Orlando

1985

Saturday, September 14, 1985 8:00 PM
Wednesday, September 18, 1985 7:30 PM
Saturday, September 21, 1985 8:00 PM
Tuesday, September 24, 1985 8:00 PM
Thursday, October 3, 1985 8:00 PM
Sunday, October 6, 1985 2:00 PM

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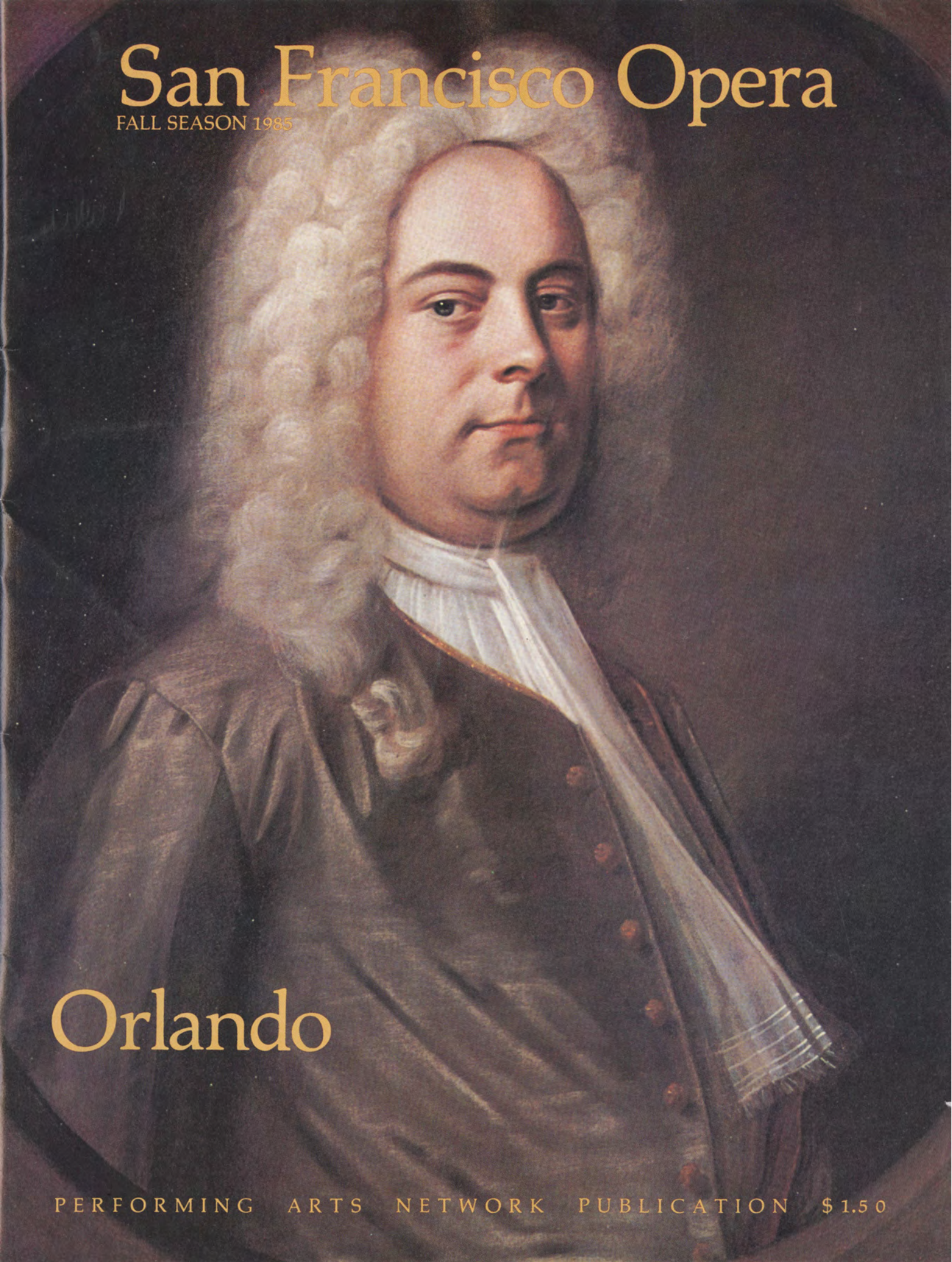
Publications Collection

San Francisco Opera Archives

San Francisco Opera

FALL SEASON 1985



Orlando

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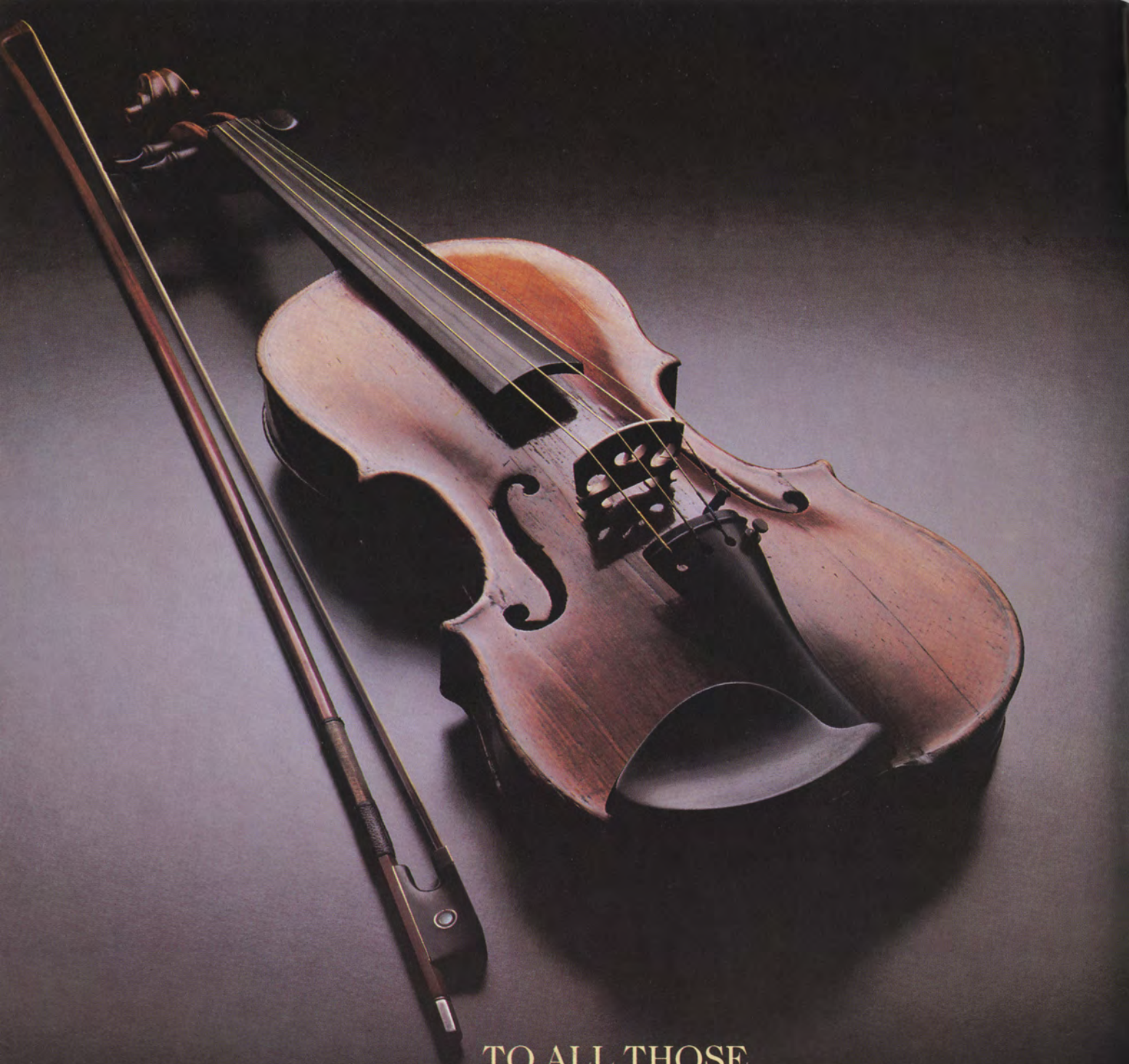

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San Francisco Opera

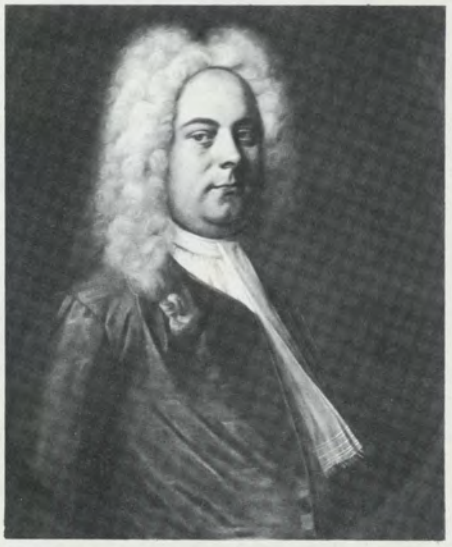
Terence A. McEwen, *General Director*

Orlando

FALL SEASON 1985

FEATURES

DEPARTMENTS



COVER:
Attr. to Balthasar Denner (1685-1749),
George Frideric Handel
Oil on canvas (1726-8), 29½ x 24⅝ in.
National Portrait Gallery, London.
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Proceeds from the sale of this magazine benefit the San Francisco Opera.

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Telephone: (415) 861-4008

San Francisco Opera Magazine 1985 is a Performing Arts Network publication: Gilman Kraft, President; Michel Pisani, Publisher; Irwin M. Fries, Executive Vice-President and National Sales Director; Florence Quartararo, Advertising Manager; Marita Dorenbecher, Account Executive; Fran Gianaris, Account Executive; Ellen Melton, Advertising Coordinator.

Performing Arts Network

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From the Chairman of the Board and the President

Reid W. Dennis

Tully M. Friedman

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

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

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

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

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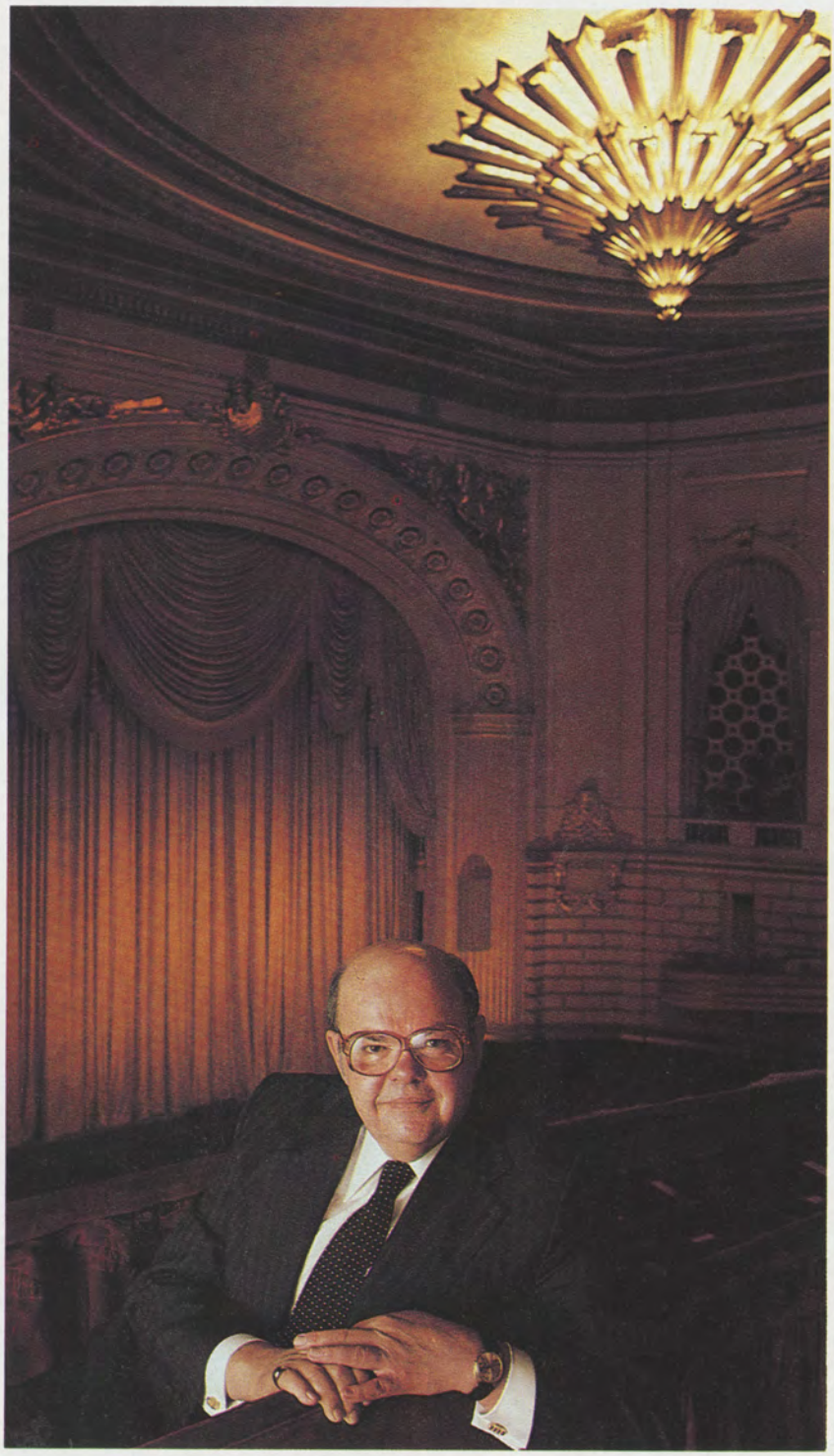
General Director's Message

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

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

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

Our team welcomes you to the 1985 Fall Season.



RON SCHERL

San Francisco Opera

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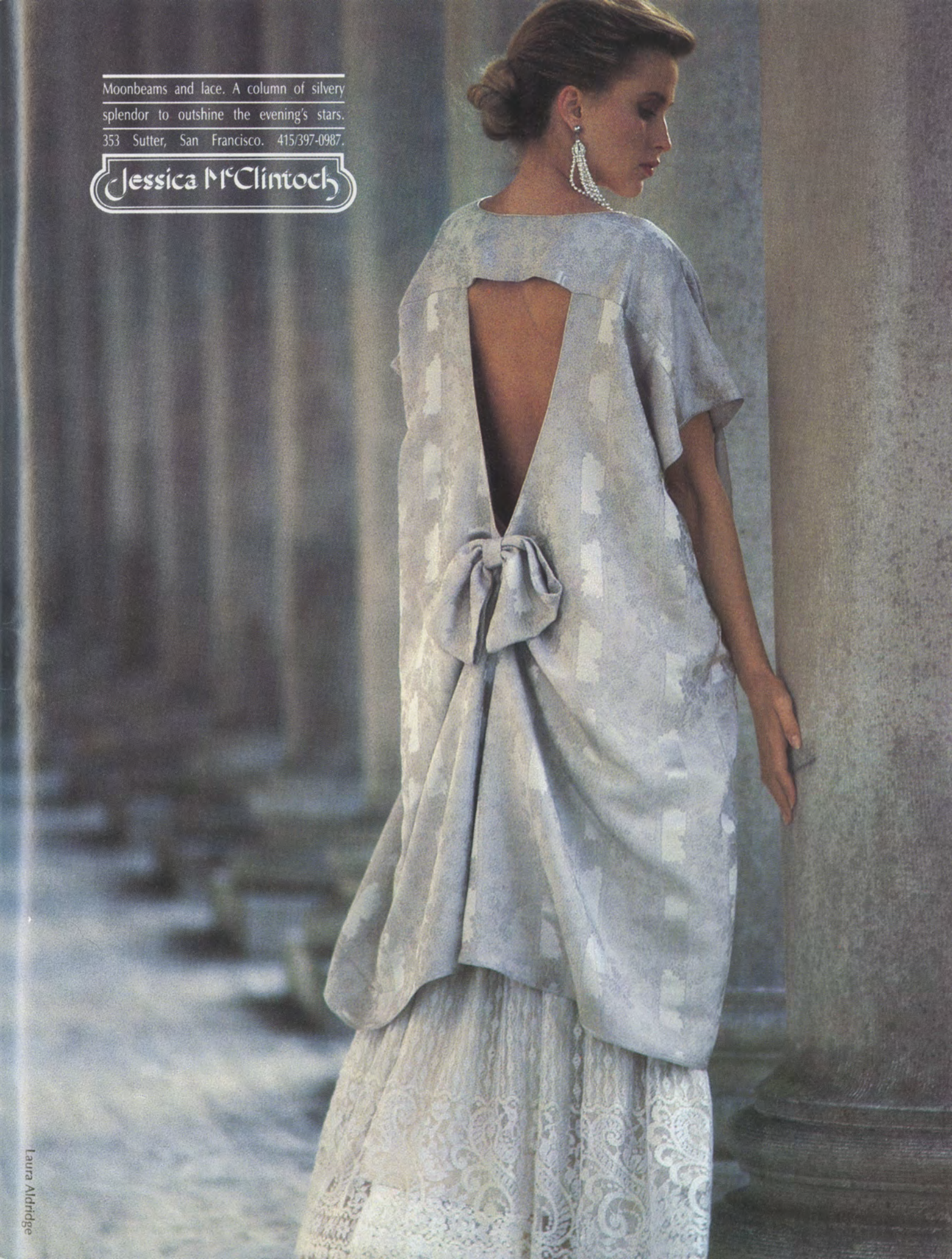
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The San Francisco Opera is supported by much-appreciated grants from the San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund, the California Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Arts.

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

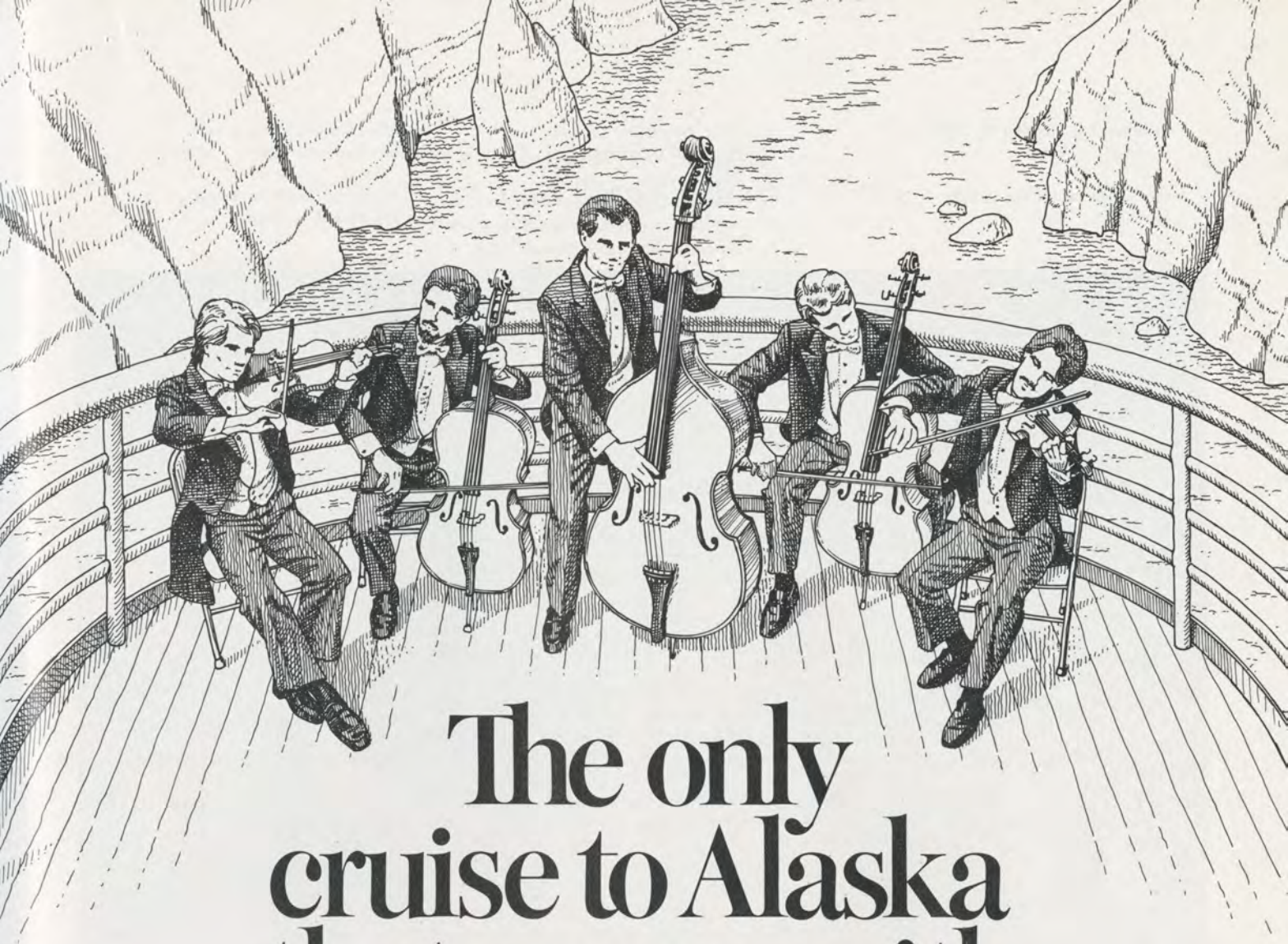
Wednesday, October 23, 8:00
Falstaff Verdi

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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Liberian Registry 9-9

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
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FALSTAFF
Verdi/in Italian with English Supertitles

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

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

These matinees will be performed with Supertitles by Paul Moor.

Kirsten Flagstad Exhibition

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

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1985 Fall Opera Previews

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

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD

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

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

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD PREVIEWS

MARIN

Previews held at Park School Auditorium, 360 E. Blithedale, Mill Valley; refreshments served at 7:30 p.m., previews at 8 p.m. Series registration is $20 for 6 previews ($15 for students and seniors). Single tickets are $4 ($3 for students and seniors). For further information, please call (415) 388-6789 or (415) 388-6982.

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

Turandot	
Eugene Marker	9/19
Werther	
James Keolker	10/3
Falstaff	
James Keolker	10/16
Der Rosenkavalier	
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.

Orlando	
Robert Jacobson	9/10
Turandot	
Arthur Kaplan	9/17
Falstaff	
James Keolker	10/15
Billy Budd	
Michael Mitchell	11/12
Der Rosenkavalier	
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.

Adriana Lecouvreur	
Arthur Kaplan	9/6
Orlando	
Robert Jacobson	9/13
Werther	
James Keolker	10/4
Falstaff	
James Keolker	10/11
Billy Budd	
Michael Mitchell	11/12
Der Rosenkavalier	
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.

Orlando — 9/11, 6 p.m. reception; 7 p.m. preview
Robert Jacobson
1000 Buckeye Rd., Kenwood

Werther — 10/1, 11 a.m. preview; 12:30 p.m. luncheon
James Keolker
El Dorado Hotel
405 - 1st St. West, Sonoma

Billy Budd — 11/7, 11 a.m. preview; 12:30 p.m. luncheon
Michael Mitchell
3735 Alta Vista, Santa Rosa

Der Rosenkavalier — 11/12, 6 p.m. reception; 7 p.m. preview
Speight Jenkins
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.

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

continued on p.62

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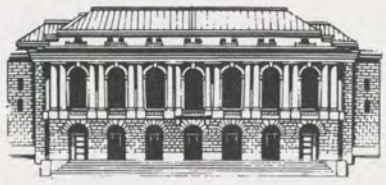

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Notes on *Orlando*

By ANDREW PORTER

George Frideric Handel—who spent most of his life in London, a naturalized Englishman, and settled on that spelling of his names—was born in 1685, like J.S. Bach and Domenico Scarlatti. Although he is best known as the composer of the sacred oratorio *Messiah*, he was, as the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* puts it, "by training and inclination primarily a composer for the theatre." Sixteen years ago, Winton Dean, in his *Handel and the Opera Seria*, made high claims for Handel as an operatic composer: "A Handel opera is a far more complex and subtly organized phenomenon than it looks on paper. If these operas, including their librettos, are subjected to the detailed study they deserve . . . it may be found that Handel's mastery of opera as a fusion of music and drama is scarcely less absolute than that of Monteverdi and Mozart, though it is very differently organized." In this tercentenary season, when many of Handel's operas have been staged—and most of them in a less cavalier manner than used to be the case—the justness of Dean's claims has become increasingly apparent.

In some forty Italian operas and twenty English music dramas (the latter written for performance in the theater, though not for staging), Handel gave expression to just about the full range of human experience. Myth, history, and romance—the Bible, Sophocles and Euripides, Herodotus and Xenophon, Tasso and Ariosto, Corneille and Racine, Milton, Dryden, and Pope—supplied his subject matter. And he composed so abundantly that there are likely to be new adventures in store all life long for even the most assiduous Handelian.

He was born in Saxony. As a young man he spent three years at the Hamburg Opera (1703-6) and then four traveling in Italy, where his *Rodrigo* was produced in Florence (1707) and his *Agrippina*, with very great success, in Venice (1709). One might say that he united thorough German musicianship with firsthand experience of contemporary Italian operatic

Michael Stennett's costume designs for Orlando (above) and Medoro (left).

craft at its most exciting. He was quick to learn, and famously unreluctant to borrow (and improve on) other men's good ideas. In 1710, aged 25, he went to London for the first time, and there, at the Queen's Theatre, he brought out *Rinaldo*—the first Italian opera especially composed for the British capital. *Rinaldo* was scenically and musically spectacular, a display of all Handel's powers.

Other operas followed in a fairly steady stream for three decades. To put *Orlando* into context, one may summarize some periods in Handel's career. The "First Academy" period began in 1720. A group of noble enthusiasts, under royal patronage, had decided to establish Italian opera in London on a long-term basis. They engaged the King's Theatre (formerly the Queen's, but now George I had succeeded Queen Anne), a musical director (Handel), a manager (Christian Heidegger), a house librettist (the poet Paolo Rolli), and a scenic designer (Roberto Clerici). In 1719, Handel traveled through Europe recruiting his company: the Academy was opened in April 1720 with Giovanni Porta's *Numitore* and then Handel's *Radamisto*. In the second season, the great castrato Senesino arrived; two seasons later, the great soprano Francesca Cuzzoni. London, as Winton Dean put it, "became the operatic center of Europe, with the best composers, the best singers, and creditable scenic designers."

The First Academy reached its peak with three heroic operas: *Giulio Cesare*, *Tamerlano* (both 1724), and *Rodelinda* (1725). In 1726, a second *prima donna*, Faustina Bordoni, was engaged. Handel then wrote five operas in which he had to strive to give equal prominence, equal opportunities, to his two leading ladies

---

Andrew Porter is the music critic of The New Yorker. *His English translation of Handel's* Ottone *has been performed in London and in Drottningholm. Earlier this year, he directed Handel's* Tamerlane *in Bloomington, Indiana, and in Purchase, New York. John Eaton's* The Tempest, *to his libretto, had its premiere in Santa Fe this summer.*

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Faustina Bordoni and Senesino in a contemporary caricature by Anton Maria Zanetti.

and at the same time not slight his *primo uomo*. But "second *prima donna*" is a contradiction in terms: the rivalry between the two first sopranos became intense, and at a performance in 1727 they actually came to blows on the stage. Meanwhile audiences, partisans of one singer or the other, grew increasingly unruly. Catcalls were not uncommon. After eight seasons, the First Academy came to an end in an atmosphere of squabbles, recriminations, and disgust on the part of the serious-minded. The runaway success of *The Beggar's Opera*, which opened in January of 1728, was hardly the cause of its demise but—with its two heroines who try to tear out one another's eyes—a mocking reflection, rather, of the state to which opera had fallen.

Handel was not deterred for long. At the end of 1729 he launched his "Second Academy," with *Lotario*. He gave five seasons at the King's and then three at Covent Garden—the theater John Rich had built with the profits of *The Beggar's Opera*. Among the glories of this period were *Orlando* (1733) and *Ariodante* (1735), two of his finest operas. *Alcina*, another masterwork of the period, appeared shortly after *Ariodante* and was even more successful, but it was Handel's last operatic triumph. The Second Academy foundered not on internal but on external rivalry. The Opera of the Nobility, a competing concern, had opened in 1733 and had lured away most of Handel's best singers. London could not support two opera troupes in cutthroat competition, and in 1737 both companies, in sad financial disorder, broke up.

There followed for Handel some unsettled but still fecund years. By now he was also working in an alternative medium to Italian opera: it might be called English music drama ("A Musical Drama" was the billing of his *Hercules*), though it is usually called oratorio. It was drama in the vernacular, freed from the conventions of *opera seria*, freed from the requirements of painted scenery, and in large part freed from the temperamental conflicts that flourish so easily in the glare of the footlights. Stage directions remained, but they were printed in the audiences' wordbooks, not enacted. The Aeschylean drama *Saul* (King's, 1733) had demonstrated at its highest the new freedom and power of Handel's work in this form. But Italian operas continued to appear, too. Handel's last two were *Imeneo* (1740) and *Deidamia* (1741). The former failed after two, the latter after three performances. The composer, it seems, thought of leaving England. The success of *Messiah* (1742) and of *Samson* (1743) may have changed his mind. But it was not until 1747 that Handel's life settled into a regular and comfortable pattern, which lasted twelve years, until his death: a Lenten season of oratorios at Covent Garden—new works mingled with revivals—sung partly by his English regulars and partly by opera singers (such as Guadagni, Gluck's future Orpheus) borrowed from the King's.

BIBLIOTECA NAZIONALE, TORINO

Filippo Juvarra (1678-1736), Countryside with Bridge and Tower, *probably designed for a performance of* Orlando.

***

Orlando, Dean says, is "musically perhaps the richest of all Handel's operas." It was the first of his three operas whose plots are drawn from Ariosto's romantic epic *Orlando Furioso*—the others being *Ariodante* and *Alcina.* All three are Second Academy operas. And *Orlando* is in another way a landmark in Handel's career, being the last piece he composed for the Second Academy before most of his singers defected to the Opera of the Nobility. At its first performance, at the King's on January 27, 1733, *Orlando* was billed as "a new Opera . . . wherein Cloaths and Scenes are all entirely new." It's a spectacular opera, as a glance at the scenic directions of the libretto will show. It's a "magic" opera, in the genre that Handel had so successfully adopted with his first London presentation, *Rinaldo.* At the wave of a magician's wand, a fountain springs up to conceal Medoro from the furious Orlando. Zoroastro bears the hero skyward in an aerial car. An eagle with a golden vessel in his beak descends from on high. And there are elaborate transformation scenes. Magical apparatus, any whiff of the supernatural, was

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Title page of the Orlando *libretto, published a year before the opera's premiere.*

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something that Metastasio, the leading librettist of the age, had sought to banish from the stage by the example of his classical and severely rational librettos. But in embracing magic, Handel was not merely giving his scenic designers a field day and his audiences a feast for the eye. To quote Dean again, "There is more to it than this. The miraculous can release the imagination of the composer as well as of the audience, and open the way to fantasy and romanticism. The elements that Metastasio was so careful to purge . . . not only inspired some of Handel's greatest music; they are qualities intimately associated with romanticism in art." *Orlando* is a romantic opera.

The preface to the libretto declares that "the immoderate Passion that *Orlando* entertained for *Angelica* . . . and which, in the end, totally deprived him of his Reason, is an Event taken from *Ariosto*'s incomparable Poem, which being universally known, may serve as an Argument to the present *Drama*, without any larger Explication." But the *Orlando Furioso* is hardly known universally today. (Later in the century, Mozart's Guglielmo, in *Così fan tutte*, declared himself more deeply in love than an Orlando, more grievously smitten than a Medoro.) It had been supplying operatic plots from Marco da Gagliano's *Medoro* (1619) and Francesca Caccini's *La Liberazione di Ruggiero* (1625; the first opera composed by a woman) onward. Ariosto's poem tells, in the words of Sir John Harrington's Elizabethan translation,

> Of dames, of knights, of arms,
> of love's delight,
> Of courtesies, of high attempts . . .

Orlando (Roland), Charlemagne's nephew, is Christendom's champion against a Moorish invasion, but he has been deflected from battle and from duty by his intemperate love for Angelica. She is the proud, beautiful daughter of the Grand Khan of Cathay; not only Orlando but half of Europe's great knights are in love with her. Spurning them all, she loses her heart to the common African foot soldier Medoro, whom she finds wounded and nurses back to health. (The libretto elevates Medoro to princedom.) The *Orlando Furioso* is filled with lovers—faithful, fickle, tender, jealous, resolute. Orlando is the wildest of them all, and when—as we discover in the opera—he sees the names of Angelica and Medoro carved on a tree

SOHL

Director John Copley during a technical rehearsal for Orlando. *In the back, seen through swirls of steam, is lighting designer Thomas Munn.*

in amorous entwinement, he loses his wits altogether and becomes dangerously mad. Supernatural medication is needed to restore his senses. His wits are saved—and so is Europe.

Ariosto's poem is a romance, a long-sustained adventure story filled with color and incident, and wide-ranging in its locations. *Ariodante* deals with one self-contained episode from it, set in Scotland; *Alcina* with another, set on the enchanted Caribbean island where the sorceress snares Ruggiero by her magic art. But *Orlando* treats the central theme, the hero's love and madness. The libretto underlying Handel's opera was written by Carlo Sigismondo Capece and set by Domenico Scarlatti in Rome, 1711. But for Handel's use it was thoroughly reworked. Two characters were dropped. (Well, the princess Isabella still makes a brief, mute appearance; in Scarlatti's opera she has six arias to sing.) Orlando's tutelary genius, Zoroastro—a skillful condensation of the various mages and sages who move through Ariosto—was invented and added. Comparison of the Scarlatti and the Handel librettos shows the intervention of a dramatist—it is tempting to assume it was Handel himself—who not only shortened the work (Scarlatti's libretto has 1634 lines, and Handel's 632) but was also interested in human character, human plights, and their eloquent theatrical presentation. Watched over by Zoroastro, the other four characters tread the intricacies of love's mazes in music that lays bare their deepest feelings. Parallels with *Figaro* and *Così fan tutte* have not inappropriately been drawn. A final Dean quotation: "The situations are psychologically and universally true, and can carry a profound symbolic content."

The opera is carefully shaped, the sequence of numbers carefully planned and balanced. Consider the three act endings. Act I closes with a marvelous trio in which Angelica and Medoro, while rapt in their own love, also seek to comfort the heartbroken Dorinda, who has unwisely allowed herself to fall in love with Medoro. Act II closes with Orlando's great mad scene: a series of ariosos, changing key and changing tempo (some bars are in 5/8) in response to the hero's almost Freudian hallucinations, then running into a rondo whose deceptively simple main theme frames wildly disparate episodes—the first poignantly chromatic, the second stormy. The end of Act III affords one of the many examples of Handel's disturbing the standard *opera seria* forms for dramatic effect. Orlando, believing that in his madness he has killed Angelica, embarks on a suicide aria. But instead of running its regular course, it is suddenly interrupted by Angelica herself, leading the key to the major and so, through recitative, into a final *coro* far more elaborate than the usual, perfunctory "signing off." The characters have won through a storm of passions to wisdom and harmony. ■

Marilyn Horne: The Compleat Handelian

By JOHN SCHAUER

She made her first appearance on the War Memorial stage as Carmen for Spring Opera Theater in 1961; since then, she has been lauded by the Rossini Foundation and the editor of *Opera News* as the greatest singer in the world today. Yet if one were to attend only a portion of her portrayals — Gluck's Orfeo, Vivaldi's Orlando, Handel's Rinaldo and Orlando, Bellini's Romeo, Rossini's Neocle, Arsace and Malcolm — one might conclude that Marilyn Horne reached the zenith of the singing profession primarily by wearing the pants in the royal family of opera. It's an impression the singer herself feels is erroneous.

"I think that's a little bit of a mistake, when you consider that my opera career is at least 30-some years now, and I never sang a trouser role until about 20 years ago. When you consider just what I've sung in San Francisco in the last few years, I think there's been a balance and maybe even a swing to the feminine roles. I sang Dalila, Cenerentola, Adalgisa, Arsace and Tancredi, and then this year of course there's Orlando and [Mistress] Quickly, so I think it's about even."

She does not find that she prefers male roles over female ones, or vice versa. "It's a little more difficult for me to be costumed as a male, so I have to be very

continued on p.47

LECLAIR

Marilyn Horne in the title role of Handel's Rinaldo, *as presented by the Metropolitan Opera in 1983.*

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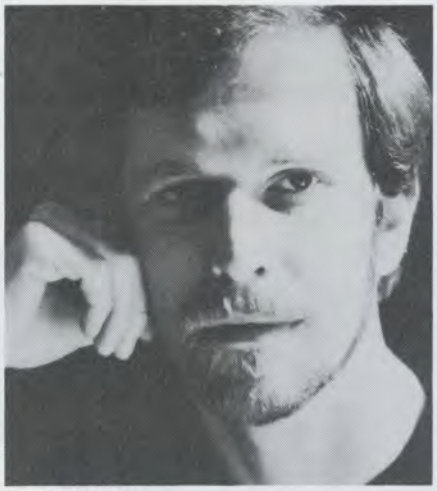
MARILYN HORNE

VALERIE MASTERSON

Internationally celebrated mezzo-soprano **Marilyn Horne** returns to San Francisco Opera to sing the title role of *Orlando* (which she has performed in Venice and at Carnegie Hall) and to add the role of Mistress Quickly in *Falstaff* to her impressive repertoire. The Pennsylvania native, who in 1982 became the first recipient of the Rossini Foundation's Golden Plaque honoring her as "the greatest singer in the world," 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* (1960). Her 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. She is perhaps Spring Opera Theater's most illustrious alumna, having portrayed Carmen (1961), Rosina (1962) and the title role of *L'Italiana in Algeri* (1964), three roles she has recorded complete and performed to critical plaudits at the Met and elsewhere. Her incredibly varied repertoire ranges from Thomas's *Mignon* and Massenet's *La Navarraise* to the "trouser roles" in which she is considered to have no peer today: Gluck's Orfeo, Vivaldi's Orlando, Bellini's Romeo, Handel's Rinaldo, Neocle in Rossini's *Siege of Corinth* and Arsace in *Semiramide,* a role in which she scored a major triumph at the 1980 Aix-en-Provence Festival and repeated for Opening Night of San Francisco Opera's 1981 Fall Season. She sang Arsace at Carnegie Hall in 1983, as part of a series of three Rossini operas presented as a showcase for Miss Horne, including *Tancredi* and *La Donna del Lago,* a role she recently performed at Covent Garden. This year she returned to Carnegie Hall to appear in *Orlando* and *Semele.* A busy concert artist with nearly 1,000 recitals to her credit, she was heard in two nationally televised "Live from Lincoln Center" concerts with Joan Sutherland and Luciano Pavarotti, and again more recently with Leontyne Price (a program that resulted in a Grammy-winning disc). Another televised recital titled "Marilyn Horne's Great American Song Book" has resulted in a recording to be released next year by London Records. Her lengthy discography includes recordings for London, Deutsche Grammophon, RCA and CBS, including an album of Handel opera arias for RCA and several solo records. Her autobiography, entitled *My Life, Marilyn Horne,* has been published by Atheneum. Among her numerous awards are the Handel Medallion, New York City's highest cultural award, and the "Commendatore al merito della Repubblica Italiana" awarded to her by President Pertini of Italy in 1983.

Soprano **Valerie Masterson** returns to San Francisco Opera to sing the role of Angelica in *Orlando,* a role she recently sang in a concert performance at Carnegie Hall. She made her Company debut in the title role of *La Traviata* in 1980, and scored a major triumph when she returned in the summer of 1982 as Cleopatra in Handel's *Julius Caesar.* Miss Masterson, who has studied with Eduardo Asquez in London and Adelaide Saraceni in Milan, sang at Salzburg for one season before joining the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company as principal soprano. She bowed with Sadler's Wells Opera (now the English National Opera) as Constanze in *The Abduction from the Seraglio* in 1971, becoming a permanent member of that company the following year. Her roles with ENO have included Susanna and the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro,* Countess Adele in *Le Comte Ory,* Sophie in *Der Rosenkavalier,* Pamina in *The Magic Flute,* Mimì in *La Bohème,* Gilda in *Rigoletto,* Cleopatra, Gounod's Juliette, and the title roles of *La Traviata, Manon* and *Louise.* Miss Masterson has won acclaim in a number of Handel roles, including Morgana in *Alcina,* which she sang at the Aix-en-Provence Festival; Romilda in *Xerxes* with ENO; Ginevra in *Ariodante* at La Scala; Berenice in *Scipio* in a Paris radio broadcast that was recorded and released on disc; and the title role of *Semele* at Covent Garden. Other Covent Garden assignments have included Marguerite in *Faust, La Traviata, Les Dialogues des Carmélites, Das Rheingold, Götterdämmerung,* the world premiere of Henze's *We Came to the River* and, most recently, Micaëla in *Carmen.* She has also appeared with the Lyric Opera of Chicago, the Paris Opera, and the companies of Geneva, Munich, Barcelona, Marseilles, Toulouse, Prague and Buenos Aires, among others. Her discography includes complete versions of *La Traviata, Elisabetta Regina d'Inghilterra, Das Rheingold, Götterdämmerung* and several Gilbert & Sullivan works for Philips Records. Next year, EMI will issue a recording of the ENO production of *Julius Caesar,* which is also being made available on videotape.

RUTH ANN SWENSON



JEFFREY GALL

KEVIN LANGAN

Soprano **Ruth Ann Swenson** sings the roles of Dorinda in *Orlando* and Nannetta in *Falstaff* for the 1985 Fall Season. She made her Company debut during the 1983 Summer Season as Despina in *Così fan tutte*, a role in which she has recently won high praise with the Geneva Opera. During the 1983 Fall Season she was seen as Echo in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Olga in *La Grande Duchesse de Gérolstein* and Xenia in *Boris Godunov*. Last fall, she portrayed Giannetta in *L'Elisir d'Amore* and a Confidante in *Elektra*. As a participant in the Merola Opera Program for two years, she appeared in productions of *Die Fledermaus*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Rigoletto* and was a winner in the 1981 and '82 San Francisco Opera Center Auditions Grand Finals. She sang the role of Gilda in Western Opera Theater's 1982 touring production of *Rigoletto*, participated in the San Francisco Opera Center's Singers Tour of *Die Fledermaus*, and appeared in Showcase productions of Harbison's *Full Moon in March* (1982), *L'Ormindo* and *The Rape of Lucretia* (1983). She held an Adler Fellowship with the Center in 1983 and '84, and created the role of Belisa in the world premiere of Susa's *The Love of Don Perlimplín* at the State University of New York at Purchase in 1984, repeating the role for the San Francisco Opera Center's Showcase this last March. It was at that time she was called upon to replace an ailing colleague in the title role of *Martha* for Portland Opera, winning critical acclaim after learning the role in a matter of days. Another highlight of her 1984-85 engagements was her Seattle Opera debut as Adina in *L'Elisir d'Amore*. In 1984 she made her debut with the San Francisco Symphony in Nielsen's Third Symphony, returning for Mahler's Eighth. During the 1985 *Ring* Festival, she sang the role of Aennchen in three concert performances of Weber's *Der Freischütz*.

Countertenor **Jeffrey Gall** returns to San Francisco Opera as Medoro in *Orlando*, a role he sang at Carnegie Hall earlier this year as well as in Venice. He made his Company debut as Nirenus in the 1982 Summer Festival production of *Julius Caesar*. In 1979 he sang the role of Apollo in *Death in Venice* for Spring Opera Theater, but is known primarily for his performances of the baroque repertoire. It was in the title role of *Orlando* for the Peter Sellars production at the American Repertory Theatre in Cambridge that Gall first came to national prominence. He has sung with numerous early-music ensembles, including the Waverly Consort, the New York Renaissance Band, Pomerium Musices, the Handel and Haydn society of Boston, Banchetto Musicale, the Castle Hill Festival, the Cantata Singers and Emmanuel Music. More recently he has appeared with the Opera Company of Boston, the New Opera Theater at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, at Tanglewood, and with the Oakland Symphony, with whom he has sung in Handel's *Jephtha* and *Samson*. Last season he made his debut at Teatro San Carlo in Naples in Jommelli's *La Schiava Liberata* and at La Fenice in Venice in Cesti's *Il Tito*. Other European credits include the La Scala in Milan, the Festwoche der Alten Musik at Innsbruck, and the festivals of Spoleto and Edinburgh. A specialist in the music of Handel, he has sung in that composer's *Semele* at Carnegie Hall, *Messiah* with Musica Sacra at Avery Fisher Hall, *Athalia* with Music of the Baroque in Chicago, *Belshazzar* at Alice Tully Hall, and performances of Cavalli's *Xerxes* conducted by René Jacobs at Bordeaux (as well as a recording for Harmonia Mundi). Most recently, he won plaudits in the title role of Peter Sellars's production of *Julius Caesar* at the PepsiCo Summerfare Festival in New York.

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*. He was most recently seen here last fall as Henry VIII in *Anna Bolena*, a portrayal that won him enthusiastic critical praise. He participated in the 1979 and 1980 Merola Opera Programs, and 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. 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 in 1980 was a Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions winner. His European operatic debut took place in 1982 when he appeared as Osmin in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* in Lyons, France. Recent appearances include a triumphant New York recital debut at Carnegie Recital Hall in April 1984, Méphistophélès in *Faust* last January in Toronto, followed by Sarastro in *The Magic Flute* in Houston in February, and May performances as Padre Guardiano in *La Forza del Destino* in Winnipeg. Among his future engagements are *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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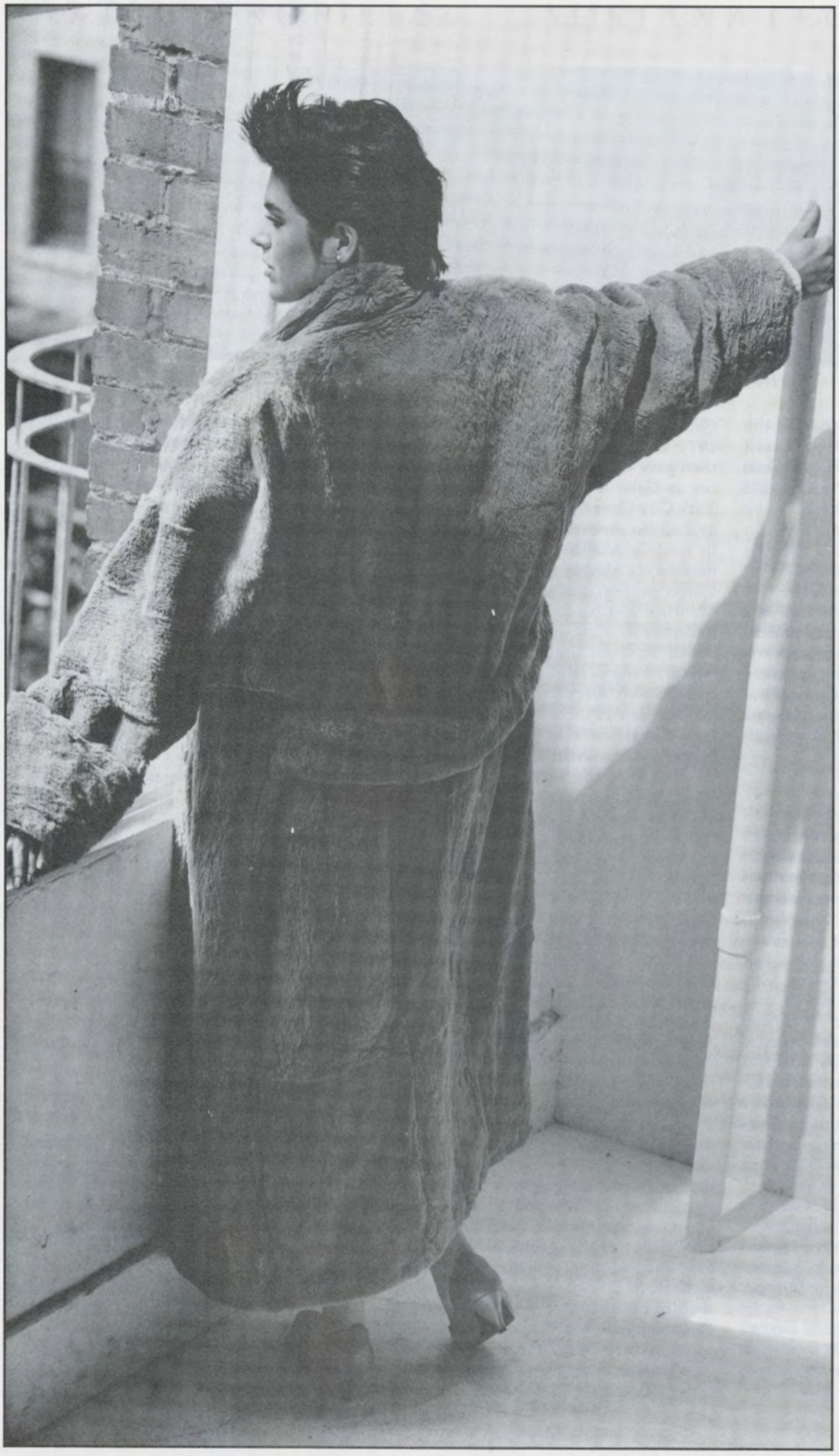

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San Francisco Opera Premiere

Opera in three acts by GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL
Edition by CHARLES MACKERRAS and JULIAN SMITH

Libretto by CARLO SIGISMONDO CAPECE
Based in part on the epic *Orlando furioso* by LODOVICO ARIOSTO

Orlando

(in Italian)

Conductor
Charles Mackerras

Production
John Copley

Set Designer
John Pascoe

Costume Designer
Michael Stennett

Lighting Designer
Thomas J. Munn

Musical Preparation
Bruce Lamott*
Mark Haffner
Christopher Larkin
Joseph De Rugeriis

Prompter
Joseph De Rugeriis

Continuo
Bruce Lamott, harpsichord
Judiyaba, cello

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Robin Thompson

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SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 21 AT 8:00
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24 AT 8:00
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 3 AT 8:00
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 6 AT 2:00

CAST

(in order of appearance)

Zoroastro, a magician and philosopher	Kevin Langan
Orlando, a hero	Marilyn Horne
Dorinda, a shepherdess	Ruth Ann Swenson
Angelica, Queen of Cathay, in love with Medoro	Valerie Masterson
Medoro, in love with Angelica	Jeffrey Gall

Gods, goddesses, pages, squires, genii
Corps de ballet

* San Francisco Opera debut

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

The performance will last approximately three hours and forty-five minutes.

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

All performances of *Orlando* feature Supertitles by Clifford Cranna, San Francisco Opera.

Orlando/*Synopsis*

ACT I

The magician Zoroastro appears to Orlando in a dream and conjures up an allegorical vision representing the struggle between military glory and romantic love that dominates the hero's thoughts. Zoroastro, declaring himself to be the guardian of Orlando's sense of valorous duty, recommends the former, but Orlando (who has fallen in love with Angelica) reflects that even the great heroes of antiquity had their softer moments. He decides to devote his service to chivalry. The shepherdess Dorinda observes Orlando rescuing a beautiful princess from her foes. Struck by the sight of the famous warrior, she is left confused and unable to explain the strange new emotions in her heart. Angelica, Queen of Cathay, secretly awaits her lover, Medoro. While caring for his wounds, she had fallen deeply in love. When he arrives, Angelica offers him her hand and her throne. He declares himself unworthy, but she reassures him. Dorinda now approaches Medoro. She is suspicious of her friend's constant attention to the beautiful Queen. Medoro quickly replies that it is his duty to accompany the woman responsible for saving his life on her journey back to her homeland, but that he will never forget the sweet Dorinda. She ruefully admits that love tempts her to believe words she knows to be untrue. Zoroastro warns Angelica of Orlando's vengeance should he discover her with Medoro. However, in his desire to restore Orlando's energies to combat, he promises to assist the lovers. Orlando approaches his beloved, but Angelica tries to repulse him by accusing him of loving the princess whom he had recently rescued. He denies this and says that he will do whatever she wishes to prove his affection. As Medoro is seen approaching, Zoroastro and his genii produce a fountain that instantly shields the prince from Orlando's view. Safe for the moment, Angelica continues her ruse by doubting the sincerity of Orlando's affection. The hero vows to enter the fiercest combat in order to prove his love. Dorinda discovers Angelica and Medoro together again. Angelica admits that Medoro is her spouse and the couple attempt to console the heartbroken shepherdess.

ACT II

Dorinda sings to a nightingale of her unrequited love. Orlando enters, demanding to know if it was she who spread the false rumor of his supposed affection for the rescued princess. Through her denial, Orlando learns of Angelica's imminent departure with Medoro, whose beauty Dorinda describes. In his despair, Orlando vows to pursue Angelica and wishes for his own death. Zoroastro exhorts Angelica and Medoro to escape from the jealous Orlando. He then offers advice to his apprentices, warning them that when Cupid is one's guide, all reason vanishes. Medoro carves his and Angelica's names, entwined, on a tree, and then goes to prepare for their departure. Angelica reflects that, although she must distress Orlando (to whom she owes her life), she cannot rule her own heart. Orlando, delirious, enters and attacks her. Zoroastro intercedes, allowing for her escape. Orlando is left devoid of reason and is surrounded by Stygian Furies. In his madness, he sees a vision of Pluto and the weeping Proserpina, who reveal themselves as a mocking Medoro and Angelica.

ACT III

Medoro comes to Dorinda's cottage, where he and Angelica had agreed to meet should they be parted. Dorinda receives him kindly, and he regretfully explains that his heart beats for someone else. Orlando enters and in his madness mistakes Dorinda for Angelica and attempts to make love to her despite her protests. He then mistakes her for one of his foes and imagines himself locked in mortal battle. Angelica learns from Dorinda of Orlando's plight, and hopes for his recovery. Dorinda reflects on the strange effects of love. Zoroastro enters, changes the scene to a cavern, and announces that Orlando will soon be cured. Angelica now learns from Dorinda that Orlando has destroyed her cottage and buried Medoro in its ruins. Orlando appears, once again threatens Angelica, and hurls her into the cavern. The earth, he says, is now rid of monsters, and he sinks into an exhausted slumber. An eagle descends, bringing a vial of healing elixir, which Zoroastro's genii sprinkle on Orlando. He wakes into sanity, but, believing that in his madness he has killed Angelica, tries to kill himself. Angelica arrives and restrains him. Orlando declares that he is now victorious over himself, and wishes happiness to Angelica and Medoro. All celebrate his victory in a final chorus.

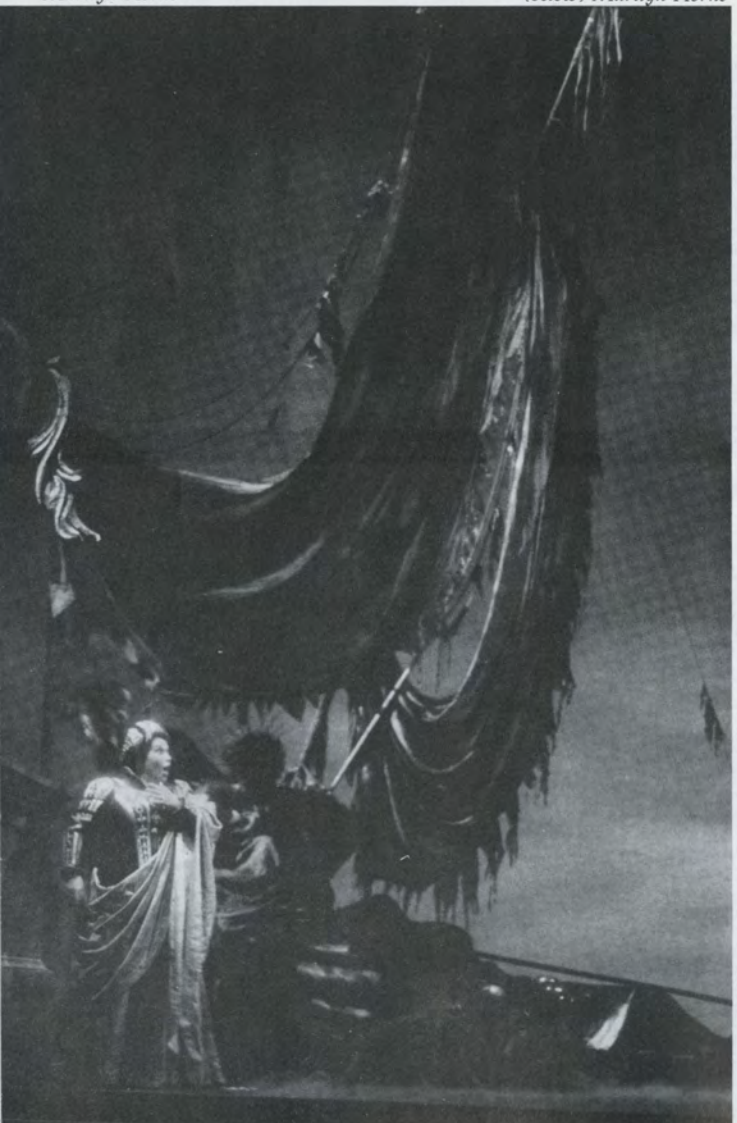
Orlando

Photos taken in rehearsal by Marty Sohl

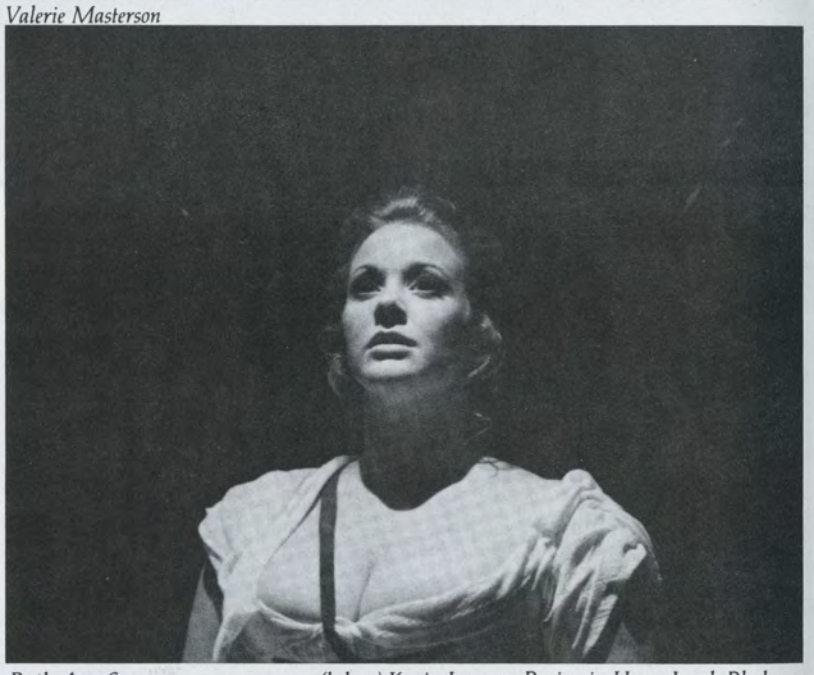
Marilyn Horne

Marilyn Horne

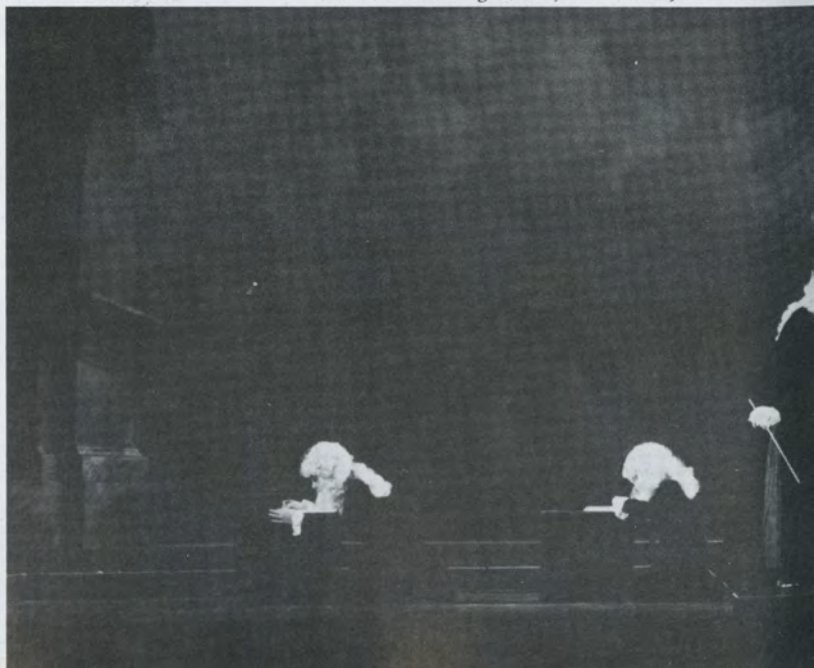
Valerie Masterson



(below) Marilyn Horne



Ruth Ann Swenson



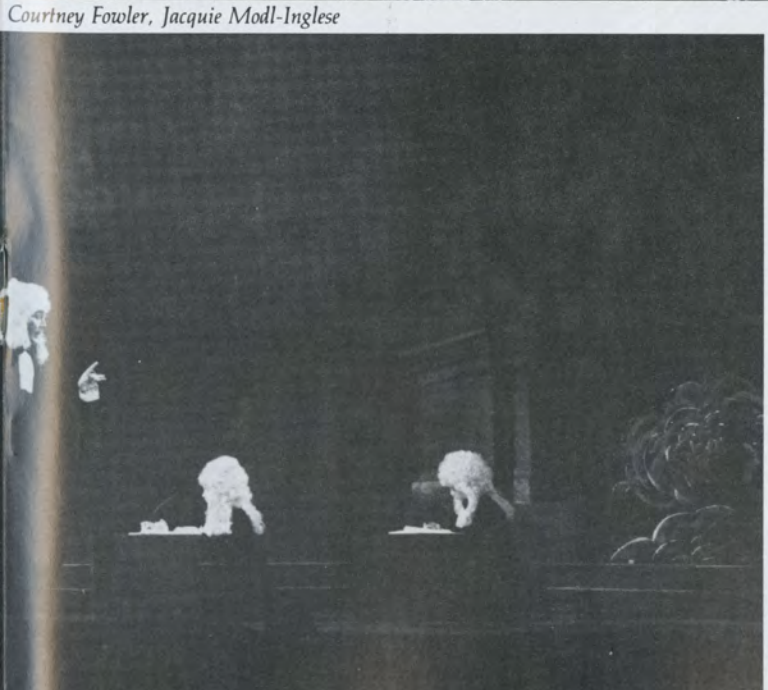
(below) Kavin Langan, Benjamin Haas, Jonah Blechman,

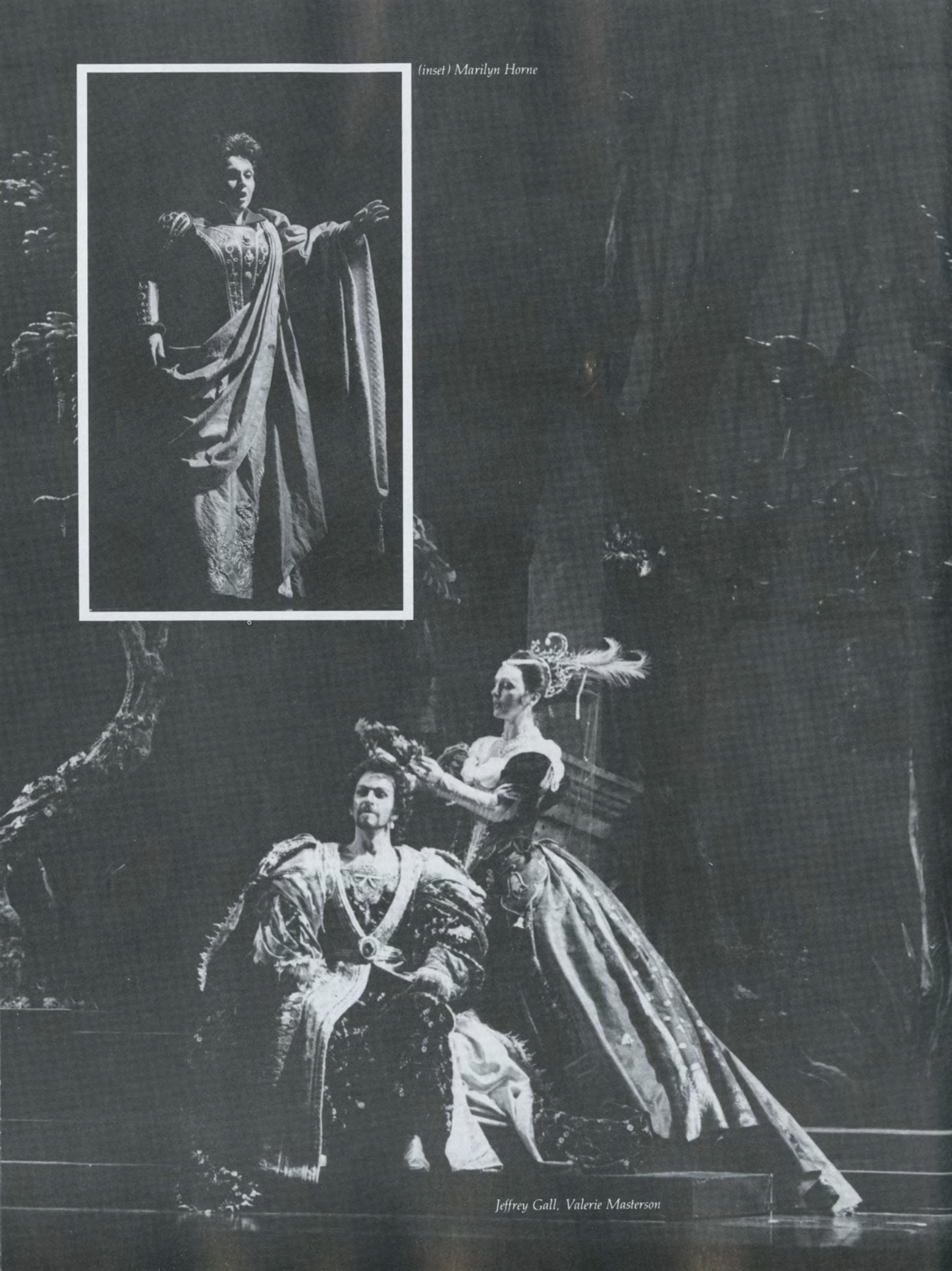
(above) Kevin Langan *(below) Jeffrey Gall*

Courtney Fowler, Jacquie Modl-Inglese

Marilyn Horne

Ruth Ann Swenson, Jeffrey Gall *(below) Marilyn Horne*





(inset) Marilyn Horne

Jeffrey Gall, Valerie Masterson

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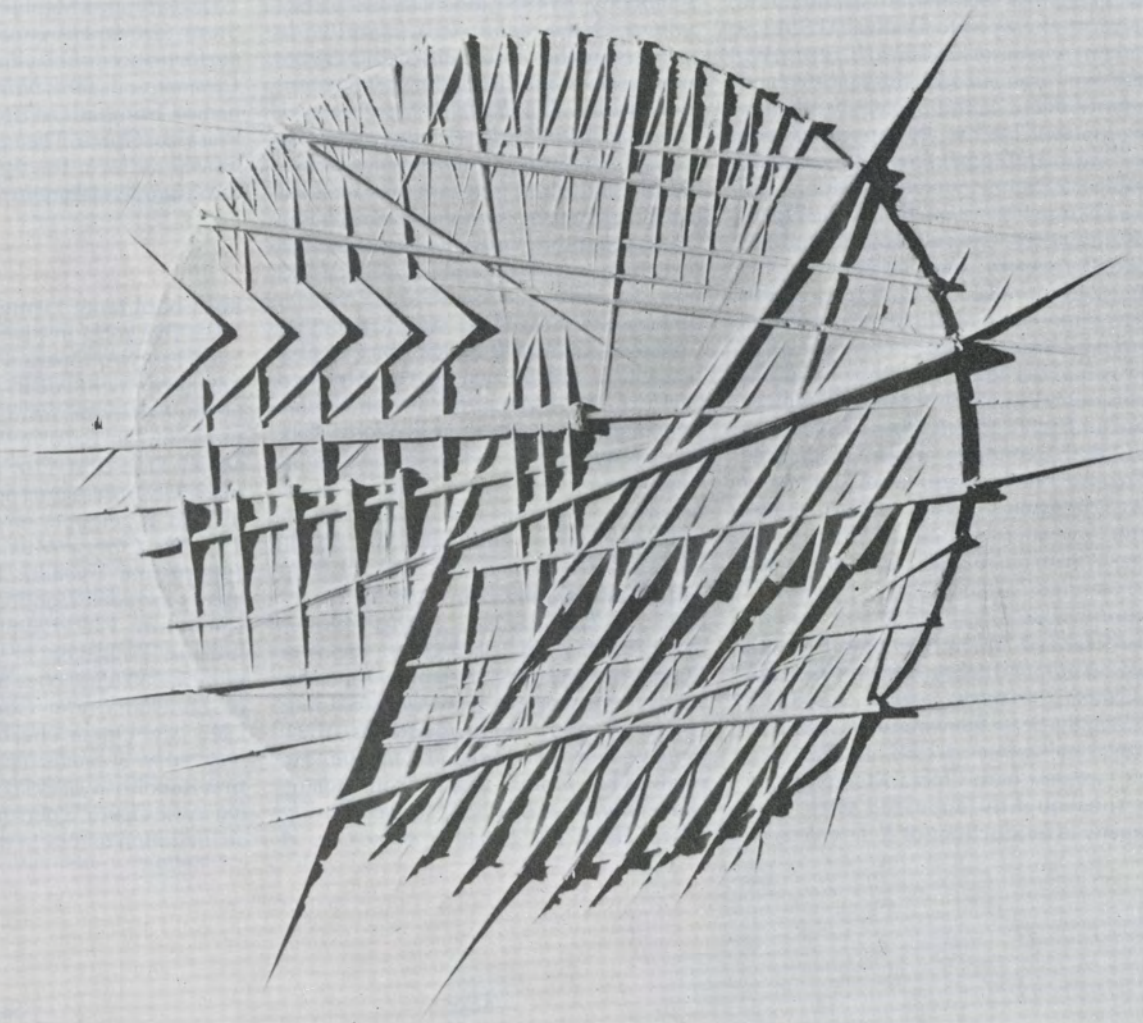

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CHARLES MACKERRAS

JOHN COPLEY

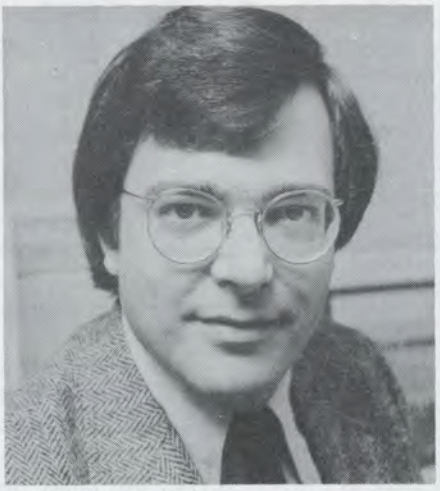
JOHN PASCOE

Sir Charles Mackerras is on the podium to lead *Orlando* in the music edition that he created and has conducted in Venice and at Carnegie Hall. He was last here for the critically acclaimed production of *Julius Caesar* that opened the 1982 Summer Festival. After three years as principal conductor with the Hamburg State Opera, Mackerras was appointed musical director of the English National Opera in 1970, and during the eight years of his tenure brought the company to new levels of international recognition. From 1976 to 1979 he was chief guest conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra — and he has recently finished a four-year term as chief conductor of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. He has conducted at most of the world's great opera houses, including Covent Garden, the Vienna Staatsoper, the Paris Opera and Hamburg State Opera. His American conducting debut took place in 1967 with an appearance by the Hamburg Opera at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York, but he conducted an American company for the first time when he led 1969 performances of *The Magic Flute* and *La Cenerentola* for San Francisco Opera. He returned here for *Eugene Onegin* and *Un Ballo in Maschera* in 1971. Other American credits include performances with the Metropolitan Opera, Houston Grand Opera, and the orchestras of Boston, Chicago, Cincinnati, Detroit, Los Angeles and New York. An acknowledged world authority and leading conductor of the works of Janáček, Mackerras received the Janáček medal from the Czech government in 1979. He is also a respected interpreter of the works of Handel, and in the summer of 1984 led the English Chamber Orchestra (a group with which he has worked for over three decades) for the music in a Tony Palmer film on the life of Handel. His lengthy discography, which has earned him a number of prestigious awards, includes a complete cycle of Janáček operas and a wide range of vocal and instrumental music by Handel. Born in Schenectady, New York, Mackerras grew up in Australia and has been honored with the title Commander of the British Empire in 1974 and a knighthood in 1979.

Stage director **John Copley** returns for his fourth season with San Francisco Opera to mount a new production of *Orlando*. He made his San Francisco Opera debut during the 1982 Summer Season with a highly praised production of Handel's *Julius Caesar* and returned in the fall of 1983 for the widely acclaimed American premiere production of Tippett's *The Midsummer Marriage*. Last fall he directed *Don Giovanni* here. Copley spent several years early in his career as a stage manager for musicals in London's West End before becoming assistant and then principal resident producer (director) at Covent Garden, a position he still holds. His productions there have included *La Bohème, Werther, Così fan tutte, Le Nozze di Figaro, Ariadne auf Naxos, L'Elisir d'Amore* and, most recently, Handel's *Semele*, as well as the two largest galas mounted at Covent Garden, marking the occasions of England's entry into the Common Market and Queen Elizabeth's Silver Jubilee. He also staged Dame Janet Baker's farewell performances in *Alceste* at Covent Garden and in *Mary Stuart* with the English National Opera at the London Coliseum. Other ENO credits include *Julius Caesar, Der Rosenkavalier, La Belle Hélène, Il Trovatore, Werther* and *Aida*. Copley's work has also been seen at La Scala in Milan, the Welsh National Opera, Scottish Opera, Netherlands Opera, the Greek National Opera and festivals at Drottningholm, Aix-en-Provence, Ottawa, Munich, Athens, Wexford and Wiesbaden. Among the 18 productions he has directed in Australia are *Jenůfa, Macbeth, Manon, Manon Lescaut, Così fan tutte, Le Nozze di Figaro, The Magic Flute* and *Don Carlos*. In North America, his directing credits include productions for the Canadian Opera Company, the Vancouver Opera, New York City Opera, the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Dallas Opera and the Washington Opera at Kennedy Center. His engagements for the 1985-86 season include *Eugene Onegin* and *The Marriage of Figaro* for San Diego Opera, *Semele* and *The Marriage of Figaro* at Covent Garden, *Don Quichotte* at New York City Opera and *Peter Grimes* for Australian Opera.

John Pascoe designed the sets for *Orlando*. He made his Company debut with the sets for the 1982 Summer Season production of *Julius Caesar*, originally seen at the English National Opera for his 1979 opera design debut. After studying theater design at the Wimbledon School of Art, he went on to create designs for the Derby Playhouse, the Crucible Theatre and the Bristol Old Vic, where he was appointed resident designer. In Bath, he held concurrent positions with the University, Prior Park and Young People's Theatre. In 1979, Pascoe's designs for Paisiello's *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* were seen at the Royal Northern College of Music, the same year he designed a production of *She Stoops to Conquer* for Greenwich. In 1980, he designed a new Covent Garden production of *Lucrezia Borgia*, which was subsequently seen at the Rome Opera. His 1981 production of Handel's *Alcina* was seen at the Australian Opera in 1981 and 1983, and for the revival he also created cos-

MICHAEL STENNETT



THOMAS J. MUNN

tumes for Joan Sutherland in the title role. He also designed and directed a production of *La Bohème* for the Northern Ireland Opera Trust in Belfast in 1983. The following year saw the unveiling of his new production design of *Anna Bolena* at the Canadian Opera in Toronto and, later that year, here in San Francisco. Other assignments last year included designs for a production of *Solomon* that he also directed for the Göttingen Händel Gesellschaft in Germany, and a video production of *Julius Caesar* with Janet Baker and Valerie Masterson, as well as designs for *Così fan tutte* at the Dallas Opera. His *Anna Bolena* production will be seen at the Lyric Opera of Chicago this season, and this December he will give a lecture on "Designing Handel in the 20th Century" for the British Museum. His work is represented in the Victoria and Albert Theater Collection in London.

Costumes for *Orlando* were designed by **Michael Stennett**, whose work was first seen by San Francisco Opera audiences in the 1982 Summer Season staging of Handel's *Julius Caesar*, a production originally created for the English National Opera and subsequently seen in Geneva as well. Last fall, his costumes were seen in the production of *Anna Bolena* first produced for the Canadian Opera Company and to be seen this season at the Lyric Opera of Chicago. Since his first production in 1968, *Anne of Green Gables* in London's West End, the English designer has worked for various leading opera, ballet and theatrical companies. His credits for the Australian Opera include costumes for *Le Nozze di Figaro, Rigoletto, Jenůfa, Così fan tutte, Madama Butterfly, Fra Diavolo, La Traviata, I Masnadieri, Tosca, Les Huguenots* and *Lucia di Lammermoor*. The costumes from the last-mentioned were selected by Joan Sutherland for her subsequent performances of the role at the Metropolitan Opera and Covent Garden. His most recent Australian Opera credit was a 1985 production of *Un Ballo in Maschera* conducted by David Agler. In Britain, his costumes have been seen in productions of *Werther* for ENO; *La Bohème, Peter Grimes* and *Tosca* for the Welsh National Opera; and, for the Royal Opera, *Le Nozze di Figaro, Werther, Alceste* and a production of *Lucrezia Borgia* also seen in Rome. Other credits include *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Eugene Onegin* for the Ottawa Festival, *Platée* for the Stockholm Opera and *I Capuleti ed i Montecchi* for the Teatro Massimo, Palermo. In this country his work was also seen in the 1982 Los Angeles Philharmonic production of *Falstaff* that was recorded on video, as was the ENO *Julius Caesar*. His graphic work has been featured on numerous record jackets, and a large number of his designs appear in a recent book entitled *Joan Sutherland: Designs for a Prima Donna.*

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

Glossary of mythological references in *Orlando*

Alcide	Epithet of Heracles (Hercules).
Antaeus	(Anteo, Antaios) A gigantic wrestler, son of Gaea and Poseidon, invincible for as long as he touched the earth with one foot.
Argalia	Brother of Angelica, Queen of Cathay.
Asia	An oceanid, daughter of Oceanus, sister of many, including Callirhoe, Clymene, Clytis, Europa, Perseis and Styx.
Cerberus	Watchdog of Hades. Represented as having three heads, a dragon's tail, and snakes springing from his neck and back (sometimes with fifty or one hundred heads).
Charon	Ferryman of the river Styx. His toll was a coin, placed in the hand or mouth of the dead, to pay for the ferrying across the river to Elysium.
Cimmerian	Pertaining to inhabitants of grottoes at the entrance to Hades. They live in a land of eternal darkness.
Cocito	Cocytus. See under Stygian.
Cupid	In Roman mythology, the god of love; son of Venus and Mercury, and counterpart of the Greek Eros.
Erebus	(a.k.a. Erebo and Erebos) The underworld darkness below Hades, through which all the dead must pass. Erebus was born of Chaos and Darkness, and was the brother of Nyx. Fathered fascinating children: Aether, Cer, Hypnos, Momus, Moros, Nemesis, Thanatos and Charon.
Falerina	A witch who presides over the enchanted garden of Orgagna. Orlando finds out how to break her enchantments, and she is forced to do his bidding for a time.
Ferraguto	(a.k.a. Ferragù, Ferrau, Ferracute, or Ferragus) A Saracen knight, who lost his helmet in a river and vowed to wear none other than Orlando's. He was finally killed by Orlando when stabbed in the navel, his only vulnerable part.
Furies	Roman goddesses of vengeance, known in Greece as the Erinyes: Alecto, Megaera and Tisiphone. Snaky-haired and hideous, they sprang from the blood of Uranus when he was castrated by his son Cronos.
Genii	Also known as the jinn. Demons of Muslim legend, they come in two flavors: evil (hideously ugly) and good (exquisitely beautiful). Both can become invisible at will and assume any kind of animal or human shape. The *Orlando* genii are of the good variety.
Lete	Lethe. See under Stygian.
Mars	Roman god of war and agriculture, son of Jupiter and Juno, or of Juno alone. Equivalent of the Greek Ares. In Roman poetry, the word Mars is often used as a synonym for war.
Morfeo	(Morpheus) God of sleep and dreams. Son of Somnus, brother of Icelos and Phantasos and 997 others.
Omphale	A queen of Lydia, to whom Heracles was sold as a slave. She became his mistress, bore him three children, and forced him to dress as a woman.
Orlando	Italian name of Charlemagne's paladin Roland. Subject of Ariosto's romantic epic *Orlando Furioso*, published in 1516 (40 cantos) and in a longer version (46 cantos) in 1532.
Pelide	(Pelides) Epithet of Achilles.
Pluto	Epithet of Hades, god of the underworld.
Proserpina	Roman counterpart of Persephone. Goddess of the underworld and of the reviving crops.
Stygian	Referring to the river Styx, one of the five rivers of Hell. The other four: Acheron, Cocytus (also mentioned in *Orlando*), Phlegethon, and Lethe.
Venus	Roman goddess of love, identified with the Greek Aphrodite.
Ziliante	Son of the King Monodante of India. He is rescued by Orlando (according to Ariosto) after falling into the power of the witch Morgana.
Zoroastro	Italian version of the Greek word (Zoroaster) for the Persian Zarathustra, the founder of the Perso-Iranian national religion. He clung to three basic commandments: good thoughts, good words, good deeds.

Marilyn Horne *continued from p.32*

careful about the costumes. It seems I'm always playing these warriors, so I also have to wear armor and things like that. Sometimes it can be excruciatingly uncomfortable. But it's also fun, you know. You put on those boots and the sword and breast plate and, well, you don't become a male, but you certainly think of yourself in a different way when you get on stage.

"Opera singers are a little different from straight actors because we have music all the time to help us create our characters. Music does a wonderful job of that, and I would say having to immerse oneself greatly in a role, at least for me, is not necessary.

"Of course the text and the sentiment helps enormously, too — that puts you immediately into character. In my case I think that the recitatives are highly important for putting forth the maleness of the part, because they can be accented with a certain strength and a certain kind of color that makes the audience a little more convinced that I'm a male. I don't think that anybody is going to really accept the fact that I am a male on stage, but maybe for a few hours we can give a little bit of an illusion.

"If opera audiences are at all trained and have come to a few operas, they accept that situation as being part and parcel of the art. A person who is new to opera may find it very difficult. I remember one comment: A friend of mine was in the ladies' room at a performance of Bellini's *I Capuleti ed i Montecchi* in which I was singing Romeo, and she heard this lady saying, 'I just don't know what the world is coming to. All these things are just changing around so much, and now I come to the opera and Romeo's a woman!'"

Is her undertaking of numerous trouser roles due to any degree to a lack of meaty roles for mezzo-sopranos as women? Only slightly, according to Horne. "Amneris and Eboli and Azucena aren't any slouches, but the *protagonisti* are usually a soprano or a tenor. I've been lucky that so many operas have been revived for me so that I can also play wonderful *protagoniste* roles. It gives a mezzo or a contralto a certain stellar status that she may be denied singing the other parts. I wouldn't want to bet my life savings on it, but I have a feeling that it always counts for a little more if you can be singing the title part."

The warm and richly burnished tone

ARICI/SMITH

In April of 1985, Marilyn Horne sang the title role of Handel's Orlando *at the Teatro La Fenice in Venice.*

for which Horne is famous does seem to make her a likelier candidate for trouser roles than some other mezzos. "It has to do with the fact that I can sing quite easily in the middle and lower registers and also declaim in those registers, without feeling any fatigue or injury to my voice. Part of that is my natural gift of a big chest resonance, which makes it possible to present a little stronger male character."

With an intimate knowledge of parts written both for castrati and for women *en travesti*, Horne is in a unique position to discern the continuum of performance traditions from the 18th century into the 19th. She points out that Rossini wrote at least one opera — *Aurelio in Palmira* — for a castrato. "Of course he was born at a time when he still heard some castrati, and I think he was terribly influenced by the rigorous schooling and discipline that were part of the castrato tradition. I also think there must have been a special sound in the blending of the soprano and the castrato voice, which he wanted to carry over. It wasn't very long, though, before the tenor started to take over those roles. A part like Bellini's Romeo is certainly the forerunner of Arturo in *Puritani* — that kind of romantic hero that he quickly disposed of as soon as some tenors were around for whom he wanted to compose."

Although she has performed only two Handel castrato roles on stage, Horne is widely regarded as the most persuasive proponent of the genre. Which aspects of Handel's music does she find most striking? "For me the recitatives that are accompanied by full orchestra are so extraordinary. I know it's the fast coloratura arias that bring down the house, but for me the great, great beauty of Handel is in his slow arias with their incredible melodies."

What other Handel roles are in her future? "At the top of the list now is *Julius Caesar*; it's a wonderful opera and a grand character to play, so I possibly will do that within the next few years. *Radamisto* also interests me very much; perhaps *Admeto*."

It is no coincidence that those three

roles — along with *Orlando* and a revival of *Rinaldo* — were all written by Handel for one singer, the famous castrato Francesco Bernardi, who went by the stage name Senesino, after his native Siena. "If it's written for Senesino, it's going to be right for me," Miss Horne quickly agrees. This is a woman who is not only the possessor of a magnificent instrument and awesome technique, but great intelligence and a thorough knowledge of the repertoire and its history. "I find a similar case with Rossini. If I chose a part that he wrote for Pisaroni-Carrara or Rosa Mariani or Adelaide Malanotte-Montresor, I almost don't even have to look at the score, because I know that the parts are going to suit me. Or anything that Marietta Alboni sang is going to be right for me. She was Rossini's only voice pupil and was absolutely his favorite singer. He wrote a wonderful cantata for her, *Giovanna d'Arco*, which I have sung and recorded, and I sing an aria that Meyerbeer wrote especially for her in *Les Huguenots* called 'Non!—non, non, non, non, non!' and an opera that was written for her by Auber called *Zerline* — all of this music just fits me like a glove."

Because she cannily chooses roles that suit her voice, Horne, unlike other mezzos who venture into the castrato repertoire, never uses transpositions, although she is not opposed to the practice. "Why not? Handel would have done it, and we know that the pitch was different in Handel's time anyway. As long as you don't spoil the structure of the music, why not transpose? Julius Caesar and Orlando happen to be very low parts, so you're dealing with a contralto castrato role rather than, say, Ariodante, which is a higher mezzo or even a soprano castrato role. The categories get all mishmashed, though, because they were all so different in those days.

"You know, we're getting very fussy these days about baroque music. We're on the verge of just coughing and spitting and hiccupping over every single tiny thing, and we have to remember that we're also in the business of performing. Handel himself borrowed and pasted and stole from himself; he was a showman — he was putting on a show all the time.

"We could have a discussion about old instruments versus modern instruments. The old instruments are perfectly valid and very interesting, but I think they're hard to sing with. For a recording they can

NOWINSKI

Marilyn Horne as Arsace in Semiramide, *the opera that opened San Francisco Opera's 1981 season.*

CALDWELL

Marilyn Horne as Rinaldo in Houston Grand Opera's presentation of the Handel work.

keep retuning all the time and get a sound situation that is more flattering, but [live] they don't make such great sound, and if Handel were to come back today and had the option, I think he would use modern instruments played as nearly as possible in a baroque style — the strings especially.

"The size of a Handel orchestra is a double-sided coin, too. It's wonderful to have a small orchestra underneath you. On the other hand, the orchestra doesn't help you as, say, in Puccini or Wagner — an orchestra like that will just carry the singer along in a way. With Handel, you're just standing there nude on stage with a light accompaniment underneath you. It makes it totally exposed."

An exposed vocal line is far from being the only hurdle in a Handel opera. "The coloratura arias are excruciatingly difficult, not only to sing but to remember," Horne chuckles, as if recalling a few Handelian bloopers and blunders. "They take such funny turns. They are killers to sing, there's no doubt about it. They take incredible flexibility in your larynx, they take incredible breath control and tremendous economy of air. And then you have to do all of this and project it out into a big house" — a house that may, like the War Memorial, be several times larger than the houses for which Handel composed.

"Then, of course, the convention is that when you come to the *da capo* or repeat of the A section — the arias are almost always in ABA form — then you have to *embellish* that difficulty. Yes, you can make it simpler, but one would not be considered a great Handel singer if one just simplified his music, so you have to make it even more difficult."

The entire subject of ornamentation in baroque music is one of the most passionately debated by musical scholars. Horne's own ornamentation, for the most part, is provided by others. "I am not comfortable writing ornamentation," she freely admits. "I'm not gifted in that way. I usually have somebody write it for me, and then I take it apart and decide if I want to use it or not. I may rewrite certain bars here and there; I may have some ideas about a cadenza. I work very closely with my accompanist, Martin Katz [who created the sensationally bravura ornamentation Horne used in *Rinaldo*]. In the case of this *Orlando*, most of the ornamentation was written by Charles Mackerras. This is very much his version. He also

POWERS

Marilyn Horne and Joan Sutherland in the 1982 San Francisco Opera production of Bellini's Norma.

NOWINSKI

Another view of Marilyn Horne as Arsace in San Francisco Opera's 1981 presentation of Rossini's Semiramide.

wrote choices, so in many cases I just took one of them. On the other hand, I rewrote certain things. I can certainly ornament a given bar here or there, or write a cadenza — and I've written a few right on the spot on stage when things have gone haywire — but I would rather have somebody writing with me."

Horne recognizes ornamentation as a musical device that need not be assiduously dictated by the sentiments of the libretto. "There are times when the ornaments can bring out something in the situation that needs to be accented, but I think basically it's decoration — it's show-off time."

Of course any singer who dares to enter the damned-if-you-do, damned-if-you-don't realm of ornamentation faces criticism from some quarters for overin-

dulging. It's a critical stance that began back in the 18th century, when numerous singers were taken to task for inventiveness that was deemed, at least by some, to be excessive.

"You know, they really ornamented much, much more than we do," Horne points out. "When I was preparing *Tancredi* I was presented by Phillip Gossett [a renowned Rossini scholar] with a whole set of variations which Rossini himself wrote for Pasta to sing in the role. I looked at them and said it's not possible — I could never ornament this much without being criticized from one end to the other, but I did decide to use a part of her ornaments. I like the things Rossini had written and used a few, and I was criticized for over-ornamenting for using even a part of them!"

Horne occasionally does improvise new ornaments on stage. "I find that the more I know a piece, a piece that's really in my bones, then I can fiddle around with it a little, because I'm not going to get myself off the track. Of course, I might feel inventive on a given night, but if the conductor doesn't know that, whatever I invent has got to be within the beats the conductor is laying down. I can't suddenly go free." It's a situation that differs from that of her historical predecessors. "They did not have to contend with things being very strictly in time, because they were going to be followed absolutely by the conductor or first violinist or whoever was leading the performance, no matter what turn they took. There's no question about it; they were totally in charge."

Does she ever wish things were still like that? Laughter punctuates her quick affirmative answer. "It would make life a lot easier. But I'm sure that we all need to have our excesses dampened a little bit, so I suppose it's not so bad. In the music that I sing on the opera stage — I clarify that because I sing a lot of different music off the opera stage — I basically have an awful lot to say because it is the nature of the music. I'm going to bring my own ornaments and cadenzas, and I may say I can't sing it at that tempo, I need this tempo. So we're going to have a lot of give and take.

"On the other hand, I'm thrilled to be working on *Falstaff*, where I don't have to change anything, where I don't have to embellish anything. I can really look at that score and say I'm going to do every dot and every accent and everything exactly as it's written. That's marvelous!"

In This Year of Handel...

By TIMOTHY PFAFF

The combined Bach and Handel tercentenaries this year seem to have had surprisingly little effect on our view of J.S. Bach, at the same time that they appear to have dramatically changed our perception of Handel. That's fitting insofar as the prevailing view of Bach hardly needed changing: there is nearly universal assent on the matter of his genius.

How different the situation with Handel, and particularly the operatic Handel. A good-humored debate still rages over which are the four most familiar notes in all of Western classical music, the opening statement of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony or the notes of the first "Hal-le-lu-jah" in the "Hallelujah" chorus. But until comparatively recently, the beloved, even revered (however misunderstood) composer of *Messiah* has remained a kind of victim of his singular success with that somewhat atypical work. Scattered performances of some of his other works, while they have served to remind audiences of his tremendous range as a composer, also have, however unwittingly, served to reinforce the appraisal of him as a slightly lesser Bach. And for the better part of two centuries, his reputation as the greatest composer of opera between Monteverdi and Mozart has been more an article of faith than of direct musical experience.

There have been a number of sincere attempts to revive Handel operas in our century — beginning in the 1920s in Germany, since the mid-1950s in England, and, since about that same time, at an annual festival in Halle, Handel's birthplace. However well intended, those revivals have not always ably served their cause. Some of Handel's operas have reached the stage in versions their creator would scarcely have recognized, and the revivals generally have been slow to kindle audience demand for more of his masterpieces. It's significant that prior to the Handel tercentenary, the San Francisco and Metropolitan opera stages had enjoyed but one Handel opera each, *Julius Caesar* in San Francisco in 1982 (also given by Spring Opera Theater in 1978) and *Rinaldo* at the Met in 1984. It is the fondest hope of Handelians everywhere that the so-called "Handel year" will have changed all that for good, or at least for the better.

Given the nature of operatic scheduling today, the Handel "year" really extends from mid-1984 to mid-1986. During that period, tercentenary celebrations will have brought no fewer than 27 of Handel's 40 full-length operas to the world's stages, either in full productions or in professional, semi-staged concert performances. Precise counts are hard to make because of shared and traveling productions, but it is worth noting that of those 27 operas, more than half have been presented in more than one production, two (*Serse* and *Orlando*) have enjoyed at least four different productions, and two others (*Agrippina* and *Julius Caesar*) have been seen in at least five productions each. It is almost as though two centuries of neglect were being compensated for in two years.

Further promoting a full appreciation of this great genius of the baroque has

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COURTESY, LIM M. LAI

A scene from Handel's Orlando *as presented at Halle in 1922.*

been the publication of four books in English, each in its own way an important addition to available Handel literature and geared as much to the lay reader as to the "music professional." *Handel* (Thames and Hudson, 1984), by the acclaimed early music specialist Christopher Hogwood, has been hailed as the most up-to-date, reliable, and readable Handel biography to date. H.C. Robbins Landon's *Handel and His World* (Little, Brown and Co., 1984), also dependable despite its sometimes hagiographic tone, boasts, in addition, an enormous and absorbing collection of pertinent and beautifully reproduced illustrations. Jonathan Keates's *Handel: The Man and His Music* (St. Martin's Press, 1985), an ambitious study conducted in a relaxed style, is the most even-handed in its consideration of the operas.

For those willing to brave the sometimes tortured English translation, easily the most important addition to Handel studies has been Reinhard Strohm's *Essays on Handel and Italian Opera* (Cambridge University Press, 1985). The collection includes fresh, eye- and ear-opening essays on Handel's crucially important years in Italy (1706-1710), the *opera seria* "tradition" and, not incidentally, a concluding essay on "Comic traditions in Handel's *Orlando*." A good assessment of the value of the current baroque opera revival in general, and of the recent profusion of Handel opera productions in particular, is tucked inside a single sentence in Strohm's preface. "If we realise," he writes, "how much musical theatre must have been present in Handel's mind that is now forever forgotten, it can be electrifying when a good performance makes us Handel's contemporaries."

In his entry on Handel in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (considered by many to be the single best entry on a composer in the entire dictionary, and now available in paperback as *The New Grove Handel*), Winton Dean, still the most important commentator on Handel, wrote: "Scholarship has been slow to come to grips with Handel; when it has done so, and when its findings have seeped through the slow minds of impresarios into the public domain, a world of humane wisdom, profound art and aesthetic pleasure will become available to the widest audience." In the decade since he penned that challenge, scholarship has quickened its pace, and impresarios their wits, with the result that an ever-widening audience has gained admittance

Susan Larson as Cleopatra and Rodney Hardesty as Ptolemy in Peter Sellars's staging of Handel's Julius Caesar, *set in modern Cairo, and presented this summer by PepsiCo Summerfare, Purchase, New York.*

to Handel's absorbing musical universe.

A fine example is that of *Rodrigo*, Handel's first opera for Italy (commissioned by Prince Ferdinand de Medici, composed and staged in Florence in 1707, when Handel was 22) and now considered his first major masterpiece in any form. Although a good deal of *Rodrigo* has survived in Handel's own autograph, the opera has, until rather recently, been considered unperformable because crucial bits of its music were lost — including the all-important final chorus, a *sine qua non* in Handel opera. Also missing was its original libretto. In the mid-1970s, Strohm discovered the libretto in a library in Bologna, where it was catalogued under its original title, "Vincer se stesso e la maggior vittoria" ("To conquer oneself is the greatest victory," the opera's motto). The libretto made plain that not as much music was lost as was once thought, and made possible the identification of more of *Rodrigo*'s missing music in other Handel manuscript collections in Europe.

Alan Curtis, a music professor at UC Berkeley and a renowned exponent of rare 17th- and 18th-century operas in Europe, was the first to devise, and, ultimately conduct, a full performing version of the work. His work entailed translating the libretto to gain full understanding of the drama (Curtis respects 18th-century libretti not by "believing" their stories, but by believing in them), justifying the first libretto with the text of the autograph score, and then filling the resulting gaps with appropriate music — while scrupulously avoiding the critically much-deplored practice of transplanting arias from another Handel opera wholesale onto the trunk of the one to be performed. In the end, the only such grafting Curtis had to do was to "borrow" the music (only) of a duet from *Teseo*, which perfectly fit the words of a missing *Rodrigo* duet. (Handel, among the most famous of self-borrowers, may himself have taken the music from *Rodrigo* for the *Teseo* duet in the first place. A plausible explanation for the missing music in the *Rodrigo* autograph might well be Handel's own recycling of the pieces in subsequent operas. Music first composed for *Rodrigo* reappears scarcely — yet significantly — altered in several of Handel's later compositions.) Curtis solved the problem of missing music for the opera's opening accompanied recitative in the way Handel would have: he composed it himself.

Rodrigo was given its first modern performances in August of 1984, as the centerpiece of the Early Music Festival Week in Innsbruck, Austria. The strong emphasis on early music performance practices there, as well as on baroque dance and stagecraft, meant that the Innsbruck *Rodrigo*s were as Handelian in flavor as is possible in modern times. The point was not a pedantic trotting out of the *Urtext* or a scholarly exhumation of an apprentice work. Rather, it was to see what kind of statement the work, Handel's Italian debut in a form he incorporated with characteristic speed and panache, would make if allowed to speak its

own musical, dramatic, and aesthetic language. In the event, the piece proved not only viable but bold, striking, and really rather precocious in its psychological veracity, a trademark of mature Handel at its best. Even after a sleep of nearly three centuries, *Rodrigo*'s vigor was sufficient to sustain yet a second modern production, at Sadler's Wells Theatre in London last July, in an English translation by Anthony Hicks and with yet more of the once-missing music restored.

Handel wrote only two operas for Italy, the second, *Agrippina*, in 1709 for Venice, the opera capital of Europe at the time. Of the several *Agrippina* productions during the Handel tercentenary, one amounted to a significant homecoming for the work. Last June and July Christopher Hogwood led baroque-style performances of the piece, under the auspices of La Fenice, at Venice's Teatro Malibran, only a few Venetian "blocks" away from the site of its original performances, the Teatro San Giovanni Crisostomo.

In this tercentenary extravaganza, Handel's operas (and, indeed, some of his oratorios, dramatic cantatas, and serenatas) have hit the boards in almost every conceivable permutation. Some have been fully staged, others semi-staged, still others given in concert versions. Some have been directed with an eye to baroque dramaturgy, others to emphasize their "modernity." Some have been accompanied on "original" instruments, others on modern instruments. Most have been performed in the original language, a few in the language of the modern audience in question. Some have been performed in versions sensitive both to period practices and modern circumstances, while others have been mounted on editions simply pulled from library shelves. Generalizations come hard, but a few are nevertheless in order.

Two are of fundamental importance: Handel works, and Handel sells.

Handel works best, it now seems clear, when his dramatic instincts — manifested in painstakingly worked out musical and dramatic schemes — are respected. Handel works hardly at all when, on the other hand, scenes, arias, and ensembles are shifted from act to act, even opera to opera, or when the shape or pace of an act or scene is disfigured by insertions or cuts. Handel works when the original pitches of his vocal writing are observed, whereas his music sounds odd and ungainly when octave transpositions are introduced to match the sex of a singer to the gender of a role. Handel's operas are believable, even convincing, when singers, players, and conductors perform them on their own terms and do not stint, either by giving too uninflected a performance or by making adjustments, consciously or unconsciously, to the "modern" sensibilities of an audience, with its imagined intolerances. Handel's operas play when they are treated as viable dramas, however bound to the sensibilities of an earlier time; they do, on the other hand, become long evenings in the theater when they are treated as pearls of abstract vocalism (the arias) on a long string of senseless chatter (the recitatives). Taken seriously — but given with the full palette of emotional colors, from high solemnity to high merriment, with which the composer always painted his scenes — Handel's operas hold the modern ticket-buying public rapt.

The trials and errors of modern Handel productions have, in the end, been clearer on the "wrongs" than on the "rights" of the matter. Three centuries after the fact, there proves to be no one indisputably correct way to stage and

perform a Handel opera. Even employing an authentically baroque opera house like the one in Drottningholm, Sweden (where the Handel tercentenary was marked with another, presumably "authentic," production of *Agrippina*), ensures little more than a museum staging, as contrasted with the presentation of a living work of art.

The variety of means left open to modern producers of Handel was aptly demonstrated during the PepsiCo Summerfare, at the Purchase campus of the State University of New York last July, where three Handel operas, *Teseo, Tamerlane,* and *Giulio Cesare,* were performed. Employing rather startlingly different means, the various productions reflected three distinct, if equally serious, contemporary visions of Handel's *dramma per musica.*

The *Teseo* production, imported from the Boston Early Music Festival, at which the piece had its American stage debut in June, sought to present the challenging, "magic" opera in as thoroughly baroque a style as was possible with modern resources. (Its conductor, director, and overall guiding intelligence, Nicholas McGegan, had led a similarly "authentic" *Orlando* at St. Louis in 1983, to great acclaim.) The players, led by McGegan at first harpsichord, sat at stage level, in view of both singers and audience, and played on period instruments. The singers performed (in Italian) according to baroque principles, decorating the repeated sections of da capo arias in a manner that either was or sounded improvised, and moved and gestured in the manner depicted in 18th-century iconography. Sets were a series of painted flats flown from above the stage to facilitate quick scene changes. Costumes were designed on 18th-century models. Footlights, although electrical, were dimmed to suggest candlelight. The obvious intent was to stage lovingly, but not slavishly, a baroque production.

Tamerlane, imported from the Opera Center of Indiana University in Bloomington, took more of a middle ground. Sung in English, it was performed in stage designs inspired by Adolphe Appia. Andrew Porter directed the work, with an eye for simple, uncluttered movements and gestures intended to realize the opera's action without overstatement. The "point" of the production seems to have been to allow score and libretto to speak unfettered by the conventions of a particular historical period.

At the opposite extreme from the *Teseo* was the Peter Sellars-directed *Giulio Cesare,* which had its premiere at Purchase. Performed complete (at nearly five hours, like Wagner), in Italian, and in baroque vocal style, it was, however, played on modern instruments. More to the point, it was played in an almost aggressively modern production, with sets depicting the Middle East of the near future. The action was set in and around a Cairo hotel, at which a Diet Pepsi-sipping Cleopatra worked as a cocktail waitress. (Sellars's "spaced-out" *Orlando* of a few years ago was set around Cape Kennedy, and in the Everglades.) Although the production must have offended purists, it played to high acclaim both from audiences and from critics with impeccable Handelian credentials. Porter himself (dubbed "the conscience of the international Handel revival" by a critic in *Opera*) called it "a production responsive at every point to the seriousness, the splendor, the humors, and the variety of the work, alert at every moment to the movements and the meanings of the music."

Three distinctive operas, three highly individual directors, and three different but valid visions of Handel's musical and dramatic art in our time. Even more encouraging than the mere fact that so many of Handel's operas were brought back to the stage for his tercentenary is the sense that the pieces have been perceived as particular, individual, and not mere manifestations of a phenomenon called "Handel opera." For these viable, stageworthy works not to disappear once again, it will be necessary for their directors, performers, and audiences to perceive them as flexible rather than time- and convention-bound pieces.

In a lecture on modern Handel revivals, Winton Dean put it succinctly: "A work of art is not objectively a success in one period and a failure in another, though its appeal may vary from age to age. It exists or it does not.... If its form or idiom is strange, the least we can do is try to understand it. That means accepting it on its own terms and, in the case of opera, giving it the best possible chance of coming to life in the theater. It will then be found, as it invariably is with a great and experienced creative artist, that the limitations of a convention melt away, like the wax from which a bronze is cast, and the essential strength remains." ■

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Previews *continued from p.19*

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

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

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

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Lear	9/5
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Turandot	9/16
Werther	9/23
Falstaff	10/14
Billy Budd	11/11
Der Rosenkavalier	11/18

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Turandot	9/11
Der Rosenkavalier	9/18
Werther	9/25

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

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

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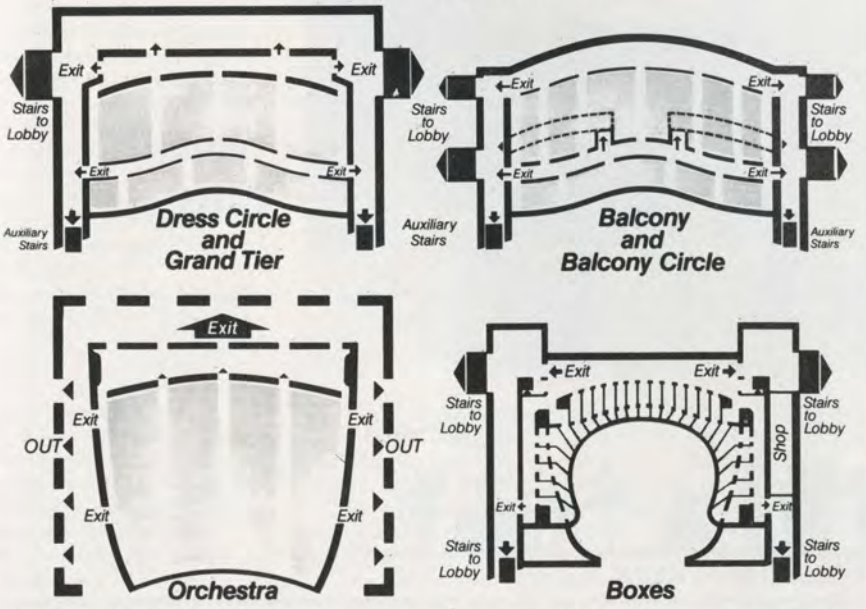

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