

Adriana Lecouvreur

1985

Friday, September 6, 1984 7:30 PM
Tuesday, September 10, 1984 8:00 PM
Friday, September 13, 1984 8:00 PM
Monday, September 16, 1984 8:00 PM
Sunday, September 22, 1984 2:00 PM
Wednesday, September 25, 1984 7:30 PM
Saturday, September 28, 1984 8:00 PM

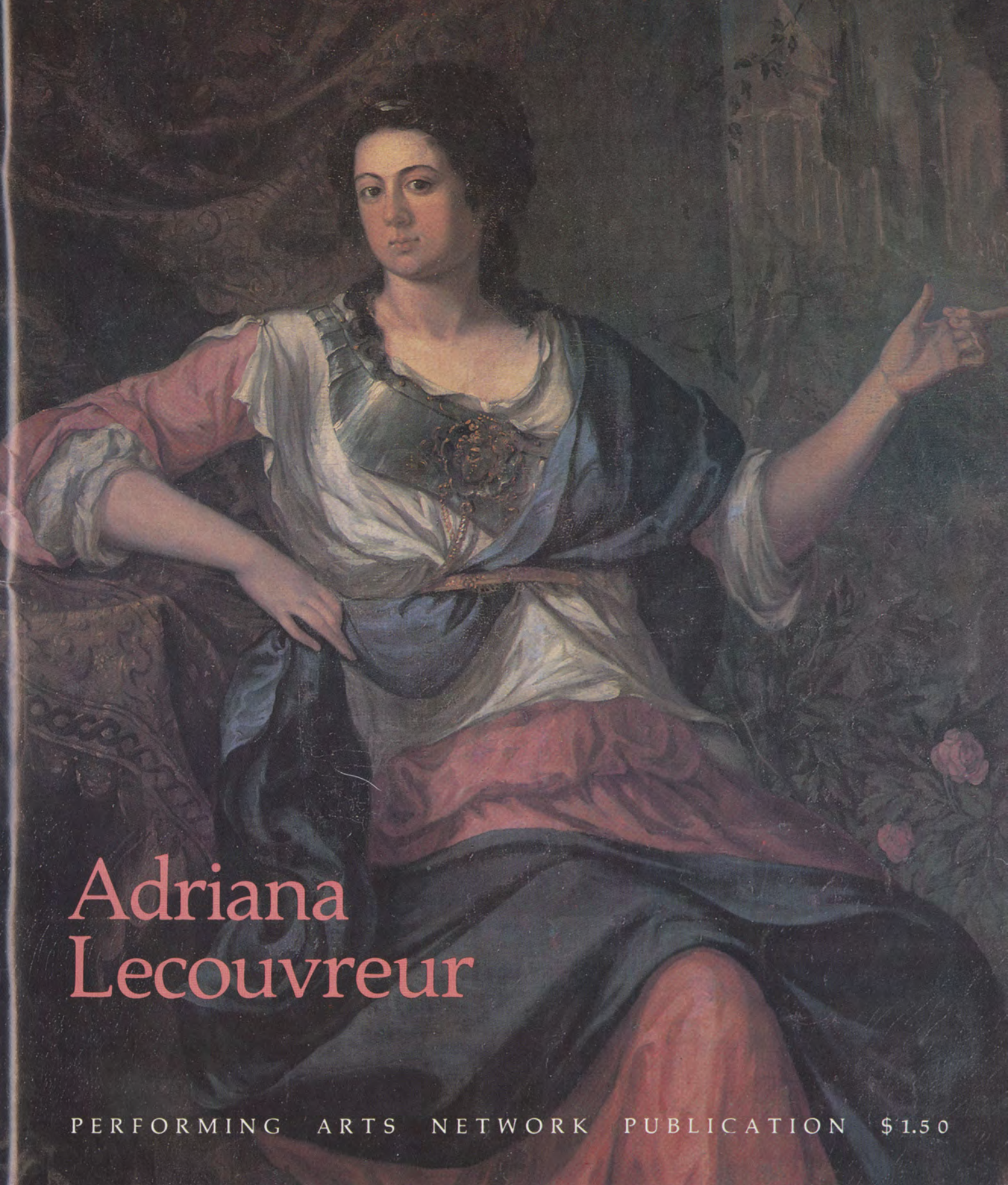
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San Francisco Opera

FALL SEASON 1985



Adriana
Lecouvreur

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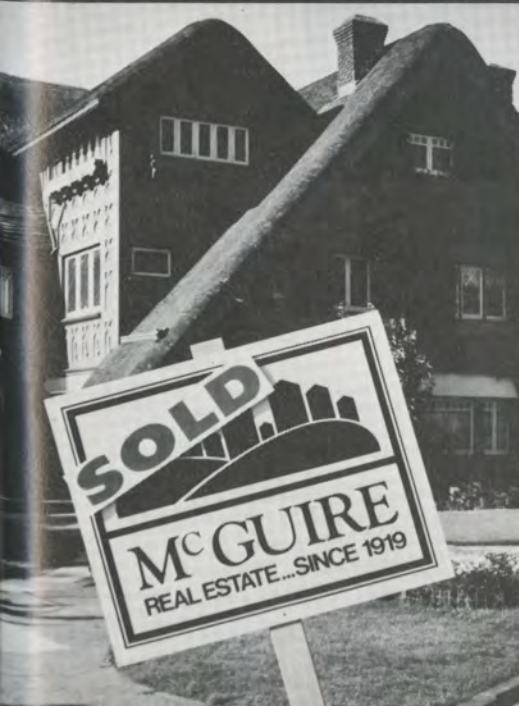
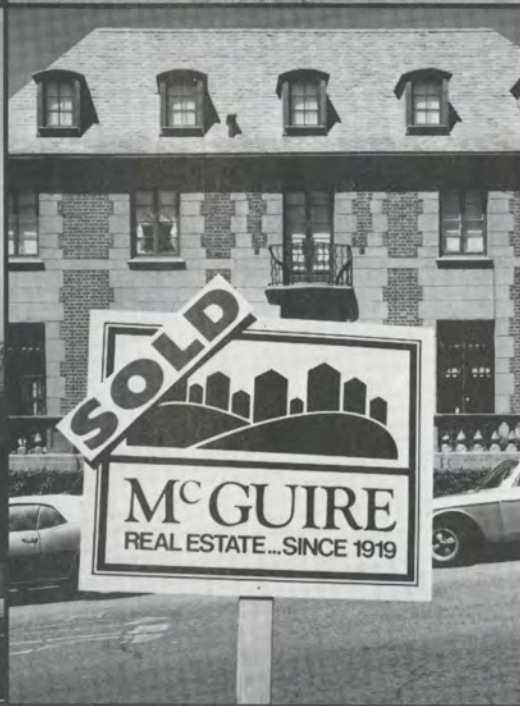
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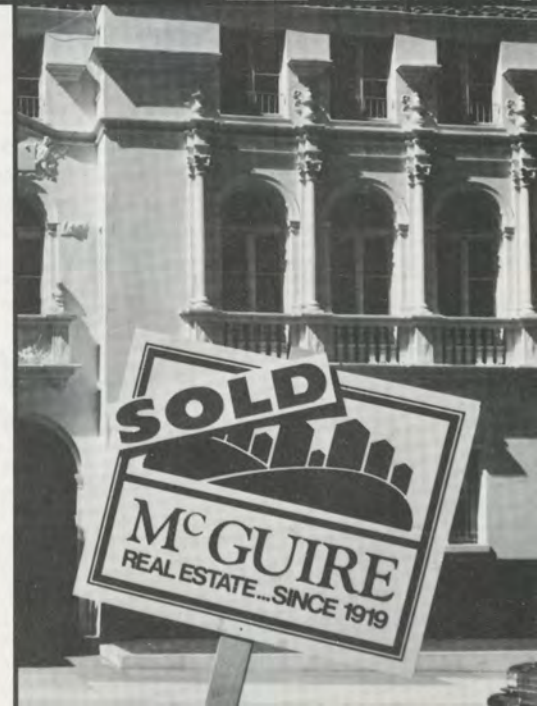
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San Francisco Opera

Terence A. McEwen, *General Director*

Adriana Lecouvreur

FALL SEASON 1985

FEATURES

- 24 **Adrienne and Adriana Lecouvreur** by Julian Budden
An introduction to Francesco Cilea's *chef-d'oeuvre*, along with an examination of the Scribe play upon which it is based.
- 32 **Mirella Freni meets Adriana Lecouvreur** by Arthur Kaplan
Interview with the charming Italian soprano, who this season adds the role of Adriana Lecouvreur to her repertoire.
- 54 **"There is Nothing Second Best About the Arts in America"**—
NEA Celebrates 20th Birthday by Ron De Luca

DEPARTMENTS

- 16 1985 Fall Season Repertoire
19 Opera Previews
34 Artist Profiles
37 Cast and Credits
38 Synopsis
64 Box Holders
65 Services
67 Medallion Society
71 Supporting San Francisco Opera



COVER:

Nicolas de Largillière (1656-1746),
Adrienne Lecouvreur.

Oil on canvas, 46 x 59½ in.

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Photo: Schopplein Studio.

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From the Chairman of the Board and the President



Reid W. Dennis

As newly elected executive officers of the San Francisco Opera Association, it is our pleasure to welcome you to the San Francisco Opera's 63rd consecutive Fall Season. This "dream season" is a fitting close to a year that will long be remembered as one of significant achievement by our Company.

Our acclaimed 1985 Summer Festival production of Wagner's epic masterpiece, *The Ring of the Nibelung*, which drew worldwide attention, is a testament to the vision and leadership of our General Director and the generous support of our donors, our Board, and the entire staff of our Company.

Our current Fall Season has been made possible by the generosity of many donors. Special recognition goes to those who have underwritten new productions. Handel's *Orlando*, which we will be sharing with the Lyric Opera of Chicago, was made possible by an anonymous gift in honor of Bernard and Barbro Osher. A new Jean-Pierre Ponnelle production of Verdi's final opera, *Falstaff*, was made possible by a generous grant from the L.J. Skaggs and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation.

Other operas on our schedule are revivals. *Lear* was made possible in 1981 by a grant from the Carol Buck Sells Foundation and the S.F. Opera Guild. This Fall's *Tosca* was originally underwritten by a grant from the Charles E. Merrill Trust, while *Un Ballo in Maschera* was originally sponsored by a gift from an anonymous friend of the Opera.

Revivals of operas allow the Company to utilize its inventory of existing productions while presenting a wide variety of operas from the repertory. However, funds are still required to revive a production, since repairs and alterations must be undertaken before the opera can be presented. The re-mounting of Puccini's *Turandot* is being underwritten by the Ambassador Foundation of Los Angeles; Pacific Telesis awarded the Company funds to revive *Tosca*; while Bernard and Barbro Osher contributed the costs of presenting *Un Ballo in Maschera*. We are deeply grateful to these donors whose generosity further enriches our operatic experience.

It is a special pleasure to recognize our governmental funding sources this year. The National Endowment for the Arts has been a loyal supporter of the San Francisco Opera, and we join with other arts organizations and the citizens of this country to salute them during this, their 20th anniversary year. The Hotel Tax Fund, Mayor Dianne Feinstein, and Chief Administrative Officer Roger Boas have consistently demonstrated their commitment to the San Francisco Opera. We join with others in the arts community in commending the Hotel Tax Fund during its 25th anniversary year. In addition, we recognize the importance of the continued support of the California Arts Council to our operations.

Once again, we thank the San Francisco Opera Guild, the Merola Opera Program and the War Memorial Board of Trustees for their ongoing support. They have earned our deepest appreciation.

Our understanding and appreciation of our operas this fall will be heightened by the presence of Supertitles, sponsored by a generous grant from the American Express Family of Companies obtained through the efforts of the San Francisco Opera Guild. In making Supertitles possible this season, American Express has demonstrated its community spirit and sensitivity to the need to make the performing arts accessible to a broader audience.

We are pleased to report that our financial position has improved. We have



Tully M. Friedman

eliminated our accumulated deficit with the assistance of a special matching grant from the Paul L. and Phyllis Wattis Foundation. However, the underlying problem of financing opera, the most expensive of art forms, remains. Our budget for this year exceeds \$20 million, and ticket sales will cover approximately 55% of these costs. Although this earned income ratio is higher than most companies are able to achieve, it still leaves us with about \$9 million to raise in order to end the year in the black. Of this amount, government grants, income from our endowment, the San Francisco Opera Guild, and production sponsorships will provide approximately half. The remainder must come from foundations, corporations and, most important, a large number of individuals.

We have presented a very special year of operatic events. To maintain this operatic legacy that is such an important part of San Francisco life, we need your continued support.

In closing, we would like to commend the leadership of Walter M. Baird, who served for 12 years as President and Chief Executive Officer of this Association. His commitment and dedication played a significant role in ensuring the world-class status of the San Francisco Opera, and we will follow his example and seek his counsel as we lead the San Francisco Opera in the years ahead.

Reid W. Dennis, *Chairman*
Tully M. Friedman, *President*

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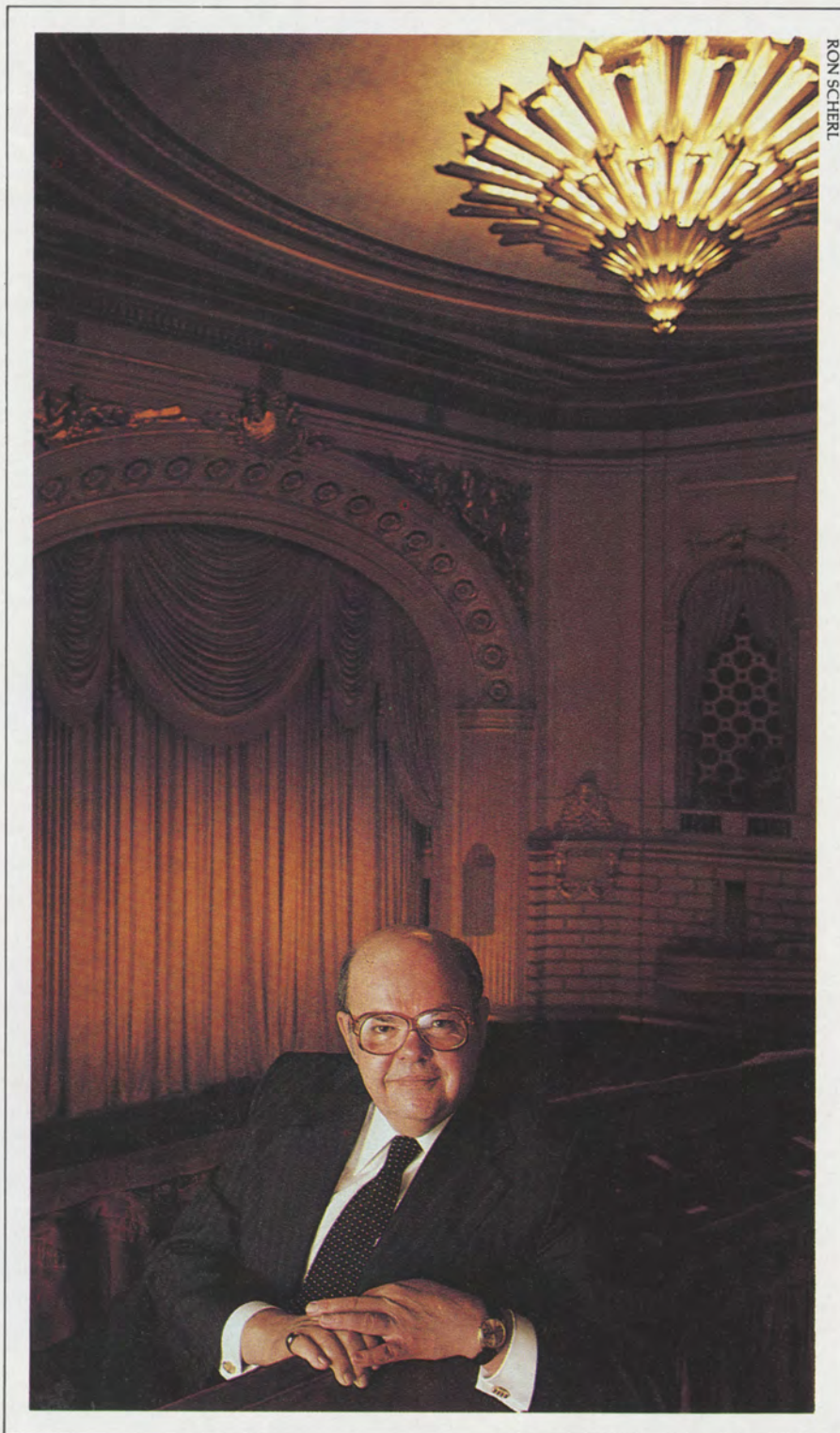
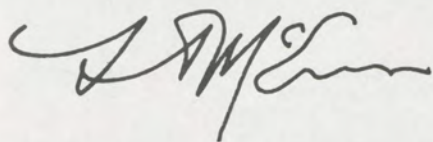
General Director's Message

The year 1985 will undoubtedly go down in the annals of the San Francisco Opera as a very important one for the Company. The reason, of course, is that this year we accomplished a major task: the *Ring*. The international attention we have received and are still receiving because of it is gratifying indeed, and I would like to take this opportunity to salute every member of the Company involved in this endeavor. It was truly a team effort, with all members of the team doing their parts to perfection. We were lucky there were no illnesses or major mishaps, but it takes a great deal more than luck to bring off the monumental task we set ourselves. I am extremely proud to be a member of this San Francisco Opera team.

The 1985 San Francisco Opera Fall Season is a star-studded one, with much glamour and a great variety of repertoire, even though this year we don't have our customary Russian opera. We promise to return to the Slavic repertoire again during the next year.

With three productions new to our City, and the wonderful Supertitles being used in seven out of ten operas, we continue to maintain the excellence that has made the San Francisco Opera one of the leading companies of the world.

Our team welcomes you to the 1985 Fall Season.



RON SCHERL

San Francisco Opera

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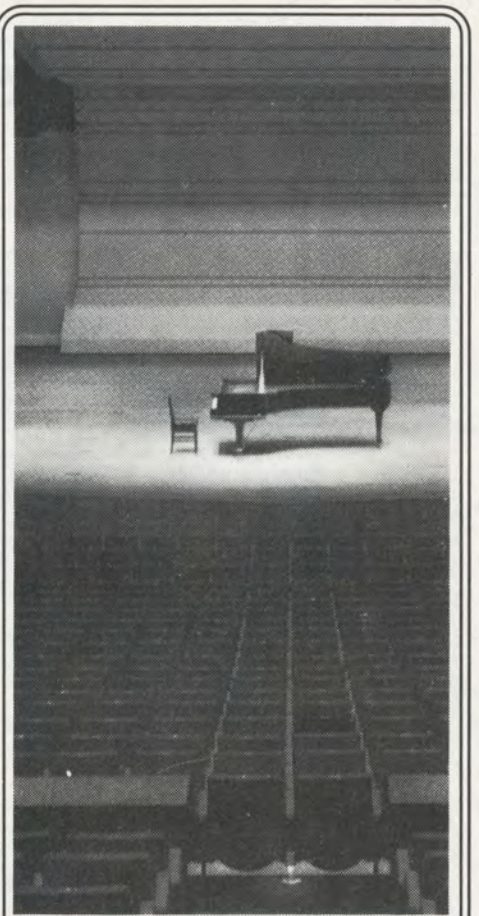
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San Francisco Opera

Terence A. McEwen, *General Director*

1985 Fall Season

Friday, September 6, 7:30

Opening Night

Adriana Lecouvreur Cilea

Scenery and costumes from the Metropolitan Opera Association.

Freni, Ciurca*, Gustafson, Cowdrick*/Mauro, Nucci, Vernon*, Green, Petersen*, Skinner* Arena/Mansouri/Cristini/Diffen/Sulich/Munn

Saturday, September 7, 8:00

Lear Reimann

This production was originally made possible through generous grants from the Carol Buck Sells Foundation and the San Francisco Opera Guild.

Silja, Dernes, Greenawald/Stewart, Langdon-Lloyd, Ludgin, Knutson, Trussel, Ulfung, Duykers, Noble, Patterson, Anderson* Layer**/Ponnelle/Ponnelle/Halmen/Munn

Tuesday, September 10, 8:00

Adriana Lecouvreur Cilea

Thursday, September 12, 7:30

Lear Reimann

Friday, September 13, 8:00

Adriana Lecouvreur Cilea

Saturday, September 14, 8:00

San Francisco Opera Premiere

Orlando Handel

Produced in cooperation with the Lyric Opera of Chicago, and made possible, in part, by an anonymous gift in honor of Bernard and Barbro Osher.

Horne, Masterson, Swenson/Gall, Langan Mackerras/Copley/Pascoe/Stennett/Munn

Sunday, September 15, 2:00

Lear Reimann

Monday, September 16, 8:00

Adriana Lecouvreur Cilea

Tuesday, September 17, 8:00

Lear Reimann

Wednesday, September 18, 7:30

Orlando Handel

Friday, September 20, 8:00

Lear Reimann

Saturday, September 21, 8:00

Orlando Handel

Sunday, September 22, 2:00

Adriana Lecouvreur Cilea

Tuesday, September 24, 8:00

Orlando Handel

Wednesday, September 25, 7:30

Adriana Lecouvreur Cilea

Thursday, September 26, 8:00

Turandot Puccini

Produced in cooperation with the opera companies of Dallas, Houston, and Miami.

The revival of this production is made possible, in part, through a much-appreciated grant from the Koret Foundation.

Marton (September 26, 29; October 2, 5), Kelm (October 9, 12, 15, 18), Anelli*/Bonisoli, Macurdy, Kelley, Green, Malis, Harper, Pederson*, Anderson Klobočar/Hebert/Klein/Munn

Friday, September 27, 8:00

Lear Reimann

Saturday, September 28, 8:00

Adriana Lecouvreur Cilea

Sunday, September 29, 2:00

Turandot Puccini

Wednesday, October 2, 8:00

Turandot Puccini

Thursday, October 3, 8:00

Orlando Handel

Friday, October 4, 8:00

Werther Massenet

Scotto, Parrish/Kraus, Dickson, Capecchi, Petersen, Patterson, Maxham* Plasson*/Uzan*/Rubin/Munn, Arhelger

Saturday, October 5, 8:00

Turandot Puccini

Sunday, October 6, 2:00

Orlando Handel

Wednesday, October 9, 7:30

Turandot Puccini

Thursday, October 10, 8:00

Werther Massenet

Saturday, October 12, 8:00

Turandot Puccini

Sunday, October 13, 2:00

Werther Massenet

Tuesday, October 15, 8:00

Turandot Puccini

Wednesday, October 16, 7:30

Werther Massenet

Friday, October 18, 8:00

Turandot Puccini

Saturday, October 19, 8:00

Werther Massenet

Sunday, October 20, 2:00

New Production

Falstaff Verdi

Produced in cooperation with the opera companies of Chicago and Houston. This production is based upon that originally mounted at the Glyndebourne Festival in 1976, sponsored by the Fred Kobler Trust and the Corbett Foundation of Cincinnati, Ohio.

The San Francisco presentation of this production is made possible through a generous grant from the L.J. Skaggs and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation.

Lorengar, Horne, Quittmeyer, Swenson/Wixell, Titus, MacNeil, Frank, Corazza, Langan Arena/Ponnelle/Ponnelle/Munn

Tuesday, October 22, 8:00

Werther Massenet

Wednesday, October 23, 8:00

Falstaff Verdi

Friday, October 25, 8:00

Werther Massenet

Saturday, October 26, 8:00

Tosca Puccini

This production was originally made possible through a grant from the Charles E. Merrill Trust.

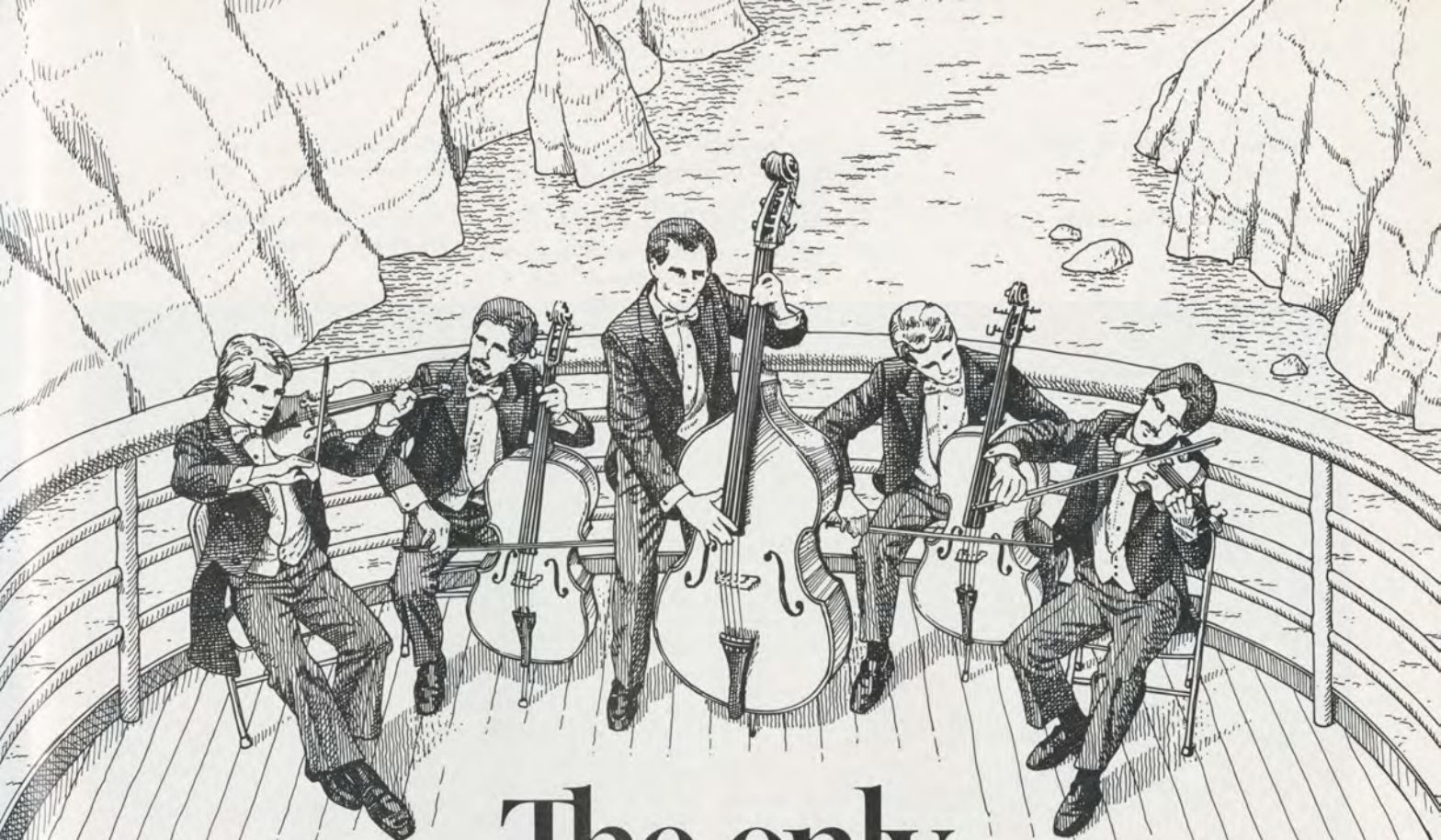
Slatinaru/Giacomini, Morris, Capecchi, Wexler, Kelley, Pendergraph*, Pederson Cillario/Ponnelle/Farruggio/Ponnelle/Arhelger

Sunday, October 27, 2:00

Falstaff Verdi

Tuesday, October 29, 8:00

Tosca Puccini



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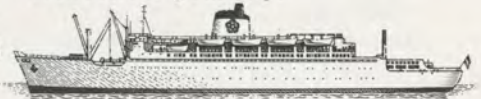
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Wednesday, October 30, 7:30
Falstaff Verdi

Saturday, November 2, 8:00
Falstaff Verdi

Sunday, November 3, 2:00
Tosca Puccini

Tuesday, November 5, 8:00
Falstaff Verdi

Wednesday, November 6, 7:30
Tosca Puccini

Thursday, November 7, 8:00
Un Ballo in Maschera Verdi
This production was originally made possible through a gift from a friend of the San Francisco Opera. The revival of this production is made possible through the generosity of Bernard and Barbro Osher.

M. Price, Cossotto, Mills/Domingo (November 7, 10, 13, 17, 20, 23), Aragall (December 1,6), Carroli, Langan, Patterson, Malis, Petersen, Anderson Pritchard/Frisell/Conklin/Carvajal/Munn

Friday, November 8, 8:00
Falstaff Verdi

Saturday, November 9, 8:00
Tosca Puccini

Sunday, November 10, 2:00
Un Ballo in Maschera Verdi

Tuesday, November 12, 8:00
Tosca Puccini

Wednesday, November 13, 7:30
Un Ballo in Maschera Verdi

Thursday, November 14, 8:00
Billy Budd Britten
Costumes from the Royal Opera, Covent Garden
Duesing, King, Morris, Glossop, Busterud, Garrett*, Wexler, Schwisow*, Gudas, Kelley, Harper, Parce*, Pederson, MacAllister, Pendergraph
Leppard/Coleman/Munn, Piper/Munn

Friday, November 15, 8:00
Tosca Puccini

Sunday, November 17, 2:00
Un Ballo in Maschera Verdi

Tuesday, November 19, 8:00
Billy Budd Britten

Wednesday, November 20, 8:00
Un Ballo in Maschera Verdi

Thursday, November 21, 8:00
Production new to San Francisco

Der Rosenkavalier Strauss
Sets from the Lyric Opera of Chicago. Costumes from The Royal Theatre, Copenhagen.
Te Kanawa, Fassbaender, Parrish, Cook, Hartliep, Kilduff*, Chen, Cowdrick/Moll, Di Paolo, Capecchi, Andreolli*, Harper, Petersen, Gudas, Garrett, Patterson Pritchard/Neugebauer/Schneider-Siemssen/Schröck*/Arhelger

Friday, November 22, 8:00
Billy Budd Britten

Saturday, November 23, 8:00
Un Ballo in Maschera Verdi

Sunday, November 24, 2:00
Der Rosenkavalier Strauss

Monday, November 25, 8:00
Family Performance
Falstaff Verdi
Hartliep, Zajic, Cowdrick, Chen/Pendergraph, Malis, Schwisow, Peterson, Harper, Pederson
Bradshaw/Ponnelle/Thompson/Ponnelle/Munn

Tuesday, November 26, 8:00
Der Rosenkavalier Strauss

Wednesday, November 27, 7:30
Billy Budd Britten

Friday, November 29, 8:00
Der Rosenkavalier Strauss

Saturday, November 30, 1:00
Family Matinee
Falstaff Verdi

Saturday, November 30, 8:00
Billy Budd Britten

Sunday, December 1, 2:00
Un Ballo in Maschera Verdi

Monday, December 2, 8:00
Der Rosenkavalier Strauss

Tuesday, December 3, 8:00
Billy Budd Britten

Wednesday, December 4, 7:30
Der Rosenkavalier Strauss

Friday, December 6, 8:00
Un Ballo in Maschera Verdi

Saturday, December 7, 8:00
Der Rosenkavalier Strauss

Sunday, December 8, 2:00
Billy Budd Britten

**American opera debut
*San Francisco Opera debut

All performances with Supertitles except *Lear*, *Billy Budd* and the international cast *Falstaff*. Supertitles are provided by the generous support of American Express.

Repertoire, casts and dates subject to change.

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San Francisco Opera Guild Presents
Opera for Young Audiences
FALSTAFF
Verdi/in Italian with English Supertitles

Wednesday, October 23, 1:00
Tuesday, October 29, 1:00
Friday, November 22, 1:00

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

These matinees will be performed with Supertitles by Paul Moor.

Kirsten Flagstad Exhibition

The Archives for the Performing Arts invites you to view its exhibition of opera photographs documenting the career of Wagnerian soprano Kirsten Flagstad, currently on display in the War Memorial Opera House Museum. Flagstad, who would have been 90 this year, performed frequently in the Bay Area, making her local debut in San Francisco Opera's first complete *Ring* cycle in 1935. The Opera House Museum is located on the south mezzanine (box) level, adjacent to the Opera Boutique. Materials for the exhibition are from the Archives' Kirsten Flagstad Collection — the largest Flagstad archives outside of Norway.

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1985 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 may be purchased at the door for \$5. For further information, please call (415) 565-6432. Programs are subject to rehearsal changes.

Sir Charles Mackerras	9/16
Alfredo Kraus	10/7
Renata Scotto	10/14
Ingvar Wixell	10/21

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 p.m. Series registration is \$20 for 6 previews (\$15 for students and seniors). Single tickets are \$4 (\$3 for students and seniors). For further information, please call (415) 388-6789 or (415) 388-6982.

<i>Adriana Lecouvreur</i>	
Arthur Kaplan	9/5
<i>Orlando</i>	
Robert Jacobson	9/12
<i>Turandot</i>	
William Huck	9/19
<i>Falstaff</i>	
James Keolker	10/17
<i>Billy Budd</i>	
Michael Mitchell	11/7
<i>Der Rosenkavalier</i>	
Speight Jenkins	11/14

NORTH PENINSULA

Previews held at the Kohl Mansion, 2750 Adeline Dr., Burlingame, at 7:30 p.m. Series registration is \$20; single tickets

are \$6. For further information, please call (408) 735-3757 or (415) 342-9123.

<i>Turandot</i>	
Eugene Marker	9/19
<i>Werther</i>	
James Keolker	10/3
<i>Falstaff</i>	
James Keolker	10/16
<i>Der Rosenkavalier</i>	
Speight Jenkins	11/13

SOUTH PENINSULA

Previews held at the Palo Alto Senior Center, 450 Bryant Street, at 8 p.m. Series registration is \$18 (students \$9); single tickets are \$4 (students \$3). For further information, please call (415) 941-3890.

<i>Orlando</i>	
Robert Jacobson	9/10
<i>Turandot</i>	
Arthur Kaplan	9/17
<i>Falstaff</i>	
James Keolker	10/15
<i>Billy Budd</i>	
Michael Mitchell	11/12
<i>Der Rosenkavalier</i>	
Speight Jenkins	11/19

SAN JOSE OPERA GUILD

Previews will be held at the Villa Montalvo Center for the Arts, 15400 Montalvo Rd., in Saratoga. Series is open to the public at a cost of \$4 per lecture; \$3 for students and senior citizens (free of charge to San Jose Opera Guild members and members of Montalvo). For further information, please call (408) 741-1331.

<i>Adriana Lecouvreur</i>	
Arthur Kaplan	9/6
<i>Orlando</i>	
Robert Jacobson	9/13
<i>Werther</i>	
James Keolker	10/4

<i>Falstaff</i>	
James Keolker	10/11
<i>Billy Budd</i>	
Michael Mitchell	11/12
<i>Der Rosenkavalier</i>	
Speight Jenkins	11/15

SONOMA COUNTY CHAPTER

Previews held at various times and locations (see below). Series registration is \$15 for 4 previews. Single tickets are \$5 (students \$3). For further information, reservations and the cost for receptions and luncheons, please call (707) 539-7157.

<i>Orlando</i>	9/11, 6 p.m. reception;
Robert Jacobson	7 p.m. preview 1000 Buckeye Rd., Kenwood
<i>Werther</i>	10/1, 11 a.m. preview;
James Keolker	12:30 p.m. luncheon El Dorado Hotel 405 - 1st St. West, Sonoma
<i>Billy Budd</i>	11/7, 11 a.m. preview;
Michael Mitchell	12:30 p.m. luncheon 3735 Alta Vista, Santa Rosa
<i>Der Rosenkavalier</i>	11/12, 6 p.m. reception;
Speight Jenkins	7 p.m. preview Wild Oak Saddle Club 6600 Toney Dr., Santa Rosa

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 (415) 347-6920 or (415) 342-2463.

<i>Adriana Lecouvreur</i>	
Arthur Kaplan	9/3
<i>Orlando</i>	
Robert Jacobson	9/10
<i>Werther</i>	
Edmund Manwell	10/3

continued on p.62

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Not an opera tour although there will be a performance or two at the Verona Festival. Three nights French Chateaux Country, Maasticht, 4 day all inclusive first class Rhine Cruise, Berne, Stresa, Verona, Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Gravenbruch. All inclusive costs: \$3,650.00, single supplement \$325.00.

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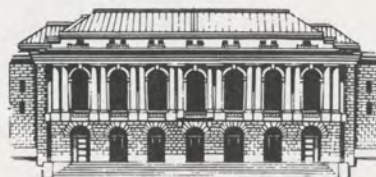
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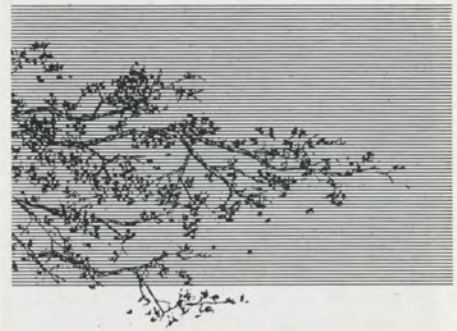
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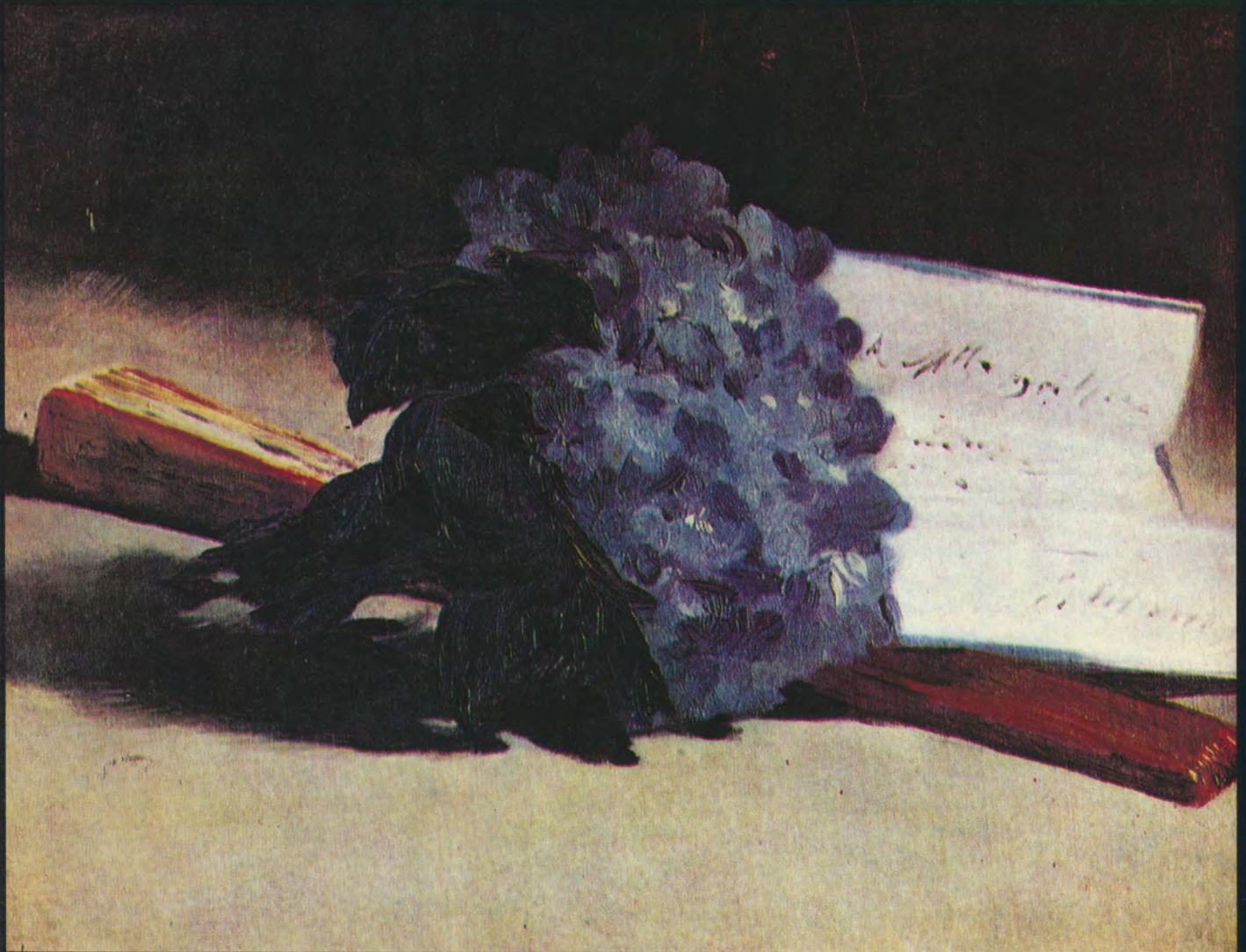
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*Adrienne and
Adriana Lecouvreur*



By JULIAN BUDDEN

There can be no more effective vehicle for a great actress than a play about a great actress, for it gives the first the opportunity to operate on two levels: as her predecessor performing the classics and as herself performing her predecessor. This was clearly in Eugène Scribe's mind when together with Ernest Legouvé he was required to write a play that would exploit to the full the talents of Elizabeth Félix, the Swiss-Jewish actress who toured with her own company under the name of Rachel. The result was *Adrienne Lecouvreur*, first performed at the Théâtre du Gymnase, Paris, in 1849; so well did they succeed that the play remained for years in the French repertoire, to be taken up by Sarah Bernhardt long after Scribe and all his works had fallen out of fashion.

The historical Adrienne Lecouvreur was born in 1692, the daughter of a milliner, who rose to become the leading actress of the Comédie Française. Sainte-Beuve wrote of her that "She was mistress of the silent scene, of the art of listening, of acting with her whole being . . . while others were speaking." The fortune that she amassed she chose to squander on her lover, the soldier of fortune, Moritz of Saxony. Her death at the age of 38 was due to some intestinal infection. But of course that would not do for Scribe. Just as he had foisted a gratuitous love-intrigue on Gustavus III of Sweden to account for his death at a masked ball, so he made his Adrienne die poisoned by a jealous rival.

His plot is a clockwork mechanism of quite extraordinary complexity. All his characters emerge as fairly horrible from the expository first act (omitted in the opera). Here we learn that the Prince of Bouillon, unworthy descendant of the crusader Godfrey, affects an interest in

(Left) Edouard Manet (1832-1883), *The Bunch of Violets*, 1872. Oil on canvas, 8¾ x 10¾ in. Private collection, Paris.

chemistry and womanizing merely because he wishes to ape the Regent of France in everything. His current mistress is Adrienne Lecouvreur's rival, the actress Mme Duclos — one of those pivotal characters whom we are never allowed to meet. His wife, the Princess, knows all about the intrigue and uses it as a means of blackmailing him into giving her rich presents ("he was so miserly before"). The Abbé de Chazeuil has wormed his way into the confidence of both husband and wife in the hope of enjoying the latter's favors, but she already has a lover in Maurice de Saxe, a dashing young general in the service of the King of France, from whom he hopes to receive the Duchy of Courland. Illegitimate by birth, continually in debt, his exploits are legendary. We hear that at 13 he fought with Prince Eugène at the Battle of Malplaquet and a year later under Peter the Great at Stralsund. He himself recounts an almost unbelievable escape from the army of a Russian prince by blowing up the fortifications of the castle in which he was being besieged. Superman, indeed — and also superstud. At the age of 12, during the siege of Lille, he made off with a woman ("he began as he meant to go on," murmurs the Abbé). The Princess is only too ready to use her influence to raise the money that will enable him to equip two regiments and so take over his Duchy. Then she suddenly notices a nosegay that he is wearing — "given me by a flower girl outside the theater," he tells her before handing it to her. "But flower girls do not tie their posies with threads of golden silk," she reflects after he has left. She summons the Abbé and asks him to find out, with her husband's help, who is the woman with whom Maurice is clearly having an affair; and she promises him he will not go unrewarded. All this explains the presence (in Act II) of both the Abbé and Prince backstage at the Comédie Française, where gossip is rife and infor-

mation can be bought. What neither of them knows is that the Princess regularly uses her husband's mistress as a go-between for her own assignations with Maurice; hence the confusion of what follows.

Marginally more sympathetic is Michonnet, the stage director — if only he were not faintly ridiculous as well. His silent devotion to Adrienne is matched by a sense of grievance at not having been elected a member of the Comédie Française, a subject which he brings up at every opportunity. Nor is Adrienne herself beyond reproach. When the Princess contrives Maurice's arrest and imprisonment for debt, her rival does not hesitate to make use of Michonnet's inheritance to procure his release. For all that, the role is a rewarding one for a virtuoso actress, with its neatly placed excerpts from Corneille and Racine and the many occasions it provides for registering emotion.

Scribe himself would have been very surprised to see his play transformed into an opera. A past master of every dramatic genre, from grand opera to vaudeville, he knew to a hair's breadth what was effective in each; he would never have loaded a libretto with such a wealth of detailed action as occurs here. Yet, strangely enough, Cilea's was not the first operatic *Adrienne Lecouvreur*. In 1856 the composer Edoardo Vera produced an *Adriana Lecouvreur* which was sufficiently successful to be printed in vocal score. The reason for its attraction may be found in the Prince's description (in Act I of the play) of a certain powder that a Minister of State has required him to analyze: "A little amount placed in a pair of gloves or in a flower will be sufficient to produce first a sense of giddiness, then an exaltation of the brain and finally a severe delirium that

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Adrienne Lecouvreur in an engraving, made after a painting by Charles Coytel (1694-1752).

leads to death." In the 1850s, mental derangement was still a favorite recipe for coloratura singing. However, the Romantic high noon was over, and unhappy love was no longer enough to produce madness by itself; a little medical aid was thought necessary (see Petrella's *Jone and Celinda*).

Nearly half a century passed before another attempt was made on the same subject. "The variety of action which offered me new and original situations, the fusion of comic and dramatic elements all set within the splendid framework of the eighteenth century — a period well-known to me —, the overwhelming love of the protagonist and the moving final act combined to touch my heart and my sensibilities." Thus Cilea, recalling the genesis of his most famous opera. Born in Palmi, Reggio Calabria, in 1866, he was the youngest but one of that generation of composers called to the banner of the publisher Edoardo Sonzogno in the 1890s in the cause of "verismo". Not, however, one of the most successful. His *Tilda* (1892) was thought no more than promising; and of his subsequent stage works, only two have shown any signs of permanence: *L'Arlesiana* (1897), based on the play by Alphonse Daudet, subsequently revised more than once, contains his most famous single aria, "E la solita storia del pastore," a movingly elegiac piece, bearing witness to the composer's lifelong admiration for the Bellini of *Norma*. *Adriana Lecouvreur* was written with far less effort during Cilea's time as professor of theory and counterpoint at the Reale Istituto

Musicale in Florence. It was first performed at Sonzogno's own Teatro Lirico, Milan (once the Teatro della Cannobiana) on November 6, 1902, with a cast that included Angelica Pandolfini, Enrico Caruso and Giuseppe De Luca. At least one foreigner was impressed. "Last Wednesday I was at the Lirico, where I much admired your *Adriana*," Massenet wrote; "I love your music; your scoring is so clean, so expressive, so beautifully colored; and what a feeling for the pictorial alongside the dramatic expression! Your *Adriana* is a most touching and seductive score" — all in Massenet's most sugary vein, but there is no reason to doubt his sincerity. Cilea always avoided the brutal excesses of "verismo". Unlike Mascagni or Leoncavallo — even Puccini — he was essentially an "all-around" composer as well as a considerable pianist (note the essentially pianistic figuration of the opening action scene). His invention may not be strikingly original — indeed he sometimes descends to the level of a Victorian ballad — but it is always fluent and well mannered. *Adriana Lecouvreur* is the work of a sensitive musician.

The score bears the unusual description: "Drama in 4 acts by Eugène Scribe and Ernest Legouvé reduced for the lyric

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Sarah Bernhardt's 1880 American tour included performances of 8 plays, including *Adrienne Lecouvreur*. This engraving graced the pages of the Boston program booklet, labeled "a compendium of valuable information," and printed to accompany the performances at the Globe Theatre.

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Maurice de Saxe as seen in an engraving, made after a painting by Hyacinthe Rigaud (1649-1743).

stage by Arturo Colautti and set to music by Francesco Cilea"—a measure of the librettist's modesty as well as his fidelity to the original play, as far as the conventions of opera allow. Inevitably, there is much compression and suppression. Scribe, the clever dramatist that he was, plants the two instruments of destruction—the nosegay and the powder—firmly in the first of his five acts; Colautti delays the introduction of the powder until the third of his four. Prince and the Abbé appear to have no aim in their visit backstage except to indulge in prolonged and fatuous gallantry. The Abbé's designs on the Princess are barely hinted at in Act III—indeed, the character is nowadays often played as a stagestruck fop. Maurice's account of his escape from the attacks of the Russian Prince Mentzikov and his Cossacks is confusingly placed after his liberation from prison, made possible by Adriana's pawning of her jewelry. But in the opera, she does not use Michonnet's legacy for the purpose; it is the humble stage director who uses it to redeem them, unknown to Adriana—a deft touch which ennobles both characters. Adriana's four colleagues, Dangeville, Jouvenot, Quinault and Poisson, are built up for the sake of contrast. All are strictly comic; the first two are allowed the beginning of a quarrel which Michonnet has to pacify; Quinault and Poisson "bitch" at one another on being presented to the Prince. But in the last act, all rally round the stricken Adriana, persuading her that "the show must go on."

Despite moments of vagueness, Colautti's libretto is neatly constructed, with much graceful versification. All the more pity, therefore, that some of Cilea's best ideas clearly came to him independently of the text, so that some of the poetry is roughly handled. This is especially the case with the opera's chief gem, Adriana's "Poveri fiori," whose verbal scansion leaves much to be desired (evidently it had been conceived as an oboe tune). In the main, Cilea's melodic style follows the path of Mascagni and Puccini, inclining toward the slow, passionate swirl (see the Adriana/Maurizio duet in Act III, "Ah che giova"). Both at the start of Act II and during the final duet between the lovers ("No, la mia fronte che pensier non muta"), he employs that Puccinian procedure (itself derived from Massenet) in which the top and bottom lines are doubled and the harmonies sandwiched in between. Other influences are present as well. The opening of Act I with its vigorous *tutti* beginning off the beat suggests an acquaintance with Verdi's *Falstaff*; while the prelude to Act IV with its alternating minor key common chords brings to mind Wagner's "Im Treibhaus" and the start of *Tristan und Isolde*, Act III. An unusual feature for 1902 is the ballet in the third act; for Cilea's generation normally scorned the central ballet as old-fashioned and smacking too much of grand opera in the manner of *Aida* and *La Gioconda*. But it provided an opportunity for some elegant eighteenth-century pastiche, most welcome to one who had grown up with an enthusiasm for Paisiello



Francesco Cilea in 1892.

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and Cimarosa. It was a clever thought, too, to have the Prince's account of the deadly poison that he is required to analyze accompanied by a dainty little gavotte—a fine example, this, of musical irony. Especially effective is the third act curtain, recitation over an orchestral melody taking the place of what would once have been a grand ensemble or "pezzo concertato." The device of having that same melody thundered out by full orchestra as a postlude is a common one of the period (see Puccini *passim*). Throughout the score, Cilea makes skillful use of thematic recall (leitmotiv is too strong a word) as a means of binding together music and drama. Adriana herself has only one such theme: the melody of her opening solo ("Io son l'umile ancella del genio creator"), standing for her dedication as an actress. So does Michonnet—a rising orchestral motif with rather sentimental chromatic inflections denoting his tender, more than paternal devotion to the actress. Abbé and the Prince, when working as a pair, are stamped with a couple of elegant themes, the first tripping, with widely spaced intervals, the second more smooth and flowing. Maurizio has no motif of his own, but the opening phrase of his first love duet with Adriana ("La dolcissima effigie sorridente") returns at apposite moments. By contrast, the Princess has no less than three "visiting cards." Her operatic model would appear to be Verdi's Amneris—be it noted that she divines Adriana's secret by using exactly the same means whereby Amneris discovered Aida's. So the Princess, too, has her "jealousy" motif, a fidgety orchestral figure that we hear in Act I before we actually meet her, at the point where Maurizio realizes that for political reasons he must keep his assignation with the Princess and break his word to Adriana ("Oh cruel Courland," he sighs, "how much you cost me!"—Aida again!). The same musical idea bursts out in full force during the almost Wagnerian prelude to Act II. The arpeggio-based "O vagabonda stella" depicts the Princess in all her false graciousness. Finally a sinuous theme in 6/8 time shows her attempting to wheedle Maurizio into resuming their affair by reminding him of their "burning kisses" (rather oddly, this is the theme with which Cilea chooses to ring down the curtain on Act II). In Act III, when the Princess is trying to guess her rival's identity, both "jealousy" and "wheedling"



Francesco Cilea is flanked by Mafalda Favero (left) and Giulietta Simionato (right) after a performance of *Adriana Lecouvreur* at Milan's *La Scala* in 1948.

motifs are combined vertically to happy effect.

Cilea uses a similar technique to prepare for the famous "Poveri fiori." When, just before going onstage, Adriana hands Maurizio the nosegay of violets, the orchestra gives out an anticipation of the aria's opening phrase but with altered harmonies. This ploy is repeated when in the following act the Princess notices this same nosegay in Maurizio's buttonhole and becomes immediately suspicious. The melody in its proper form dominates the prelude to Act IV; finally, we hear it sung in full by Adriana, who thinks that the flowers have been returned to her by Maurizio by way of insult. The audience, primed by the "jealousy" motif, can have no doubt as to who the sender is, whether or not they know their Scribe.

The final scene of delirium is, as one might expect, a tissue of reminiscences, crowned, however, by an entirely new melody ("Ecco la luce che mi seduce") as

Adriana, believing herself the tragic muse, Melpomene, is transfigured at the moment of her death. One can only regret that Cilea did not ask for a new text here, which would match the singer's line less awkwardly.

Although Adriana is still in her thirties at the time of her death, the part has always been a favorite with the mature prima donna. Technically, it is not very demanding; it is full of luscious tunes; and it requires the kind of personality and presence that come with experience. Maria Caniglia, Magda Olivero and Renata Tebaldi all performed it towards the end of their careers. Nor was it the last operatic setting of Scribe's play. In 1904, one Girolamo wrote an *Adriana Lecouvreur* which never got as far as the stage; another version by the Russian Aleksandrov was performed in 1920. But of all four operas (including Vera's of 1856), that of Cilea is the only one that has stayed the course. And deservedly so. ■

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Mirella Freni meets Adriana Lecouvreur

By ARTHUR KAPLAN

"I was ten when I saw my first opera," recalls Italian soprano Mirella Freni. "It was *Tosca* and I loved it. When I got home, I wanted to sing it. I made my little brother, who was only four, play Scarpia. When I tried to stab him, he'd move away

Arthur Kaplan is a free-lance writer, critic, lecturer and tour director in the field of opera.

and I'd tell him, 'No, you have to stay there because I have to kill you.'

"All little girls dream of becoming actresses," she continues, "but since I loved music and opera as a child, I actually wanted to become a singer. When I was five, I used to go around saying, 'I'm going to be an opera singer!' My parents would tell me that I was crazy."

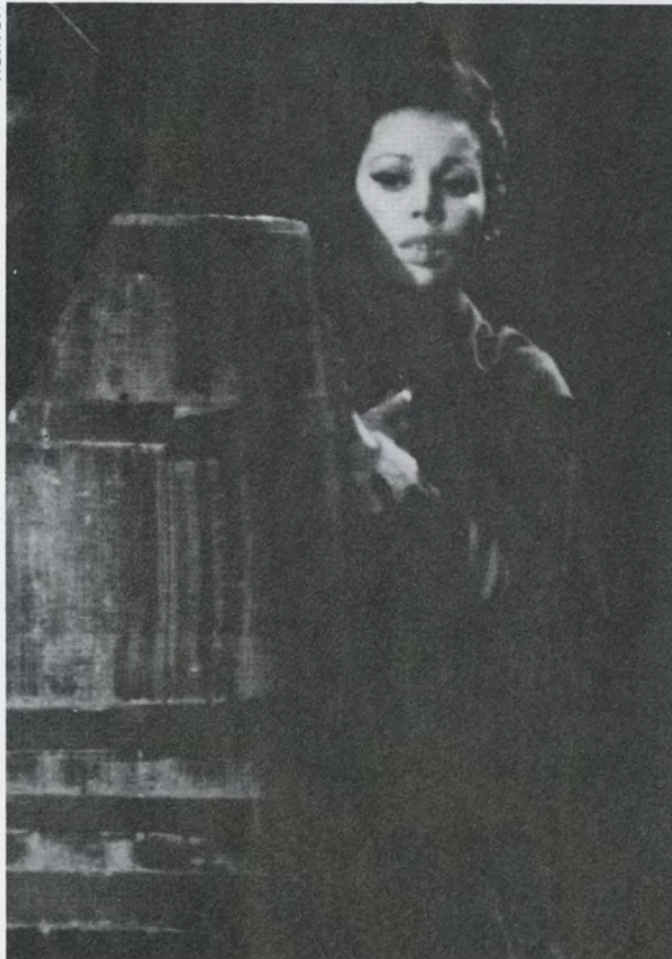
But Miss Freni, who must have been

both a very clairvoyant and determined little girl, proved she was not at all crazy by fulfilling her childhood dream. Now, for the first time in her career, she is actually portraying a legendary actress as she assumes the title role in Francesco Cilea's *Adriana Lecouvreur*.

It is perhaps fitting that she should play the celebrated 18th century tragé-

continued on p.48

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Two views of Mirella Freni on the San Francisco Opera stage: (left) as Mimì in Act 3 of *La Bohème* in 1967, and in the title role of her first ever *Manon Lescaut* in 1983 (right).

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Mirella Freni, one of the world's most beloved sopranos, undertakes the title role of *Adriana Lecouvreur* for the first time in her illustrious career. Her last appearance with San Francisco Opera, in the title role of the 1983 Fall Season production of *Manon Lescaut*, was another career first. She made her operatic debut at the age of 19 in her native Modena as Micaëla in *Carmen*. Subsequent engagements included her 1960 Glyndebourne debut as Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* and her 1961 Covent Garden debut as Nannetta in *Falstaff*, the vehicle of her debut at La Scala the following year. In 1963, Herbert von Karajan engaged her for the role of Mimi in a Zeffirelli production of *La Bohème* that brought her to international attention the following year. The production was made into a popular film, and soon Miss Freni appeared as Mimi in her spectacular debuts at the Metropolitan Opera (1965), Lyric Opera of Chicago (1965) and San Francisco (1967). She has since become one of the world's most sought-after singers, appearing regularly with such companies as the Paris Opera, Vienna Staatsoper, La Scala and Covent Garden, as well as in Hamburg and at the Salzburg Festival. Her artistry embraces both the Italian repertoire — Violetta in *La Traviata*, Elisabetta in *Don Carlo*, Desdemona in *Otello*, the title role of *Aida* — and the French, including the title roles of Massenet's *Manon* and Donizetti's *La Fille du Régiment*, Juliette in Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette*, and Marguerite in *Faust*. She has appeared on telecasts of *Faust* from the Lyric Opera of Chicago and *Don Carlo* from the Met, and starred opposite Plácido Domingo in a Jean-Pierre Ponnelle film of *Madama Butterfly*. Her discography numbers over 20 complete opera recordings. Recent engagements include *La Bohème* at the Met as well as in Hannover and Hamburg; *Simon Boccanegra* in Houston and Vienna; *Faust* in Bonn and Barcel-

ona; and *Eugene Onegin* in Chicago, Houston and Bordeaux. Later this year she will appear as Mimi in Houston.

Mezzo-soprano **Cleopatra Ciurca** makes her San Francisco Opera debut as the Princess of Bouillon in *Adriana Lecouvreur*. Born in Romania and trained at the Conservatory of Music in Bucharest, Miss Ciurca won numerous prestigious international vocal competitions and appeared in opera and concert performances in numerous Romanian theaters. She made her French debut in 1982 in *Il Trovatore*, the vehicle of her debut in Frankfurt. For the Orange Festival in France she sang the role of Laura in *La Gioconda*, while Strasbourg heard her as Amneris in *Aida*. In 1983 she appeared with the Opera Company of Philadelphia as Paulina in *The Queen of Spades*, a performance that was later televised nationwide on public television, and sang Eboli in a Brussels production of *Don Carlo*, a role she repeated the following year at Naples. In 1984, she also appeared as Adalgisa in *Norma* at the Paris Opera and as Marina in *Boris Godunov* in Zurich. Later that year, she returned to the United States to appear in *Eugene Onegin* and *Rigoletto* at the Metropolitan Opera. Last April, she performed with the Opera Orchestra of New York in a concert performance of *Le Roi d'Ys* at Carnegie Hall. After her current San Francisco engagement, Miss Ciurca will travel to Tulsa to sing Amneris.

Following her highly acclaimed performances as Freia in *Das Rheingold* for San Francisco Opera's 1985 Ring Festival, soprano **Nancy Gustafson** appears as Mlle. Jouvnot in *Adriana Lecouvreur*. The Illinois native made her Company debut

during the 1983 Summer Season as Woglinde in *Das Rheingold*, appearing also as Helmwige in *Die Walküre* (a role she repeated last summer) and returning during the 1983 Fall Season as Flora in *La Traviata*. Last fall, she was seen in *Madama Butterfly*, *Elektra* and *Khovanshchina*. As a participant in the 1982 Merola Opera Program, she appeared in productions of *The Magic Flute* and *Rigoletto*, receiving the Gropper Memorial Award in the 1982 San Francisco Opera Center Auditions Grand Finals. For the Center's 1983 and '84 Showcase series she was heard as Sicle in Cavalli's *L'Ormino* and in the '84 Seasons' Preview. As a 1984 Adler Fellow, she created the role of the Mother in the world premiere of Conrad Susa's *The Love of Don Perlimplin*. Last year she made her debut with the San Francisco Symphony in performances of Mahler's Eighth Symphony, and last December made her European debut at the Théâtre Musical de Paris/Châtelet as Rosalinde in *Die Fledermaus* in a production that was also seen at the Grand Théâtre de Nancy in March of this year. In 1983, she sang her first performances of Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte* for the Carmel Bach Festival, where she also appeared as soprano soloist in Bach's *St. John Passion*, and took part in the special concert for Queen Elizabeth II during the monarch's visit to California. Miss Gustafson has appeared in numerous productions by Chicago Opera Theater, Opera Midwest and at Harvard and Northwestern Universities.

Mezzo-soprano **Kathryn Cowdrick** makes her San Francisco Opera debut as Mlle. Dangeville in *Adriana Lecouvreur*, appearing also this season as Mistress Page in the Family performances of *Falstaff* and as an Orphan in *Der Rosenkavalier*. A participant in the 1984 Merola Opera



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Program, Miss Cowdrick performed the role of Mistress Page in *Falstaff* at Stern Grove and appeared as Tisbe in *La Cenerentola* at Villa Montalvo. She returned to the Center to tour with Western Opera Theater's production of *La Cenerentola*, in which she sang both Tisbe and the title role. Miss Cowdrick currently holds an Adler Fellowship with the Center. A professional speech therapist as well as a singer, she received much of her professional opera training at Juilliard's American Opera Center. In 1983, she appeared in Barber's *Antony and Cleopatra* at Charleston's Spoleto Festival and in *Madama Butterfly* at the Spoleto Festival in both Charleston and Italy.

Ermanno Mauro returns to San Francisco Opera as Maurizio in *Adriana Lecouvreur*. A leading tenor with the Metropolitan Opera and regular performer at the Vienna Staatsoper, the Paris Opera and Covent Garden, he made his San Francisco Opera debut during the 1982 Fall Season as Pollione in Bellini's *Norma* with Joan Sutherland and Marilyn Horne, and returned the following year to garner critical acclaim in *Manon Lescaut*. Born in Trieste, he later moved to Canada and made his professional debut with the Canadian Opera Company in Toronto in *Il Trovatore*, replacing the originally scheduled tenor on short notice. He was then invited to join the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, where he remained as principal tenor through 1975. He made his German debut in 1972 as Rodolfo in *La Bohème* in Frankfurt, and made a number of important international debuts in quick succession. In 1975, he bowed at the Vienna State Opera as Manrico in *Il Trovatore*, in 1976 as Don Alvaro in *La Forza del Destino* at the Paris Opera and in 1977 made his Italian debut as Don José in *Carmen* in

Genoa. He made his American debut in 1974 as Cavaradossi in San Diego and then gave his first New York performances as Calaf in *Turandot* with the New York City Opera, where he also appeared as Rodolfo, Andrea Chénier and as Faust in Boito's *Mefistofele*. The year 1978 marked his Metropolitan Opera debut as Canio in *Pagliacci*; his Scala debut as Manrico; and his Rome Opera debut as Radames in *Aida*. In 1979, he was first heard at the Hamburg State Opera, where he appeared as Cavaradossi, as well as in Buenos Aires and Santiago. Following his San Francisco Opera debut, he bowed in Houston as Calaf and appeared opposite Montserrat Caballé in *La Forza del Destino* at the Orange Festival. Last summer, he made his Australian Opera debut as Radames. His assignments for the present season include *Manon Lescaut* in Florence with Mirella Freni; Calaf and Manrico at the Hamburg State Opera; his first stage performances of the title role of *Otello* at the Dallas Opera; another new role, that of Paolo in *Francesca da Rimini* with Renata Scotto at the Met; and his Lyric Opera of Chicago debut as Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly*. Next season will see him in a new production of *Turandot* at the Deutsche Oper Berlin; *Andrea Chénier* in Dallas; *Adriana Lecouvreur* in Barcelona; and Canio and Chénier at the Vienna Staatsoper.

Baritone **Leo Nucci** returns to San Francisco Opera as Michonnet in *Adriana Lecouvreur*. He made his acclaimed Company debut as the elder Germont in the 1983 Fall Season production of *La Traviata*. Born in Bologna, Nucci gave his first operatic performance in the title role of *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* at Spoleto in 1967 after winning the A. Belli Competition. He was soon singing in the major opera houses of

Europe. He made his Metropolitan Opera debut during the 1979-80 season in *Un Ballo in Maschera*. The following season he appeared in *Ballo* with the Paris Opera, Washington Opera, and in his Lyric Opera of Chicago debut. In 1982, he was seen in *Ballo* at the Met as well as in Naples; in *Lucia di Lammermoor* and *La Traviata* in Vienna; in *Traviata* in Geneva; and in *Falstaff* at Covent Garden. His assignments for the 1983-84 season included *La Forza del Destino* at the Met, including the national radio broadcast; *Simon Boccanegra* opposite Mirella Freni for Houston Grand Opera; opening the Naples season singing Rigoletto; and a return to La Scala for *Don Carlo* and *Luisa Miller*. That same season also saw him performing in the opera houses of Berlin, Hamburg, Bilbao, Vienna, Avignon, Bologna, Marseille and Orange. Highlights of his busy 1984-85 season included his return to the Met for *Il Barbiere* and *Eugene Onegin*, including broadcasts of both works; a return to La Scala as Rossini's Figaro; Rigoletto in Barcelona; plus numerous appearances in Vienna, Geneva, Hamburg and Berlin. His extensive discography includes complete recordings of *La Rondine*, *Andrea Chénier*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *L'Elisir d'Amore*, *Don Pasquale*, *Maria de Rudenz*, *Aida*, *Tosca* and *Falstaff*.

Tenor **Jonathan Green** appears this fall as the Abbé de Chazeuil in *Adriana Lecouvreur* and Pong in *Turandot*, a role he sang during the 1982 Summer Season. He made his highly praised local debut in the title role of Kurka's *The Good Soldier Schweik* for 1980 Spring Opera Theater and made his Company debut that same year, appearing as the First Priest in *The Magic Flute*, the Shepherd in *Tristan and Isolde* and Beppe in *Pagliacci*. Since then, his

continued on p.44



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Opera in four acts by FRANCESCO CILEA
Text by ARTURO COLAUITI

Based on the drama by EUGÈNE SCRIBE and ERNEST LEGOUVÉ

Adriana Lecouvreur

(in Italian)

Conductor

Maurizio Arena

Stage Director

Lotfi Mansouri

Designer

C.M. Cristini

After sketches by

Camillo Paravicini

Costume Designer

Ray Diffen

Lighting Designer

Thomas J. Munn

Chorus Director

Richard Bradshaw

Choreographer

Vassili Sulich

Musical Preparation

Susanna Lemberskaya

Christopher Larkin*

Svetlana Gorzhevskaya

Philip Eisenberg

Prompter

Philip Eisenberg

Assistant Stage Director

Sharon Woodriff

Stage Manager

Gretchen Mueller

Costumes executed by

Metropolitan Opera Costume Dept.

This production of *Adriana Lecouvreur*
was acquired through the courtesy
of the Metropolitan Opera Association

Act III musical sequence from original version
by arrangement with Michael Kaye

First performance:

Milan, November 6, 1902

First San Francisco Opera performance:

September 9, 1977

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 6 AT 7:30

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10 AT 8:00

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 13 AT 8:00

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 16 AT 8:00

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 22 AT 2:00

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25 AT 7:30

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28 AT 8:00

CAST

(in order of appearance)

Mlle. Jouvenot Nancy Gustafson

Michonnet Leo Nucci

Poisson Dennis Petersen*

Mlle. Dangeville Kathryn Cowdrick*

Quinault Philip Skinner*

Abbé de Chazeuil Jonathan Green

Prince de Bouillon Richard Vernon*

Adriana Lecouvreur Mirella Freni

Maurizio Ermanno Mauro

Princess de Bouillon Cleopatra Cieurca*

Major-domo Gregory de Silva

Members of the Comédie Française, servants,
guests of the Prince de Bouillon

Paris Kyle Tucker*

Mercury Robert Aames*

Corps de ballet

* San Francisco Opera debut

PLACE AND TIME: Paris in 1730

ACT I The foyer of the Comédie Française

INTERMISSION

ACT II A villa on the outskirts of Paris

INTERMISSION

ACT III Prince de Bouillon's palace

INTERMISSION

ACT IV Adriana's house

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

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

*The performance will last approximately
three and one-half hours.*

1985 Supertitles underwritten through a generous grant from
American Express via San Francisco Opera Guild.

All performances of *Adriana Lecouvreur* feature
Supertitles by Francesca Zambello, San Francisco Opera.

Opening night flowers by Ah Sam, San Mateo, courtesy of the
San Francisco Opera Guild.

Adriana Lecouvreur/Synopsis

ACT I

In the foyer of the Comédie Française, the stage manager, Michonnet—who remains at his irksome job only because of his secret love for the famous actress Adriana Lecouvreur—frantically helps members of the company dress for Racine's *Bajazet*. Excitement runs high backstage, for the bill pairs Lecouvreur and her rival Duclos. When the Prince de Bouillon, lover of Duclos, arrives with the Abbé de Chazeuil, the two men exchange banter with the vain actors. Soon Adriana appears, costumed as Roxane and rehearsing her lines. In answer to effusive compliments, she replies that she is but the handmaid of poetic genius. Alone with her, Michonnet starts to tell his true feelings, when she confesses her love for "an ensign," Maurizio. No sooner is Michonnet gone than Maurizio arrives to set a rendezvous with Adriana. She gives him a bouquet of violets before he returns to his box to watch her performance. The Prince and Abbé come back with a letter they believe Duclos has written to Maurizio asking for a meeting that night at the Prince's villa. Not realizing the note was actually written by the Prince's wife, the two men plot to trap Duclos in this infidelity, but other actresses overhear their plan. Michonnet watches Adriana from the wings, commenting rapturously on her performance. Maurizio, having meanwhile received the Princess' message, cleverly sends a note to Adriana onstage in the form of a prop letter, canceling their rendezvous. Crestfallen, Adriana returns, surrounded by admirers, and accepts the Prince's invitation to supper in order to plead Maurizio's cause with the influential Count of Saxony, who she does not know is Maurizio himself.

ACT II

At the Duclos villa, the Princess nervously awaits Maurizio. On his arrival she questions him about the bouquet of violets, which he gives her to allay her suspicions. When she warns him of possible political arrest, he resolves to leave Paris. Stung by his decision, she suspects a rival, whereupon Maurizio begs her to stop reproving him. At the sound of approaching footsteps, she panics and hides in an adjoining chamber. The Prince and Abbé enter, expecting to confront Duclos with her lover. Maurizio halts them with a challenge to a duel. Adriana interrupts, joyfully discovering the true identity of Maurizio, with whom she reaffirms her love. Michonnet comes in search of Duclos and confirms Maurizio's claim that it is not the actress whom he hides. Reassured by Maurizio that he loves only her, Adriana promises to assist the mysterious person to escape unknown. Alone in the darkened room, she

anonymously offers the Princess her help, but suspicion and jealousy flare up between the two rivals. No sooner has the Princess slipped through a secret doorway than Michonnet finds a bracelet she dropped in flight.

ACT III

To avenge herself, the Princess has had Maurizio imprisoned, but Adriana has secured his release by selling her diamonds. The curtain opens on an elegant pavilion. With the Abbé fawning over her, the Princess muses on her rival's identity. The Prince, an amateur chemist, has discovered a poisonous powder which is fatal with even the slightest inhalation. He shows the powder to his wife, who is more concerned with her rival, Adriana, and suggests that the Prince show the substance to the Abbé. When other guests arrive, Adriana among them, the Princess recognizes her voice. To confirm her own suspicions, she tells her Maurizio has been wounded, at which Adriana faints. Wrongly believing the Princess has secured his release from prison, Maurizio enters and greets her warmly. He tells of his latest military exploits. After an elaborate ballet depicting the Judgement of Paris in which the solo dancer presents the prize golden apple for beauty, not to Venus, Juno, or Minerva, but to the Princess of Bouillon, the Princess taunts Adriana further with the bouquet of violets. In answer, the actress holds up the lost bracelet. As the guests comment excitedly, the Princess, with forced control, asks the actress to recite *Ariadne Abandoned*. Instead, Adriana declaims Phaedra's lines, aiming "Brazen unchaste creatures" at the Princess, who vows revenge.

ACT IV

Disillusioned by Maurizio's neglect, Adriana has retired from the stage. Visiting her, Michonnet says he, too, knows unrequited love. They are joined by former colleagues, who bring the actress birthday gifts and sing a gossipy madrigal to cheer her. She is especially moved when Michonnet gives her the diamonds with which she secured Maurizio's freedom. As the others retire into another room, Adriana opens a package she thinks is from Maurizio. It contains the violets she had given him. Kissing the faded flowers, she throws them into the fire. A moment later Maurizio himself arrives and is reconciled with Adriana. As they embrace, she goes deathly pale. At his cries for help, Michonnet rushes in, but it is too late. Adriana dies, having inhaled poisonous fumes from the flowers, which were sent by the vengeful Princess.

Adriana Lecouvreur

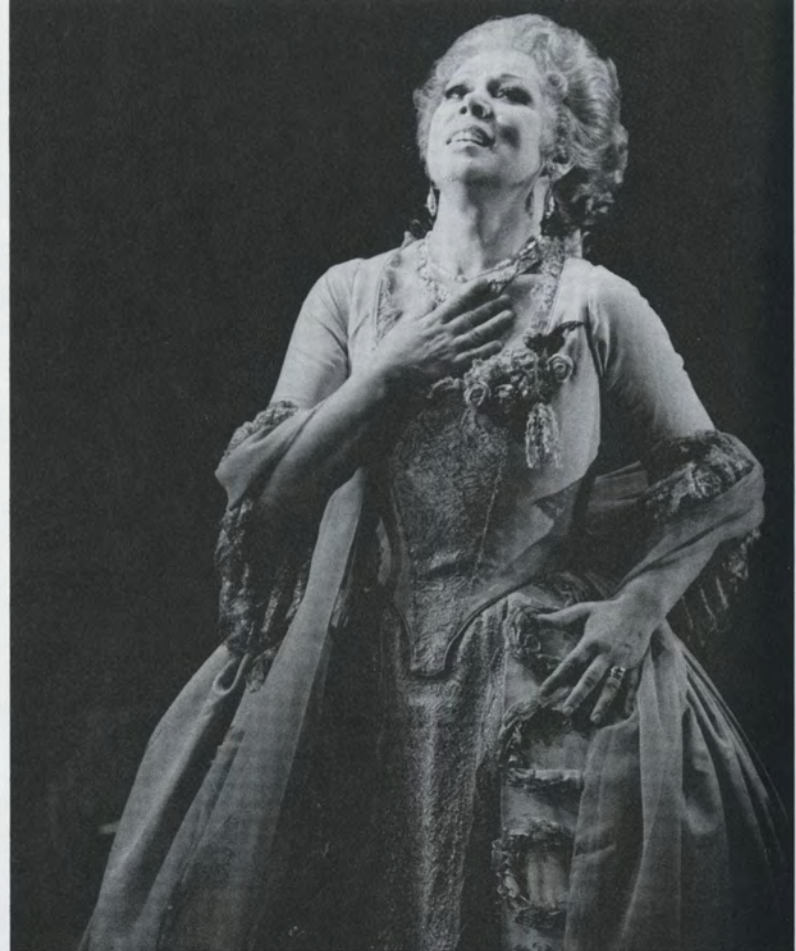
Photos taken in rehearsal by David Powers

Mirella Freni





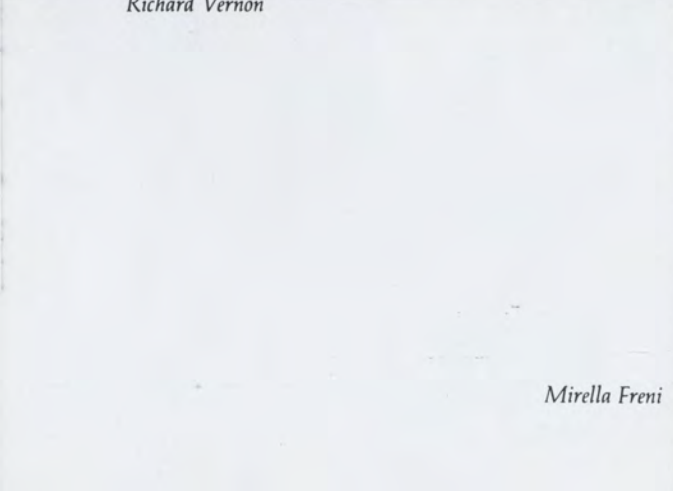
Ermanno Mauro



(above) Mirella Freni



Richard Vernon

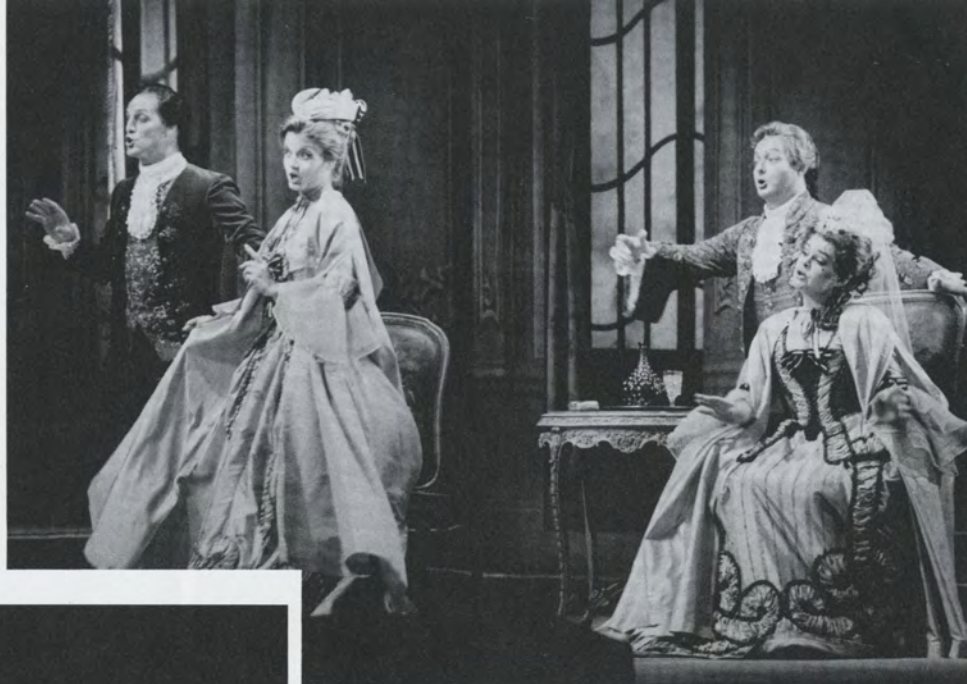


Mirella Freni





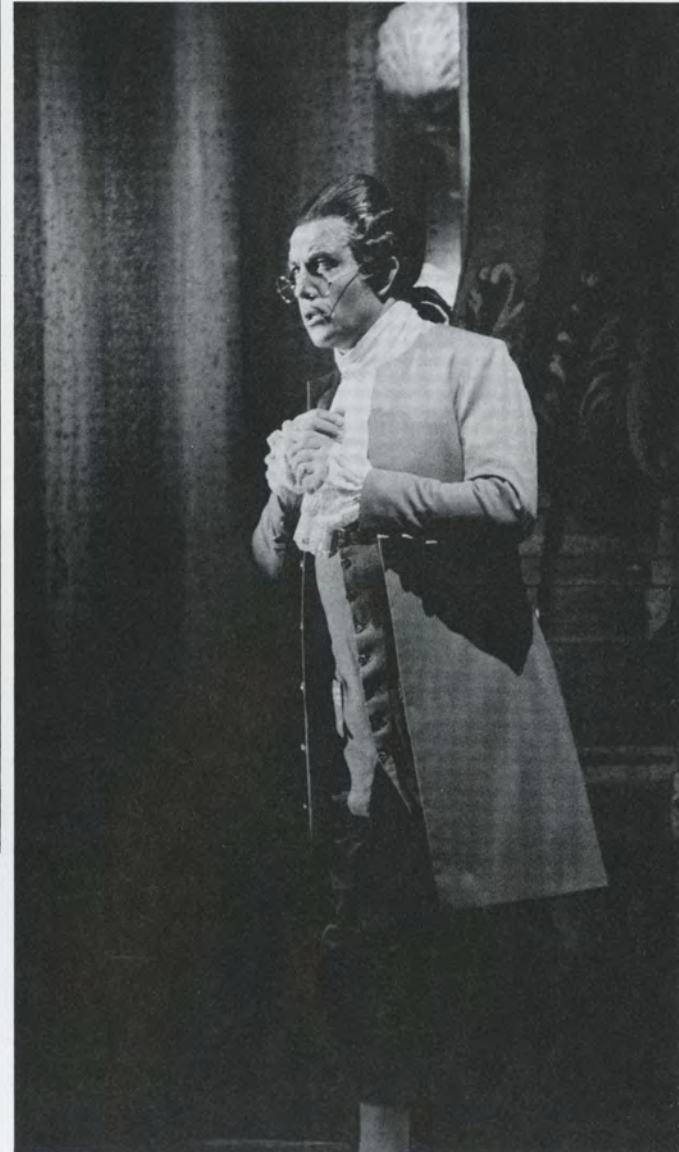
Jonathan Green



Philip Skinner, Nancy Gustafson, Dennis Petersen, Kathryn Cowdrick



(above) Cleopatra Ciurca



Leo Nucci



Mirella Freni, Ermanno Mauro



Mirella Freni



(above) Leo Nucci, Mirella Freni

(below) Mirella Freni

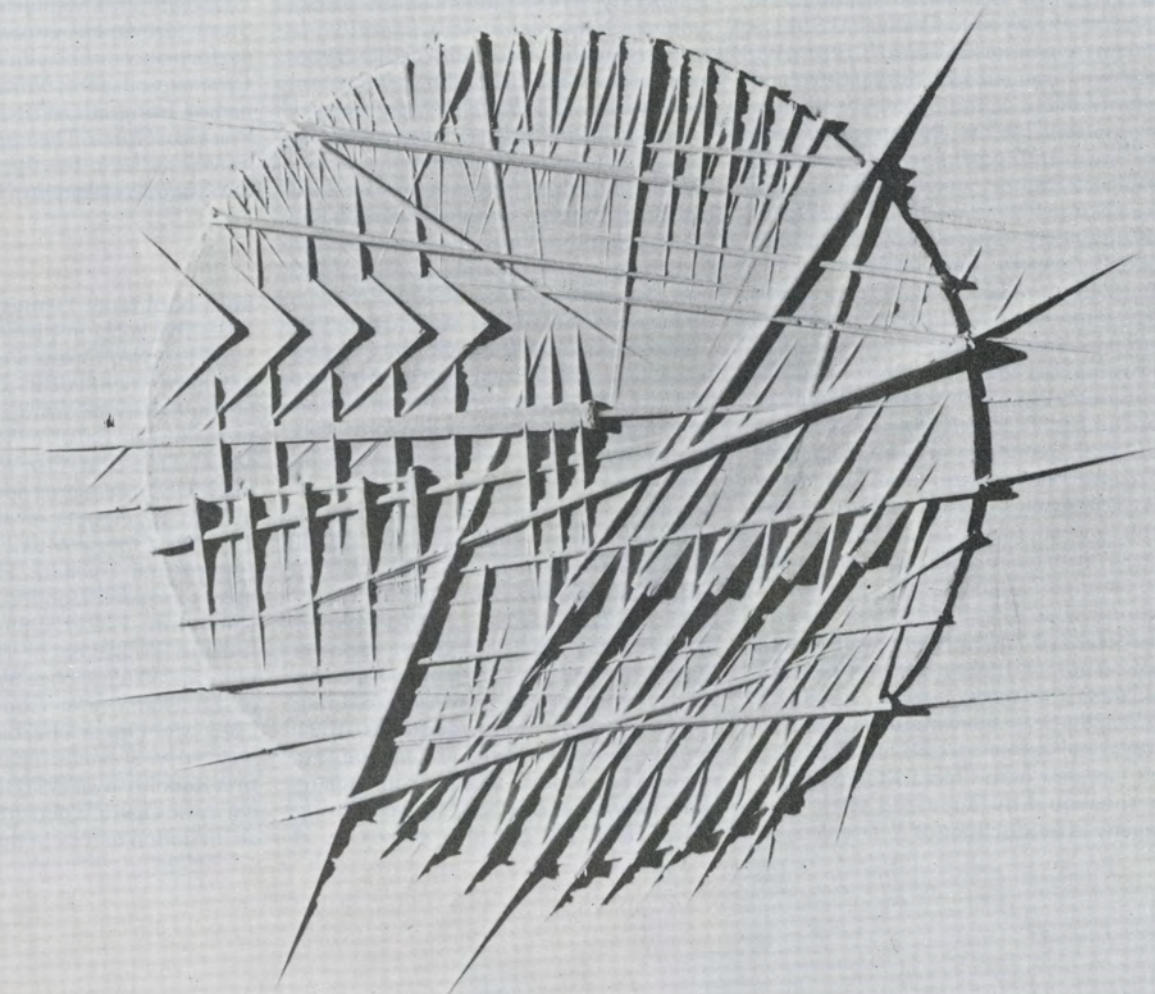


Mirella Freni, Ermanno Mauro



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RICHARD VERNON



PHILIP SKINNER



DENNIS PETERSEN



KYLE TUCKER

continued from p.35

numerous San Francisco Opera assignments have included roles in *Semiramide*, *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, *Merry Widow*, *Le Cid*, *Wozzeck*, *The Rake's Progress*, *Salome*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Dialogues of the Carmelites*, *The Queen of Spades* and *Tosca*. He is a frequent performer with New York City Opera, of which he has been a member since his 1977 debut as Don Basilio in *The Marriage of Figaro*. Other City Opera assignments include Lippo Fiorentino in Weill's *Street Scene* (telecast over PBS), the world premiere of Argento's *Miss Havisham's Fire*, *Turandot*, *Ariadne auf Naxos* and *The Grand Duchess of Gérolstein*. He bowed at the Spoleto Festival U.S.A. in 1980 in *Monsieur Choufleuri*, returning there for three subsequent seasons, and made his debut at the Spoleto Festival in Italy in 1981. He has also appeared with the Cincinnati Opera, Fort Worth Opera, the Opera Company of Philadelphia, the Lake George Opera Festival, Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Opera/Memphis and the Kentucky Opera. Last season saw his debut with the Washington Opera in *The Rake's Progress* and a return to Fort Worth for *The Postman Always Rings Twice*, as well as his first concerts with the Columbus Symphony. This season he will be heard in Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* with the Duluth Symphony and in appearances with the Washington and Kentucky Opera companies.

Bass **Richard Vernon** makes his San Francisco Opera debut as the Prince of Bouillon in *Adriana Lecouvreur*. A graduate of Memphis State University, he made his professional debut in 1972 as Pimen in *Boris Godunov* with Opera Memphis. He has subsequently appeared with that company in productions of *Il Trovatore*, *La*

Forza del Destino, and *Samson et Dalila*, among others. He was a national finalist in the 1977 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. He spent two seasons with the Houston Grand Opera as a member of the Houston Opera Studio before becoming a resident artist for his third season in Houston, where his roles included Ramfis in *Aida*, Alidoro in *La Cenerentola* and Lodovico in *Otello*. He has also appeared in numerous productions of the Washington Opera, the Pittsburgh Opera and Connecticut Opera, as well as with the National Symphony, the Hong Kong Philharmonic and the Philippines Symphony. In 1981, he made his Metropolitan Opera debut in *L'Enfant et les sortilèges* and has since returned there for many assignments, including productions of *Macbeth*, *Un Ballo in Maschera*, *Il Trovatore*, *Don Carlo*, *Parsifal*, *Don Giovanni*, *Ernani* and *Der Rosenkavalier*, including the national telecast of the last-mentioned work. On the Metropolitan Opera's national tour he has also been seen in *Boris Godunov* and *La Bohème*. Next year, he will bow at San Diego Opera as Lodovico, followed by appearances as Colline in *La Bohème* in Palm Beach. This season, he will return to the Met and perform the bass solo part of Verdi's Requiem Mass with the Oklahoma City Symphony.

A graduate of this year's Merola Opera Program, bass-baritone **Philip Skinner** makes his San Francisco Opera debut as Quinault in *Adriana Lecouvreur*. A graduate of Northwestern University, Skinner appeared there in productions of *La Bohème* and *The Rape of Lucretia*. He received his master's degree from Indiana University, where he has been seen in *The Magic Flute*, *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, *A*

Midsummer Night's Dream, *Das Rheingold*, *Così fan tutte* and *Murder in the Cathedral*. He made his professional debut as Don Basilio in *The Barber of Seville* at Bowling Green State University in 1984 and has since been seen at the San Antonio Festival as Leutoldo in *William Tell* and Escamillo in *Carmen*. He was heard as the King of Egypt in *Aida* with the Savannah Symphony, and has performed two roles in *Turandot*, that of a Mandarin for Kentucky Opera, and as Timur with the Columbus Symphony. During the 1985 Merola Opera Program, he was seen at Villa Montalvo in the title role of *Don Giovanni* and as Méphistophélès in *Faust* at Stern Grove. His concert work includes performances of Haydn's *The Seasons*, *The Creation* and *Lord Nelson Mass*, the last named being at the Spoleto Festival. For Western Opera Theater's 1985-86 tour, he will perform the title role and that of the Commendatore in *Don Giovanni*.

Iowa-born tenor **Dennis Petersen** undertakes five roles in his debut season with San Francisco Opera: Poisson in *Adriana Lecouvreur*; Schmidt in *Werther*; Bardolfo in the Family performances of *Falstaff*; a Judge in *Un Ballo in Maschera*; and the Major-Domo in *Der Rosenkavalier*. He made his professional opera debut in 1979 in two Bizet operas produced by the Theater Opera Music Institute, *Don Procopio* and *Djamileh*. His 1980 engagements included Don José in *Carmen* with the White Water Opera Company of Indiana, Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* with the Natchitoches Symphony Society of Louisiana, and Count Almaviva in Cleveland Opera Theater's production of *The Barber of Seville*. That fall, he sang his first Rodolfo in *La Bohème* with the Brooklyn Lyric Opera, a performance that led to an invitation to tour in that opera with the



ROBERT AAMES

Texas Opera Theater. After a year of study in Europe, he returned to the United States to sing Rodolfo with the Center for Opera Performance and a concert production of Wagner's *Rienzi* with the Opera Orchestra of New York. Subsequent engagements with that group include *Benvenuto Cellini* in 1983, and *Nabucco* and *William Tell* in 1984. During the 1982-83 season, he added four new roles to his repertoire: Nemorino in *L'Elisir d'Amore*, Faust in *Mefistofele*, Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor* and Edoardo in Verdi's *Un Giorno di Regno*. Recent engagements have included *La Traviata* and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony in Eugene, Oregon; a tour of *Rigoletto* with the New York City Opera National Company; Mendelssohn's *Die Erste Walpurgisnacht* with the New York Choral Society; and a major triumph as a last-minute replacement for the tenor soloist in Britten's *War Requiem* with the Philadelphia Orchestra.

Kyle Tucker makes his San Francisco Opera debut dancing the role of Paris in *Adriana Lecouvreur*. A native Californian, Tucker began his ballet training at San Francisco Conservatory of Ballet and has appeared locally with several Bay Area companies. During the 1983-84 season he was a member of the Milwaukee Ballet under the direction of Ted Kivitt. Productions he appeared in with the Milwaukee Ballet include Henrique Martinez's staging of *Giselle*, Sallie Wilson's *Fall River Legend*, Gerard Charles's *Rapsodie con moto*, and Paul Sutherland's *Rodeo*. Tucker then joined Ballet Mississippi and for the 1984-85 season was principal dancer and partner to prima ballerina Kathy Thibodeaux. With the Mississippi troupe he appeared in Carlos Carvajal's *Comedia* and two productions by Alan Woodward, *Divertimento* and *Variaciones Concertantes*.

For the same company he danced the lead in Charles Dickson's *Legend of Lovers*, Carvajal's *Counterpoise* and Jean-Pierre Bonnefoux's *Springfest*. Other/Ballet Mississippi assignments included Romeo in John Butler's *Romeo and Juliet*, Prince Iskender in Dickson's *La Péri*, the Snow Cavalier and Sugar Plum Cavalier in Dickson's *Nutcracker*, and the Pas de deux in Denise Shultz's *Paquita*.

Robert Aames makes his San Francisco Opera debut as Mercury in *Adriana Lecouvreur*. Born in Iowa City, Iowa, Aames studied with a number of dance groups, including the Pacific Ballet, Kahz Zmuda, director; Dance Spectrum, Carlos Carvajal, director; and the San Francisco Ballet School, directed by Richard Cammack. After spending a year in performance with Dance Spectrum, he joined the Milwaukee Ballet under the direction of Ted Kivitt, where his assignments included John Butler's *Carmina Burana* and Robert Rodham's *Trio*. The following season found him with the San Francisco Ballet, where he appeared in the Michael Smuin-Lew Christensen production of *Cinderella*, Lew Christensen's *Nutcracker* and Balanchine's *The Prodigal Son*. Last season, he was a member of the Oakland Ballet, and was seen in Eugene Loring's *Billy the Kid* and Tandy Beal's work *This Harsh Spectacle . . . This Invisible Activity . . . This Sense*. As a guest artist, he has danced with Sacramento Ballet in *Giselle* and *Cinderella*, with the Sonoma Ballet in the Snow pas de deux in *Nutcracker*, and with San Luis Obispo Civic Ballet in *Cinderella*.



MAURIZIO ARENA

Maestro **Maurizio Arena** is on the podium for *Adriana Lecouvreur*, a work he conducted earlier this year in Munich and has recorded for RCA. He made his highly acclaimed Company debut with Puccini's *Manon Lescaut* during the 1983 Fall Season. Born in Messina, Italy, he studied music in Palermo and Perugia, where he was trained in conducting by Franco Ferrara. After many years of collaboration with Tullio Serafin and Antonino Votto, he began his operatic training as répétiteur and assistant conductor at the Teatro Massimo in Palermo from 1960 to 1963. From 1963 to 1969, he was permanent conductor at that theater, where he led performances from the Italian operatic repertoire in addition to many modern and contemporary operas, including *Wozzeck*, *Bluebeard's Castle* and *Carmina Burana*. Since 1969, he has been a guest conductor at most of the important operatic capitals in Europe, including Milan's La Scala, Rome, Trieste, Brussels, Lyons, Paris and Venice. In 1980, he conducted *Der Freischütz* in Lyons, Rossini's *Matilde di Shabran* with the French National Radio Orchestra, and led performances of *Nabucco* in Verona and at the Verdi Festival in San Diego. Since then, he has conducted *Caterina Cornaro* at the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires, *Le Nozze di Figaro* in Lyons, concerts in Paris and Italy, and *Francesca da Rimini* in Geneva. During the 1983-84 season, Arena conducted *Manon Lescaut* and *Francesca da Rimini* in Genoa and, at the Teatro Regio in Turin, Verdi's *I Due Foscari* and Ghedini's *Maria d'Alessandria*. Last season's engagements included *L'Elisir d'Amore* and *Tosca* at the Vienna Staatsoper, and next year will find him at the Verdi Theater in Trieste for Rossini's *La Donna del Lago* and at the Verona Arena for *La Fanciulla del West*.

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LOTFI MANSOURI



VASSILI SULICH

Noted stage director **Lotfi Mansouri** returns for his 18th season with San Francisco Opera to mount his first production of *Adriana Lecouvreur*. The Iranian-born director has staged over 29 different works for San Francisco Opera, including *La Sonnambula* (1963), *Esclarmonde* (1974), *The Merry Widow* (1981), *Norma* (1982) and *Anna Bolena* (1984), all with Joan Sutherland; *The Daughter of the Regiment* (1974) with Beverly Sills; Auber's *Fra Diavolo* (1969) and Meyerbeer's *L'Africaine* (1972); and *La Gioconda*, first produced for the 1979 Fall Season and telecast live throughout the United States and to Europe via satellite, and revived for the 1983 Fall Season. From 1960 to 1965, he served as resident stage director of the Zurich Opera and from 1965 to 1974 was head stage director at the Grand Théâtre in Geneva. In 1976 he made his Metropolitan Opera debut with *Esclarmonde* and his Vienna Staatsoper debut with *La Fanciulla del West*. General director of the Canadian Opera Company since 1978, Mansouri has staged for that company *Don Carlos* (the original French version), *Wozzeck*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Don Giovanni*, *The Maid of Orleans*, *Carmen*, *Tristan und Isolde*, *Simon Boccanegra*, *Peter Grimes*, *Otello*, *Lulu*, *Norma*, *Death in Venice* and, most recently, the Canadian Opera Company's first production of *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. He was operatic consultant and staged the opera sequences for the MGM film "Yes, Giorgio," with Luciano Pavarotti, and in November 1983 he directed *Esclarmonde* for his Covent Garden debut. Last year he won high praise for his stagings of *The Mikado* and *La Rondine* for New York City Opera, the latter to be telecast nationally this October, as well as *La Belle Hélène* for the Netherlands Opera, where he will return for *Arabella* next March with Edo de Waart. Future assignments include the Canadian Opera premiere of *Dialogues of the Carmelites*, *Salome* and, to open the current season, Thomas's

Hamlet, featuring the first stage Ophelia of Joan Sutherland, whom he will direct again in *Anna Bolena* for the Lyric Opera of Chicago this fall and for Houston Grand Opera in 1986. His autobiography, "Lotfi Mansouri: An Operatic Life," has been published in 1982.

Choreographer **Vassili Sulich** returns to San Francisco Opera for *Adriana Lecouvreur*. He undertook his first Company assignment with Tchaikovsky's *Queen of Spades* during the 1982 Fall Season and returned the following fall for *La Gioconda* and *Boris Godunov*. Born in Yugoslavia, he began his career with the National Ballet of Zagreb. Sulich appeared as principal dancer with a number of European companies, among them Jeannine Charat's Ballet de France, Miskovich's Ballets des Etoiles de Paris and Roland Petit's Ballets de Paris, with whom he created the role of Christian in *Cyrano de Bergerac*. In his many film and television appearances, Sulich has performed with such stars as Rosalind Russell and Geraldine Chaplin. He was selected to choreograph the music of French composer Maurice Thiriet in Jean Cocteau's *Oedipus Rex* at the Lyons Opera. For the Geneva Opera, he has devised dances for Mozart's *Idomeneo*, Gounod's *Faust* and Saint-Saëns's *Samson et Dalila*, and choreographed the latter for Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires as well. Currently principal choreographer and artistic director of the Nevada Dance Theater, which he founded in 1972, Sulich has created more than 35 new ballets for that company, which is undertaking its third national tour this season. In 1981, he received the Governor's Award for outstanding individual artistic achievement in the state of Nevada. Last year he choreographed *The Nutcracker* at the National Opera House in Split, Yugoslavia, and staged the dramatic ballet *Mantodea* for the Royal New Zealand Ballet, Ballet Eddy

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THOMAS J. MUNN

Toussaint in Montreal and for contemporary City Ballet in Hong Kong. Later this season, his Nevada Dance Theater will give the premiere of his new ballet, *Walls in the Horizons*, set to Bartók's Concerto for Orchestra.

In his tenth year with San Francisco Opera, **Thomas J. Munn** is responsible for lighting seven productions this fall: *Adriana Lecouvreur*, *Lear*, *Orlando*, *Turandot*, *Falstaff*, *Un Ballo in Maschera* and *Billy Budd*. In addition, he has designed the sets for *Billy Budd*. Since 1976, he has conceived the lighting and special effects for over 70 San Francisco Opera productions. He created the lighting for all four of the operas of last summer's Ring Festival, and last fall designed lighting for seven productions, including *Ernani*, *Carmen*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Elektra*, *Khovanshchina*, *Rigoletto* and *Don Giovanni*. He also designed the scenery as well as the lighting for *Nabucco* and *Salome* in 1982, *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* in 1981, *Roberto Devereux* and *Pelléas et Mélisande* in 1979 and *Billy Budd* in 1978. In addition to his numerous design credits for the War Memorial stage, Munn has designed for Broadway, Off-Broadway and regional theater companies throughout the United States and Europe. Recent projects include productions for the Hartford Ballet, Lyric Opera of Chicago and the Netherlands Opera. His television credits include San Francisco Opera productions of *La Gioconda* (for which he received a 1979 Emmy Award), *Samson et Dalila* in 1980, *Aida* in 1981 and the Pavarotti concert in 1983. Last spring, he served as TV lighting consultant to American Ballet Theatre for an upcoming television series and is at work on sets and lighting for a new multi-media production of *Coppélia* that will have its premiere with the Hartford Ballet next April.



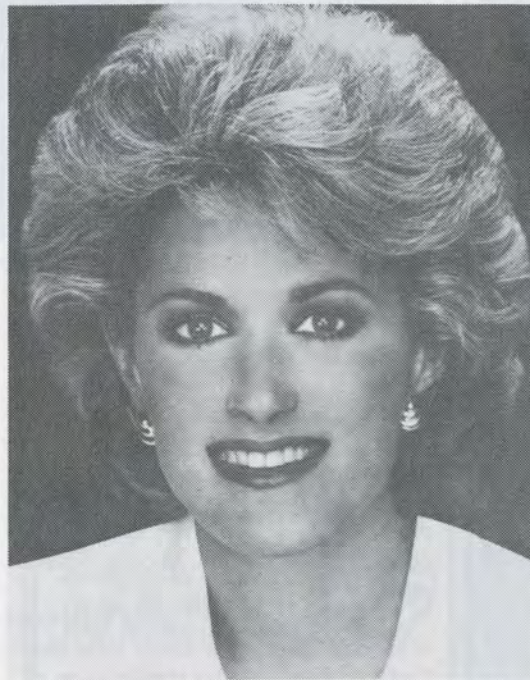
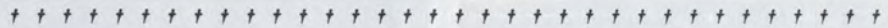
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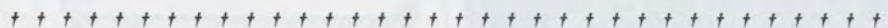
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Mirella Freni continued from p.32



NORTON

Mirella Freni awaits her entrance during a 1967 performance of *La Bohème* at the San Francisco Opera.

dienne of the Comédie Française who, through the simplicity of her vocal delivery and stage deportment, almost single-handedly brought about a revolution on the French stage. Among the current crop of leading sopranos, Freni is the one best known for the naturalness of style and purity of voice that have made her for decades the ideal Mimì, Micaëla, Susanna and Liù.

Her return to the Vienna Staatsoper in June to portray the lovely slave girl in Puccini's *Turandot* was the occasion of a great personal triumph. It did not, however, come without some initial concern. Not only was she singing a role she had not performed on stage in over 15 years, but she was in some pain because of a leg

injury. Had it not been for an administrator's announcement in front of the curtain just prior to the performance and a discreet whisper to Agostino Ferrin playing Timur to allow her unencumbered stage movement for "Tu, che di gel sei cinta," no one in the audience would have suspected a thing. It was only at the final curtain when she took her bows that one noticed a decided limp. More importantly, no one in the audience could have believed, hearing those limpid, legato phrases and observing that youthful appearance and demeanor, that the Modena-born soprano had been singing professionally for over 30 years. True, the voice has matured and become slightly more dramatic over the course of time, but it has lost none of its

freshness of tone and smoothness of delivery.

Unlike many of today's lyric sopranos, Miss Freni has protected her instrument by refusing to take on roles that are beyond her natural limits. "I know how to say 'no'," she affirms with a touch of pride in her self-knowledge and self-will. "Perhaps the others are somewhat weaker and allow themselves to be persuaded to sing things they shouldn't. If I could sing *Norma* and *Macbeth* I'd be delighted. Especially *Macbeth*. I'd give anything to play that character, but I can't. Well, I could," she adds mischievously, "but afterwards, 'Krac'," indicating with a throat-slitting gesture the probable results. "I know my possibilities and my limits. Why go looking for vocal problems when they can be avoided. I always make this joke: 'A soldier saved can fight another battle; a dead one is good for nothing.'"

Throughout her career, conductors and impresarios have asked Freni to take on roles that she considered too dramatic for her voice. One of those was Karajan, who tried to persuade her to sing *Madama Butterfly*. Only recently she refused a prestigious invitation from La Scala to open the season as Cio-Cio-San. "I like my vocal cords too much," she smiles, demonstrating a delectable set of dimples. "In the long run, I would hurt my voice. I love it [Freni made a highly praised film version of *Madama Butterfly* directed by Jean-Pierre Ponnelle], but I won't sing it on the stage."

The soprano weighs offers for new roles very carefully. "First, I have to see if it comes close to my personal dramatic style. Then I have to look at the *tessitura* to see if it's good for my voice. I'm capable of saying 'no' to a role if there are one or two notes that I can't do the way I'd like to."

There are very few roles she has initially rejected and subsequently performed at a later date. One is Puccini's Manon Lescaut, with which she has had one of her greatest career successes, first in San Francisco in 1983, then at the Met and in Munich (she will sing her first Manon Lescaut in Italy this December in Florence). "I have to thank Terry McEwen because he was so insistent, telephoning me all over the world to persuade me to take on this role. Four or five years earlier I had signed a contract with Houston, and then became frightened and said, 'No, no, no, no, no... let's do another opera. This

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Mirella Freni and Ermanno Mauro in a scene from San Francisco Opera's 1983 production of *Manon Lescaut*.

one is too strong for me and perhaps I'll destroy my voice.' But Terry was so persistent and used such good tact and tactics that he finally won me over. But I said, 'Okay, I'll come. But if during rehearsals I feel it's too heavy for me, you're running the risk of losing a Manon.' In fact, the role was just right for me vocally and I found that even on stage it was a natural.

"Then, after that triumph, Terry McEwen had another idea. 'Why don't you make a debut here in *Adriana Lecouvreur*?' a role I'd never even considered before. He said we'd do it with [Ermanno] Mauro and [Maurizio] Arena, the same team as for *Manon Lescaut*. Last year I was busy with an engagement for another new role [Tatiana in *Eugene Onegin*], so we put it off for a year. The San Francisco Opera, for its working conditions, the feeling of friendship and the kindness and love everyone showed me—from the dressmakers to the stagehands—is one of the best possible theaters for making a role debut."

Was Adriana, like Manon, going to prove a good role for her? "I think so," she replies cautiously, "but with any new role I always wait to see what will happen on the stage with the orchestra, the various

tensions, etc. Until I've sung it before the public, I can never really say if it's right for me. Even with *Bohème*, *Turandot*, *Don Carlos*, it was that way. It's not fear," she adds quickly, as if to ward off a possible question. "It's a kind of artistic conscience. For the first few performances I always listen carefully, and when I hear that the role is not going to harm my voice, I feel much better.

"I know what my voice can do. I'm very familiar with my vocal technique, and throughout my career I've tried to be very honest with myself and to treat my instrument very well. I have a certain instinct for these things which has always helped me. Perhaps it's for that reason that after 30 years of a career I'm still singing with a very healthy sound — at least that's what they all say. And I really haven't had any problems yet," she says, making the Italian gesture of the *malocchio*, pointing the index finger and pinky downward to chase away the evil spirits.

The only role she has ever abandoned after a single outing is Elvira in Verdi's *Ernani*, with which she opened La Scala two years ago. "I can sing it, but in the uncut version we did, it's a tremendous chore for the soprano. The heroic attacks of Verdi's early writing for the voice —

tac, tac, tac — bothered me a bit when it came to the long, legato phrases. I'd never had any trouble with legato support before, but the diaphragm couldn't support that type of legato, so I said, 'No, I'm Mirella Freni with my long, legato phrases and even if I can sing *Ernani*, I won't sing it any more. I like the role, and there's a pretty good recording and a live telecast from La Scala as souvenirs, but I won't ruin my best qualities by singing a part which does nothing to advance my career."

Some might say that *Aida*, which Freni has sung under Karajan's baton at the Salzburg Festival and on disc, is another case of material too dramatic for her essentially lyric instrument. She is quick to dismiss the parallel. "*Aida* helped me develop certain areas of my voice — the lower middle register — and gave me greater confidence in that area. Yes, there are a few moments of strong dramatic accent, but it's not that way all the way through, like *Elvira*. It's another type of singing. You know, they've asked me to do a recording of *Forza*. Perhaps it might work out, but the second act duet . . . ? I'm willing to try things out, but I'm not ashamed to say that I'm always happy to go back to the roles in my repertory."

In *Adriana Lecouvreur*, Freni is assuming a role in which such diverse talents as Rachel, Sarah Bernhardt and Eleonora Duse triumphed on the legitimate stage, and Lina Cavalieri, Giuseppina Cobelli, Claudia Muzio, Mafalda Favero, Maria Caniglia, Gina Cigna, Magda Olivero and, more recently, the two Renatas — Tebaldi and Scotto — have triumphed on the lyric stage. "For me," states the newest exponent of the part, "Olivero and Tebaldi were the best Adrianas I have seen. La Tebaldi had that radiant voice. Madonna, what velvet! I remember having seen it at the Met, and the sound of her voice coming from the back of the stage in the second act. 'La promessa la terrò' [I will keep my promise]," she breaks off singing the phrase in ravishing half voice. "That exquisite *piano*! I swear I felt myself pulled out of my seat with my hair standing on end. Such a beautiful voice I've never heard in my life, so rich with interior harmonies. No one else has it today.

"Olivero was stupendous. She had all the tragic gestures down to perfection. That style might not work today — and for my personality it would not work — but it has remained imprinted on my

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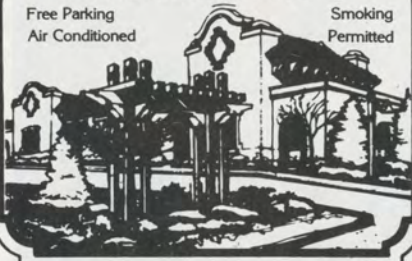
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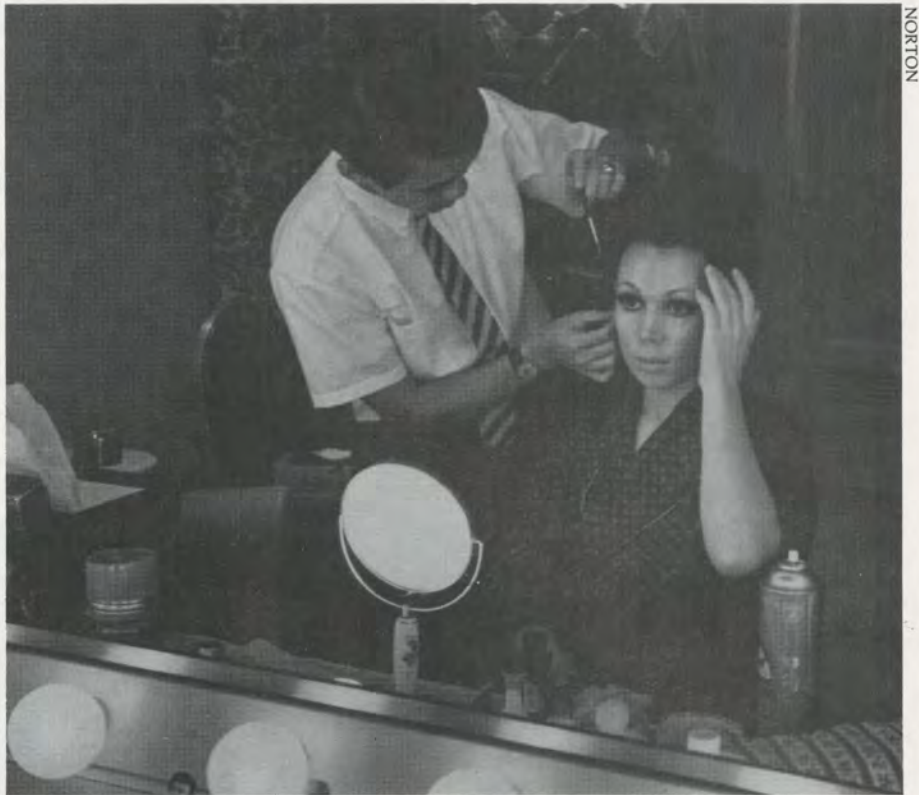


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NORTON

In her dressing room, Mirella Freni prepares for her 1967 debut role with the San Francisco Opera, that of Mimi in *La Bohème*.

mind. Today we're so influenced by the movies, it's hard to imagine how they used to grab the curtains and be so melodramatic. But you have to remember that Adriana was a *tragédienne*, and with Olivero it did work. I'll have to find a simpler, more natural style without forgetting that Adriana is an actress. It's not the same simplicity as for Mimi or Liù."

Freni was working on Adriana with a musical coach at the Staatsoper in Vienna during her *Turandot* engagement. "I've done a little historical research on the character," she says, "but the literary sources are already one step removed from historical reality. Then the librettist and the composer choose certain special moments from the literary sources. So when you play a role on the stage, it's really your own interpretation that counts."

She sees Adriana, who lived in Paris at exactly the same historical moment as Prévost's fictional Manon Lescaut, as a very different character from the heroine of Puccini's opera. "Manon is a girl who experiences certain feelings instinctively and acts on them naturally. Adriana is more mature. She's a lady of the theater who is very concerned with her profession. Of course her instinctive feelings —

love and jealousy — are there too, but it's all very different. Adriana is very sympathetic, but I haven't yet found the same richness of character, the same human moments as in *Manon* or *Bohème*. With Mimi, for example, that warmth and interior richness is there throughout. The key to Mimi's character is in the last act. I discovered that working with Karajan, who tested my intelligence and sensitivity by starting with the final scene. Mimi is dying and yet she is the one who says, 'Don't worry about me.' She's the one who gives courage to the others.

"With Adriana, these things are only touched upon. 'Poveri fiori' is sung to herself. She feels sorry for herself, for her own problems. She cries out because of jealousy. The love between Maurizio and Adriana becomes moving only at the end. I want to find Adriana's human side ... that kind of richness one finds in Puccini. But it's harder here.

"In certain ways *Adriana* is a *verismo* opera. But it's not completely in the *verismo* style like *Tosca*. Perhaps because Adriana is a *tragédienne*, Ciġea chose a somewhat different musical language. I must say honestly that I'm not in love with all the music in *Adriana*. There are beautiful melodies and themes; perhaps

that's what accounts for its popular appeal. The two arias are wonderful and the last act is beautiful, but there are strange moments.

"It's a difficult opera in the sense that everything has to be done perfectly. The staging has to be carefully thought out. For instance, the action at the end of the second act goes by so quickly that it can be difficult to understand. The moment the two women recognize each other as rivals must be staged clearly and not rushed musically. And then, the singing must be perfect.

"The recitation from *Phèdre* in the third act is very tricky. It's got to be spoken in part because Cilea used a spoken notation. I would like to recite the Racine text almost to the end. It's ugly when it's sung, and doesn't have the right effect. You've got to maintain the dramatic tension right up to the end and then deliver the *coup de grâce* sung as intended with 'Che mai debba arrossir.' The first part of the monologue is easier since the music is slow and written mostly with chords so that you can follow the orchestra without difficulty. But then Cilea put in rhythmic things that don't fall at the right place to allow the recitation of the text with the proper dramatic accents. In the second part of the monologue, there are two or three lines that are really *antipatiche*. You're forced musically to stay within the given tempi and it's hard to play the scene correctly. It bothers me to death. We'll have to work very hard on that section. I've got it all worked out in my head; let's hope we can make it work on the stage as well.

"I like the role but I haven't sung it on the stage yet, so if now I had to choose between Adriana and Manon, I'd choose Manon. I prefer Puccini's Manon to Massenet's, which I have also sung. Puccini goes further into the passionate human nature of the character. Puccini's Manon is more a woman than Massenet's, who remains a somewhat capricious, superficial young girl. The only really dramatic moment is the seduction scene in Saint Sulpice. Puccini brings out the most beautiful human feelings. I adore his Manon perhaps more than any other character I sing right now. I sing it with such joy, and I hope I'll have the same joy singing Adriana." Making the same *malocchio* gesture so as not to tempt fate, she finishes with that characteristic warm smile, "I'm always *prudente*." ■

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NEA celebrates 20th birthday

"There is Nothing Second Best About the Arts in America"

By RON DE LUCA

This claim, made recently in congressional hearings, probably could not have been made twenty years ago. "Serious" artists were expected to train in Europe and the goal of the young American artist was to make a statement in the European opera house, theater, or gallery. In addition, the common perception was that America did not offer the artist or the arts company a large and enthusiastic audience that would support serious artistic efforts.

This is no longer the case. The story behind this change is one reason why all of America is celebrating the 20th anniversary of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA).

Prior to the NEA's existence, the arts were not accessible to the majority of Americans; virtually all arts organizations were located in the major urban areas. Now, however, arts companies exist in small communities across the land, and many major companies now tour to areas lacking resident companies of their own. It is impossible to assert that the National Endowment alone is responsible for the tremendous growth in the arts organizations over the past twenty years. Yet there is no doubt that the NEA has been a major catalyst in this arts expansion, highlighted

in the table below.

Organizations eligible for National Endowment for the Arts support

	1965	1985
Orchestras	58	192
Opera Companies	27	102
Dance Companies	37	213
Theaters	22	389
Media Arts Centers	0	80

National Art Week, September 23-29

President Ronald Reagan declared September 23-29 as National Arts Week in honor of the 20th Anniversary of the National Endowment for the Arts. In a statement signed at the White House, the President said that the

...past two decades have witnessed a virtual explosion of creative activity in every area of human genius—dance, literature, theater, music, media, visual arts, opera, design, and also the folk arts, our national heritage. Because of the good work done by the National Endowment for the Arts, this rich heritage has been made accessible to all Americans, not merely a small elite.

The National Endowment for the Arts was created by Congress and became an independent agency of the Federal



Ruth Ann Swenson as Belisa and David Malis in the title role of Conrad Susa's *The Love of Don Perlimplin*, presented in the Spring of 1985 by the San Francisco Opera Center. The staging was made possible, in part, by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Government on September 29, 1965. Its mission is to encourage and support American arts and artists and to foster the excellence, diversity and vitality of the arts while helping broaden their availability and appreciation.

How the Endowment Works

The Endowment receives annual appropriations from Congress and then awards grants to non-profit, tax-exempt organizations of outstanding quality and individual fellowships to artists of exceptional talent. For fiscal year 1985, the Endowment received \$163.6 million and divided this among 18 different arts programs. Opera-Musical Theater, the program under which the San Francisco Opera receives Endowment support, had a budget of \$5.9 million for its two main funding areas: support of professional companies and support of new American works. These two areas are further subdivided into various components under which companies submit applications. These proposals are then reviewed by a panel of experts in the field who make recommendations to the Chairman of the Endowment.

The Endowment is directed by a chairman, who is appointed by the President for a four-year term and advised by the National Council on the Arts, a 26-member body also appointed by the President. Frank Hodsoll, appointed by President Reagan, is the current Chairman of the Endowment.

The Significance of the NEA

In this year of celebration, the National Endowment has de-emphasized its own role, preferring instead to emphasize the partnership that the NEA has organized with local and state governments, corporations, private funding sources, and the artists themselves to foster interest in the arts.

One of Mr. Hodsoll's priorities is to strengthen the financial position of the leading arts organizations. He has emphasized the Challenge Grant Program, which awards grants to assist organizations with capital formation and endowment campaigns. Generally, these funds must be matched three to one or two to one by new money or by increased gifts by the recipient organization. This program is an example of how the NEA works in partnership with other funding sources to accomplish major objectives.

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PHILLIPS

Western Opera Theater's 1985-86 production of Mozart's Don Giovanni will feature a number of young San Francisco Opera Center performers. Shown: Thomas Potter as Masetto (left), and E. Mark Delavan as Don Giovanni.

Endowment's Opera-Musical Theater Program, believes that the NEA's function is to certify the professional standing of a company:

The Endowment, after 20 years of life, has come to stand for quality in its own sense, that is, the Endowment's stamp has come to mean something. People realize that when the Endowment says, 'This company is good enough to fund,' . . . that there is such a body of objective opinion behind it that this has a greater impact than if another funding source gave money.

Overall, the Endowment's funding accounts for only 3% of the total income for American opera companies. However, this is a critically important 3%. Testifying before Congress at the re-authorization hearings for the Endowment, distinguished opera singer Risë Stevens summed up her twenty years' experience with the NEA by stating:

Grants from the Endowment act as catalysts, encouraging further donations by foundations, corporations, and individuals. I am aware that funding for the arts is a small part of the whole picture, but is extraordinarily vital to these performing companies.

The American Artist

In addition to growth in the arts, the NEA has exerted a profound impact on the role of the American artist in the world art scene. The American artist, in Stevens's words,

has emerged as an important force in today's cultural scene and now has a strong identity all over the world that must be sustained and nurtured.

What this means in the operatic world is that American singers now have a choice as to where they want to make a career. No longer is Europe the only place that boasts of extensive training and performance opportunities for aspiring opera singers.

The San Francisco Opera, for example, maintains one of the most successful training programs for young singers in the country, the San Francisco Opera Center. NEA support, through its Services to the Field Program, designed to further the art form of opera, enables the Center to maintain a program that works to transform talented young singers into professional, experienced, accomplished opera singers.

Over 2000 singers compete in nationwide auditions to be among 20 selected for the Merola Opera Program, the San Francisco Opera Center's first level of training. Participants receive a stipend while they undertake extensive coaching and studying. Performance opportunities include two fully staged and costumed opera productions during the summer.

The next level in the training program is Western Opera Theater, the touring and educational branch of the Center. Founded in 1967 with the first touring grant awarded by the NEA, Western has toured every year since and continues to receive Endowment funding

through the Regional Touring Program. To date, WOT has given nearly 2,000 performances of opera in English and has traveled over a quarter of a million miles in its effort to make opera accessible to all Americans.

The most exceptional singers may then be selected for the Adler Fellowship Program. Fellows receive an 11-month performance-oriented residency and take roles in the Company's Summer and Fall seasons. In addition, they receive intensive coaching and take master classes to refine their skills. Again, the NEA, through support to the San Francisco Opera under the Professional Companies Program, supports a part of the cost of this program.

In addition to receiving support for general operating expenses, the San Francisco Opera has also received funding for special projects from the Endowment, which has a special commitment to supporting new American works. *The Love of Don Perlimplin*, presented in the 1985 Showcase Season in Herbst Theatre, was made possible, in part, by a grant from the NEA that enabled the San Francisco Opera and the Opera Center to mount

the production. The composer, Conrad Susa, also received a grant from the NEA to compose this opera.

Patrick J. Smith explained that the NEA is able to fund projects that might otherwise have difficulty attracting sponsors.

I think the Endowment has to be in a funding situation because in many cases we are funding things that are not attracting private support. That's where I think the Endowment must make the difference, as well as funding new works and reviving seldom-produced works, which I think is vital.

The Federal Budget and the Future of the NEA

Despite the successful track record of the Endowment, federal funding for the arts is not guaranteed. The budget cuts of recent years have illustrated that competition for federal dollars will grow increasingly keen in the future. Realizing this, arts advocates have organized themselves to educate Congress about their needs.

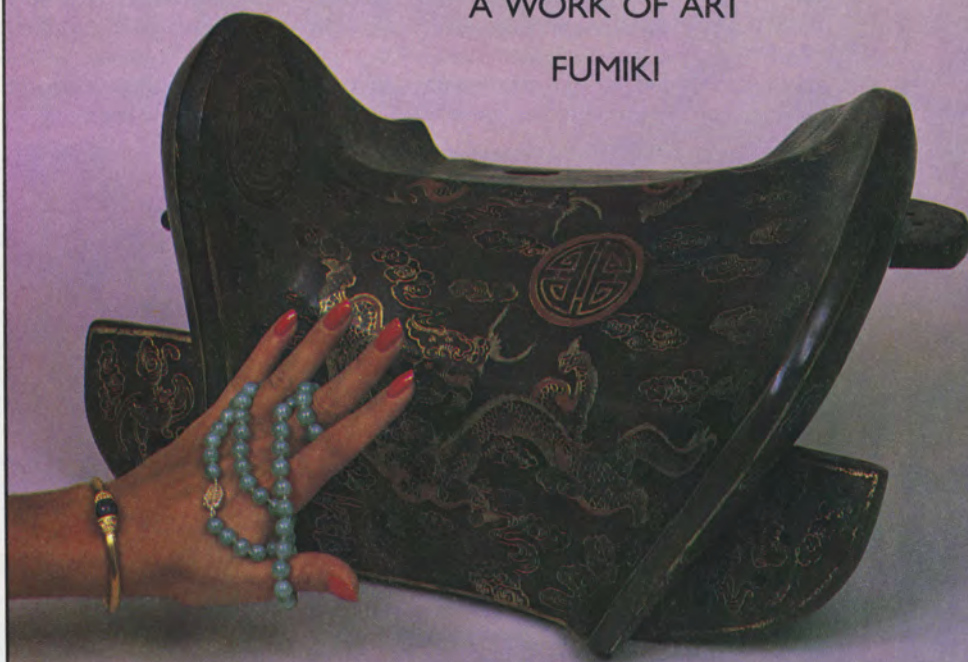
Each year when the federal budget is under congressional scrutiny, the Ameri-

can Arts Alliance and its member arts organizations demonstrate how important NEA funding is to their companies and urge Congress to maintain adequate funding for the Endowment. These efforts have been successful; this year, in fact, the Endowment received \$175 million, a modest increase over last year's allocation of \$164 million.

Many in the arts believe that a continued federal role in the arts world is vital. The NEA has played a major role in creating an environment where imagination, creativity and talent are nurtured and rewarded. In concluding her remarks to Congress, Stevens underscored the importance of a federal role in the arts:

The National Endowment for the Arts has made its mark on our civilization in the past 20 years, and when I think of the progress we have seen, I can only think of how much more can be accomplished in the next 20 years. Our thrust must be toward ever-greater support so that we can continue our pursuit of excellence in the performing arts in our nation. It is our noble and ultimate mission. ■

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Royal Viking Line and San Francisco Opera present "Opera in the South Pacific," January 29 - February 16, 1986

Friends of the San Francisco Opera will have an opportunity to experience a truly different cruise when the sleek and streamlined Royal Viking Star lifts anchor at Auckland, New Zealand, on January 29, 1986. In a continuing travel program with Royal Viking Lines, the San Francisco Opera has arranged for a spectacular operatic package, which includes three performances of The Australian Opera in the landmark Sydney Opera House. A high point of the tour will be a performance of *Lucia di Lammermoor* at Sydney, featuring Dame Joan Sutherland in one of her most famous roles.

While cruising, the young artists of the San Francisco Opera Center will offer several evenings of operatic entertainment. In addition to duets and ensembles, such as those from *Madama Butterfly* or *Così fan tutte*, there will be "A Night in Old Vienna," complete with waltzes and Viennese pastries, as well as solo recitals and other surprises. There will be extraordinary events in many locations: in Melbourne, we'll visit the new arts complex; in Sydney, three performances by The Australian Opera—a new production of *The Mikado*, *Falstaff*, conducted by David Agler, long familiar to San Francisco Opera audiences, who is currently Princi-

pal Conductor of the Australian company, and the above mentioned *Lucia* with Dame Joan Sutherland. In addition to opera, there will be a performance of the Sondheim musical comedy *Company*, performed by the Sydney Theatre Company at the Drama Theatre of the Sydney Opera House.

Ports of call include Wellington and Christchurch in New Zealand, a trip way down under to Tasmania, and Australia's Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney. January happens to be a summer month there, so one can expect warm sunshine, long days, and frolicking (or lazing) on wonderful beaches.

Royal Viking Line is contributing 10% of each cruise fare as a donation to the San Francisco Opera Center, and this support will help the Center in continuing the development of the many young artists whom you see each season on the stage of the Opera House.

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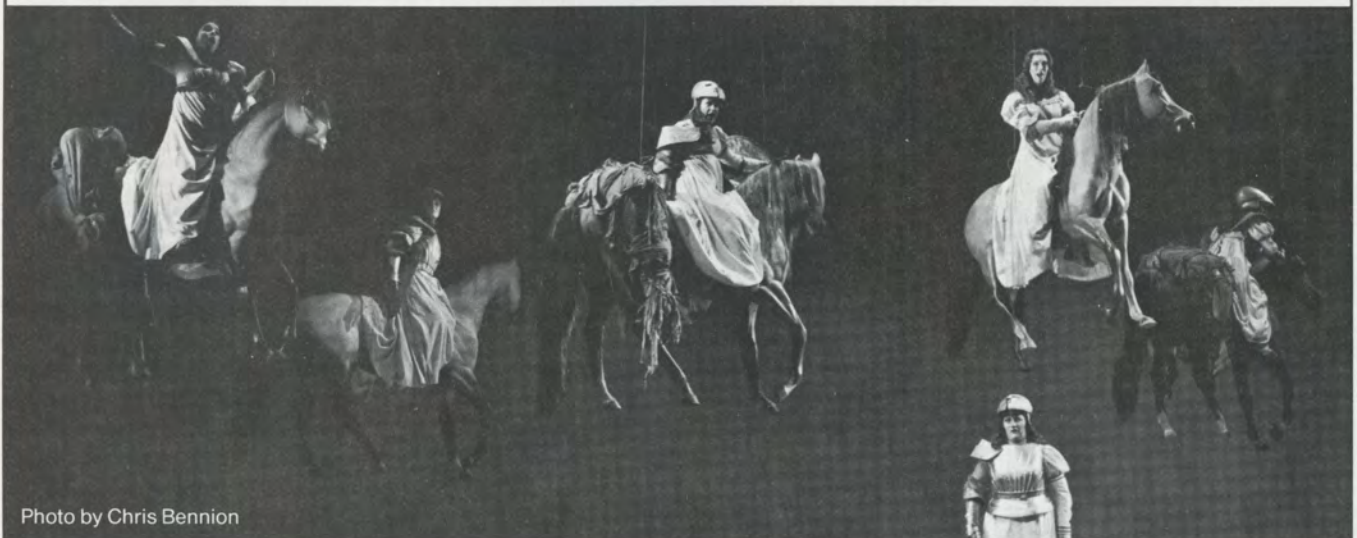


Photo by Chris Bennion

Previews continued from p.19

<i>Falstaff</i>	
James Keolker	10/17
<i>Billy Budd</i>	
Michael Mitchell	11/8

NAPA OPERA LECTURE SERIES

"Adventures in Opera" is a 10-week course, now in its 13th year. The lectures, which accompany the Saturday and Sunday series at the San Francisco Opera, will be held at 7:30 p.m. in the Napa First Methodist Church, Centennial Hall, 4th and Randolph, in Napa. Ernest Fly will again teach the course. Cost for the entire series is \$20. Individual lectures are \$3. For further information, please call (707) 224-6162.

<i>Lear</i>	9/5
<i>Orlando</i>	9/12
<i>Adriana Lecouvreur</i>	9/19
<i>Turandot</i>	9/26
<i>Werther</i>	10/3
<i>Falstaff</i>	10/10
<i>Tosca</i>	10/17
<i>Un Ballo in Maschera</i>	10/24
<i>Der Rosenkavalier</i>	10/31
<i>Billy Budd</i>	11/7

OPERA EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL PREVIEW SERIES

Previews of operas of the 1985 fall season will be given by Michael Barclay, director of Opera Educational International. Lectures are given in the auditorium of the Dr. William Cobb School, 2725 California Street, between Scott and Divisadero, at 7:30 p.m. Admission to the full series of 8 opera previews is \$32; individual admission at the door is \$5. For further information, please call (415) 526-5244.

<i>Adriana Lecouvreur</i>	9/3
<i>Lear</i>	9/5
<i>Orlando</i>	9/9
<i>Turandot</i>	9/16
<i>Werther</i>	9/23
<i>Falstaff</i>	10/14
<i>Billy Budd</i>	11/11
<i>Der Rosenkavalier</i>	11/18

SAN FRANCISCO COMMUNITY COLLEGE LECTURE SERIES

Under the sponsorship of the S.F. Community College District, Robert Finch will give three free lectures. They will be given at 10 a.m. in the Community College Auditorium at 33 Gough Street (½ block off Market St.). For further information, please call (415) 431-3437.

<i>Turandot</i>	9/11
<i>Der Rosenkavalier</i>	9/18
<i>Werther</i>	9/25

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. Performances on Friday and Saturday are at 8:30 p.m.; Sunday at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$6 for individual performances, \$16 for the complete series. For information and reservations, please call (415) 349-6411.

<i>Adrienne Lecouvreur/Scribe</i>	9/13, 22, 28
<i>La Tosca/Sardou</i>	9/14, 20, 29
<i>Turandot/Gozzi</i>	9/15, 21, 27

SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY LECTURE SERIES

Under the sponsorship of the San Francisco Public Library, William Huck will give four free opera previews. They will be given at 7 p.m. at the following locations: 8/29 at the Sunset Branch Library, 19th and Judah; 9/17, 10/8 and 11/5 at the Marina Branch Library, 1890 Chestnut St. For further information, please call (415) 346-9336.

<i>Adriana Lecouvreur</i>	8/29
<i>Turandot</i>	9/17
<i>Der Rosenkavalier</i>	10/8
<i>Billy Budd</i>	11/5

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Ten two-hour classes on all the fall operas (one class per opera). There is a choice of three series: Mondays from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.; Thursdays from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.; Saturdays from either 10 a.m. to noon or from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. Cost for the course is \$80; individual classes are \$10. Classes held at 13 Columbus Ave., San Francisco. For further information, please call (415) 956-1271.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Unused Tickets Patrons who are unable to attend a performance may make a worthwhile contribution to the San Francisco Opera Association by returning their tickets to the Box Office or telephoning (415) 864-3330. Donors will receive a receipt for the full value, but the amount is not considered a contribution to the fund drive or fulfillment of a fund drive pledge.

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

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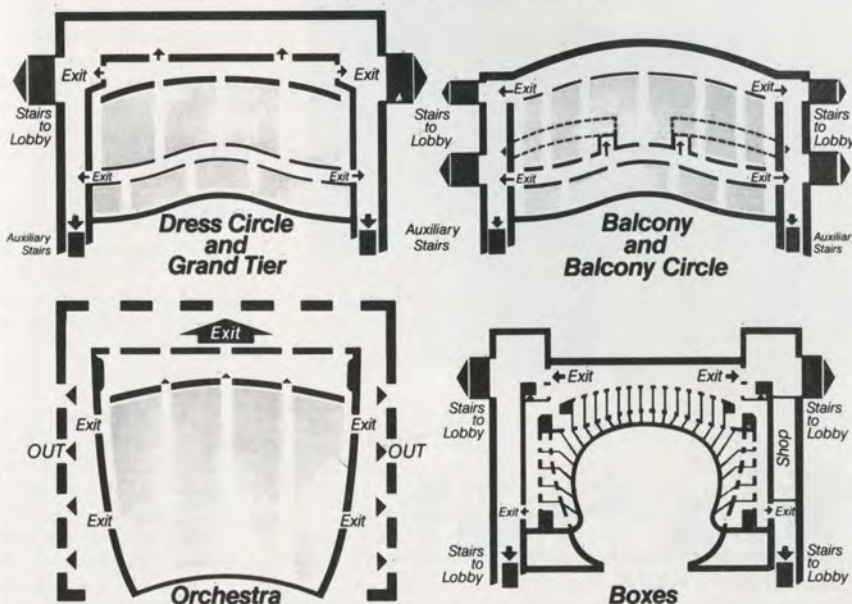
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