

Falstaff

1985

Sunday, October 20, 1985 2:00 PM
Wednesday, October 23, 1985 8:00 PM
Sunday, October 27, 1985 2:00 PM
Wednesday, October 30, 1985 7:30 PM
Saturday, November 2, 1985 8:00 PM
Tuesday, November 5, 1985 8:00 PM
Friday, November 8, 1985 8:00 PM
Monday, November 25, 1985 8:00 PM (Family Performance)
Saturday, November 30, 1985 2:00 PM

SFO_PUB_01_SFO_1985_05

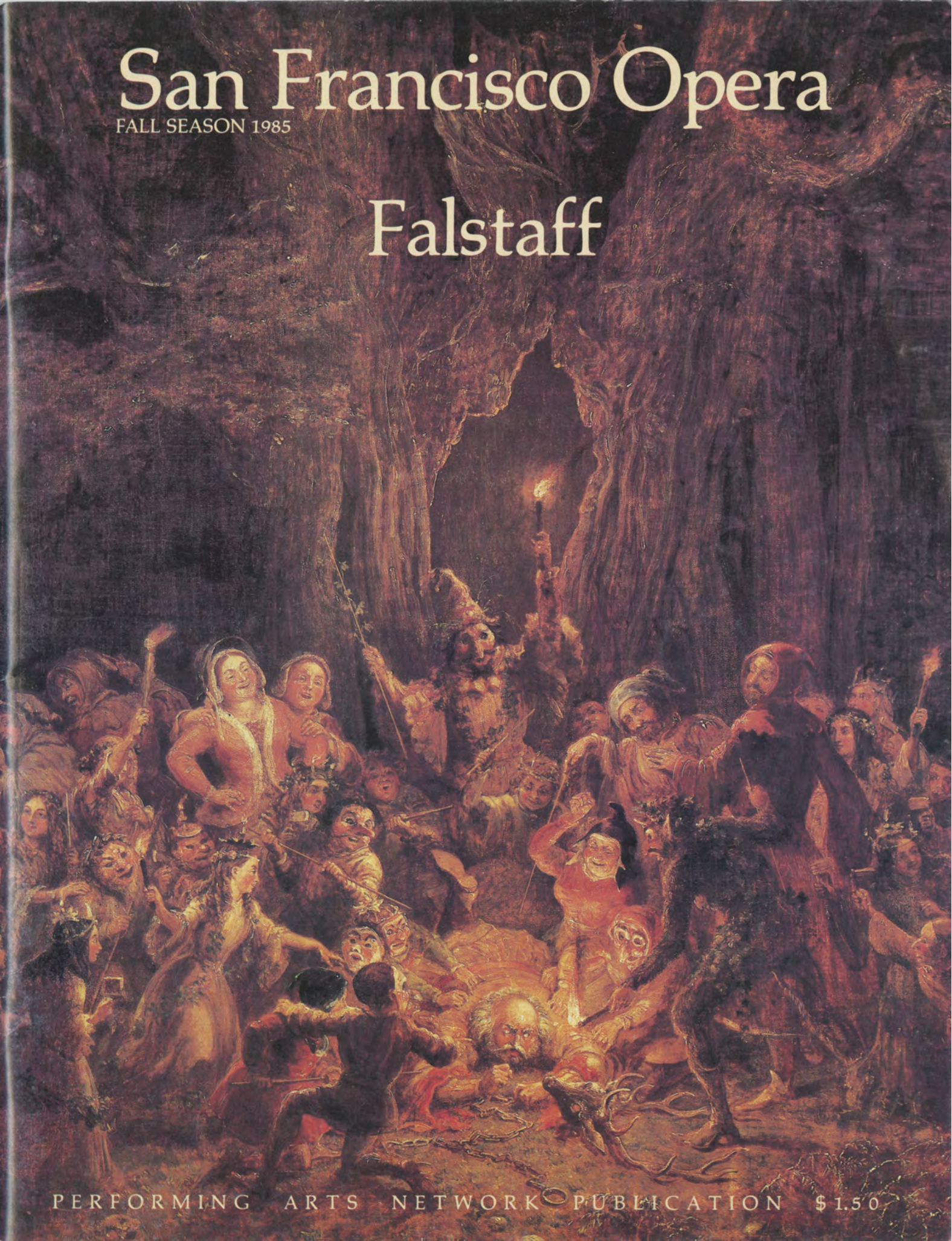
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San Francisco Opera

FALL SEASON 1985

Falstaff




PERFORMING ARTS NETWORK PUBLICATION \$1.50



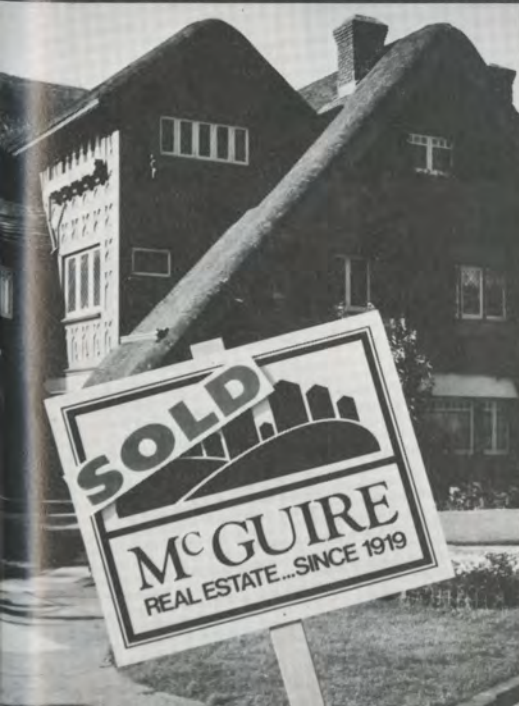
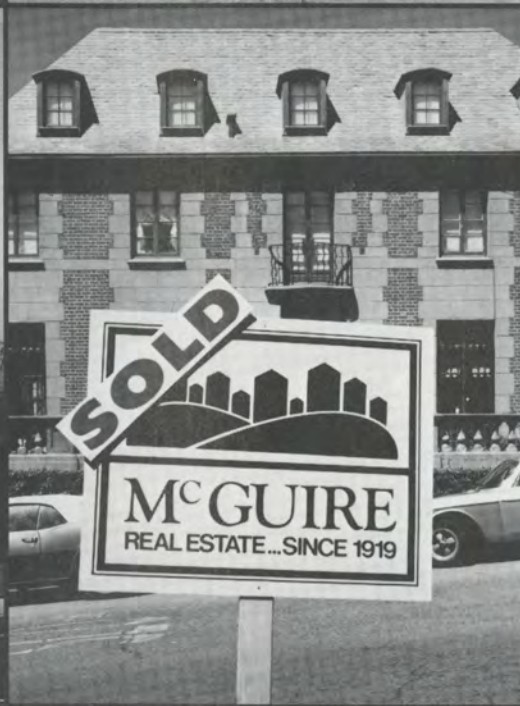
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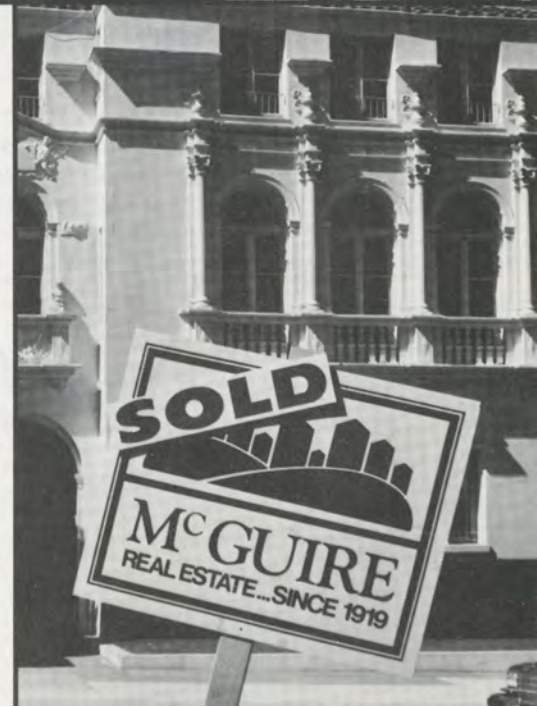
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Terence A. McEwen, *General Director*

Falstaff

FALL SEASON 1985

FEATURES

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An engrossing look at Verdi's last masterpiece.
- 32 **Ponnelle on Falstaff** by Allan Ulrich
Conversation with the noted director-designer includes some of his views on the Verdi/Shakespeare creation.
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COVER:

George Cruikshank (1792-1878)
Herne's Oak from "The Merry Wives of Windsor," c.1857
Oil on canvas, 36 x 48 in.

Yale Center for British Art
Paul Mellon Fund

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Photo: Michael Marsland

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

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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.

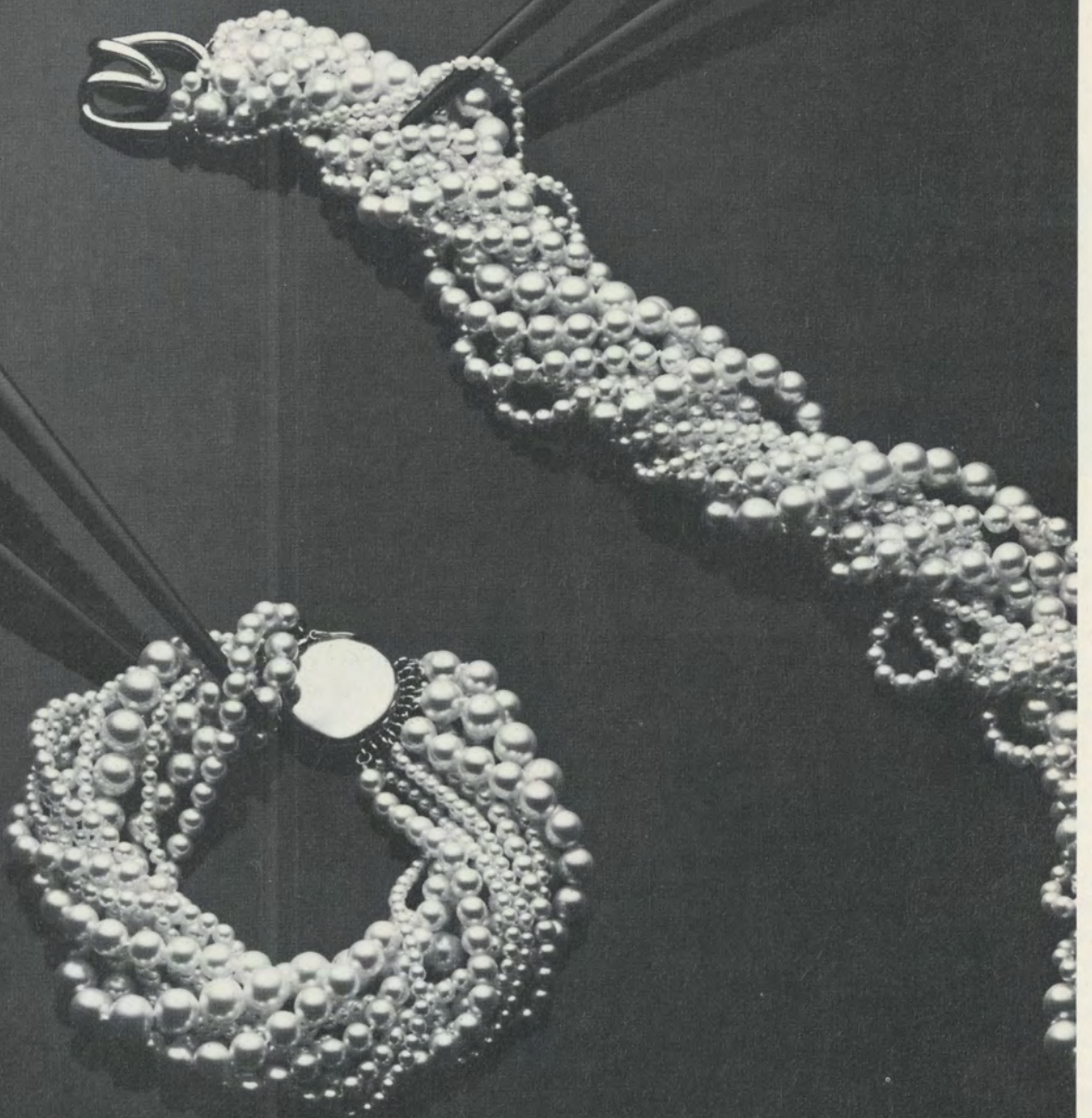
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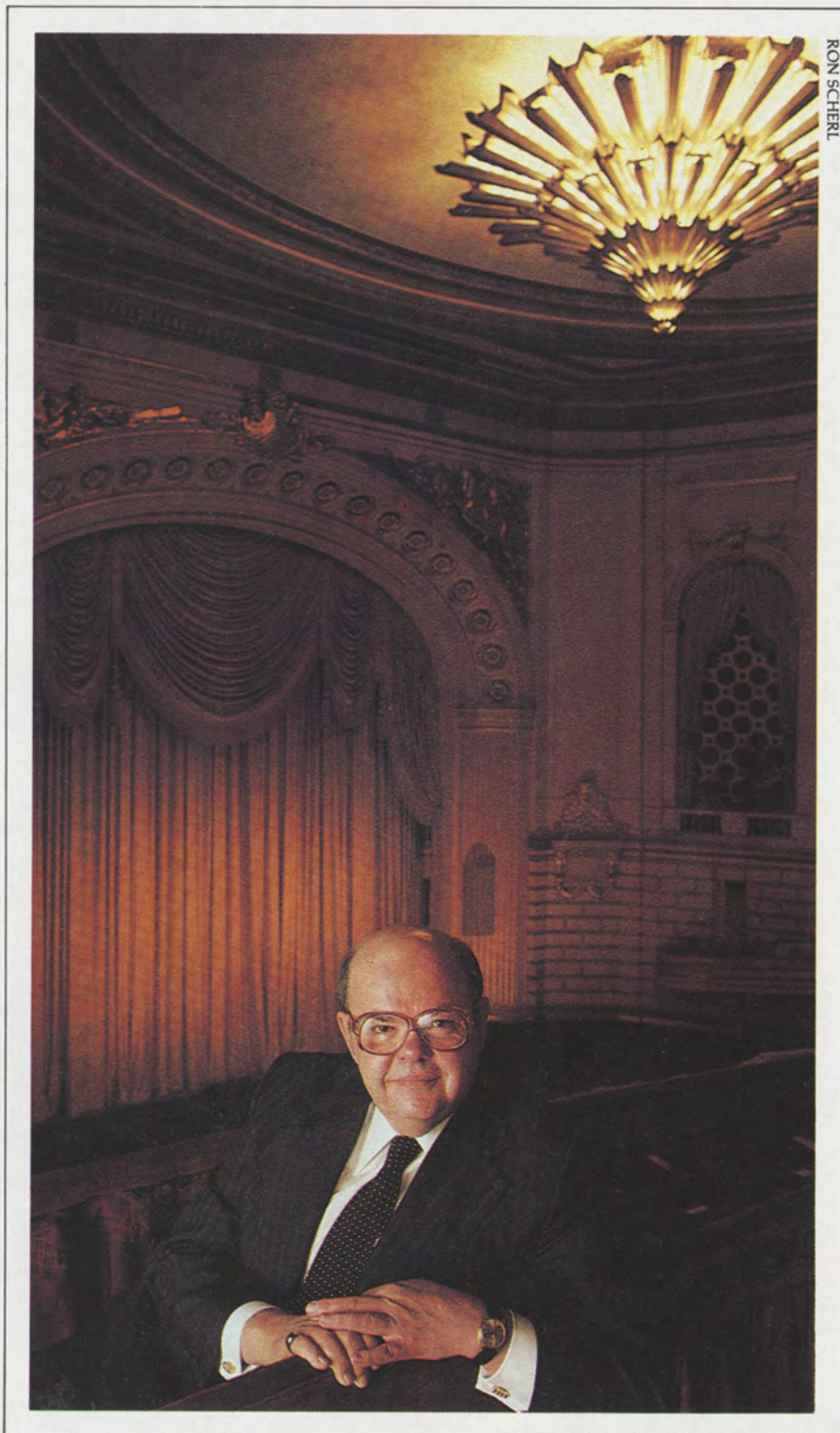
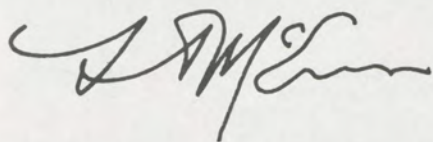
General Director's Message

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

Terence A. McEwen, *General Director*

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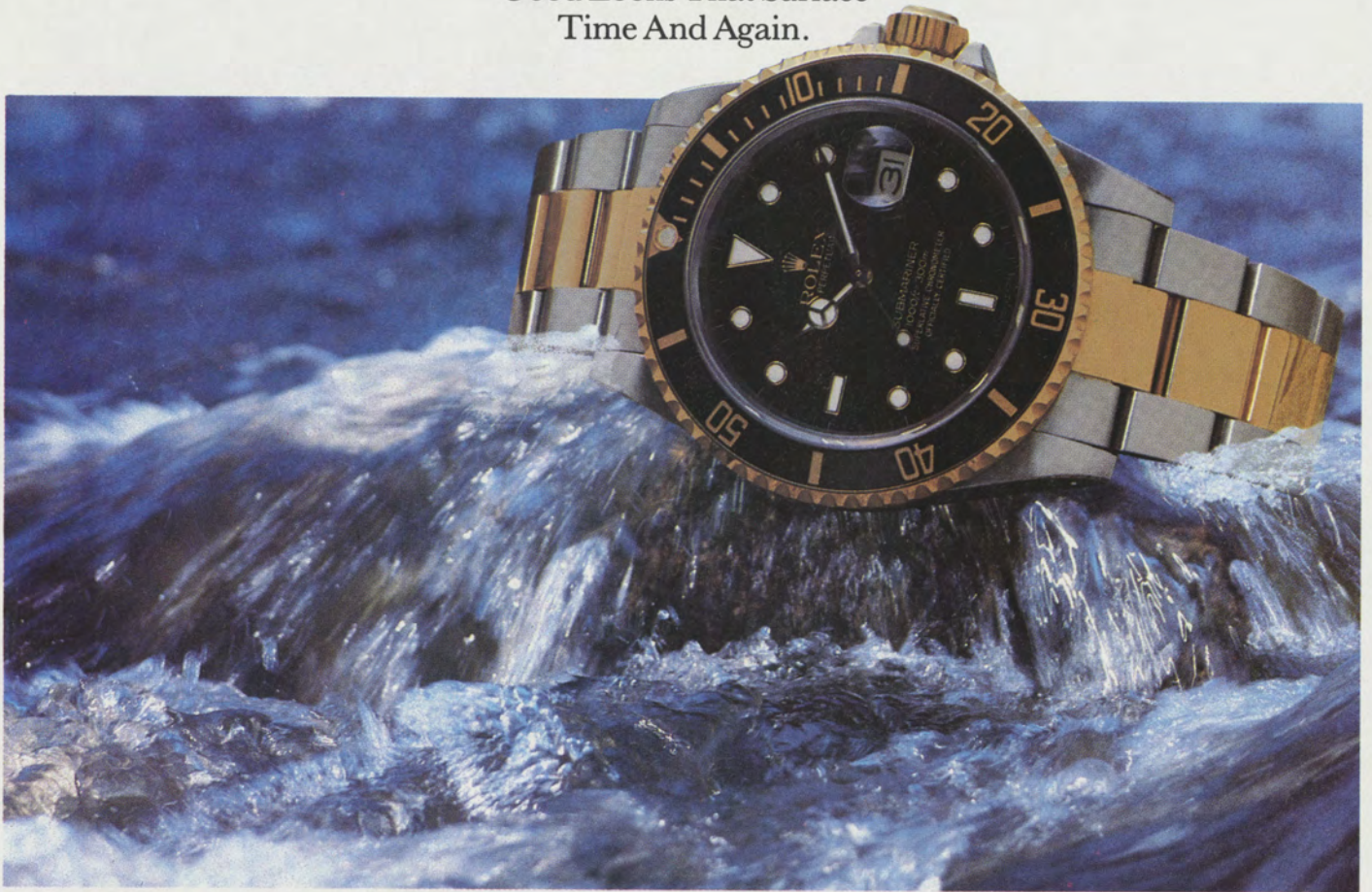


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San Francisco Opera

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, Dernesch, 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*/Bonisolli, Macurdy, Kelley, Green, Malis, Harper, Pederson*, Anderson Klobučar/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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9-10

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.

Sennheiser Listening Devices

In order to increase the enjoyment of opera for hearing-impaired members of the audience, the War Memorial Opera House has recently installed a new Sennheiser Listening System. Wireless headphones and induction devices (adaptable to hearing aids) are available at the north end of the main lobby. A rental fee of \$2.00 is requested, in addition to an ID deposit, such as a drivers license or major credit card. The devices can be used in any seat in the Opera House.



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California

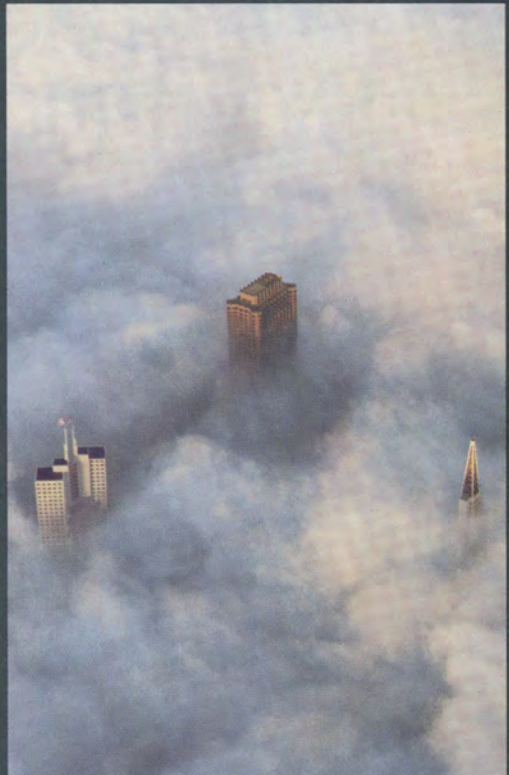
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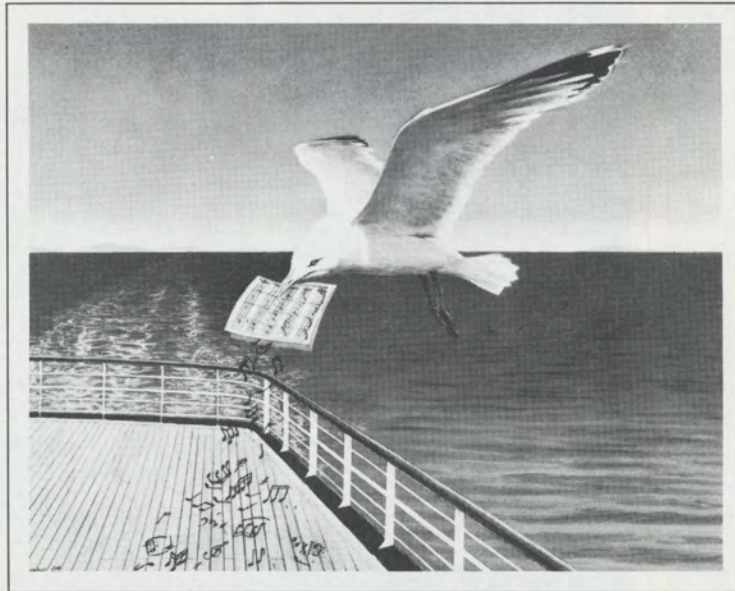
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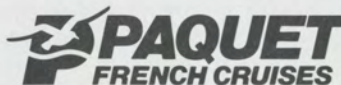
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1985 Fall Opera Previews

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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Falstaff: Fully Rounded

By JULIAN BUDDEN

"Today I dipped into a volume of Verdi's letters," Hugo von Hoffmannsthal wrote to his collaborator Richard Strauss in 1926. "How many reminders of our own joint labors! . . . I happened quite by chance on a passage where he says that he spent twenty years searching for a comic opera libretto and now just when he thinks he has at last found it people remind him that Rossini had said forty years before that he would never be able to write a comic opera. How little times change! . . . We had better luck with our opera buffa (better, too, than Verdi with *Falstaff*, which has never really become popular)." At the time of writing, that was certainly true. *Der Rosenkavalier* had become a repertory piece; *Falstaff* was rarely performed and was always poorly attended. But most musicians were in no doubt of its worth. Richard Strauss himself, at 30, was so overwhelmed by a performance given in Berlin as to be impelled to send Verdi a copy of his own newly printed opera *Guntram* by way of tribute (" . . . finding no words with which to

Giuseppe Verdi in a photo-portrait taken in 1893, later tinted by an unknown hand.

express the huge impression that the extraordinary beauty of *Falstaff* has made upon me, and being unable to convey to you my gratitude for this rebirth of the intellect in any other way, I beg, you, sir, at least to accept this score"). That same performance evoked a similar response from Ferruccio Busoni who by now had made Berlin his home. "Illustrious and venerated Maestro," he wrote to Verdi, "for some time the desire has grown within me . . . to introduce myself to you and to establish some kind of communication with Italy's first composer and one of the noblest men of our time." And he concluded the letter, "Lastly, *Falstaff* has worked in me such a spiritual and emotional revolution that I can truthfully date from this moment a new epoch in my life as an artist." Evidently, at the last moment, Busoni's courage failed him, for

Julian Budden, internationally renowned musicologist, is the author of a landmark three-volume series, The Operas of Verdi.

A tree-lined alley at Villa Sant'Agata towers over Verdi, in conversation with friends. The watercolor was made in 1892 by Leopoldo Metlicovitz.



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Salvatore Baccaloni as Falstaff with Ebe Stignani as Quickly and Lorenzo Alvary as Pistola. San Francisco Opera, 1948.

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the letter was never sent. Years later, another of Italy's musical pioneers, Alfredo Casella, declared that *Falstaff* was the starting point for all modern Italian music. For Verdi, at eighty, to have roused such enthusiasm in three composers more than fifty years younger is no mean feat.

In each of his three Shakespearean operas Verdi adopts a different approach to the Bard, according to the subject and his own resources at the time. For *Macbeth*, he drew up the operatic scheme himself, carefully selecting those scenes that he was confident of being able to set convincingly to music. Within the contemporary Italian idiom, by dint of stretching the conventions here and there, he matched the nocturnal, fantastic quality of the play, the "terribilità" of *Macbeth* and his Lady. But the poetry? True, one is touched by his readiness, however naive, to seize upon the salient lines of the play ("Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood clean from my hand?" "Life's... an old tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing") and to set them in high relief; but it cannot be said that he

recreates them in music. The most he does is to give them a more or less appropriate vocal expression—and in the case of Macduff's heart-rending aside "He has no children!" not even that. By the time he came to write *Otello* Verdi was at last in a position to encompass Shakespeare's poetic range, that eloquence that rages "from the Propontick to the Hellespont." But to do this he needed room; what Shakespeare could express in a couple of lines required ample paragraphs from Verdi; hence the pleonasm and the periphrases of Boito's libretto which inevitably dilute Shakespeare's language, a process that becomes particularly evident when the opera is performed in English, even in a translation as polished and singable as Andrew Porter's. One can understand, while not sharing, the distaste of a Shakespearean scholar such as the late Gabriele Baldini, author of *The Story of Giuseppe Verdi*, for the composer's penultimate opera. The verse is, indeed, often intolerably precious; but for Verdi's purpose nothing else would do.

By contrast, the libretto of *Falstaff*



Licia Albanese as Nannetta in San Francisco Opera's 1948 Falstaff.

amounts to an original creation. Here the gold of Shakespeare's lines is melted down and minted anew into a language of Boito's own devising, derived partly from Boccaccio and his contemporaries—appropriately so, since Shakespeare himself had drawn the plot of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* from a story in Ser Giovanni Fiorentino's *Il Pecorone* of 1558. Boito could therefore justly claim with Verdi's help to have guided "Shakespeare's sparkling farce back again to its clear Tuscan source."

But he did more. An opera in which Falstaff is the central character—unless it be a brief one-acter like Holst's *At the Boar's Head*—will inevitably be based on *The Merry Wives* rather than on the chronicle plays. Such is the case with the operas of Salieri, Balfe, Nicolai and Vaughan Williams. Nor is *La Gioventù di Enrico V*, set by Mercadante, Pacini and others an exception. It does not derive directly from Shakespeare but from a comedy by the Frenchman Alexandre Pineu-Duval; it also presents the Fat Knight in a marginal role, reserving pride

of place for Prince Hal and a couple of runaway aristocratic lovers (it does, however, contain the newly crowned king's devastating rebuff to his former crony—"I know thee not, old man"). The problem is that the Falstaff of the *Merry Wives* is a far more commonplace creation than that of *King Henry IV*. With remarkable ingenuity Boito weaves into his libretto threads from the histories: the Honor Catechism, the memory of Falstaff's slimness as page to the Duke of Norfolk, the justification of his roguery ("Men of all sorts take a pride to gird at me. . . . I am not only witty in myself, but the cause that wit is in other men")—to give but three instances. The result is a Falstaff fully rounded in every sense of the word. Yet one thing more remained to be done. Shakespeare's Falstaff is indeed "a man of middle earth"; he speaks a rich gamey prose. In 1893, the days of prose opera were still far off. Verdi's Falstaff is given a poetic dimension without forfeiting any of his capacity for making us

laugh. All the smoother becomes the transition from pure comedy in the first five scenes to the romantic fantasy that haunts the last—an atmosphere which of all the Falstaff operas written up to now only that of Nicolai prefigures.

The elimination of minor characters and their amalgamation with others was common practice when it was a matter of transforming a play into an opera. So we are not surprised that Parson Evans, Eugby and Page should disappear, or that Dr. Caius should lose his French nationality to become a mixture of Justice Shallow and Slender. Loose ends are tied up. Ann (Nannetta) becomes Ford's daughter, not Page's; Caius find himself "married" to Bardolfo, not to some anonymous boy. The boldest decision was to omit the episode of the Fat Woman of Brainford which Salieri, Balfe and Nicolai all retain; but the gain in variety justifies it; we are thus spared *two* house-searches and *two* duets between Falstaff and "Master Brook."



Leonard Warren was Falstaff, Oralia Dominguez, Quickly, in San Francisco Opera's 1956 Falstaff.



Elisabeth Schwarzkopf as Mistress Ford in San Francisco Opera's 1956 *Falstaff*.

Nineteenth-century comic opera was traditionally articulated in arias and ensembles governed by a structure which is to some extent independent of the action. In *Falstaff*, the action itself is often conceived in terms of a musical structure. Two instances will suffice to make this clear. When the curtain rises, Falstaff is in dispute with Dr. Caius. From the expostulations of one and the calm replies of the other are built what would in academic terms be called the first and second subjects of a sonata movement—itsself a kind of “argument” in music. The interventions of Bardolfo and Pistola fuel the development in such a way that the entire scene up to the exit of Dr. Caius forms in effect a built-in overture in which every twist and turn of the quarrel is accurately mirrored. Another case in point, even more striking, occurs in the second scene. After the reading aloud of Falstaff's letter—a huge melodic paragraph of 44 bars diversified by amused comments—the action proceeds on three alternating

planes: the scheming of the women (allegro, mostly 6/8), the chattering of the men (allegro, 4/4) and the dialogue of the lovers (allegretto, 3/4), the whole forming a design something like a scherzo with two consecutive trios. At the end, elements of all three are vertically combined. This type of superimposition was not in itself new. It first occurs in the Pré-aux-clercs scene in Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots*; Sullivan more than once makes use of it in his Savoy Operas; and Verdi had already furnished a splendid example in the finale to the second act of *Aida*. The difference here lies in the conflict of meters: the 6/8 of the women against the 4/4 of the men with Fenton's tenor soaring lyrically above the melee. For this Verdi could have had only one model: the conclusion of the first act of *Die Meistersinger*, where Walther von Stolzing continues his song above the arguments of his judges and the happy frolicking of the apprentices. Wagner's comedy had already been pre-

sented at La Scala three years earlier, and it is unlikely that Verdi would have missed a performance. Whether his debt to his great contemporary went any further than that one moment may be doubted. True, when Falstaff sits shivering outside the Garter Inn after his ducking (“Che giornata nera!”) the orchestra gives out a motif identical with that of Klingsor in *Parsifal*, of which Verdi certainly possessed a score. Francis Toye described the lovers' “Labbra di fuoco” as “richly harmonized à la Wagner”; and indeed in both key, harmony and (more remotely) melodic outline, they reveal a certain kinship with a theme associated with Eva in the third act of *Die Meistersinger*. But the spotting of thematic resemblances is a futile occupation, being both speculative and subjective. What is certain is that Verdi's method of composition in *Falstaff* has nothing in common with Wagner's except for the seamless continuity that it achieves (“the art of transition,” as



Sir Geraint Evans portrayed the Fat Knight in three San Francisco Opera stagings of Verdi's *Falstaff*: 1962, 1963 and 1970. This photo was taken in 1962.

Wagner called it). It is not based on motifs that stand out as musico-dramatic images. Such thematic working as the score contains is mostly below the surface, often making use of the merest musical small change. Nor is there any question of entrusting the main burden of the musical thought to the orchestra. *Falstaff* remains a vocal opera; and its most memorable motifs ("Può l'amor riempirvi la pancia" "Dalle due alle tre" "Te lo cornifico") all originate in the voice. Throughout the score, Verdi's feeling for verbal nuance—a trait that goes back to Pergolesi—is wonderfully acute. Both when Ford makes fun of Falstaff after his ritual drubbing in Act III ("Lo cornuto chi è?") and when Falstaff turns the tables on him after the double wedding ("Lo scornato chi è?") the music gives us the stylization of a jeer. "Povera donna!" says Mistress Quickly of Alice Ford to the same descending pattern of notes that had served Violetta (*La Traviata*) for those very words during her aria "Ah fors'è lui." Many of the phrases are instinct with appropriate movement and gesture. Mistress Quickly's "Reverenza" has a curtsy built into it; when Falstaff, sure of his conquest, proclaims "Va, vecchio John," we can sense him pacing the room in triumph. Yet one has to admit that the relationship of voice to orchestra is not quite the same as in Verdi's previous works, for one of the glories of the score is the liveliness of its orchestral texture in which not a note is wasted and not an instrument added without a purpose. In some passages (e.g., Alice's instructions for the masquerade in Act III), it is pared down to a mere wisp of sound. To this, the vocal spread of the conventional operatic singer is lethal. Verdi showed himself aware of this problem when he declared that the proper venue for *Falstaff* was not La Scala in Milan but his own home, Sant'Agata. What was needed for its performance was the "note" and the "accento" (a difficult word to translate in this context—"attack" is the nearest equivalent). And it is precisely the failure of the average star to meet these requirements that has prevented *Falstaff* from attaining the popularity of *La Traviata* or *Aida*. Not surprisingly, one of the greatest exponents of the role was the late Tito Gobbi, possessor of one of the steadiest, most sharply focused baritone voices of our time.

One still occasionally hears the complaint that Verdi's last opera shows a

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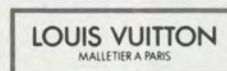
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The women in San Francisco Opera's 1962 *Falstaff* were (l. to r.): Kerstin Meyer (Meg Page), Giulietta Simionato (Mistress Quickly), Wilma Lipp (Alice Ford) and Jolanda Meneguzzi (Nannetta).



The men, San Francisco Opera, 1962 (l. to r.): Raymond Manton (Bardolfo), Glade Peterson (Fenton), Thomas Stewart (Ford), Howard Fried (Dr. Caius) and Michael Langdon (Pistola).

drying-up of his former melodic fertility. This is rather like objecting to *Parsifal* and *Tristan* on the grounds that they do not contain such melodies as "O du mein holder Abendstern" or "Einsam in trüben Tagen." For the truth is that here Verdi's lyricism is no longer bounded by the set piece. That he was still able to write marvelous melodies in the conventional sense is shown by Fenton's Sonetto, Nannetta's "Sul fil d'un soffio etesio," and the Wedding Minuet—not to mention Falstaff's "Quando ero paggio al Duca di Norfolk," a perfectly formed period of 24 bars lasting all of half a minute: surely the shortest aria in existence and the perfect illustration of one who "could have crept into any alderman's thumb-ring." In Verdi's own day both it and the women's quartet, "Quell'otre, quel tino" were regularly encoed.

In his pioneering life-and-works of Verdi, Francis Toye concludes his chapter on *Falstaff* with the words: "Only one comic opera by Mozart, one by Rossini and one by Wagner can compare with it—and of all these great works it is certainly not the least in stature." True; but

"comedy" covers a wide range; and of the operas referred to by Toye only *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* remains within the bounds of sparkling charm and *vis comica*. In *Le Nozze di Figaro* or *Don Giovanni* (whichever was meant), deeper issues are involved; and both the Countess Almaviva and Donna Anna have a tragic side. Walther von Stolzing's love and his art are both serious matters; and so is the lesson that Hans Sachs preaches to his fellow-citizens. Can a similar element be found in *Falstaff*?

Certainly not in the character of the name part. The pathetic old man who as he lay dying "babbled o' green fields" has no part in Verdi's opera. His Fat Knight is a figure of fun throughout. Even when his spirits are at their lowest ebb, as in the opening scene of Act III, we feel no more sorry for him than we do for Baron Ochs after he has been "pinked" by Octavian's sword. (Indeed, when composing *Der Rosenkavalier*, Richard Strauss recommended to his librettist that he study *Falstaff* as a model for that very moment.) Nor is it different with Ford. His schemes for trapping his wife are so preposterous as to lose him any sympathy to which his

imagined condition as a wronged husband might entitle him. If his great monologue ("È sogno o realtà?") at times recalls the music of *Otello* it is only by way of parody. Admittedly, one man's farce is another's tragedy; but nothing in Ford's lines suggests that he is genuinely suffering. Nor would Verdi have chosen Italy's leading comic baritone, Antonio Pini-Corsi (subsequently the creator of Schaunard in Puccini's *La Bohème*) to impersonate the role if he had intended a serious impersonation. Rather, it is in the music for the lovers that he finds that spiritual dimension that reaches beyond the world of laughter. Their lyricism is pervaded by a sense of transience, of "Time's winged chariot hurrying near"—largely due to the fast tempo in which so much of it is couched. Another aspect is its delicacy and restraint—"perhaps the only music in which the love of boy and girl is adequately interpreted in accordance not only with Latin but with Anglo-Saxon ideals" (Toye again). The avoidance of an extended love duet was originally Boito's idea ("Just as one sprinkles sugar on a cake," he wrote to Verdi, "so I would like



Margaret Price during Nannetta's "Sul fil d'un soffio etesio" at the San Francisco Opera in 1970.

to sprinkle the whole comedy with that happy love without concentrating it at any one point"). Even Vaughan Williams—not one of the opera's admirers, otherwise he would hardly have ventured on his own *Sir John in Love*—was won over by this music, "inspired by a lot of typical Italian slush about kissing."

Ultimately, however, it is the range of Verdi's musical thought, distilled and refined through more than fifty years of experience, that gives the opera its stature. The score is bathed in a glow of humanity and kindness, and, in the final scene, of picturesque fantasy. Here it has a marked advantage over the play. For

when Shakespeare transports us to Windsor Forest, he never tempts us to share Falstaff's illusion. His poetry for all its imagery ("Fairies blue, green grey and white...") remains earthbound; anything else would have sounded very odd in the mouth of such a person as Mistress Quickly, the Fairy Queen of the drama. Verdi's music, on the other hand, not only creates a world of enchantment comparable to that of Mendelssohn's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, but sets it within a context of knockabout comedy without the faintest sense of incongruity. Great composers are adept at getting the best of both worlds. ■

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Jean-Pierre Ponnelle during a pause onstage between 1985 *Lear* rehearsals.

Ponnelle on *Falstaff*

By ALLAN ULRICH

Nine years after it first saw the light of late afternoon in the unique landscape that inspired it, Jean-Pierre Ponnelle's

Allan Ulrich reviews music and dance for the San Francisco Examiner, contributes frequently to the Los Angeles Times, and is music and dance editor for the San Francisco Focus. He is a contributor to the New Grove Dictionary of Music in the United States.

celebrated Glyndebourne Festival production of Verdi's last opera, *Falstaff*, arrives at the San Francisco Opera this season. The occasion marks the production's American premiere (it later travels to the Chicago Lyric Opera and the Houston Grand Opera), a fitting gesture since this altogether extraordinary work has rarely been absent from either the company's affections or from its repertoire.

The San Francisco Opera has jolly

well earned the right to a new *Falstaff*. It seems proper that it should come from the director-designer, who, starting with *La Cenerentola* in 1969, has given this community three of the most exquisitely appointed and deeply felt comedy productions of its six-decade history.

Although Ponnelle has earned a somewhat unjust reputation for stuffing his suitcases with his productions and

continued on p. 51

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PILAR LORENGAR



NIKKI LI HARTLIEP



MARILYN HORNE



DOLORA ZAJIC

Spanish soprano **Pilar Lorengar**, a favorite of San Francisco Opera audiences since her American debut here in 1964, is Mistress Ford in *Falstaff*. Acclaimed in all of the world's principal opera houses, Miss Lorengar performed here most recently as Agathe in the 1985 Ring Festival performances of *Der Freischütz*. One of the most highly honored and beloved singers at the Deutsche Oper Berlin, she was awarded the title Kammersängerin in 1963 and Honored Member in 1983, her 25th year with the company. Her Salzburg bow in 1961 was followed by debuts at La Scala, Covent Garden, the Vienna Staatsoper and with the companies of Brussels, Paris, Hamburg and Munich, among others. In her debut season with San Francisco Opera, she appeared as Liù in *Turandot*, Desdemona in *Otello*, the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, and Micaëla in *Così fan tutte*. In 1984 she scored huge successes in programs of zarzuela arias with Plácido Domingo in Salzburg and San Francisco. Miss Lorengar's Metropolitan Opera debut was as Donna Elvira in 1965, and she has returned there in many leading roles, also appearing with the companies of Chicago, Dallas, Miami, Denver, Cincinnati and Washington, D.C. On tour, she has performed in Japan, Israel, South America and South Africa. Her 1985 credits include Tosca at the Sydney Opera House and Desdemona opposite Plácido Domingo's *Otello* in a unique performance in the Madrid football stadium before more than 40,000 people. Renowned around the world as a concert artist, Miss Lorengar has made a large number of concert albums and complete opera recordings, among the most recent being Gluck's *Iphigénie en Tauride*.

Soprano **Nikki Li Hartlieb** is Mistress Ford in the family performances of *Falstaff* and portrays Marianne in *Der Rosenkavalier*. Last fall she sang the title role in the family performances of *Madama Butterfly*, a role she has also sung with the Marin Opera and Minnesota Opera. She made her Company debut as Anna in *Nabucco* during the 1982 summer season and returned as the Slave in *Salome* that fall. Miss Hartlieb was a participant in the 1983 Merola Opera Program, during which she appeared as Antonia in *The Tales of Hoffmann* at Stern Grove. For the Showcase series in Herbst Theatre, she has appeared as Mimi in *La Bohème* (1982), the Female Chorus in *The Rape of Lucretia* (1983) and in the title role of *Rodelinda* (1985). On Western Opera Theater tours she has portrayed the Countess in *The Marriage of Figaro* and Mimi. A 1984-85 Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, Miss Hartlieb was the winner of the first prize Schwabacher Memorial Award in 1983, and was featured in the 1984 series of Schwabacher Debut Recitals. During the 1985 Ring Festival, she sang the *Wesendoncklieder* on a program of Wagner's chamber music.

Internationally celebrated mezzo-soprano **Marilyn Horne** returns to San Francisco Opera to sing the title role of *Orlando* and to add the role of Mistress Quickly in *Falstaff* to her impressive repertoire. The Pennsylvania native was last seen here as Dalila in the 1983 production of *Samson et Dalila* and the previous year in the title role of Rossini's *La Cenerentola* and as Adalgisa opposite Joan Sutherland's Norma. It was as Adalgisa that Miss Horne made her stunning Metropolitan Opera debut in 1970, since which time she has triumphed in all of the world's major houses. San Francisco Opera is honored to be the company with which she made her first major operatic appearance, singing Marie in *Wozzeck*. Subsequent Company credits include Marzelline in *Fidelio*, Hermia in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Marina in *Boris Godunov* (1961); Musetta in *La Bohème*, Marie in *Daughter of the Regiment* and Nedda in *Pagliacci* (1962); Eboli in *Don Carlo* (1966); and the title role of *Tancredi*

(1979), the vehicle of her sensational 1977 debut at the Rome Opera. In 1981 she opened the Fall Season in the role of Arsace in *Semiramide*, one of the numerous "trouser roles" in which she is considered to have no peer today. A busy concert artist with nearly 1,000 recitals to her credit, she has been featured in recent years in Carnegie Hall concert performances of *Tancredi*, *Semiramide*, *La Donna del Lago*, *Orlando*, and *Semele*. Her autobiography, entitled *My Life, Marilyn Horne*, has been published by Atheneum, and she is known to millions from her appearances on television talk shows and numerous "Live from Lincoln Center" concerts, both solo and with such colleagues as Luciano Pavarotti, Joan Sutherland and Leontyne Price. Among her many awards are New York City's Handel Medallion and the Rossini Foundation's Golden Plaque.

Currently in her second year as an Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, mezzo-soprano **Dolora Zajic** is Mistress Quickly in the family performances of *Falstaff*. Earlier this year she was seen as Schwertleite in *Die Walküre* during the Ring Festival, and for the Opera Center's 1985 Showcase series portrayed Bertrando in Handel's *Rodelinda* and Marcolfa in Susa's *The Love of Don Perlimplin*, a role she created at the work's world premiere in 1984 at the State University of New York at Purchase. A native of Nevada, she made her 1984 Company debut as a Priestess in the summer season production of *Aida* and returned that fall for parts in *Ernani*, *Elektra* and *Rigoletto*. Miss Zajic participated in the 1983 Merola Opera Program, appearing in Offenbach's *The Tales of Hoffmann* at Stern Grove, and portrayed Suzuki in Western Opera Theater's touring production of *Madame Butterfly*. Other roles she has performed include Santuzza in *Cavalleria Rusticana*, the Principessa in *Suor Angelica*, Siebel in *Faust*, Tisbe in *La Cenerentola* and Cherubino in *The Marriage of Figaro*. Among Miss Zajic's numerous awards is the bronze medal at the VII International Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow in 1982.



SUSAN QUITTMAYER



KATHRYN COWDRICK



RUTH ANN SWENSON



LI-CHAN CHEN

Mezzo-soprano **Susan Quittmeyer** is Mistress Page in *Falstaff*. The New York native began her association with San Francisco Opera in 1979 as La Ciesca in *Gianni Schicchi* and Dorabella in the family matinees of *Così fan tutte*. Her roles with the Company in Fall Seasons have included a highly praised Composer in the 1983 *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Paulina in *The Queen of Spades* and Mercédès in *Carmen*. This last summer she sang Waltraute in the Ring Festival performances of *Die Walküre*, a role she also sang in the fall of 1981 and summer of 1983. With Los Angeles Opera Theater she has appeared as the Composer, as Dorabella in *Così fan tutte* and as Octavian in *Der Rosenkavalier*. Miss Quittmeyer bowed with Baltimore Opera as Siebel in *Faust*; with Mobile Opera as Carmen, and with Hawaii Opera Theatre as Cherubino in *The Marriage of Figaro*, a role she has also sung with Montreal Opera. Other credits include Nicklausse in *The Tales of Hoffmann* with Denver Opera and Smeton in *Anna Bolena* at San Diego Opera. Recent appearances include the Composer with the Strasbourg Opera and Cherubino at Santa Fe Opera, a company she has been associated with for three years. Upcoming engagements include the Composer with the Philadelphia Opera, Cherubino at San Diego Opera, Zerlina with the Denver Opera and Octavian with the Cincinnati Opera.

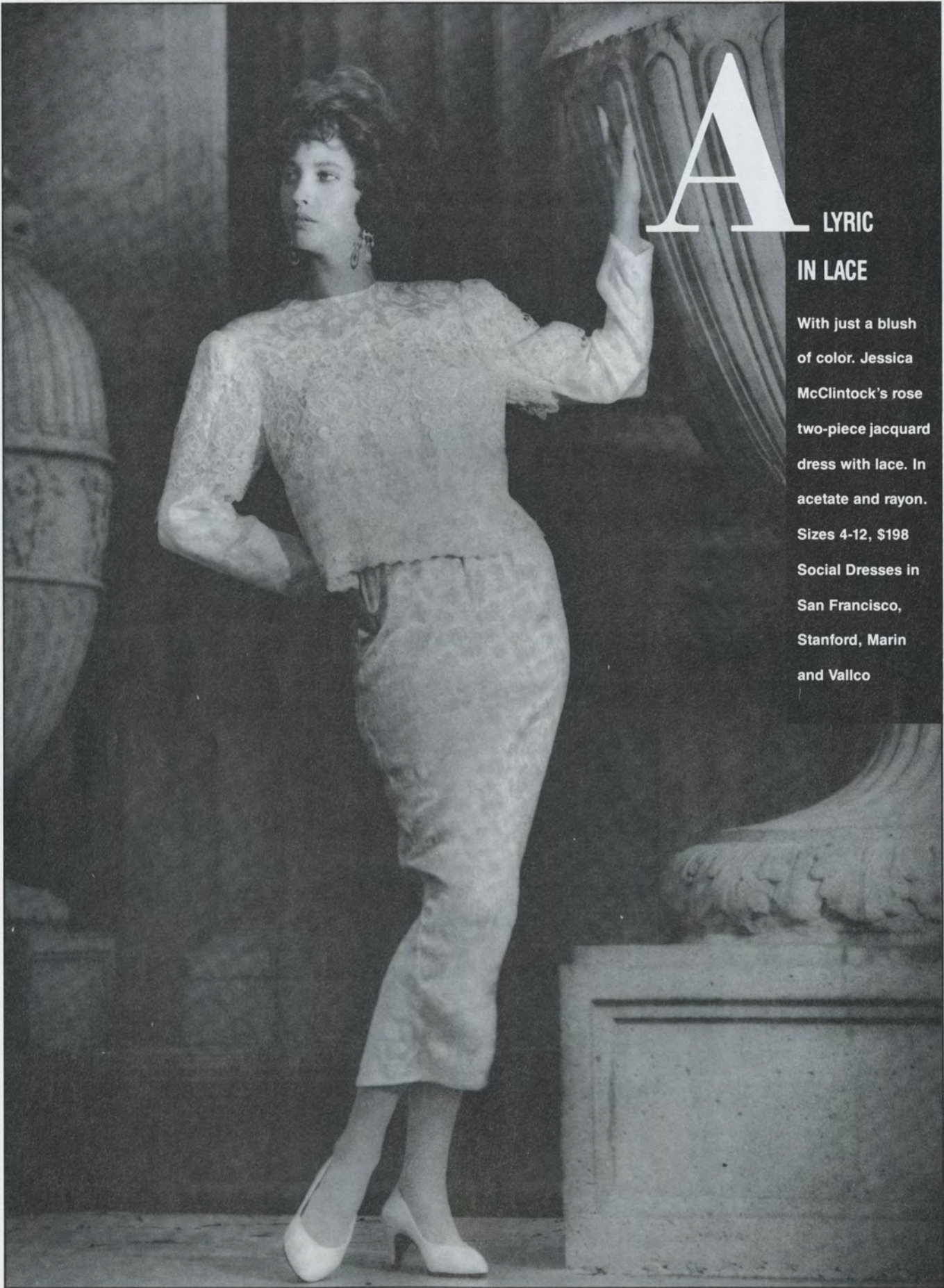
Mezzo-soprano **Kathryn Cowdrick** makes her San Francisco Opera debut as Mlle. Dangeville in *Adriana Lecouvreur*, appearing also this season as Mistress Page in the Family performances of *Falstaff* and as an Orphan in *Der Rosenkavalier*. A participant in the 1984 Merola Opera Program, Miss Cowdrick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

Soprano **Ruth Ann Swenson** appears as Dorinda in *Orlando* and Nannetta in *Falstaff*. She made her Company debut as Despina in the 1983 summer *Così fan tutte* and returned that fall as Echo in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Olga in *La Grande Duchesse de Gérolstein* and Xenia in *Boris Godunov*. Last fall she appeared in *L'Elisir d'Amore* and *Elektra*. As a participant in the Merola Opera Program for two summers, she was heard as Ann in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Sally in *Die Fledermaus* and Gilda in *Rigoletto*, a role she performed on Western Opera Theater's 1982 national tour. A 1983 and '84 Adler Fellow with the Opera Center, she appeared in Showcase productions of Harbison's *Full Moon in March* (1982), *L'Ormino* and *The Rape of Lucretia* (1983) and Belisa in Susa's *The Love of Don Perlimplin* (1985), a role she created at the work's world premiere at the 1984 PepsiCo Summerfare in New York. Last March she replaced an ailing colleague in the title role of *Martha* for Portland Opera, winning critical acclaim after learning the role in a matter of days. Highlights of her 1984-85 season include her Seattle Opera debut as Adina in *L'Elisir d'Amore*, Despina in *Così fan tutte* for the Grand Théâtre de Genève, and Aennchen in *Der Freischütz* during the 1985 Ring Festival in San Francisco. Future engagements include Susanna in *The Marriage of Figaro* and Juliette in Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette* for Portland Opera, Handel's *Messiah* with the San Francisco Symphony and her Netherlands Opera debut as Nannetta.

Soprano **Li-Chan Chen** appears this season as Nannetta in the family performances of *Falstaff* and as a Noble Orphan in *Der Rosenkavalier*. She made her San Francisco Opera debut as the Fourth Bridesmaid in *Der Freischütz* during the 1985 Ring Festival. Miss Chen has performed extensively with the major orchestras of her native Taiwan, including the Taipei City Orchestra and the Taiwan Symphony. Her operatic debut as Pamina in *The Magic Flute* with the Taipei Opera Theater was followed by performances as Marguerite in *Faust* at the Taipei Music and Arts Festival. She participated in the 1984 Merola Opera Program, during which she was heard as Nannetta at Stern Grove and won four awards at the San Francisco Opera Center Auditions Grand Finals. She returned to Taiwan in December 1984 to sing the role of Musetta in *La Bohème* with the Taipei City Orchestra. Currently an Adler Fellow with the Opera Center, she appeared as a member of the Chorus in this year's Showcase production of *The Love of Don Perlimplin* and is a member of the touring Center Singers.

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

New Production

Opera in three acts by GIUSEPPE VERDI

Libretto by ARRIGO BOITO

After *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and parts of *Henry IV* by William Shakespeare

Falstaff

(in Italian)

Conductor

Maurizio Arena

Richard Bradshaw (Nov. 25, 30)

Production

Jean-Pierre Ponnelle

Designer

Jean-Pierre Ponnelle

Stage Director for Family Performances

Robin Thompson

Lighting Designer

Thomas J. Munn

Chorus Director

Richard Bradshaw

Musical Preparation

Jeffrey Goldberg

Mark Haffner

Susanna Lemberskaya

Robert Morrison

Jonathan Khuner

Philip Eisenberg

Joseph De Rugeriis

Prompter

Philip Eisenberg

Joseph De Rugeriis (Nov. 25, 30)

Assistant to Mr. Ponnelle

Vera Lúcia Calábria

Assistant Stage Director

Paula Williams

Stage Manager

Gretchen Mueller

Scenery constructed in

San Francisco Opera Scenic Studios

Costumes executed by

San Francisco Opera Costume Shop

First performance:

Milan, February 9, 1893

First San Francisco Opera performance:

September 27, 1927

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 20 AT 2:00

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 23 AT 8:00

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 27 AT 2:00

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 30 AT 7:30

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2 AT 8:00

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5 AT 8:00

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 8 AT 8:00

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 25 AT 8:00

(Family Performance)

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 30 AT 2:00

(Family Matinee)

CAST

(in order of appearance)

		November 25 and 30 (Family Performances)
<i>Sir John Falstaff</i>	Ingvar Wixell	Richard Pendergraph*
<i>Bardolfo</i>	Joseph Frank	Dennis Petersen
<i>Pistola</i>	Kevin Langan	Monte Pederson
<i>Host of the Garter Inn</i>	Daniel Becker	Daniel Becker
<i>Robin, page to Falstaff</i>	Aaron Denny	Sasha Radetsky
<i>Mistress Quickly</i>	Marilyn Horne	Dolora Zajic
<i>Dr. Caius</i>	Rémy Corazza	Daniel Harper
<i>Mistress Meg Page</i>	Susan Quittmeyer	Kathryn Cowdrick
<i>Mistress Alice Ford</i>	Pilar Lorengar	Nikki Li Hartliep
<i>Nannetta</i>	Ruth Ann Swenson	Li-Chan Chen
<i>Fenton</i>	Walter MacNeil	James Schwisow*
<i>Ford</i>	Alan Titus	David Malis
<i>Mr. Page</i>	Matthew Lord	Matthew Lord
<i>Townspeople, servants, masqueraders</i>		

* San Francisco Opera debut

PLACE AND TIME: Windsor, England, on the banks of the Thames, during the reign of Henry IV

ACT I *Scene 1:* The taproom of the Garter Inn
Scene 2: The garden of Ford's house

INTERMISSION

ACT II *Scene 1:* The taproom of the Garter Inn
Scene 2: A room in Ford's house

INTERMISSION

ACT III *Scene 1:* Outside the Garter Inn
Scene 2: Herne's Oak in Windsor Forest

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

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

The performance will last approximately three hours.

The Family Performances of *Falstaff* feature Supertitles by Paul Moor. 1985 Fall Season Supertitles underwritten through a generous grant from American Express via the San Francisco Opera Guild.

Falstaff/Synopsis

ACT I

SCENE 1—The dissolute knight, Sir John Falstaff, has been writing letters. Dr. Caius enters to complain of outrages committed by Falstaff and his henchmen Pistola and Bardolfo. He is summarily rejected and Falstaff is left considering how he may pay his bill at the Inn. He decides to send two letters he has just written to Mistress Ford and Mistress Page, wives of well-to-do merchants, and keepers of their purses. He thinks they will be easy prey to his charm and station. Pistola and Bardolfo refuse to deliver the letters for fear of staining their honor, an excuse which Falstaff will not accept, believing honor to be an illusion. He entrusts the letters to a page and dismisses Pistola and Bardolfo.

SCENE 2—Mistress Page and Mistress Quickly have come to tell Mistress Ford of the letter Meg Page has received from Sir John. Alice Ford, accompanied by her daughter Nannetta, is as eager to tell Meg of an identical letter she has just received. Together they scheme to outwit him. Ford, Caius and Fenton enter with Pistola and Bardolfo and, not seeing the ladies, who have hastily hidden themselves, discuss the information which Pistola and Bardolfo have brought to Ford that Falstaff has designs on his wife. Alice is afraid of her husband's jealous nature, and when Ford leaves, followed by Caius and the two reprobates, the ladies also depart leaving Nannetta and Fenton, who are in love, a brief moment alone. The ladies return and Fenton hides. Alice decides to send Mistress Quickly with a note to Falstaff, setting a tryst at which they will punish him. Catching a glimpse of Fenton hiding, the ladies fear they are overheard and scatter, leaving Fenton and Nannetta alone together again. The men re-enter and Ford decides to visit Falstaff under an assumed name to try to discover his plan and outwit him. The ladies return and the two groups outline their separate intentions for thwarting the plans of the knight.

ACT II

SCENE 1—Pistola and Bardolfo return to Falstaff and seek his forgiveness, which is casually granted. Mistress Quickly comes to deliver her message, and Falstaff readily agrees to visit Alice between two and three o'clock. No sooner has Mistress Quickly gone than Ford is announced under the name of Master Fontana. He offers Falstaff a handsome reward to win the love of a certain Alice Ford, who has so far repulsed his advances. He says that if Sir John can succeed then he may also hope to do so. Falstaff agrees at once and confesses that he already has an assignation with the lady. Falstaff leaves to dress for the occasion and Ford is overcome with rage and jealousy.

SCENE 2—Alice and Meg are waiting for Falstaff. Mistress Quickly returns from the Garter Inn and reports on her success. Nannetta enters and tearfully tells them that her father insists that she marry Dr. Caius. The ladies promise to help her escape this fate and Alice calls for the laundry basket, which is an important part of her plan to humble Falstaff. Final preparations are made and as Falstaff is seen approaching, all but Alice hide. Falstaff enters and immediately begins to court Alice, who teases him by telling him that she knows he is interested in Meg Page. Falstaff indignantly denies this, but Mistress Quickly enters to say that Mistress Page has arrived in a fluster. Meg arrives and tells them that Ford is approach-

ing, crying for vengeance. Mistress Quickly adds her voice to the panic, and Falstaff has barely time to hide behind a screen before Ford enters with his followers and searches the room, missing the screen but emptying the linen basket. As Ford rushes out to search the rest of the house, Falstaff emerges and is soon hidden in the basket. Nannetta and Fenton leave the search and in turn hide behind the screen. Ford and his followers return and search the room again, this time omitting the linen basket. Suddenly a kiss is heard from behind the screen and Ford immediately concludes that Falstaff is hidden there. With great care he makes his tactical plan to assault the screen and capture Falstaff, but when the screen is removed, showing Nannetta and Fenton, he is doubly enraged. Bardolfo and Pistola start the search again on a false scent, and as soon as Ford has rushed upstairs, Alice orders the servants to tip the contents of the basket out of the window into the Thames. She sends for her husband and by way of explanation leads him to the window.

ACT III

SCENE 1—Falstaff is sitting outside the Inn meditating on the ways of the world and seeking to wash the Thames out of his system with drafts of sack. Mistress Quickly comes to offer Mistress Ford's apologies. Meanwhile Alice, Meg, Ford, Caius and Fenton conceal themselves to see how he takes it. Intent on humbling Falstaff still further, Alice has given Mistress Quickly a letter inviting him to meet her at midnight by Herne's Oak in Windsor Forest disguised as Herne the Black Hunter, whose ghost is believed to haunt the spot. Falstaff, the eternal optimist, takes Quickly into the Inn to discuss this renewed hope of the conquest of Alice, who meanwhile describes her plan in full to the others. All are to assume disguises and frighten Sir John out of his wits. Ford sees a chance to further his plans for Nannetta to marry Dr. Caius. Mistress Quickly overhears their plotting.

SCENE 2—Fenton enters seeking Nannetta, who answers him from the depths of the forest. Alice arrives, not yet disguised, but hands a monk's disguise to Fenton. Mistress Quickly is disguised as a witch and Nannetta as Titania. Together they plan to outwit Ford and Caius. Meg enters, also in disguise, and all vanish as Falstaff is heard approaching. He appears on the stroke of midnight wearing the antlered headdress of Herne. He calls on Alice and, now in disguise, she comes to him. Meg's voice is heard in alarm at the approach of witches, and Nannetta announces the arrival of goblins and fairies. Falstaff falls terrified to the ground. Nannetta and her followers beat and torment him cruelly to the amusement of all the others. He at last repents, but Bardolfo, growing bold and incautious, unmasks and Falstaff soon realizes he has been tricked. Mistress Quickly takes Bardolfo aside, disguises him as Titania and presents him to Dr. Caius in place of Nannetta. Ford, believing the figure in white to be his daughter, prepares to announce the betrothal of the two. Alice leads forth another masked pair to make a double ceremony and Ford pronounces both couples united. All unmask and Ford realizes he has been out-manuevered. Falstaff takes courage from Ford's frustration, but Ford is satisfied with the revenge on Falstaff, and he agrees to let Nannetta marry Fenton. Falstaff leads the group in a final ensemble, and all ends merrily on the theme of "all the world's a jest."

Falstaff

Photos taken in rehearsal by David Powers



Final Scene



(top, l. to r.) Kevin Langan, Walter MacNeil; (bottom, l. to r.) Joseph Frank, Alan Titus, Rémy Corazza



(above) Ingoar Wixell

(below) Ingoar Wixell, Pilar Lorengar



Ingoar Wixell, Alan Titus

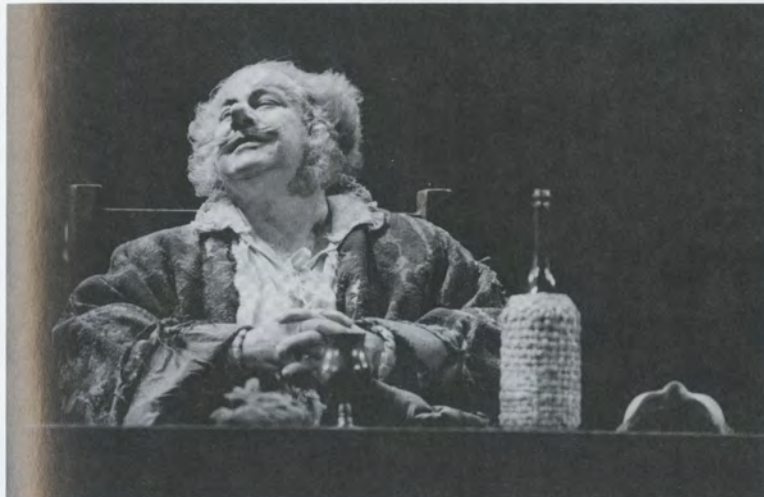




(above) Ruth Ann Swenson, Walter MacNeil



Aaron Denny, Ruth Ann Swenson, Pilar Lorengar, Susan Quittmeyer, Marilyn Horne



(above) Ingvar Wixell

(below) Pilar Lorengar, Ingvar Wixell



Susan Quittmeyer, Marilyn Horne



Marilyn Horne, Ingvar Wixell



Act 1, Scene 2



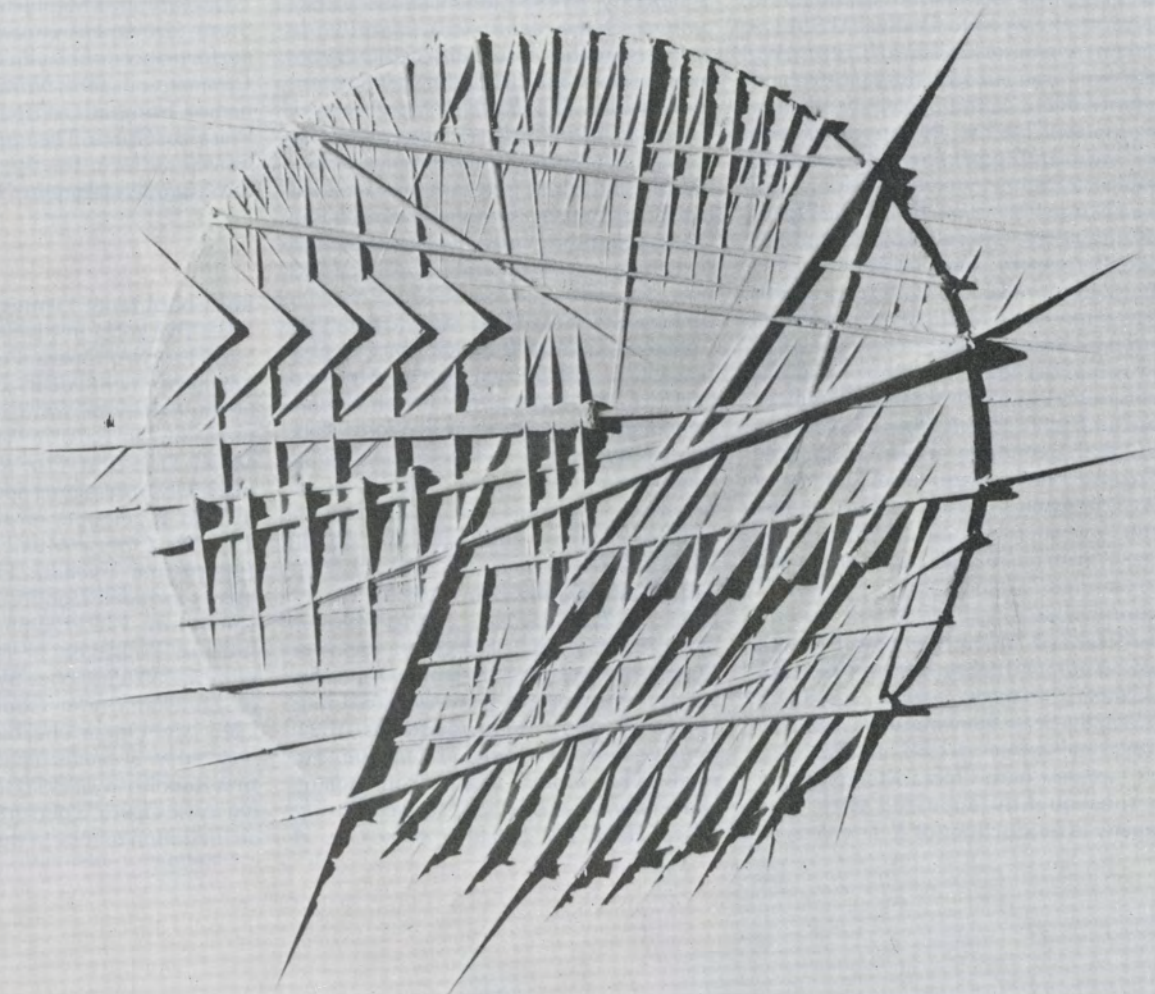
Ingvar Wixell



Aaron Denny, Ingvar Wixell

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ALAN TITUS



DAVID MALIS

Returning to the site of his 1967 American debut as Valentin in *Faust*, Swedish baritone **Ingvær Wixell** sings the title role of *Falstaff*. He was seen here last fall in the title role of *Rigoletto*, the vehicle of his 1973 Metropolitan Opera debut and a part he performed in a recently televised film by Jean-Pierre Ponnelle. Since his San Francisco Opera debut, his Company credits have included 19 assignments, including Belcore in *L'Elisir d'Amore*, Marcello in *La Bohème*, Count Almaviva in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Scarpia in *Tosca*, Count di Luna in *Il Trovatore*, Tonio in *Pagliacci*, Mandryka in *Arabella*, and the title roles of *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and *Simon Boccanegra*. One of the foremost operatic baritones today, Wixell made his professional debut as Papageno with the Stockholm Opera in 1955. In 1962 he appeared for the first time with the Deutsche Oper in Berlin as Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte*, the role of his British debut at Glyndebourne that same year. A frequent performer at Covent Garden, he was first heard there in *Un Ballo in Maschera* with the Stockholm Opera in 1960 and has since appeared with the Royal Opera as Simon Boccanegra, Scarpia, Belcore, Mandryka and Rigoletto. In the fall of 1979 he took part in performances of *Tosca* on the Royal Opera's tour of Korea and Japan, and last year was Belcore in Sir Geraint Evans's farewell performances of *L'Elisir d'Amore* at Covent Garden. Since his 1973 Metropolitan Opera debut, he has appeared there in *Il Trovatore*, *Simon Boccanegra*, *Salome*, *La Bohème*, *Tosca*, *Aida* and *La Traviata*. Other American companies he has performed with include Houston Grand Opera, Dallas Opera, Washington Opera, Miami Opera and the Lyric Opera of Chicago. He regularly sings in the world's great opera houses, and in 1978 the King of Sweden conferred upon him the "Litteris et Artibus" gold medal. Earlier this year he scored a major triumph in performances of *Aida* at the Verona Arena.

Baritone **Richard Pendergraph** makes his San Francisco Opera debut in the title role of *Falstaff* for the family performances, and also appears as Sciarone in *Tosca* and the Bosun in *Billy Budd*. A native of North Carolina, he has just completed a seventeen-week tour with Western Opera Theater, appearing as Alidoro in Rossini's *La Cenerentola*. Last summer he sang the title role in *Falstaff* at Stern Grove with the Merola Opera Program. During the winter of 1984, Pendergraph completed a six-week tour of Puccini's *La Bohème* with the New York City Opera National Company, performing the role of Marcello. In the summer of 1983 he sang Lescaut in Puccini's *Manon Lescaut* with the Chautauqua Opera. At the International Arts Festival in Corfu, Greece, he sang Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte*, the Music Master in *Ariadne auf Naxos* and Junius in Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia*. Other credits include performances with Charlotte Opera, North Carolina Opera, the Opera Company of Philadelphia, New Jersey State Opera and the Birmingham Civic Opera. He recently made his debut with the Dallas Opera as Junius in *The Rape of Lucretia*.

Baritone **Alan Titus** is Ford in *Falstaff*. The New York native first appeared in San Francisco as Figaro in Spring Opera Theater's 1972 production of *The Barber of Seville*, and made his Company debut in 1975 as Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte*. He was most recently seen here as Arlecchino in the 1983 *Ariadne auf Naxos*, the role of his 1975 Metropolitan Opera debut. He first attracted international attention when he created the role of the Celebrant in the 1971 world premiere of Leonard Bernstein's *Mass*, and bowed the following season at New York City Opera, where he has appeared regularly since then. He has participated in a large number of world premieres: Hoiby's *Summer and Smoke* (St. Paul, 1971), Henze's *Rachel La Cubana* (for the NET network), Floyd's *Bilby's Doll* (Houston Grand Opera), Britten's *Owen Wingrave* (BBC television, 1971) and, in his debut with Lyric Opera of Chicago, Penderecki's *Paradise Lost*. He made his European debut with Netherlands Opera in 1973 as

Pelléas in *Pelléas et Mélisande* and has since bowed at the Hamburg Staatsoper as Amida in *L'Ormino*, at the Paris Opera as Eisenstein in *Die Fledermaus*, in Düsseldorf with his first Don Giovanni, at Glyndebourne as Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte* and at the Aix-en-Provence Festival in *La Clemenza di Tito*. He has also sung with the Frankfurt Opera, Scottish National Opera, and the companies of Strasbourg and Marseilles. His television credits include "Live from Lincoln Center" telecasts of *Madama Butterfly*, *Il Turco in Italia*, *La Cenerentola*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and *The Merry Widow*.

Baritone **David Malis** sings three roles for the 1985 Fall Season: Ping in *Turandot*, Silvano in *Un Ballo in Maschera*, and Ford in the family performances of *Falstaff*. He made his Company debut during the 1984 Summer Season in *Don Pasquale*, and performed four roles during the Company's 1984 Fall Season. A native of Georgia, Malis participated in the 1982 and '83 Merola Opera Programs, appearing in *Madama Butterfly* and *Rigoletto* at Villa Montalvo and in *The Magic Flute* and *Tales of Hoffmann* at Sigmund Stern Grove. He portrayed Sharpless and Yamadori in Western Opera Theater's 1983 tour of *Madame Butterfly*. Currently an Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, he appeared in the 1985 Showcase production of Susa's *The Love of Don Perlimplin*, repeating the title role that he created in the work's world premiere at the State University of New York at Purchase in 1984. Earlier this year he toured with the San Francisco Opera Center Singers as Eisenstein in *Die Fledermaus*, and was featured in the Schwabacher Debut Recital Series. Among his numerous awards are this year's gold medal and a \$10,000 George London award from the National Institute of Musical Theater, and the Cardiff Singer of the World Competition, sponsored by the Welsh National Opera and the BBC.



WALTER MACNEIL



JAMES SCHWISOW



JOSEPH FRANK



DENNIS PETERSEN

Tenor **Walter MacNeil** returns to San Francisco Opera as Fenton in *Falstaff*. His last appearance here was during the 1985 *Ring* Festival, when he portrayed Froh, the vehicle of his Company debut during the summer of 1983. He returned in the fall of 1983 to sing Roderigo in *Otello*, Edmondo in *Manon Lescaut* and Alfredo in the family performances of *La Traviata*. Last fall he was seen as Pinkerton in the family performances of *Madama Butterfly*. For the San Francisco Opera Center, he toured with Western Opera Theater in 1982 as the Duke in *Rigoletto* and portrayed Belmonte in the 1984 Showcase production of Mozart's *The Abduction from the Seraglio*. During the 1982-83 season he made his Carnegie Hall debut in a concert production of *Semiramide* with Marilyn Horne and returned to that hall earlier this year in Handel's *Semele*. He appeared as Cassio opposite James McCracken's Otello for the opening season of Opera Colorado and in 1983 was heard at the Carmel Bach Festival as Ferrando in *Così fan tutte*. Other engagements have included Rodolfo in *La Bohème* with Opera Columbus and appearances with Houston Grand Opera as Alfredo in *La Traviata*, a role in which he made his New Orleans Opera debut last November opposite the Germont of his father, Cornell MacNeil. In the summer of 1984 he bowed with New York City Opera as Tamino in *The Magic Flute*. He has also been featured in several major productions by the Bronx Opera.

Tenor **James Schwisow** makes his San Francisco Opera debut as Fenton in the family performances of *Falstaff* and also appears as the Novice in *Billy Budd*. While studying at Juilliard, he appeared in *Falstaff*, *The Magic Flute*, and the world premiere of Hugo Weisgall's *The Hundred Nights*. He was invited to join the Opera Center of the Lyric Opera of Chicago and appeared in Lyric productions of *Andrea Chénier*, *La Bohème*, and the world premiere of Penderecki's *Paradise Lost*. Additional debuts followed at the Spoleto Festival U.S.A. in the

world premiere of Conrad Susa's *Transformations*, with Washington Opera as Paris in *La Belle Hélène* and as Romeo in Gounod's *Romeo and Juliet* with the Lake George Opera Festival. Other credits include performances with the Canadian Opera, Michigan Opera Theatre, Central City Opera, Kentucky Opera, Texas Opera Theatre, Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Opera Theatre of St. Louis and the Dayton Opera. His highly praised concert debut was made with the Indianapolis Symphony in Verdi's Requiem. Last season he portrayed Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* for Los Angeles Opera Theater and the Virginia Opera.

American tenor **Joseph Frank** returns to San Francisco Opera as Bardolfo in *Falstaff*. He made his Company debut in 1974 as the Dancing Master in *Manon Lescaut* and has subsequently appeared in 20 lyric and character roles during the international fall and summer seasons. These roles include Goro in *Madama Butterfly*, L'Incredibile in *Andrea Chénier*, Beppe in *Pagliacci*, Valletto in *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, Pong in *Turandot*, the Abbé de Chazeuil in *Adriana Lecouvreur* and the Dancing Master in *Ariadne auf Naxos*. It was in this last role that he made his Metropolitan Opera debut in 1979, and has returned there for numerous assignments including *Manon Lescaut*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Parade*, *Der Rosenkavalier* (Live from the Met broadcast) and this season is heard as Lacouf in *Les Mamelles de Tirésias*, and L'Arithmétique and La Rainette in *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges*. He is a familiar figure on the stages of leading opera companies, including Houston Grand Opera, San Diego Opera, Tulsa Opera, Miami Opera, Pittsburgh Opera, Dallas Opera and many others. A frequent performer with the Santa Fe Opera, his credits there include the American premiere of the three-act version of Berg's *Lulu*, Korngold's *Violanta*, the world premiere of George Rochberg's *The Confidence Man* and, this past summer, Offenbach's *Orpheus in the Underworld* and the world premiere of John Eaton's *The Tempest*. Other highlights this season are performances of the *St. Matthew Passion* with the Buffalo Philharmonic under Julius Rudel,

Adriana Lecouvreur with Renata Scotto for the Pittsburgh Opera, *Ariadne auf Naxos* for the Houston Grand Opera, and for Hawaii Opera Theatre, sings Sellem in *The Rake's Progress* and four roles in *The Tales of Hoffmann*.

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 Marschallin's 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 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 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. Recent assignments 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.

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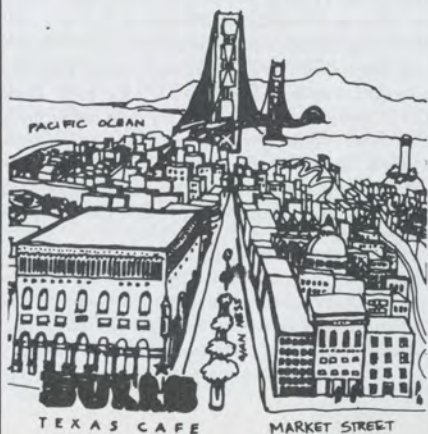
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RÉMY CORAZZA



DANIEL HARPER



KEVIN LANGAN

French tenor **Rémy Corazza** returns to San Francisco Opera as Dr. Caius in *Falstaff*. Last seen here as Prince Paul in Offenbach's *La Grande Duchesse de Gérolstein* during the 1983 Fall Season, he made his American debut with the San Francisco Opera, singing Pang in *Turandot* for the 1977 Fall Season. He began his vocal studies at the Toulouse Conservatory and went on to the National Conservatory in Paris, eventually winning prizes from the Opéra-Comique and Paris Opera as well as the first prize in the International Singing Competition in Toulouse. He began his career as first tenor with the Théâtre de l'Opéra de Paris and is currently a member of the Opéra du Rhin in Strasbourg. With a repertoire of over 30 French, Italian and German roles, Corazza has appeared with most major opera companies, including the houses of Brussels, Liège, Bordeaux, Lyons, Marseilles, Nancy, Nice, Paris, Rouen, Strasbourg, Toulouse, Lisbon and Geneva, as well as the Salzburg Festival. Upcoming engagements include *The Tsar's Bride* in Monte Carlo and productions of *Montségur* and *L'Heure Espagnole* in Paris.

Tenor **Daniel Harper** sings four roles during San Francisco Opera's 1985 Fall Season: Altoum in *Turandot*, Dr. Caius in the family performances of *Falstaff*, Maintop in *Billy Budd* and the Innkeeper in *Der Rosenkavalier*. As a member of the 1983 Merola Opera Program, he sang the title role in the Stern Grove performance of *The Tales of Hoffmann* and Pinkerton in *Madame Butterfly*, a role he also performed on Western Opera Theater's 1983 nationwide tour. He made his Company debut in *Aida* during the 1984 Summer Season, and was seen last fall as Don Riccardo in *Ernani* and as Borsa in *Rigoletto*. Currently in his second year as an Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, Harper sang the role of Grimoaldo in Handel's *Rodelinda* for the 1985 Showcase series. He has extensive concert credits in the Chicago area, including performances and a recording of Schönberg's *Moses und Aron* with the Chicago Symphony under Sir Georg Solti. This year he made an unsche-

duled debut with the San Francisco Symphony when he was called upon to replace an ailing colleague as tenor soloist in the Verdi Requiem conducted by Edo de Waart.

A favorite of San Francisco Opera audiences, bass **Kevin Langan** returns for his sixth consecutive season with the Company to sing Zoroastro in *Orlando*, Pistola in *Falstaff* and Samuele in *Un Ballo in Maschera*. A participant in the 1979 and 1980 Merola Opera Programs, he made his Company debut as the Old Hebrew in *Samson et Dalila* during the 1980 Fall Season. Since then he has earned distinction in 25 San Francisco Opera productions, most recently as Henry VIII in *Anna Bolena* last fall. He has appeared extensively throughout North America, singing a wide variety of roles with New York City Opera, the Canadian Opera of Toronto, San Diego Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Vancouver Opera, Opera/Omaha and the companies of St. Louis, Tulsa, Detroit, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Los Angeles, Palm Beach and San Jose, as well as in his home state with New Jersey State Opera. He made his 1979 recital debut in London under the sponsorship of Elisabeth Schwarzkopf and the late Walter Legge, and last year made his triumphant New York recital debut at Carnegie Recital Hall. His European operatic debut took place in 1982 when he appeared as Osmin in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* in Lyons, France. His future engagements include *The Magic Flute* in Winnipeg and Santa Fe, *Le Nozze di Figaro* in San Diego, *Aida* and *Boris Godunov* in Toronto, and *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* in Santa Fe.



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RICHARD BRADSHAW

Bass-baritone **Monte Pederson** marks his debut season with San Francisco Opera by performing four roles: a Mandarin in *Turandot*, Pistola in the family performances of *Falstaff*, the Jailer in *Tosca*, and First Mate in *Billy Budd*. Currently an Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, Pederson participated in the Merola Opera Programs of 1983 and 1984 and appeared in Merola productions of *Falstaff*, *La Cenerentola*, and *Tales of Hoffmann*. He has toured with Western Opera Theater in *Madame Butterfly* and *La Cenerentola*, and has also performed with the North Bay Opera Company, the Marin Opera Company, Pocket Opera and Midsummer Mozart Festival. Last year he appeared with the Concert Opera Association of San Francisco in Donizetti's *Lucrezia Borgia* at Davies Symphony Hall. This year he has been featured in Pocket Opera concert presentations of Handel's *Imeneo* (the title role), Donizetti's *Maria Stuarda* (Talbot) and *La Cenerentola* (Don Magnifico). Upcoming assignments include the title role of Wagner's *Der Fliegende Holländer* with West Bay Opera in February.

Maestro **Maurizio Arena** is on the War Memorial podium this year for *Adriana Lecouvreur* (a work he recorded for RCA) and *Falstaff*. 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 repetiteur 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 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*.

Richard Bradshaw returns to the War Memorial podium for the family performances of *Falstaff*. He made his American conducting debut with the Company leading the 1977 family performances of *Faust*; his most recent Company credits are *La Traviata* during the 1983 Fall Season and *Madama Butterfly* last fall. Additional assignments have included *Julius Caesar* and John Eaton's *The Cry of Clytemnestra* for Spring Opera Theater. He has led a wide variety of works for the Opera Center's Showcase series, including new works by Vivian Fine and John Harbison as well as Britten's *Rape of Lucretia*, Mozart's *Abduction from the Seraglio* and, this year, Handel's *Rodelinda*. In 1979 Bradshaw led the original version of *La Forza del Destino* for the International Verdi Congress and repeated the assignment for Seattle Opera. He conducted the American premiere of Handel's *Tamerlano* at Indiana University, and this summer earned praise for the world premiere of Eaton's *The Tempest* at Santa Fe. In October of this year he opened a new Lincoln Center Opera-in-Concert series with Verdi's *Giovanna d'Arco* with Margaret Price, Sherrill Milnes and Carlo Bergonzi. Engagements for 1986 include his conducting debut at the Glyndebourne Festival with *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* and performances of a new production of *Porgy and Bess*; opening the Hong Kong Performance Center with *Don Giovanni*; and *The Rake's Progress* for Hawaii Opera Theatre.



JEAN-PIERRE PONNELLE

Returning to San Francisco Opera after an absence of four years, **Jean-Pierre Ponnelle** recreates his production of *Lea*, in which the work received its American premiere during the 1981 Summer Festival, and presents a new production of *Falstaff* adapted from one he originally mounted at the 1976 Glyndebourne Festival. He is also responsible for the production concept and design of *Tosca*. One of the world's most noted and discussed directors and designers, Ponnelle studied at the Sorbonne in Paris, where he was born, and in 1952 created the scenery for the world premiere of *Boulevard Solitude*, Hans Werner Henze's first opera. During the 1950s he designed for the principal German theaters, both opera and drama, and made his design debut at the Vienna Staatsoper, the Rome Opera, the Opéra-Comique in Paris and in San Francisco, where his American debut was marked by productions of Orff's *Carmina Burana* and *The Wise Maiden* in 1958. He returned to San Francisco in 1959 for the American premiere of *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. In 1968 he began to assume dual responsibility as director/designer with productions of *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and *Così fan tutte* at the Salzburg Festival, where he has returned for numerous productions. The first American project both designed and directed by Ponnelle was San Francisco Opera's *La Cenerentola*, seen here for the first time in 1969 and revived for the 1974 and '82 Fall Seasons. Other Ponnelle San Francisco productions include *Così fan tutte*, *Otello*, *Der Fliegende Holländer*, *Turandot*, *Gianni Schicchi*, *Cavalleria Rusticana*, *Pagliacci*, *Il Prigioniero*, *Idomeneo* and *Carmen*. His productions have been seen in all of the world's major houses. In 1981, he staged *Tristan und Isolde* at Bayreuth, a production that was subsequently filmed. His latest productions at the Salzburg Festival are *Contes d'Hoffmann*, *The Magic Flute* and *Idomeneo*. For the Zurich Opera, he mounted a highly acclaimed Monteverdi cycle and is also staging an ongoing Mozart cycle: *Mitridate*, *Idomeneo* and *The Abduction from the*

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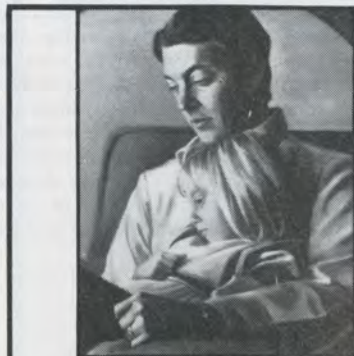
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THOMAS J. MUNN

Seraglio. Other successes in the past years include Wagner's *Liebesverbot* (Munich), *Così fan tutte*, *Nozze di Figaro* and *Don Giovanni* (Paris), *Parsifal* (Cologne), *Fidelio* (Berlin), *Aida* (Covent Garden), *La Clemenza di Tito* (Metropolitan Opera), *Cardillac* (Munich), *Cavalleria Rusticana/Pagliacci* (Vienna), and *Lulu* (1985 Munich Opera Festival). Most of Jean-Pierre Ponnelle's productions have been and will be televised such as the forthcoming new production of *Le Nozze di Figaro* at the Metropolitan this fall. Future plans include a new *Frau ohne Schatten* at La Scala, *Ariadne auf Naxos* at Houston, and the world premiere of a new Reimann opera, *The Trojan Women*, at Munich. Television viewers have been privileged to see many of his productions, including Mozart's *Idomeneo* from the Met, *The Magic Flute* from the Salzburg Festival, as well as filmed versions of *Madama Butterfly*, *Carmina Burana*, *Rigoletto*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *La Cenerentola*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *La Clemenza di Tito*, and the three extant Monteverdi operas.

Robin Thompson stages the family performances of *Falstaff*. He began his association with San Francisco Opera as an assistant stage director in 1979 and made his Company directorial debut with the 1982 English-language production of *The Marriage of Figaro*. He subsequently directed *La Gioconda* for the 1983 Fall Season and *Rigoletto* the following fall. A native Californian, Thompson received his operatic training at Indiana University sponsored by a grant from the James B. Pendleton Foundation of Los Angeles. He has received both a National Opera Institute Grant and the San Francisco Opera Guild Scholarship. He made his Santa Fe Opera debut in 1983 with a new production of *The Magic Flute*, followed by his New York City Opera debut directing Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress* in the famed David Hockney sets from the San Francisco Opera. In November of this year he directs new Montreal Opera productions of *Suor Angelica* and *Cavalleria Rusticana* that will be

telecast throughout Canada. The summer of 1986 will see the first installment of a new mounting of Wagner's complete *Ring of the Nibelung* for Artpark in Lewiston, New York, under the baton of New York City Opera Music Director Christopher Keene.

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, including all four of the operas of last summer's Ring Festival. He has also designed the scenery as well as the lighting for *Nabucco* and *Salome* in 1982, *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* in 1981, *Roberto Devereux* and *Pelléas et Mélisande* in 1979 and *Billy Budd* in 1978. In addition to his numerous design credits for the War Memorial stage, Munn has designed for Broadway, Off-Broadway and regional theater companies throughout the United States and Europe. His 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.

Ponnelle continued from p.32

sending them from city to city, he has been extolled, too, for tailoring his staging and design concepts to complement the theatrical ambience of a particular opera house. Thanks to the telecast on PBS, audiences throughout America have sampled the enchantment of Ponnelle's complex production of Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, created expressly for the panoramic expanses and stoned archways of the Felsenreitschule in Salzburg. There was, too, the 1978 premiere of Aribert Reimann's *Lear*, designed to exploit the state-of-the-craft stage facilities of Munich's National Theater. Adapted for the War Memorial, the opera came to San Francisco in 1981, and reappeared to marked success earlier this season.

The Glyndebourne *Falstaff*, planned for an 800-seat house, in which wood serves as a prominent feature of the decor, will not adapt to the marbled environment of this 3,200-seat opera house without radical rethinking. Caught between final rehearsals for the *Lear* revival, a week back in Europe and preparations for the mounting of *Falstaff*, Ponnelle surveyed the photographs of the Glyndebourne staging and cautioned his interrogator that the present adaptation is much more than a matter of mere carpentry.

"Sure, there will be an enormous difference of size," he said. "But an enormous difference of size is not just a matter of mere size difference. It means that there must be a difference in the actors and their relationships. The dynamic of human personalities must be different."

Two scenic devices will remain constant. The outdoors will everywhere assert itself amid Ponnelle's recreations of Tudor architecture.

"I love the beauty of the Sussex landscape around Glyndebourne," he noted. "The real Windsor is much more flat than what I designed here, but I couldn't resist a little joke. You could see the landscape on the stage, then you could go outside the theater and see it all again. It's a device that really derives from the Shakespearean theater. In the same way, I have kept the Thames as an important feature of the scenery, just as it is an important feature in the life of Southern England."

The sense of place in a Ponnelle production sometimes seems uppermost

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THE MAJESTIC



The 1969 production of *La Cenerentola* was Ponnelle's first assignment as designer/director. He is shown with Teresa Berganza, who sang the title role, and Paolo Montarsolo, who portrayed Don Magnifico, during a rehearsal.

in the planning. With a bit of prodding, he summarizes the contrasts between the two Shakespeare-based operas in this season's repertoire:

"The landscape in *Falstaff* is a happy place, sometimes sunny, sometimes rainy, a healthy, natural landscape, full of leaves and green vegetation. That may be why, in the last scene, Herne's Oak almost completely dominates the stage, with plants overflowing the border of the stage. In *Lear*, we are in a desert, the end point of nowhere. It's desolate, completely dry, unnatural. The plants seem composed of salt, more mineral than vegetal.

You're quite right. The landscape in *Falstaff* is more like a prop; the landscape in *Lear* comes closer to a symbol." Then, too, visitors to this *Falstaff* will also find their attention directed to the nest of antlers protruding from the top of the proscenium, a nod to both Shakespeare and Verdi.

"Both in English and Italian, they are the horns that symbolize the man who is losing his honor. Masculine vanity (perhaps the French concept of *l'orgueil* expresses the meaning better) is one of the recurring motifs of the opera. Ford fantasizes about 'Le corna, le corna' in his

second act monologue, and Falstaff constantly talks about them. And Verdi supplies prominent French horn accompaniment to reinforce the message."

Ponnelle can't resist an afterthought about a society which devised and popularized such a powerfully unambiguous visual image for cuckoldry.

"It's a pity. These symbols were part of English life until Mr. Cromwell and his Puritans came along and destroyed them. With that, the old Latin tradition was broken in England." Perhaps more essential to a *Falstaff* production than the illumination of symbolism is deciding



Jean-Pierre Ponnelle checks the newly-built scenery for San Francisco Opera's 1970 production of *Così fan tutte* (Act I, Scene 1).

what kind of opera it really is. Ponnelle finds his initial solution in classical literary form:

"I'm sure it is not tragedy. In my language, tragedy is in verse, comedy is in prose. You see some sadness in a man, who, in his youth, was probably handsome and elegant. Now, he is fat and foolish. It happens to millions of people. That's the usual human destiny. To play it and stage it as deep, dark tragedy would be pure, nasty sentimentality, just ridiculous."

Yet, Ponnelle does not hesitate in admitting that tears often lurk behind the

laughter.

"This ever-changing tone is a typically Shakespearean contrast: just when you think something is white, you turn the page, and it is black. This kind of impermanence comes not only from Shakespeare. It's a fundamental idea of 17th century and baroque art. You meet it everywhere, for example, in Monteverdi's *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, where, from moment to moment, the principal characters demand different responses from an audience. This alternation between the tragic and the comic is what I would call 'grotesque comedy.' "

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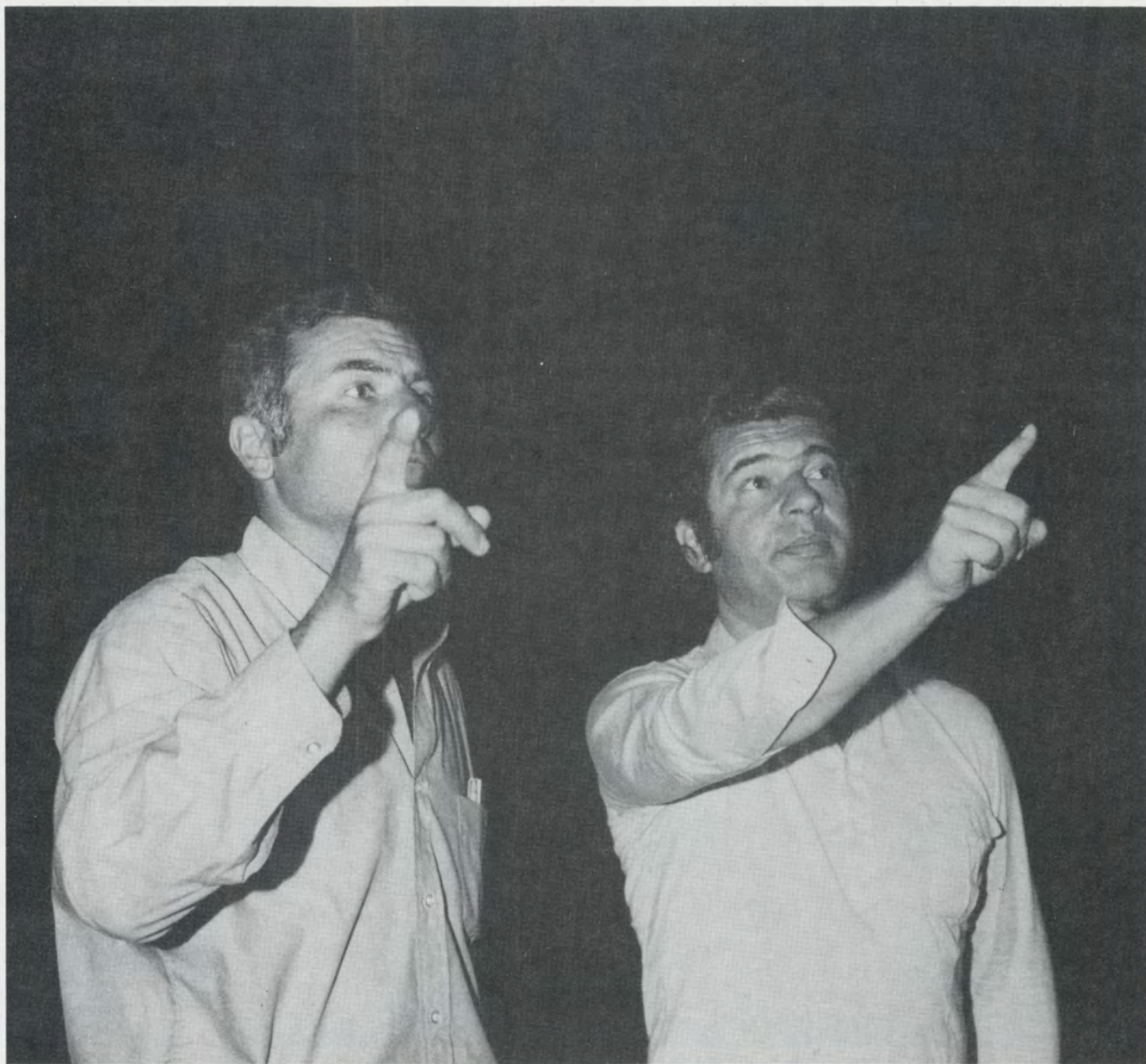
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Jean-Pierre Ponnelle checks the new *Così fan tutte* (1970) scenery with Pierre Cayard, head of the San Francisco Opera Scenic Shop.

If the material dictates that the director maintain that delicate balance, Ponnelle is alert to the episodes in the opera that call for special care.

"In the second scene of Act 2, when Falstaff appears in Ford's house and sings 'Quand'ero paggio,' it's usually played as very funny. But it's not funny at all. It's one of those moments filled with genuine nostalgia, almost a lament. It's one of those moments when Falstaff stops being the fat guy of the opening scene, and it's one of those moments when, as a director, I can add to him almost geological levels of stratification."

Falstaff's charming *arietta* is surely not born of fantasy:

"We must believe that he was the page to the Duke of Norfolk, and, to remind us, I will supply him with a little page of his own. Doesn't he call out in the first scene, 'Ehi! Paggio!?' In the boy, who should be around 12 years old, Falstaff should see himself as he was maybe 50 years earlier.

"Look also at Act 2, Scene 1, the 'Reverenza' episode with Dame Quickly. We know she is setting a trap for Falstaff. But the lines assigned her are among the most beautiful, longest melodic lines that

Verdi ever wrote. When Quickly is singing, Falstaff comes back with the same language, an antiquated kind of language ('La bella Alice,' 'La bella Meg'). All that is born of super-sophisticated, old-fashioned politesse, and that is the world of Falstaff.

"Of course," Ponnelle adds, "Quickly and Falstaff meet again at the beginning of the third act. She introduces the 'Reverenza' music again, but after being thrown into the Thames, he feels his honor has been betrayed, so his reaction, 'Send Alice to the devil,' is quite natural."

Ponnelle's research into Sir John

Falstaff and the characters who touch his life took him first to Shakespeare, to *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, to *Henry IV, Part i*, to *Henry IV, Part ii*, in all of which the knight serves as a bright thread in the tapestry of the drama; thence he turned to *Henry V*, where Sir John remains a vividly felt, rather than an actual presence.

"There," Ponnelle recalls, "I discovered interesting details, of which I was not aware before. For example, Quickly was first a servant of Dr. Caius, who is, first of all, a French scientist. That's very funny. I use it in the opera, and why not?"

"Also, I decided to introduce Mr. Page, who is in Shakespeare, but not in Verdi's score. I take a guy, probably a very slow-witted guy, who starts to come in late in every exchange, and, when he does, everybody else motions to him to shut up, shut up. It's a mime part. He never sings one note, but he exists nevertheless in this production, an in-joke for those who know their Shakespeare."

The key to Falstaff himself, Ponnelle believes, lies in his noble lineage.

"We must remember that he is the

Earl of Falstaff, a true aristocrat. He is a man of war. His duty in this society is to hang around Windsor and round up troops from the other nobles for battle in France. In times of war, he travels abroad with the king's army and collects whatever spoils he can. But, at the time of Verdi's opera, England is at peace. The king has no need of Falstaff, so he's completely out of money. His men, Bardolfo and Pistola, have nothing to do either, yet he has an obligation to pay them. He must never appear to inhabit their social level.

"Falstaff loves his wine and loves his women, but there's no vulgarity about him. He is a knight. When he pays Alice Ford a visit, he goes as a member of the court to visit a family that belongs to the *petite bourgeoisie*. He has behaved in this manner for 50 years, and he cannot change his way for commoners. The humor comes from the fact that his behavior doesn't apply in these circumstances. He always keeps his dignity, and we find that funny. He is like one of those old British colonels playing golf."

Nor, Ponnelle warns us, should we doubt the purpose of Falstaff's expedition.

"If Alice invited him into her private chamber, I don't think he would resist the invitation. He may be penniless, but there's probably a legend around this small town that no girl is safe. Everything about him may be old and not so clean, but all the instruments are in very good working order."

Even at a moment in the opera which almost always draws laughs—Falstaff's fastidious preparation for his trip to the Fords—Ponnelle finds a serious intention lurking under the surface.

"The attitude of that society at that time was that the male wore the bright plumage, while the women dressed plainly."

Those merry wives do not win Ponnelle's approbation quite so easily. He applies contemporary psychology to them, and he deems them less than innocent pranksters:

"Except for Nannetta, and her nice, conventional love, none of them is really pure. They are all cruel, they all have their



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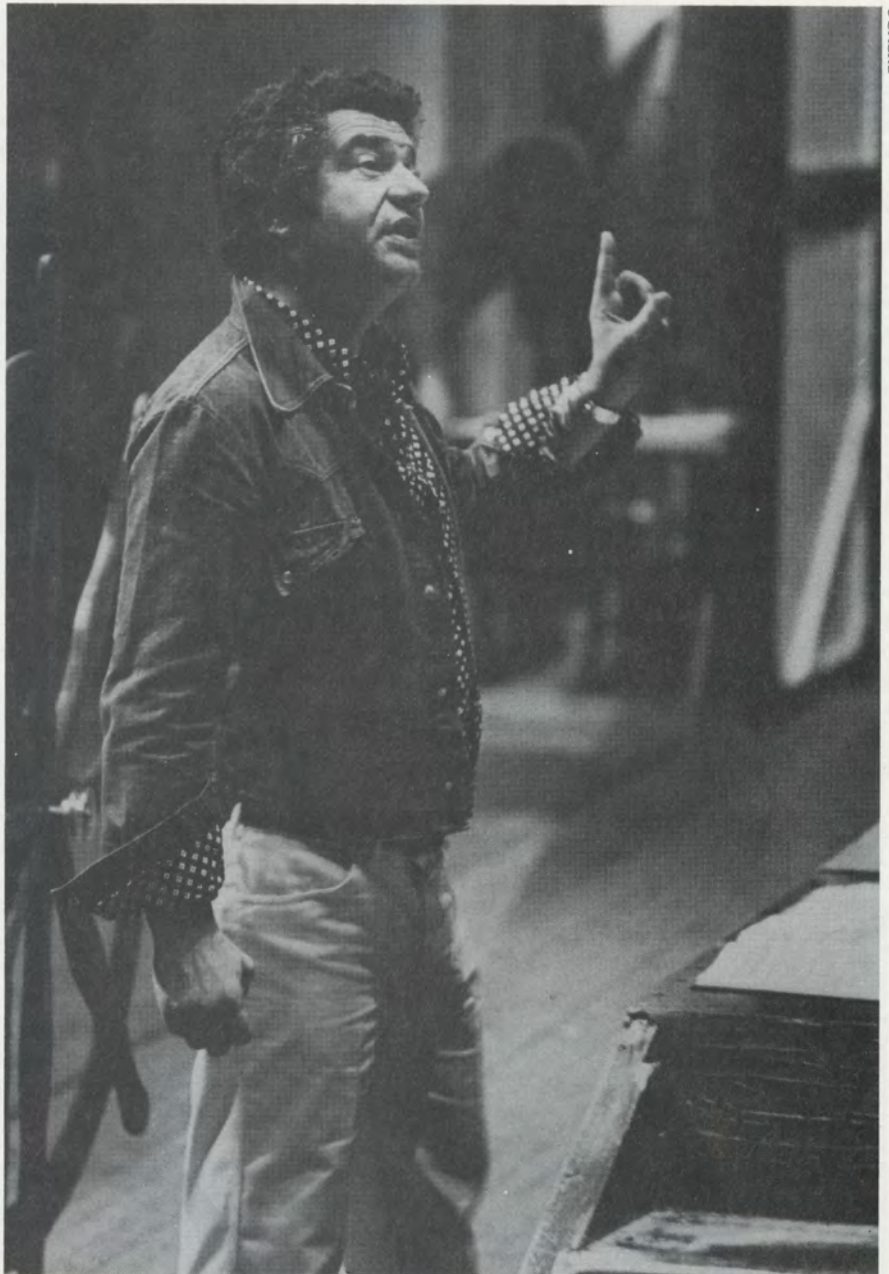
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SCHERL

Ponnelle during rehearsals for San Francisco Opera's 1975 production of *Der Fliegende Holländer*.

complexes, and the best way for women to have an alibi for their complexes is to be aggressive. If you think about it, Alice Ford goes quite far with Falstaff. In some way, she is fascinated by the fact that he is from the nobility, and here he is, kneeling in front of her, insisting, 'I love you.' Her obsession goes beyond Falstaff. The men have all the privileges in this society and the women plot their revenge on them. The revenge of the female mafia!"

How, then, must the director attempt to align the sympathies of an

audience? Ponnelle cites the opera composers, who seemingly switch viewpoints with instantaneous and often incomparable ease, often leaving the listener bewildered—Monteverdi, Mozart, the Strauss of *Ariadne auf Naxos*, and Verdi, in the present case.

"Like *Le Nozze di Figaro*, which is not Mozart's most popular opera, *Falstaff* is a very subtle comedy, and may be difficult for listeners to follow. For normal audiences, it is hard to identify with Alice and Ford. They are, more or less, para-heroes.



Rehearsing with the chorus for the 1976 production of *Cavalleria Rusticana*.

Ford is sick; he is, in my view, a kind of grotesque Iago. His 'E sogno' is a very strong jealousy aria. Do we admire Quickly, or Caius? Only Falstaff and the young lovers are sympathetic. In a profound way, this opera is Verdi's testament. The only sympathetic characters are the old man, which he was by the time of composition, and the young innocents."

To keep those shifting sympathies in perspective requires all of the three decades of Ponnelle's experience on the international opera stage. He remains philosophical:

"The challenge, the risk is always in our job. That's normal. The curtain rises and 3,000 pairs of eyes are staring at you. As a director, you must make your choices from the music. Thank God, it is not possible to change the score; from *piano* to

forte, from G Minor to F Minor. You have to respect this kind of codification.

"But within this conventional corset, as a director, you are completely free. You see *piano*, and it can be somebody crying, or somebody so choked up with laughter, he can't manage to make any more sound. It can be *piano* because he is so close to another character that he is whispering, or it can be *piano* because he is so far backstage that he would not sound any louder from that distance."

Ponnelle came to the San Francisco Opera first as designer of two Carl Orff works, *Die Kluge* and *Carmina Burana* in 1958, and introduced his setting for the American premiere production of Strauss' *Die Frau ohne Schatten* the following season. Twenty-seven years later, he finds himself booked six or seven years in

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Jean-Pierre Ponnelle and Plácido Domingo during preparations for the 1978 production of *Otello*.

advance, noting with resignation that "I now live half the time in Paris, half the time in Munich and half the time on an airplane."

Like local observers, Ponnelle is acutely aware of the stylistic evolution in his work. He acknowledges the restricted range of color in his productions in recent years. "Less is richer, probably."

And he stands ever ready to defend himself against using dream and flashback structures out of a desire for gimmickry.

"I'm not fascinated by them at all," he replies. "But for dramaturgical purposes, to use a distancing mirror often brings the characters much closer than if I did it realistically. We are often more knowledgeable after the fact, so a character is much richer on stage if he is reflecting

about himself, instead of acting unconsciously. That's why I used that technique. By the way, I am quite bored with it now."

We approach the end of our conversation and the finale, too, of *Falstaff*. Verdi and librettist Arrigo Boito may have given the world a gloriously intricate summation, but they did not provide a resolution. That, perhaps, is the nature of comedy.

"At last, you see this provincial little community complete during the 11-part fugue. It tells us that life is a joke, and you'd best accept that fact. A stoical philosophy, to be sure. Neither the women nor Ford will change. Falstaff will not change either. But he possesses self-irony. It's one of the greatest qualities in the world, and he is the only one of the characters who has it. And that quality alone makes him the hero of the opera." ■

A Clear Signal in the Music World: KKHI, The Opera Marathon Station

"I read in the paper that the Opera was having some financial problems. I tried to figure out what we could do to help," related Gordon Engler, Music Director at radio station KKHI in San Francisco. From these musings was born the KKHI/San Francisco Opera Radio Marathon, an all-day extravaganza of opera news, stories, quizzes, contests, and premiums that raises money for the Opera. In fact, the first KKHI/Opera Marathon in 1984 was the station's biggest money-raising event ever. This record may fall, however, during the Third Annual KKHI/Opera Marathon on January 26, 1986.

"We want to be remembered as the fine arts station, a friend of the arts. The Opera gives us all so much, we are happy to help in any way we can," explained Engler. On Marathon day, KKHI basically gives the station to the opera for the day. "We clear off our desks, empty our clutter,

and hand it all over to the Opera," reports Chris Bliss, Promotions Director for the station. KKHI personnel enjoy the Marathon, marveling at seeing the entire opera company working on this event. "Everyone has something to offer, from the General Director, who loves playing disc jockey, on down. Nobody's too important or unimportant to contribute something to this effort. And it takes a lot of hard work. The staff works well and there are not even any coffee cups left around at the end of the grueling 18-hour stretch," comments Engler.

KKHI undertakes a number of educational and promotional programs that help to increase the audience for opera. Before the season opens, for example, they have an "Opera Day" in which they feature opera for 24 hours. They offer a preview of the season, termed "giving them their homework" by the radio staff, for the upcoming performances. The



The San Francisco Opera 1985 Radio Marathon "Central" was improvised in one of the offices at Radio Station KKHI. Seen, left to right: Clifford Cranna, S.F. Opera's music administrator; Patricia Mitchell, executive director; Robert Commanday, music critic for the San Francisco Chronicle; and Terry McEwen, S.F. Opera general director.

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SCHERL

The 1985 Radio Marathon on Radio Station KKHI was an endurance contest for everyone involved, particularly for S.F. Opera general director Terence McEwen, who was on the air almost continuously on January 27 between 6 a.m. and midnight.

station also coordinates an annual "KKHI Night at the Opera" which brings 500 people to an opera and a post-performance party. Many attending this party are coming to the opera for the first time ever. KKHI also features a "Win a Night at the Opera" with Tower Records. Winners enjoy dinner and transportation via chauffeured limousine to and from the Opera House, while the Opera benefits from the extensive free advertising surrounding this event.

The relationship with the Opera is beneficial to the station in a number of ways. KKHI points to the success of the fund-raising events as a gauge of their strength as an effective advertising medium. Bliss pointed out that "Terry McEwen is wonderful about bringing the evening's performers to meet our guests at our Night at the Opera." The station also appreciates access to major opera stars that the San Francisco Opera facilitates. For example, soprano Gwyneth Jones, Brünnhilde in this summer's *Ring*, recently presided over an all-night program at KKHI.

In addition to its opera-related activities, KKHI is actively involved with a wide range of other arts and musical groups. The Lamplighters, Shakespeare in the Park, Pocket Opera, the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, and the Berkeley Symphony are some of the beneficiaries of KKHI's community activities. The station prefers to be involved with events

that are entertaining, fundraisers, and which offer an opportunity for arts advocacy. Engler and Bliss are currently considering setting up some sort of consortium that would benefit a number of smaller groups that individually do not have the clout to sustain a major fundraiser.

Both Engler and Bliss were pleased to be selected by the Opera to carry the initial radio broadcasts of the *Ring* in this area. Both had hoped that this summer's *Ring* would herald the return to regular broadcasting. They lamented the fact that the San Francisco Opera seasons are not on the air; they receive constant inquiries from their listeners about the return of the company's broadcasts.

With a signal that covers San Jose to Santa Rosa and east to Davis, KKHI, a classical station for the past 23 years, is located at 1550 AM and 95.7 FM Stereo. Their record library contains over 50,000 records with at least one-quarter of these being from the world of opera. The radio staff generally concedes that opera fans are the most fanatical, or certainly the most vocal. When the station tried to take a popular opera program off the air, the protest was so overwhelming that the program quickly returned to the airwaves. "Sometimes it seems like our whole audience are opera nuts who want opera on the air 24 hours a day every day," laughed Bliss. ■

—Ron DeLuca

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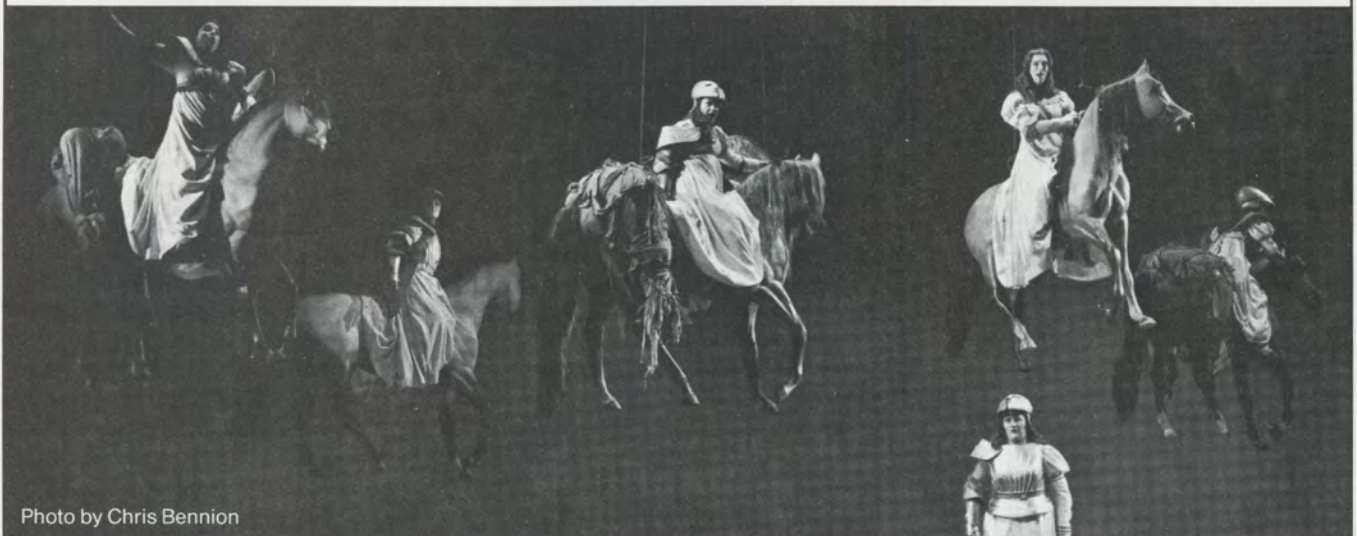


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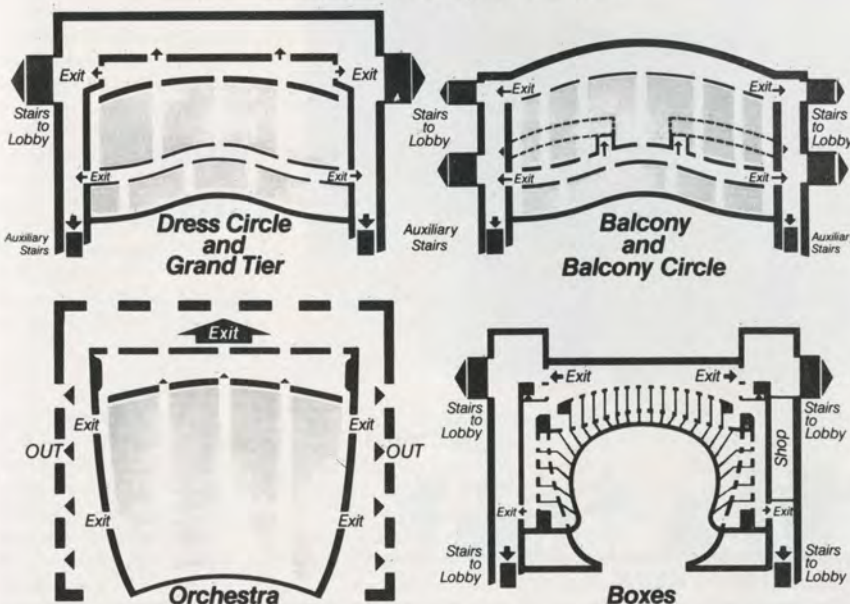
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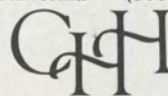
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