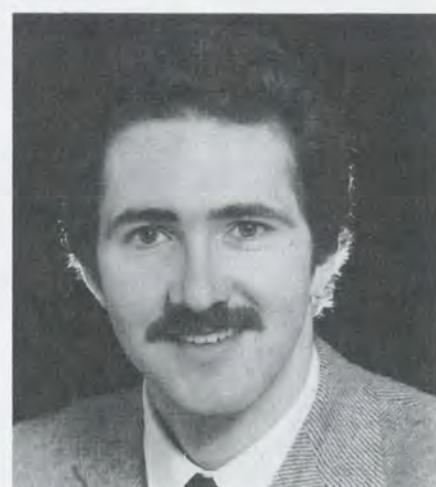
American basso cantante **Samuel Ramey** returns to San Francisco Opera as Count Rodolfo in *La Sonnambula*. His previous Company appearance, in 1978, was as Colline in *La Bohème*. After his 1973 debut with New York City Opera as Zuniga in *Carmen*, he became a leading bass with that company, singing close to 40 roles from his repertoire, many of them in productions mounted by City Opera especially for him. His unusual vocal gifts of flexibility and rich timbre have won him acclaim in a wide variety of roles, from Handel and Monteverdi through the bel canto repertoire and including such later works as Floyd's *Susannah*, Boito's *Mefistofele* and Montemezzi's *L'Amore dei Tre Re*. In 1975 he appeared in the American stage premiere of Handel's *Rinaldo* with Houston Grand Opera and made his Canadian opera debut in *The Queen of Spades* with Vancouver Opera. The summer of 1976 saw his European debut in one of his most celebrated portrayals, the title role of *Le Nozze di Figaro*, at the Glyndebourne Festival, where he subsequently returned as Nick Shadow in a production of *The Rake's Progress* that was televised over the BBC. Ramey first appeared with Netherlands



ROBERT TATE

Opera in 1978, singing the four villains of *The Tales of Hoffmann*, and in July of that year bowed with the Hamburg Staatsoper as Arkel in *Pelléas et Mélisande*, singing Don Basilio in *The Barber of Seville* the very next night. Colline in *La Bohème* was the vehicle of his 1979 debuts at the Lyric Opera of Chicago and the Paris Opera, and that June he bowed at the Aix-en-Provence Festival as Mozart's Figaro, returning the following year in highly praised performances of *Semiramide*. In 1981 New York City Opera mounted for him the company's first production of Verdi's *Attila*, and in May he made an acclaimed debut at La Scala, again as Mozart's Figaro. The same role served for his 1981 debut at the Vienna Staatsoper and his 1982 Covent Garden debut. In September 1983 he opened the Paris Opera season in the title role of Rossini's *Moïse*. Having sung regularly at the world's major houses for several years, he made a long-awaited Metropolitan Opera debut in January of this year as Argante in *Rinaldo*. His discography includes recordings on the Philips, Deutsche Grammophon, Angel, RCA-Erato, CBS and London labels, and among his television credits are *The Barber of Seville* and *Manon* in national "Live from Lincoln Center" telecasts.

Tenor **Robert Tate** appears this fall as a Notary in *La Sonnambula*, Goro in the Family performances of *Madama Butterfly* and the Servant in *Elektra*. Since his 1980 Company debut in *Samson et Dalila*, he has appeared in over a dozen different productions, most recently as Missail in *Boris Godunov* during the 1983 Fall Season. He attended the San Francisco Conservatory,



JAMES PATTERSON

and after his 1979 Spring Opera Theater debut in the ensemble of *Death in Venice*, he took part in the world premieres of Harbison's *Winter's Tale* and Mechem's *Tartuffe*, both under the auspices of the American Opera Project. During the 1982 San Francisco Opera Center Showcase series, Tate won plaudits in the travesty role of Cornelia in Scarlatti's *The Triumph of Honor*. Other Bay Area credits include Ferrando in *Così fan tutte* and Lindoro in *The Italian Girl in Algiers* with Pocket Opera, and Stravinsky's *Les Noces* with the Oakland Ballet. In 1983 he made his Wolf Trap debut as Ferrando, and earlier this year bowed with Portland Opera as Vašek in *The Bartered Bride* and portrayed Scaramuccio in *Ariadne auf Naxos* for the Spoleto Festivals in Italy and the United States. Next year he returns to Portland as Rinnuccio in *Gianni Schicchi*. Other upcoming engagements include the tenor solos in this year's "Sing-It-Yourself Messiah" in Davies Symphony Hall, to be televised by KQED, and the role of Ernesto in *Don Pasquale* for the newly formed Green Bay Opera company in Wisconsin.

Bass **James Patterson** returns to San Francisco Opera for four roles: Zuniga in *Carmen*, Alessio in *La Sonnambula*, the Bonze in *Madama Butterfly* and Sparafucile in *Rigoletto*. Currently an Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, he made his Company debut as a Customhouse Guard in the 1983 Summer Season production of *La Bohème* and sang Fafner in the last performance of *Das Rheingold*. During the 1983 Fall Season he appeared in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *La Traviata*, *La Gioconda* and *Boris Godunov*, while the 1983 Summer



NICOLA RESCIGNO

Season saw him as Fafner in *Siegfried* and the King of Egypt in *Aida*. As a participant in the 1982 Merola Opera Program he appeared in productions of *Rigoletto* and *The Magic Flute*, and went on to portray Sparafucile in Western Opera Theater's 1982 touring production of *Rigoletto*. During the 1983 Showcase series, Patterson appeared as Ariadeno in *L'Ormino* and Collatinus in *The Rape of Lucretia*, and he portrayed Osmin in this year's Showcase production of *The Abduction from the Seraglio*. During the summer of 1981 Patterson was an apprentice artist with Santa Fe Opera, where he appeared as Simone in *Gianni Schicchi*. His concert credits include Herod in Berlioz's *L'Enfance du Christ* with the Marin Symphony and, during last year's Festival of Masses, the bass solos in the *St. Matthew Passion* and the Verdi Requiem under Robert Shaw. This last summer he appeared as Fafner in both *Das Rheingold* and *Siegfried* at the Pacific Northwest Wagner Festival in Seattle.

Maestro Nicola Rescigno makes his long-awaited return to the San Francisco Opera podium to lead *La Sonnambula*. He launched his career while still in his early twenties with a performance of *La Traviata* at the Brooklyn Academy of Music and was immediately signed for a transcontinental tour of the San Carlo Opera Company. He also served as music director of the Connecticut Opera and, in pre-Castro days, of the Havana Opera before founding the Lyric Opera of Chicago with the late Carol Fox and Lawrence Kelly in 1953-54. Rescigno's many conducting assignments there included the company's inaugural production of *Don Giovanni* as

well as Maria Callas's American debut performance of *Norma*. In 1957, Rescigno and Kelly moved to Dallas and formed the Dallas Civic Opera, for which Rescigno served as artistic director and principal conductor. The Dallas Opera, as it is now called, quickly rose to national prominence, presenting the American debuts of numerous international stars as well as exploring innovative productions and unusual repertoire. Rescigno was general manager of the company from 1974 to 1977, and now retains the positions of artistic director and principal conductor. He has won recognition around the world, conducting performances at Covent Garden, the Glyndebourne Festival, Vienna Staatsoper and Paris Opera as well as in Zurich, Monte Carlo, Lisbon and all of the principal Italian opera houses. In the Americas, he has presided over performances in Rio de Janeiro, Mexico City, Houston, Washington, Chicago, Cincinnati and Philadelphia as well as Montreal and Toronto. He made his Metropolitan Opera debut in 1978, returning numerous times. Last year he conducted *Manon Lescaut* and *Turandot* in Torre del Lago and *Turandot* for the Canadian Opera. This year his assignments include *Andrea Chénier* in Palermo and *La Traviata*, *Così fan tutte* and *Il Trovatore* in Dallas. Next spring for Dallas Opera's Chamber Opera Series he will lead Cimarosa's *Maestro di Cappella*, Rossini's *Cambiale di Matrimonio* and Britten's *Rape of Lucretia*. In addition to his conducting and administrative skills, Rescigno has earned a reputation for reviving and editing a number of baroque operas, and is responsible for the American stage premieres of Handel's *Alcina* and *Samson* and Vivaldi's *Orlando Furioso*. His lengthy discography includes numerous recordings with Maria Callas, including studio albums of arias as well as complete operas recorded live in performance. Soon to be released is his new recording of *Lucia di Lammermoor* with Edita Gruberova, Alfredo Kraus and Renato Bruson.

Canadian director-choreographer Brian Macdonald returns to San Francisco Opera for *La Sonnambula*, having made his Company debut with *Cendrillon* during the 1982 Fall Season. A graduate of McGill University and an experienced actor and dancer, he joined the National Ballet of Canada during its inaugural year, but an injury during his second season



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BRIAN MACDONALD

prompted him to turn to choreography and teaching in Canada, the U.S. and Europe. He served for three years as artistic director of the Royal Swedish Ballet, later holding the same post with the Harkness Ballet in New York. From 1974 to 1977 he was artistic director of Les Grands Ballets Canadiens in Montreal and since then has been that company's resident choreographer. He has achieved international renown, and his ballets are in the repertoire of the Royal Swedish Ballet, the Royal Danish Ballet, the Batsheva Company of Israel, the Festival Ballet of England, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, the Alvin Ailey dance company, The National Ballet of Cuba and the ballet companies of the Norwegian Opera, the Deutsche Oper in Berlin and the Paris Opera. He began directing opera in 1973 with a Canadian production of *Così fan tutte*, and this other career has taken him all over the world. After his San Francisco Opera debut he directed *Alceste* for the New York City Opera, and his 1983 assignments included *Faust* for the Théâtre du Capitole in Toulouse; *Cendrillon* for New York City Opera; and new ballets for the 50th anniversary of the Banff Centre and the 25th anniversary of Les Grands Ballets Canadiens. This year he returned to Stratford to restage his three Gilbert and Sullivan productions, *The Mikado*, *The Gondoliers* and *Iolanthe*, all three being taped for Canadian television. Future engagements include *The Rake's Progress* for Washington Opera; *The Mikado* for the Opera Company of St. Louis; a production of *My Fair Lady* for the Stratford Festival, where he is an associate director; and a remounting of one of his early and best-known ballets, *Time out of*



JOAN ARHELGER

Mind, for the Zurich Opera ballet. Macdonald was awarded the Gold Star for Choreography at the 1964 Paris International Dance Festival, and in 1967 was honored with the Order of Canada, his country's highest civilian honor.

San Francisco Opera associate lighting designer **Joan Arhelger** is responsible for lighting this fall's productions of *La Sonnambula*, *L'Elisir d'Amore* and *Anna Bolena*. She joined the Company last fall, as lighting designer of *Manon Lescaut* and lighting supervisor for *La Traviata*. Her work has been seen locally in Bill Irwin's *In Regard of Flight* (featured on the PBS Great Performances series) and with various dance companies, including the Bay Area Dance Coalition's "Dancemakers '82" festival in Herbst Theatre. Miss Arhelger's opera credits in lighting design include productions for Wolf Trap Company, and the opera companies of Louisville, Fort Worth, New Orleans, Pittsburgh, Omaha, and repertory seasons with the Kansas City Lyric Opera and the Central City Opera. A student of Gilbert Hemsley, Miss Arhelger served as assistant lighting designer for American presentations by the Ballet Nacional de Cuba, the Stuttgart Ballet, the Bolshoi Opera and the Berlin Opera. For five seasons, she was resident lighting assistant for the Washington Opera at the Kennedy Center.

A Note from the Stage Director

Fearing censorship problems, Bellini and his librettist Felice Romani did not create *Hernani*, Victor Hugo's inflammatory drama, as planned, but took instead the plot of a ballet, *La Sonnambula*, which had been first produced at the Paris Opera in September 1827, and made an opera of it.

Imagine Paris in 1831—on October 31, *La Sonnambula*, the first Bellini opera to be staged there, was a resounding success, to be performed 240 times during 44 seasons until 1909. *Giselle*, a two-act ballet choreographed by Jules Perrot and Jean Coralli to music by Adolphe Adam and first given in Paris in 1841, was an even more astounding success and has been performed hundreds of times down to this day!

The parallels are very revealing of the théâtre lyrique of their period. Both heroines are fragile peasant girls, one with a weak heart and an obsession with dance, the other with an inclination to sleepwalking and song. Aristocrats (Albrecht and Count Rodolfo) cement the misunderstandings that unhinge both ladies. Avowals of love, flowers symbolic of virginity, innocence, apparitions, otherworldliness and proven devotion characterize both vehicles, which require huge technical resources from their stars . . .

If I have touched on some of these parallels, it is from a love of the style, the period, and the resonances of an opera and a ballet born 10 years apart. *Giselle* is perhaps the more metaphysical of the two, but then it doesn't have Bellini's incredible score.

— BRIAN MACDONALD

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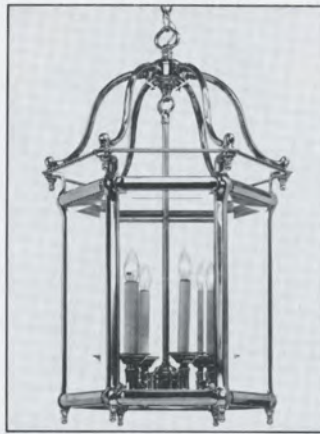
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Heart continued from p. 40

ing her to read music before she could read words, and introduced her to the stage at the age of five, when she appeared as the child in Paër's *Agnese*. Her musical precocity was such that at one performance, when the production's star suffered a memory lapse, young Maria was able to prompt her; and her artistic sensitivity was so great that she is reported to have fainted the first time she heard Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. Her lessons with her father were notoriously stormy, and later in her career she attributed her uncanny ability to cry on stage without affecting her voice to the tempestuous sessions she endured at the hands of her strict parent.

Maria made her stage debut at the King's Theatre in London in June of 1824 as Rosina in *Il Barbiere*, opposite her father. We can well imagine the revelation her audience experienced to see a 16-year-old Rosina with a lithe figure, flashing Spanish eyes and boundless energy, exhibiting the meticulous vocal technique and extravagant style of embellishments for which her father was famous.

Maria's destiny was shaped by her father's temper when he had a disagreement with the manager of the King's Theatre, prompting him to accept an offer from an agent for the Park Theatre in New York. The elder García was to bring a troupe of singers to America, where audiences had never experienced Italian opera. Along with her mother, Joaquina, and her brother, Manuel, Maria's father engaged a basso-buffo, baritone and soprano, and the newly formed opera company sailed to America in October of 1825.

The first Italian opera ever performed on American soil was *Il Barbiere*, with Maria again playing Rosina; and as they would for the rest of her life, critics fell over themselves with delight in describing her performance. The following February Maria added to her repertoire the role of Desdemona in Rossini's *Otello*, opposite her father's acclaimed portrayal of the Moor. She again won high praise, particularly for the realism of her acting, although it was in part due to her terror when her father entered the stage for the last scene with a real knife instead of a

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prop, and Maria feared he really meant to kill her, as he had threatened in a fit of rage during rehearsals. Desdemona was to become one of her most celebrated roles.

Tired of her father's abuses, Maria sought to escape by way of marriage. Legend has it that it was Lorenzo da Ponte, Mozart's librettist, then living in New York, who introduced her to one of her most ardent admirers: Eugène Malibran, a French expatriate with his own import-export business, 27 years her senior. Well-bred and elegant, he could offer her a stability she had never known with her family, and in her desperation she no doubt convinced herself of the sincerity of her attraction to him. She kept their romance a secret until she announced their engagement, to which her father responded with all the fury she had dreaded. He eventually gave his consent, although not until Eugène had offered him \$50,000 to compensate for the loss of his star singer. They were married in March of 1826, one day before her 18th birthday.

The García family moved to Mexico and Maria stayed in New York, enjoying her new life as a society matron. But economic turmoils of 1826 reduced her husband's fortunes drastically, and she returned to the stage—earning \$600 a performance, then the highest salary ever received by a performer in this country. She intended her comeback to be a temporary affair to tide her husband through hard financial times, but his business deteriorated further, and she decided she could do them both more good if she returned to Europe. "I would like to prove to him that I love him," she wrote in a diary-like document before her marriage, "that were he poor, and were his existence to depend on my work, I could make him happy and fulfill my duties." That touching expression of devotion was to settle upon her like a curse.

In November of 1826 she returned to Paris. She drew much attention from several concert and benefit performances, but although the Opéra approached her repeatedly with offers, she held out for a contract with the Théâtre-Italien, where her father had been so successful, and which was generally regarded as artisti-

continued on p. 68

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The Vertical Sleeper

By J.B. HANDELSMAN

According to operatic legend, Bellini and Donizetti were engaged in a musical duel to determine which would finish his opera first (respectively *La Sonnambula* and *Anna Bolena*) and so win the hand of the beautiful Felice Romani, who had written the texts for both. There are several reasons for doubting this story, one of which is that Felice Romani was probably a man. At all events, Donizetti, who won the race, did not wed the fair librettist; but that he worked in a fiendish hurry is evidenced by the fact that his opera is marred by all of its characters being awake from beginning to end (unless some of them nap during the intermission, with no one the wiser).

Bellini, a Sicilian, was haunted by thoughts of death; rightly so as it turned out, since he did in fact die. If in this area too he was competing with Donizetti, he can be said to have won, reaching the grave a good thirteen years ahead of his rival. The young Vincenzo's apprenticeship was in church music, and one may speculate that frequent outbreaks of gunfire and sporadic stabbings during the Sicilian vespers contributed to his gloomy

forebodings. *La Sonnambula* may have represented for him a means of overcoming death, a strolling doze perhaps symbolizing resurrection.

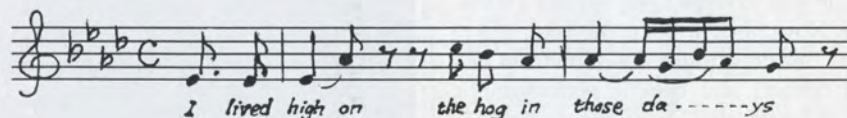
Is it not perhaps amazing what idiotic remarks one can get away with simply by adding a "perhaps"? But now the house-lights dim, the hushed and darkened opera house reminiscent of beddy-bye, programs clasped comfortingly like teddy bears, and the first faint snores are heard from the audience.

The curtain rises on a picturesque Swiss village. All Swiss settlements are more or less attractive, but this one seems special because the villagers are light-hearted and merry rather than dour and taciturn. For once they are not thinking about lending rates or the international currency market, but are celebrating the forthcoming nuptials of Elvino, a young kulak, and Amina, an orphan who has been brought

up in the mill and knows chaff when she hears it. She sings two engaging solos, "Come per me sereno" ("I have taken a tranquilizer") and "Sovra il sen' la man' mi posa" ("Rest thy tired hands on my bosom").

Only Lisa, proprietress of the local hostelry, is hostile. She once had a scene with Elvino (una scena con Elvino) and still has a thing for him (una cosa per lui).

Even without the evidence of a Swiss army knife in its scabbard, Count Rodolfo's dashing manner proclaims him a member of the military establishment; for the more perceptive, it also proclaims an imperfectly disguised depressive personality. Ostensibly traveling incognito, he unconsciously ensures that his identity will be discovered as he sings nostalgically of his childhood in the region, "Vi ravviso i luoghi ameni" ("I lived high on the hog in those days").



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

Of course, he is lord of the castle; if no one had guessed it so far, he makes it repulsively clear with his uninvented atten-

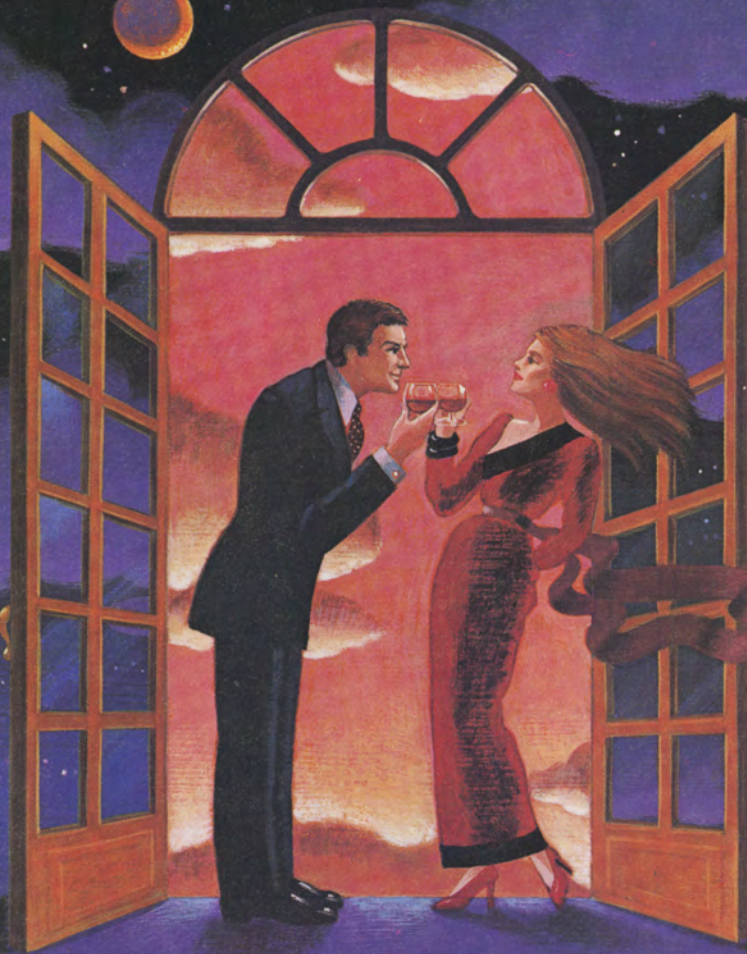
tions to the bride in the cabaletta, "Tu non sai in quei begli occhi" ("Your lovely eyes often move in unison"). Elvino is annoyed,



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but the many corkscrews and bottle openers on the stranger's weapon give him pause.

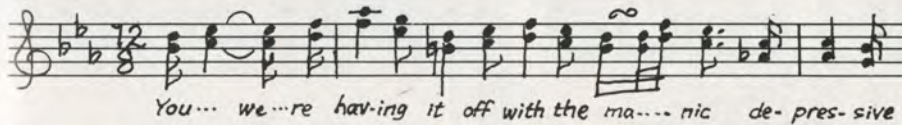
Lisa offers to provide the Count with bed and breakfast; would the gentleman like the usual Continental breakfast consisting of an elderly croissant and tepid coffee? Does the gentleman desire the usual Continental bed, or the augmented version complete with landlady? As Lisa acquires a certain comeliness in the poorly lit apartment, Rodolfo begins to abandon the idea of *droit du Seigneur* in favor of *droit du Visiteur*; but at this point Amina enters through the window, sound asleep. Lisa drops her handkerchief and pretends to go in search of a dish small enough to accommodate breakfast.

Everyone who is either a psychotherapist, or has ever been to one, or who has ever talked to anyone who has been to one—in short, the entire world—will immediately spot the suppressed motivations. Why have Amina's soporiferous peregrinations taken her to the room of the very nobleman who had just been flirting with her? Eh? As for the handkerchief

routine, it is well known that, although some things may be accidental, dropping a handkerchief is never one of them.

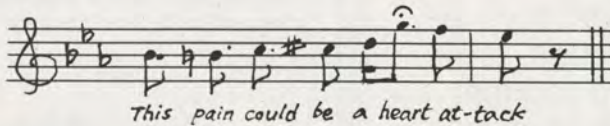
Rodolfo's better nature now takes charge, and he departs through the same window. We give him the benefit of the doubt: it may be that experience has taught him to let sleeping women lie; and so Amina does, sinking down upon his bed, where she is soon discovered by the entire village, come to congratulate the Count on being a Count. They are about to withdraw, snickering pornographically, when Lisa conducts Elvino into the room.

Amina, awakening, is no match for the overpowering circumstantial evidence. In vain she protests her innocence; Elvino does not believe her, and neither do the rest of us, Freudians to a person and knowing as we do that it was only the Count's super-ego (or fear of impotence) that saved her from eternal ignominy. Ignominy, however, is what she is having at the moment; in reply to her piteous "D'un pensiero, e d'un accento" ("Perish the thought with due emphasis"), Elvino accuses her:



Her pleas are in vain, and her ex-lover now wallows in hypochondria, whining

"Questo pianto del mio cuore" ("This pain could be a heart attack").



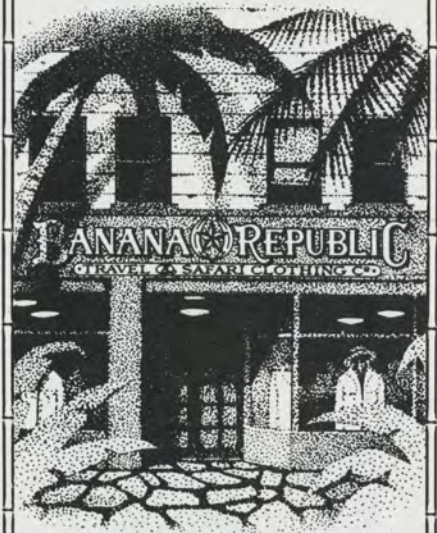
Act II, set in a valley, sees the villagers wending their way to the castle to ask Rodolfo to intercede with the injured bridegroom—even though every one of them agrees with the latter's estimate of the situation. For the supposed culprit to wheedle the supposed cuckold does not strike anyone as irregular. Obviously, they have not thought it through.

Elvino meets Amina and snatches the ring from her finger, threatening to feed it

to the next ibex he meets. "Ah," he cries. "Perchè non posso odiarti?" ("Ah!" egli grida. "Why can I no longer smell you?")

Back in the village, we learn that the unscrupulous Lisa has used her wiles to good effect, perhaps by luring Elvino into dimly lit grottoes where she is seen to best advantage, and has replaced Amina as his intended. But the orphan's foster mother produces the handkerchief dropped by Lisa in Rodolfo's bedroom. (The eighteen-

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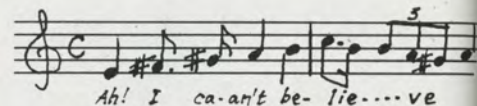
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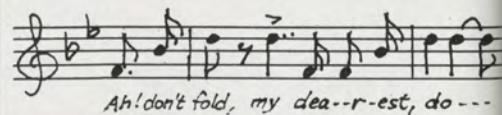
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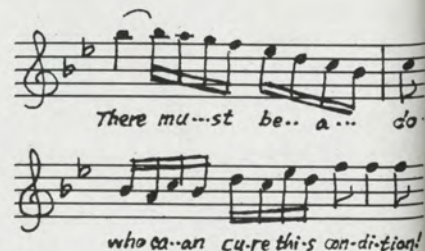
year-old Verdi, in the audience at the original performance, chose this moment to rush home and start work on *Otello*—which, however, took him another 54 years to complete.) Elvino is now as disillusioned with women as a man can be. Apparently, between Tuesday and Thursday two of them have put horns on him, and with the same Count. The latter, knowing himself to be innocent, and relying perhaps on the auxiliary nail files and button-hooks that dangle from his belt, urges upon Elvino that Amina has never been false to him; she is merely a Somnambulist. Elvino is incredulous; he has never heard of such a party and does not believe



Elvino replaces the ring on her finger, everyone shouts "Viva Amina!" except Lisa—whose shout is luckily drowned



(Many people believe that this is sung by Amina. Possibly it is. One of the themes of this opera is a crisis of identity which sometimes leads the tenor and the soprano to sing one another's lines. We may also note that the hero's very name



Whether Amina is to be cured, or will continue to somnambulate after her marriage, turning up repeatedly in the bed-chambers of itinerant aristocrats, is

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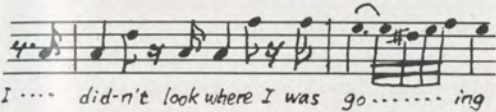
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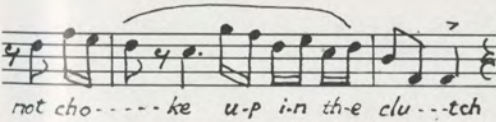
it would have a chance in Switzerland.

But at that very moment the sleeping Amina emerges from a window in the mill. She carries a lamp in order to see her dreams more clearly, and proceeds to cross the shaky bridge that spans the mill wheel. A rotting plank snaps, the lamp falls into the torrent below, but Amina continues to sleep, and walk, and sing of the ring that Elvino has taken from her. (The eighteen-year-old Wagner, hearing of this passage, immediately started work on the *Ring* cycle—which, however, took him another 45 years to complete.) Reaching dry land, she sings the plaintive "Ah! non credea mirarti" (Ah! I can't believe"):



I ... did'n't look where I was go ... ing

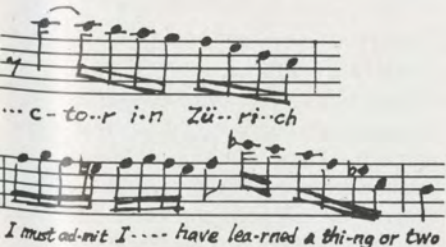
out—and Amina awakens in time to hear her beloved sing the contrite "Ah! non giunge" (Ah! don't fold"):



not cho ... ke u-p in the clu ... tch

suggests a certain unpredictability caused by overindulgence in fermented grape juice.)

Elvino's plea for forgiveness ends with these moving lines:



...c-to-r in Zü-ri-ch

I must ad-mit I ... have lea-rned a thi-ng or two

beyond the scope of this opera. Freud said "possibly," Jung said "not necessarily," and the two men never spoke to one another again. ■

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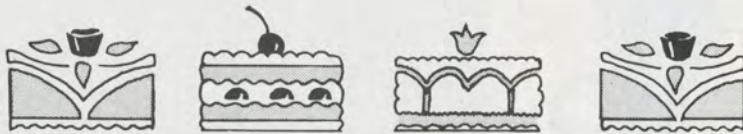
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La Sonnambula continued from p. 36

introducing *Norma* to London) remarked that he'd hardly be able to get away without fighting a duel with Charles de Bériot, Malibran's companion (and later husband).

Malibran's Amina was deemed the pinnacle of operatic performance, both for its acting and its singing. "Both are close upon perfection; and taking the extraordinary combination of the two in one person into consideration, her performance may, on the whole, be described as reaching it. We cannot say more; we dare not say less." That's the London *Times*, and every critic and connoisseur of the age seems to concur. Malibran died, after a riding accident, in 1836, but *La Sonnambula* went on being heard; in 1888 the critic Sutherland Edwards claimed that it had been performed more often than any two other, perhaps any three other, operas. Amina was a favorite Covent Garden debut role: for Pauline Viardot, Adelina Patti, Emma Albani, Marie Van Zandt, Etelka Gerster. (Marcella Sembrich chose Lucia for her debut, and then sang Amina.) At the rival house, the King's Theatre, Fanny Persiani (the first Lucia) chose *La Sonnambula* for her debut; and later, when the King's had become Her Majesty's, Jenny Lind delighted audiences for several seasons with her Amina. Foremost among her admirers was Her Majesty herself, who noted these impressions of Miss Lind's "Ah, non credea" in the Royal Diary:

"It was all *piano*, and clear and sweet, and like the sighing of a zephyr, yet all *heard*. Who could describe those long notes, drawn out till they quite melt away that shake [trill] which becomes softer and softer, those very *piano* and flute-like notes—and those round fresh tones which are so youthful?"

Lind sang the role more often than any other; about a third of her performances outside Stockholm were in *La Sonnambula*. Malibran had been approved for her realistic approach: "Thus, in the sleepwalking scene, unlike other great representatives of the part, she adopted the bona-fide nightcap of the peasant girl, and the loose garment of a sleeper; her *tricot* stockings were so transparent as to veil her feet but imperfectly." (The modern fad for bare feet on the stage is a false, anachronistic "realism.") Lind was praised for "the fact

that whereas it was usual for prima donnas to send a 'super' across the plank in the sleepwalking scene, Mlle. Lind always went herself, carrying a candle, with her eyes fixed in sleep, the whole a perilous and nerve-wracking undertaking addition to the singer's efforts." With a touch of the smugness that caused her to be nicknamed Holy Jenny, Lind told her biographer that "I should have been ashamed to stand before the audience, pretending that I had crossed the bridge, if I had not really done it."

Malibran would probably be classified nowadays as a mezzo-soprano with soprano and contralto extensions. In 1834, Bellini composed two versions of *I Puritani*: the familiar soprano scores for Giulia Grisi, and a lower-lying one tailored for Malibran, but still unperformed. It lies in the Catania library, awaiting resurrection by some bel-canto mezzo of our day. The adjustment of *La Sonnambula* for Malibran was made by the English composer Henry Bishop, best remembered as the composer of the songs "Home, sweet home" (which Donizetti used in *Anna Bolena*) and "Lo,

here the gentle lark." This Bellini-Bishop *Sonnambula* was published, and in it we find downward transpositions of the heroine's music by as much as a fourth. There are other changes: the tenor, Elvino, gains a new aria, "Yes, I love her," in Act I; and "Ah, non credea" ("Yes, for thee Time's power") gains a reprise of its opening section, "added in order that it may conclude in the Key in which it commenced." Lisa's two numbers, "Tutto è gioia" and "De' lieti auguri," are also lowered.

It made sense—and it still does—for a singer to sing a number in whatever key she or he can be musically most effective: as late as the revised *Boccanegra* we find Verdi advising the practice. Rubini, the first Elvino, had an exceptional upper register, and Bellini composed for him at a tessitura that few other tenors could encompass; so when *La Sonnambula* was first published, the tenor music was dropped by a tone or more to make it more generally accessible. (Bishop dropped "Tutto è sciolto" still further.) The table below shows the keys of the numbers concerned

TABLE

	Autograph	First Edition	Malibran	San Francisco
Tutto è gioia	A flat	A flat	F	A flat
Come per me	E flat	E flat	E flat	D flat
Sovra il sen	A flat	A flat	F	G flat
Prendi, l'anel	B flat	A flat	A flat	A flat
Ah vorrei trovar	g/B flat	f/A flat	f/A flat	e/G
Son geloso	G	F	F	F
D'un pensiero	E flat*	E flat	E flat	E flat
Non più nozze	G	A flat	F	A flat
<hr/>				
Tutto è sciolto	b/D	a/C	g/B flat	a/C
Ah, perchè non posso	D	B flat	B flat	B flat
De' lieti auguri	B flat	B flat	F	B flat
Ah, non credea	a/C	a/C	f/A flat/a	a/C
Ah, non giunge	B flat	B flat	F	G

*"D'un pensiero" was originally composed in E; then the key-signature was altered to three flats, and passing accidentals were altered to match. At the end, the horns' repeated D, dominant to the stretta, wrenched the key for Elvino's violent exclamation "Non più nozze!" The E flat-A flat sequence of the first edition (with the horns merely repeating E flats from the final chord of "D'un pensiero") is tamer.

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as they appear in Bellini's autograph; as they appear in the first (and subsequent) Ricordi editions; as they appear in the Malibran score; and as they will be done in this San Francisco production. It will be noted that the only changes here from the first edition are the dropping of "Come per me . . . Sovra il sen" by a tone, and the dropping of "Ah, non giunge" by a minor third. (The peerless Malibran took it down a full tone further still!)

In 1849, Boosey published a "critical" vocal score, newly edited from the autograph by W.S. Rockstro, in which the tenor's music is restored to its original high pitch, with its free employment of top Ds. Rockstro flinched from the "wrench" between "D'un pensiero" and "Non più nozze," and put the latter in A flat; either way, his score is the best representation in print of the autograph. It even faithfully reproduces what may have been a slip in both the autograph and the first edition. Since much of Bellini's fascination lies in the finesse of his vocal line, I'll end this note with an illustration of it. Our music example shows some bars of Amina's "Ah, non credea." (a) is what Bellini first wrote; but the reading of the final bars is conjectural, for the composer

erased these first thoughts rather thoroughly, when he revised and refined them to (b) This—with the eighth-note rests in bars 2 and 3 corrected to sixteenths—is what we also find in the first edition and in Rockstro. But in subsequent editions—and in every performance I've ever heard—the last three notes of the second bar are altered to E-D-C. For interest, I've added, as (c), the bars as Jenny Lind used to sing them.

A singer who merely stuck to the composer's written notes would be considered a dull, unpolished and unstylish artist. Some of Malibran's exciting *Sonnambula* decorations are preserved in the treatise on singing by her brother, Manuel García. And proposals for the performance of "Come per me" by the great French soprano Laure Cinti-Damoreau can be found in the *Journal of the American Musicological Society* (1975), pp. 486-92. These show that not only the melodies are to be embellished; the frequent fermatas over notes in the recitatives are to be considered not as simple pauses but as further invitations for the singer to exercise—with taste and good judgment—all the power of her artistic invention. ■

(a)

(b)

(c)

The musical score shows three versions of a vocal line. Version (a) is the original autograph. Version (b) is the first edition with corrections. Version (c) is a conjectural reading based on Jenny Lind's performance. The lyrics are: *fio re pas-sa . . . sti al par d'a-mo . . . re che un giorno so-lo, che un gior-no sol du-ro*. There are also some performance markings like *(or) no me* and *(or) gior-no sol du-ro*.

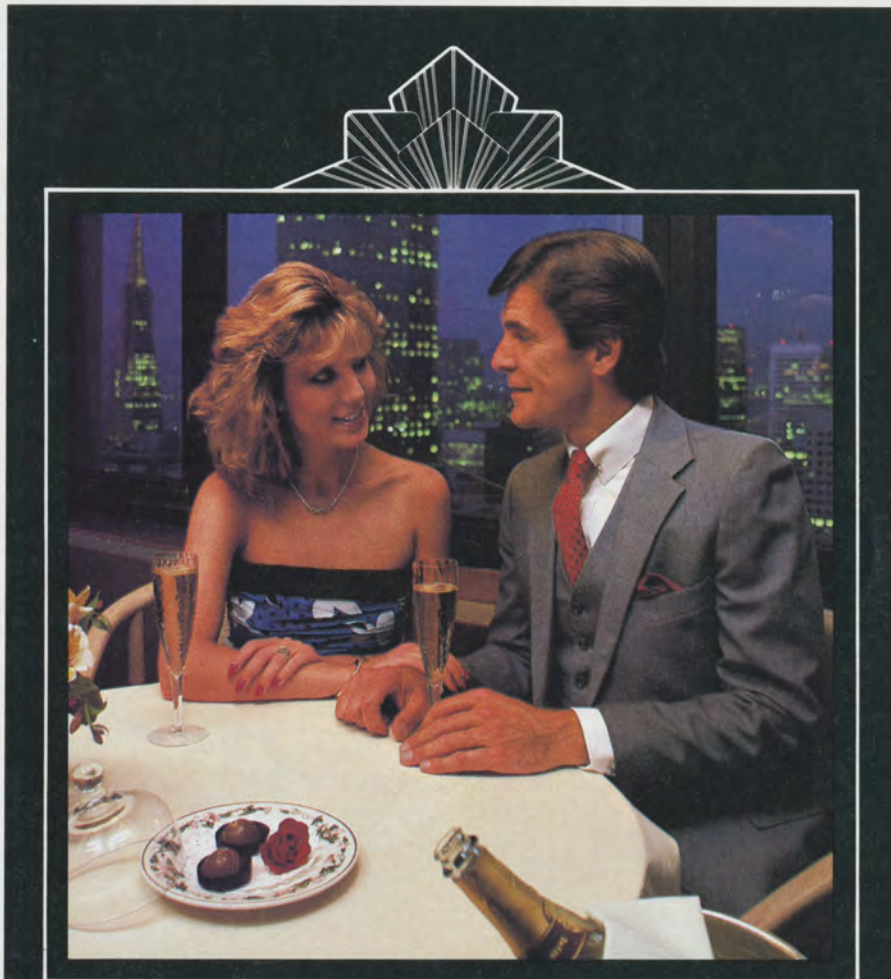


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Heart continued from p. 57

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ally superior. She eventually got the offer she wanted, and her success surpassed anything she could have hoped for. (She had wanted to be billed as Maria Garcia, but the recent appearance of another singer named Marietta Garcia prompted her to use her married name to distinguish herself from the other.)

Maria Malibran astonished the Parisians for the rest of the season, dazzling them with her versatility in a variety of roles. At her final performance that season the audience reaction was so vociferous that the law forbidding artists to take curtain calls had to be ignored, for fear the tumultuous crowd would destroy the theater if she didn't reappear. Such demonstrations were to be commonplace wherever she performed.

Having conquered the operatic capital of Europe in less than seven months, Maria by this time had considerably revised

her attitude toward her far-distant husband in New York, and came to regard him more and more as an annoyance and financial liability, even wondering if he hadn't known his business was failing, and married her for her earning capability.

Another man who was to play a decisive role in Maria's life entered the scenario in 1827, after she returned to Paris. Charles de Bériot was a Belgian violinist who was quickly recognized as one of the finest of his day—even after Paganini gave his first Paris concerts in 1831, de Bériot held his own, generally being considered a finer musician, if less exhibitionistic than his Italian rival. Maria performed frequently with him in Parisian salons, but it was not until they performed together in concert in 1829 in Charles's native land that the Byronic Belgian ignited Maria's ardor, and the two became lovers.

At first, great pains were taken to conceal the affair, but by the end of 1830, Maria could no longer tolerate the pressure of maintaining a façade of social respectability, and she and Charles lived together openly. Yet, although she was headstrong and willing to defy convention, Maria was hurt by the social repercussions that confronted her, and she sought some means to dissolve her affiliation with Malibran.

Despite every legal maneuver she and a staff of advisers devised, and even with the assistance of the great national hero General Lafayette, who was a great fan and became her close friend, Maria was unable to obtain a divorce; Eugène would not agree to one—he even came to Paris to assert his rights—and she could not obtain one in France, where such procedures were not permitted. She vowed never to sing on a Paris stage again until she and Charles were married, and in 1832 (after she gave birth to a baby girl who died shortly after birth), she and Charles left the home they had built outside of Brussels to tour Italy, where her successes surpassed even those she had scored in Paris and London—if such a thing were possible. She did not, however, succeed at severing her ties to Malibran until March 6, 1835, when she obtained an annulment of her marriage, and even then only with a stipulation that she not remarry for 10

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Maria Malibran in Persiani's *Ines de Castro* in 1835.

months. Meanwhile, she continued her skyrocketing career in Italy and England, evoking new superlatives everywhere.

Medals were struck to commemorate her performances in Milan, where she bowed as Norma at La Scala in the greatest debut that house had witnessed. A theater in which she gave a benefit concert in Venice was rechristened Il Teatro Malibran (a name it retains to this day). So hysterical was her following that the Austrian government spied on her activities, fearing that the huge influx of people to every town in which she performed might be concealing secret meetings of the *Risorgimento*. Bellini loved her as Norma and prepared a special version of *I Puritani* for her to perform in Naples, but a cholera epidemic prevented the score from arriving on time and the contract was cancelled, to Maria's great distress. (That version, which exists in the score, has never been performed.)

After hearing her in London, Bellini had resolved to compose an opera for her, a prospect that thrilled her (although new

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operas had been written for her, and although she scored personal successes in them, none of them became true repertory items). Bellini didn't live to fulfill his intention, but at least one of his immortal arias was tailored for her special talents—"Son vergin vezzosa," the polacca in *I Puritani*, was written for the Naples version, but Bellini regarded it so highly that he inserted it into the work for its Paris premiere. *I Puritani* was to be Bellini's last opera, and when Maria heard of his premature death in 1835, she wrote to Florimo: "That fatal day, the 23rd of September, will be remembered as a sad and tragic day in the annals of the Italian theater!!!" Just how sad and tragic that date was to become, she did not yet realize.

In March 1836, Maria Malibran finally became Madame de Bériot, but her joy was to be short-lived. The pace at which she drove herself, and the intensity with which she conducted her every activity, had been noted with alarm throughout her career. As early as 1829, the critic of *Le Figaro* in Paris declared, "Our apprehensions have been for some time converted into serious fears. It seems to us that Mme. Malibran has never abused her beautiful combination of talents more." The following year the *Athenaeum* in England printed, "We sincerely advise this gifted young lady to be more careful of herself, and not to ruin her powers by overstraining them." *La Revue Musicale* in Paris printed in 1830, "As the riches dissipate, she is prodigious with the treasures that she could have saved for the future. We might as well enjoy her largesse now; she alone will regret it later." In 1835 her husband described her hectic pace to a friend:

Here is her schedule three of four days a week: morning rehearsal at 10:00, after a good hour of piano practice. Concert from 1:00 until 4:00. Opera from 7 until 10. Then, one or two private concerts to finish the evening; and poor Maria has hardly returned to rest before it is daybreak ... All this is against my will, for I oppose with all my strength her acceptance of these concerts after the performances, and I refuse a large part of them although she doesn't know it; for you know that little Spanish head. She would kill her-



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Charles de Bériot in a contemporary engraving.

self if she were permitted.

In July of 1836, against her husband's advice, she accepted an invitation to hunt in England. Always a daring and accomplished equestrienne, Maria selected the most spirited horse available, only to be thrown and dragged when her foot got caught in the stirrup. She tried to conceal the seriousness of her injuries from her doting husband, and refused to cancel any of her many engagements, including one the night of her accident. Reading of her last months described in detail is an excruciating experience; Maria drove herself mercilessly, despite serious symptoms that continued to intensify, including headaches and bizarre, manic-depressive

behavior. At one point she confided under an oath of secrecy to her younger sister Pauline—who, as Pauline Viardot, would soon embark upon a major career herself—that she was certain she had a blood clot in her brain and would die soon, and there is anecdotal evidence that she had long maintained a conviction she would die young.

Maria Felicita de Bériot departed from the world that idolized her on September 23, 1836, one year to the day after the death of the composer in whose operas she had scored some of her greatest triumphs.

It is hard for us today to imagine what her artistry could have been like. She is

generally today described as a mezzo-soprano, but we must remember that singers in her day were not so distinctly classified as they are now. Her repertoire—even just considering the roles that are still accessible to listeners today—is eclectic by any standard: both the title role and Arsace in *Semiramide*; Bellini's Norma, *La Sonnambula* and Romeo in *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* (her practice of substituting the final scene of Vaccai's *Giulietta e Romeo* for Bellini's—in order to display to better advantage her low register—was thereafter adopted as standard for many years); Donizetti's Maria Stuarda and Adina in *L'Elisir d'Amore*; both Desdemona and the title role of Rossini's *Otello* (the latter being virtually the only failure she sustained) as well as Rosina in both soprano and contralto versions; and Beethoven's *Fidelio*, which she sometimes sang on a double bill with *La Sonnambula*, appearing in both works!

Her range was said to extend over three octaves, from low to high D, with her rich contralto register perhaps most admired—the London *Examiner* said her voice was “in its low notes especially instinctive with the very soul of feelings which ‘lie too deep for tears.’” She made great use of her range, particularly in her ornamentation—the *Athenaeum* critic once wrote, “This gifted creature's voice is surely the American sea serpent of music. It is to be met with in folds, in coils, in wreaths; but nobody seems to know where either the head or tail of it is to be found.”

It was not a gift she came by naturally. Her untrained voice was not considered especially promising, but it was through her father's demanding training and her own iron will that she extended her range and equalized her registers—something she would assiduously work at throughout her life. She was said to be able to sing most notes in her range in any of her three registers, giving her an enormous palette of coloristic effects. Her tone was not considered innately beautiful, but the impassioned way in which she used it and the determination through which she made it perform unnatural acts of vocalism electrified her listeners. Writing of her perfor-

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mance in *Norma*, Hans Christian Andersen said, "Hers is not one of those brilliant voices that startle you, but rather a heart dissolved in melody."

Her acting, although it probably would be considered highly stylized today, was nonetheless a striking departure from the stilted classicism that was the norm of her era. Her style was sometimes described as undisciplined or spontaneous, but in her maturity it was a carefully calculated effect, and she considered herself in absolute control of her audiences during a performance. Certainly a major part of her effect was from her own intrinsic charisma. A German critic once wrote, "She didn't sing only with her mouth. Every limb of her body sang. The sounds shot out in sparks from her eyes, from her fingers; they streamed from her hair. She was singing even when mute."

She possessed phenomenal flexibility, and her style of ornamentation would undoubtedly be considered excessive today; even in her own time there were a few who criticized her for it, and some of her staunchest defenders would admit her elaborate embellishments were at times unusual, to say the least.

A small fragment of her technique has been handed down to us through an unbroken line of teachers. Maria's brother, Manuel, became the most celebrated singing teacher of his time—he lived to be 101, dying in 1906—and one of his many distinguished pupils was Mathilde Marchesi, whose own bel canto vocal method formed the basis for the early training of such divas of our own time as Beverly Sills, who studied with a Marchesi pupil, Estelle Liebling.

And yet there is no denying the obvious fact that Maria Malibran was unique. The English journalist Henry Chorley wrote of her in 1862:

Of the artist it must be recorded that, boundless as were Malibran's resources, keen as was her intelligence, dazzling as was her genius, she never produced a single type in opera for other women to adopt. She passed over the stage like a meteor, as an apparition of wonder, rather than as one who, on her departure, left her mantle behind her for others to take up and wear. ■

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

Look for this bus, marked "47 Special," after each performance in the bus zone at Van Ness Avenue and Grove Street—across Van Ness from the Opera House. Its route is: North on Van Ness to Chestnut, then left to Divisadero where it turns left to Union. It continues on Union over Russian Hill to Columbus, then left to Powell—then right to the end of the line at North Point.

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

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

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

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

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

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Opera glasses are available for rent in the lobby. Please note that no cameras or tape recorders are permitted in the Opera House.

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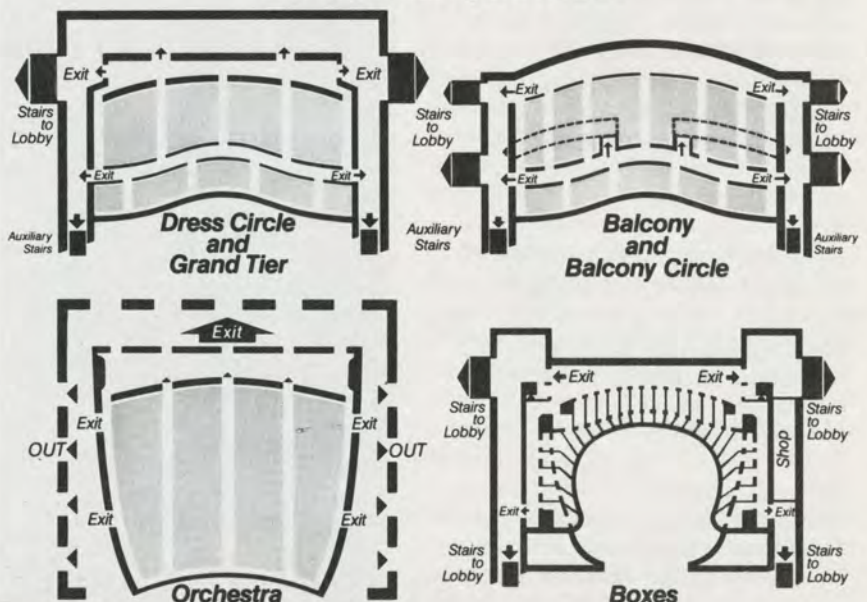
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Taxi Service Patrons needing a cab at the end of the performance should reserve one with the doorman at the Taxi Entrance before the end of the final intermission.

Performing Arts Center Tours Tours of the San Francisco Performing Arts Center, which include the War Memorial Opera House, the Louise M. Davies Symphony Hall and the Herbst Theatre take place as follows: Mondays, 10:00-2:30 on the hour and half hour. Davies Hall only: Wednesday 1:30/2:30—Saturday 12:30/1:30. All tours leave from Davies Symphony Hall, Grove Street entrance. General \$3.00—Seniors/Students \$2.00. For further information, please call (415) 552-8338.

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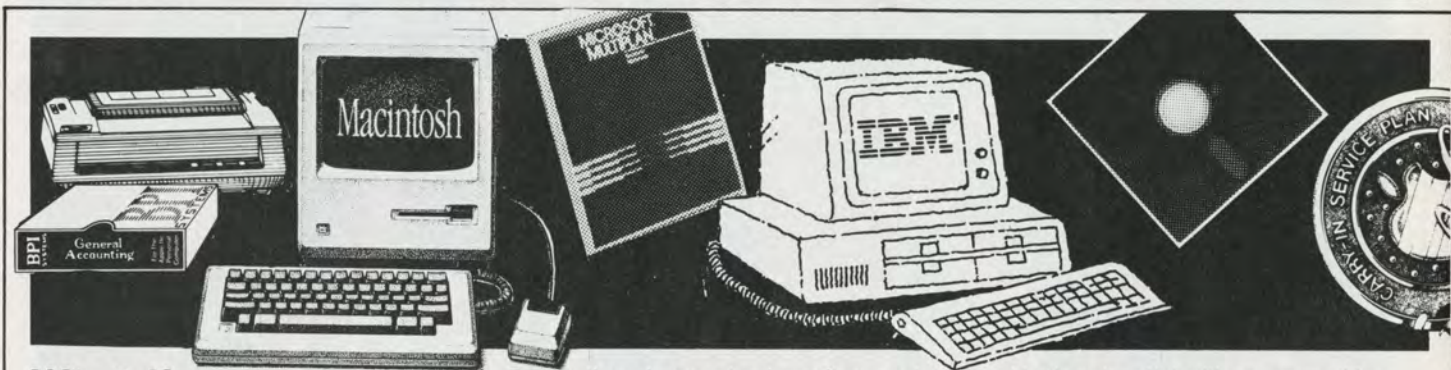
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In March of this year the Paul L. and Phyllis Wattis Foundation offered the San Francisco Opera a \$500,000 challenge grant, the purpose of which was to eliminate the 1983 deficit. We are deeply indebted to the Foundation for its insight and for its 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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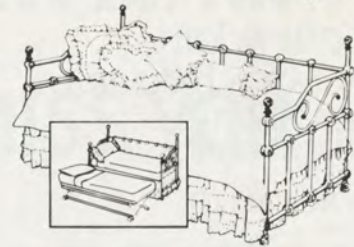
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