

Pagliacci
(The Clowns)

1985

Sunday, June 1, 1986 2:00 PM
Wednesday, June 4, 1986 7:30 PM
Saturday, June 7, 1986 8:00 PM
Tuesday, June 10, 1986 8:00 PM
Friday, June 13, 1986 8:00 PM
Tuesday, June 17, 1986 7:30 PM
Sunday, June 22, 1986 1:00 PM

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SUMMER SEASON 1986



Cavalleria Rusticana Pagliacci

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John S. Sargent

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San Francisco Opera

Terence A. McEwen, *General Director*

Sir John Pritchard, *Music Director*

Cavalleria Rusticana / Pagliacci

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COVER:

John Singer Sargent, 1856-1925
Capri, 1878
Oil on canvas, 30¼ x 25 in.

The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.
Bequest of Helen Swift Neilson.

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

Editor: Koraljka Lockhart
Art director: Frank Benson
Editorial assistant: Robert M. Robb

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

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Reid W. Dennis



Tully M. Friedman

From the Chairman of the Board and the President

It is a pleasure to welcome you to San Francisco Opera's 1986 Summer Season, a season that combines wonderful Italian repertory favorites with an exciting Company premiere and includes eagerly anticipated debuts by major international stars as well as return appearances of artists known and loved by our audience.

A season such as this, filled with wonderful melodies and gripping drama, would not be possible without the support of our loyal friends, and we are most pleased to acknowledge those who have made this summer's productions possible. Special thanks go to the Paul L. and Phyllis C. Wattis Foundation for underwriting the presentation of Menotti's *The Medium*, the first Menotti opera our Company has ever mounted. The Wattis Foundation has long been a special supporter of San Francisco Opera, having sponsored the 1983 American premiere of Tippett's *The Midsummer Marriage* in addition to a most generous 1984 challenge grant.

Three of our revival productions were underwritten at the time they were first performed: *Lucia di Lammermoor* was originally made possible through a gift from Cyril Magnin; our *Cavalleria Rusticana/Pagliacci* double bill was the result of a gift from the late James D. Robertson; and *La Voix humaine* came into being through the generosity of the San Francisco Foundation.

The 1986 presentation of *Cavalleria/*

Pagliacci is sponsored, in part, by a grant from the Koret Foundation.

We are also happy to acknowledge the American Express Company for providing funds for Supertitles being featured in our productions of *Il Trovatore* and *Cavalleria/Pagliacci*. The resounding popularity of Supertitles is a reminder of the role corporate funding can play in helping us reach new audiences.

Perhaps the best news we can share with you is the fact that the San Francisco Opera Association ended the 1985-86 fiscal year in the black, no small feat in the increasingly expensive business of mounting world-class opera. While being thankful to all who helped us meet this goal, and pleased with the results of our fundraising efforts, we cannot afford to slacken in those efforts. Our budget surplus was small, and the financial needs we face in the future will continue to mount.

We are counting on all of you in the San Francisco Opera family to help us stay on the right financial track. If you have assisted us in the past, we need and encourage your continued support. If you have not yet joined us in our on-going quest for artistic excellence with financial stability, now is the best time you could choose for doing so. Our continued success depends on you.

Reid W. Dennis, Chairman
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General Director's Message

The first Summer Season after our 1985 *Ring* is a time to enjoy, digest, and dream of the future. The *Ring* confirmed our position as one of the leading opera companies of the world. This summer, we will try to balance that Teutonic influence with three popular Italian works and one unusual French-American evening. Also this summer, we will introduce you to some remarkable young performers.

Where is our Company going? I believe no opera company can achieve the constant progress necessary to vital artistic improvement without firm convictions—and dreams. The emergence of superior-quality American artists from our Opera Center has made me believe very deeply that we can develop into the kind of opera company Arturo Toscanini dreamed about in Milan in 1921: an ensemble company, with stars. While this may seem a contradiction in terms, it best describes a company with a defined base of artists, grown and nurtured in our own atmosphere, with the addition of a number of the world-traveling stars who lend opera its special glamour. I am not proposing that our

Opera Center graduates sing only supporting roles. I am suggesting that they mix, shoulder to shoulder, with international stars, both as their equals, and as their support. The 1985 Fall Season and this year's Summer and Fall Seasons show steps in that direction.

It is my firm belief that our Company, already respected world-wide, can be made into one that will also be *envied* world-wide; a place where our audiences can have the deep satisfaction of following brilliant careers from their very beginnings until their subsequent integration into the international opera scene.

We all know opera is the most expensive and complicated of all art forms. It is also an exotic creation, one that needs regular infusions of style and spirit from every possible artistic background. This, we aim to provide.

Welcome to the 1986 Summer Season!

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "J. M. Scherl". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

San Francisco Opera

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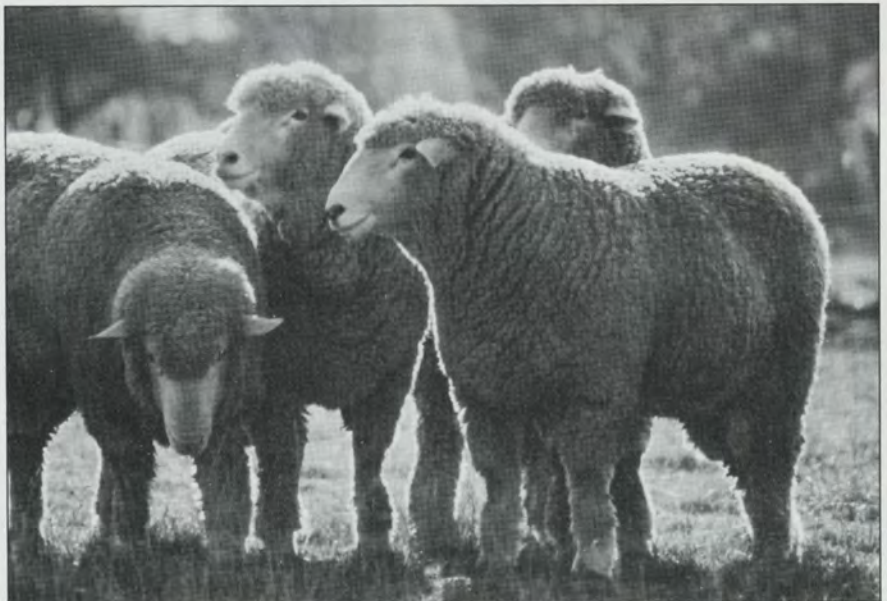
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tially adverse impact of their own growth on the services they render, Hibernia's policy of exclusivity may strike some as an unusual, if not radical, business philosophy.

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On Tuesday, September 2, 1986, at 7:30 p.m., a most extraordinary San Francisco Opera event will take place at the Oakland Coliseum Arena: the Silver Jubilee Concert, featuring Dame Joan Sutherland and Luciano Pavarotti. The San Francisco Opera Orchestra will be under the direction of Maestro Richard Bonyngé.

Subscribers to San Francisco Opera's Summer and Fall Seasons have already been alerted to this once-in-a-lifetime event, celebrating the 25th anniversary of Joan Sutherland's San Francisco Opera debut and of Pavarotti's first operatic appearance, in a performance of *La Bohème* in Reggio Emilia.

The evening will include a long list of arias and duets by Verdi and Donizetti and will be highlighted by a number of show-stopping pieces that have helped in making these incomparable artists familiar and beloved around the world.

For more information, call the San Francisco Opera Box Office at (415) 864-3330.



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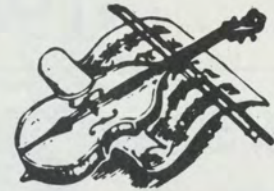
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Kawai is the official piano of the San Francisco Opera.
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The San Francisco Opera is supported by much-appreciated grants from the San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund, the California Arts Council and the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

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1986 Summer Season

Opening Night

Saturday, May 24, 8:00

Il Trovatore Verdi
Dimitrova*, Zajic, Patterson*; Bonisolli,
Carroli (May 24, 29; June 3,6), Zanca-
naro (June 12, 15, 18), Skinner, Peder-
son, Petersen, Anderson
Meltzer/Guttman/Skalicki

Tuesday, May 27, 8:00

Lucia di Lammermoor Donizetti
Rolandi*, Mazurowski*; McCauley,
Elvira, Sfiris**, Harper, De Haan*
Cillario/Farruggio/Toms/Munn

This production was originally made possible through a gift from Cyril Magnin.

Thursday, May 29, 7:30

Il Trovatore Verdi

Saturday, May 31, 8:00

Lucia di Lammermoor Donizetti

Sunday, June 1, 2:00

Cavalleria Rusticana Mascagni
Cossotto, Cowdrick, Young*; Mauro,
Cappuccilli*

and

Pagliacci Leoncavallo
Soviero; Mauro, Cappuccilli, Gordon,
Malis
Guadagno/Calábria/Ponnelle/Munn

These productions were originally made possible through a gift from the late James D. Robertson.

The 1986 presentation of Cavalleria/Pagliacci is sponsored, in part, by a grant from the Koret Foundation.

Tuesday, June 3, 8:00

Il Trovatore Verdi

Wednesday, June 4, 7:30

Cavalleria Rusticana Mascagni
and

Pagliacci Leoncavallo

Thursday, June 5, 7:30

Lucia di Lammermoor Donizetti

Friday, June 6, 8:00

Il Trovatore Verdi

Saturday, June 7, 8:00

Cavalleria Rusticana Mascagni
and

Pagliacci Leoncavallo

Sunday, June 8, 2:00

Lucia di Lammermoor Donizetti

Tuesday, June 10, 8:00

Cavalleria Rusticana Mascagni
and

Pagliacci Leoncavallo

Wednesday, June 11, 7:30

Lucia di Lammermoor Donizetti

Thursday, June 12, 8:00

Il Trovatore Verdi

Friday, June 13, 8:00

Cavalleria Rusticana Mascagni
and

Pagliacci Leoncavallo

Sunday, June 15, 2:00

Il Trovatore Verdi

Tuesday, June 17, 7:30

Cavalleria Rusticana Mascagni
and

Pagliacci Leoncavallo

Wednesday, June 18, 7:30

Il Trovatore Verdi

Thursday, June 19, 8:00

La Voix humaine Poulenc
Armstrong*

Johnson/Zambello/Joël/Halmen/Munn

and

San Francisco Opera Premiere
The Medium Menotti

Crespin, Chen, Patterson, Cowdrick;
Pederson, Loca*
Kaltenbach**/Thamin**/Pagano*/
Arhelger

The production of La Voix humaine was originally made possible through a grant from the San Francisco Foundation.

The presentation of The Medium is made possible through the generosity of the Paul L. and Phyllis C. Wattis Foundation.

Friday, June 20, 8:00

Lucia di Lammermoor Donizetti

Saturday, June 21, 8:00

La Voix humaine Poulenc
and

The Medium Menotti

Sunday, June 22, 1:00

Cavalleria Rusticana Mascagni
and

Pagliacci Leoncavallo

Tuesday, June 24, 7:30

La Voix humaine Poulenc
and

The Medium Menotti

Wednesday, June 25, 8:00

Lucia di Lammermoor Donizetti

Thursday, June 26, 8:00

La Voix humaine Poulenc
and

The Medium Menotti

Sunday, June 29, 2:00

La Voix humaine Poulenc
and

The Medium Menotti

**American opera debut

*San Francisco Opera debut

All San Francisco Opera 1986 Summer Season productions provided with Supertitles. Supertitles for Il Trovatore, Cavalleria Rusticana and Pagliacci provided through a grant from American Express Company via the San Francisco Opera Guild.

Repertoire, casts and dates subject to change.

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In Memoriam

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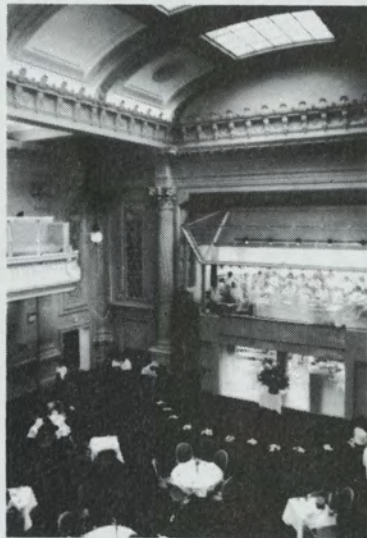


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The opera that came from nowhere

BY WILLIAM WEAVER

The 1890 edition of Baedeker's *Southern Italy* has this to say about the Apulian town of Cerignola: "26,000 inhab., uninteresting." A slightly earlier edition of the rival guide, Murray's *Hand-book to South Italy* is more expansive: "(Inn, *Il Leone*,

William Weaver lives in Italy and writes about opera and theater. His most recent book is Duse, a biography, published by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

indifferent), a well-built city, supposed to be on the site of *Ceraunilia*, on a rising ground, commanding an extensive view of the surrounding country, which appears like one vast corn-field without a tree to break its monotony."

Well, in 1890, one of those 26,000 inhab. of Cerignola was the town music-master, a young Tuscan named Pietro Mascagni. And in that uninteresting city with its indifferent inn and its monotonous vistas, the aspiring composer had completed his one-act opera *Cavalleria*

Rusticana, on which he pinned all his hopes of escape. He had been in the town for three years, and while, at first, his position there had seemed a godsend, an oasis, a refuge of security, now he was bitterly eager to spread his wings and soar.

Born in 1863, Mascagni showed his musical gifts early, but he also gave signs of an unruly character, a mixture of warm ebullience and touchy sensitivity which was to mark also his subsequent life and career. After moving from his native

continued on p.24

Santuzza faces a group of hostile Sicilian villagers in San Francisco Opera's 1976 production of Cavalleria Rusticana.



PETERSON

A drama from real life

By WILLIAM WEAVER

Though Ruggero Leoncavallo's opera *Pagliacci* has been performed regularly all over the world for close to a century, the composer himself has been largely ignored. His contemporary and rival Pietro Mascagni has been the subject of numerous biographies, and even critical scholarly studies. But for Leoncavallo: silence. Not a single book has been devoted to him, and even the simple facts of his life are often transcribed incorrectly.

His birth-date, for instance. He was born in Naples, on 23 April 1857; but if you look him up in the Concise Oxford

Dictionary of Opera or in the fifth edition of Grove's Dictionary, you will find 8 March 1858 (the fault is the composer's; he liked to make himself a bit younger). Even his first name is spelled in different ways (Ruggiero and Ruggero, the latter preferred); and his opera is sometimes wrongly called *I Pagliacci*, the added article being a mistake.

In any event, what we do know of his early life makes it sound fascinating, adventurous. Towards the end of the last century, Leoncavallo published an autobiographical article, in which he said: "I began my studies in Naples, and entered the Conservatory as a day-student at the

age of eight; I received my diploma as a composer at sixteen . . . a *Cantata* I composed was my school-leaving piece. Then I went to Bologna to complete my literary studies at the University under the direction of the great Italian poet Giosuè Carducci, and I received my diploma as doctor of law at the age of twenty."

Another falsehood. Leoncavallo never received his doctorate. Instead, he abandoned the University and took to traveling. First to Egypt, where his uncle held an important position in the Foreign Ministry, then—when a political upset drastically altered the Leoncavallos' position—to Paris. Penniless, he tells us, "I had

continued on p.25

Pagliacci performers face the Sicilian village audience during the "commedia" part of the opera. San Francisco Opera, 1976.



PETERSON



COURTESY, LIM M. LAI

Pietro Mascagni during a visit to San Francisco in 1903, getting off a cable car.

Leghorn to Milan, to study at the Conservatory (a fellow-pupil was Giacomo Puccini), he abandoned his formal studies, despite the support and encouragement of his teacher Ponchielli, and ran off to join a traveling operetta troupe. First he was the assistant conductor, then the conductor; and his first work for the theater (later repudiated) was an operetta, *Il Re di Napoli*, performed in Cremona in 1885. But by 1887, Mascagni was tired of his nomad life. On February 16 of that year, he wrote his father with news "that will make you happy . . . I am staying here in Cerignola . . ."

The following month the city council met and officially named him "maestro di suono e di canto" with a salary of one hundred lire per month. Not a princely sum, but enough to keep him alive and enable him to marry (on February 7, 1888) Argenide Marcellina Carbognani, whom he had already been referring to as his wife for some time.

In autumn of that year Mascagni—who for many months had been toiling at a grandiose operatic scheme, *Guglielmo Ratcliff*, based on the Heine tragedy—decided to write a one-act work, to enter the famous competition sponsored by the music publisher Sonzogno. This was the second of these competitions, and Mascagni's faith in them was less than total; after all, in the first one, his friend Puccini had submitted *Le Villi* and had been bypassed. But still, it was an avenue worth

trying. The composer wrote to a friend back in Leghorn, Giovanni Targioni-Tozzetti, his same age, and a would-be poet. Would his friend Nanni confect a libretto for him? Mascagni had in mind a story by Nicola Misasi entitled *Marito e Sacerdote* (Husband and Priest), which had come out in 1884. Nanni set to work and sketched a few scenes, with the title *Serafina*. But then, having gone to a performance of the play *Cavalleria Rusticana*, he wrote Mascagni and suggested that this would make a better opera subject for him.

On December 14, 1888, Mascagni wrote from Cerignola: "You needn't have written me, since I trust you completely. Do as you like. . . ." For that matter, Mascagni himself had seen the play—in

Milan, in 1884—and had "already thought of it as an opera. . . ."

Time was pressing, and Targioni-Tozzetti was afraid of failing to meet the deadline. He called on a friend, the twenty-one-year-old Guido Menasci, also a poet, to help with arranging the text. Though Mascagni had never met his new librettist, he approved of Nanni's decision.

Work went at first slowly, then in a rush. Towards the end, when the writers asked for their libretto back in order to make a neat copy, Mascagni wrote feverishly (May 28, 1890) from Cerignola: "When I had first completed the opera in a burst of inspiration, I had to make the full score, which cost me enormous labor. Then I had to make a vocal score. . . . Since from the very beginning (as I wrote you) I was afraid of being late, I was so depressed that I was about to give up the whole thing and thus waste so much work of mine and yours. . . ."

Then, as he narrates dramatically in the long letter, his little dog Titania jumped in his lap, licked his cheeks, and cheered him. "In her gaze, in her kisses, in her whimpering, I read a reproach, a hope, an encouragement; and then I . . . pulled myself together, locked myself in my study, and for seven consecutive days I worked between 16 and 18 hours a day. . . . And so, the day before yesterday (the 26th), at midnight sharp, the opera was completely finished. Yesterday morning (27th) I took the two scores to the bindery and stayed there until they were bound and dry . . . I was radiant, happy, not thinking about the outcome of the competition; it seemed to me that being on time was the only difficulty. . . ."

And after more news of Titania (who had accompanied him to the bindery), he concluded: "For the present let us wait, with a clear conscience. I have great faith and, at every moment I seem to hear a very distant clamor and I can distinctly make out one verse:

Resurrexit sicut dixit!"

In quoting a verse from his opera's Easter hymn, Mascagni was a good prophet. *Cavalleria Rusticana* — as every opera-lover knows — did win the prize, and Pietro Mascagni rose from the death-in-life of Cerignola to take his prominent place in the Italian musical world.

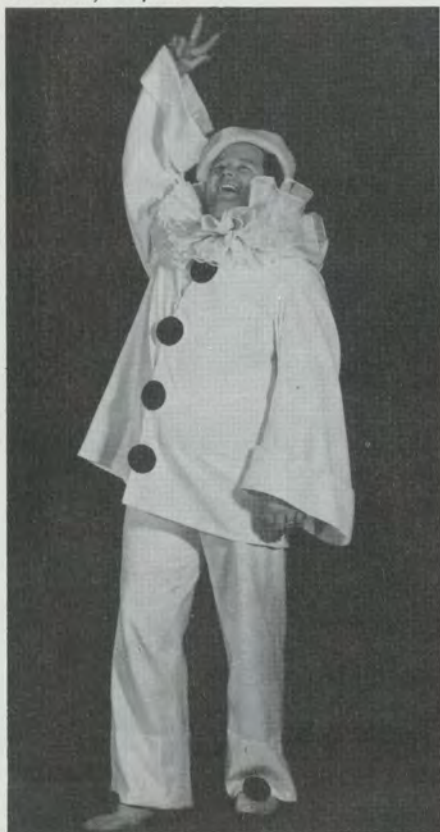
The results of the competition were announced on May 6, 1890. Three operas had been chosen for performance; after

continued on p.52



MORTON

Claudia Muzio as Santuzza in San Francisco Opera's 1932 production of *Cavalleria Rusticana*.



MORTON



MORTON

George Stinson sang with the San Francisco Opera for two seasons. His debut role, Canio in *Pagliacci*, took him temporarily away from his duties as a Highway Patrolman, and earned him the sobriquet of "The Singing Cop." Shown: Stinson in *Pagliacci* in 1939.

Lawrence Tibbett as Tonio and Lodovico Oliviero as Beppe in *Pagliacci*. San Francisco Opera, 1933.

to begin by accompanying singers in café-concerts... When I was weary of that, I left the world of the café-concert and found myself some pupils, singers whom I prepared for singing in serious operas. It was at this time that I had the good luck to meet the baritone (Victor) Maurel and the composer Massenet, who immediately showed the warmest interest in me, which then ripened into a good and sincere friendship... One day, speaking with Maurel of my dreams of the future, I read him the libretto of *I Medici*, which I had written. The great artist was so impressed by the grandeur of the work I intended to write, and by the nature of the poem, that he suggested I accompany him to Milan, where he was going for *Otello*, promising to introduce and recommend me to Signor Ricordi, the publisher of Verdi."

In Leoncavallo's youthful dreams, *I Medici*—an opera about Renaissance Florence—was to be the first work in an operatic trilogy, *Crepusculum*; the other

two works would be on Savonarola and Cesare Borgia. The obvious influence was Wagner, who at that time—the 1880s—was just beginning to be performed regularly in Italy, arousing fierce, partisan enthusiasm among some of the younger critics and composers.

But another influence was, of course, Mascagni. Six years younger than Leoncavallo, Mascagni in 1890, aged twenty-seven, had an immense success with *Cavalleria Rusticana*, a one-act work. The importance of this success was not lost on the composer of the pretentious, still-unperformed *I Medici*. As he wrote later: "...after the success of *Cavalleria Rusticana* of Mascagni, I lost patience, and convinced that the publisher Ricordi would never do anything for me, I shut myself up in my house, desperate, but determined to attempt a last battle and in five months I wrote the libretto and the music of that *Pagliacci*, which was bought by the publisher Sonzogno after only the reading of the libretto."

Leoncavallo's friend Maurel, by now much admired in Italy, thanks to his stunning creation of Iago in Verdi's *Otello*, also read the short opera and liked it. In fact, he offered to create the role of Tonio,

and apparently he suggested to Leoncavallo that Tonio should have an aria, to match those written for Nedda and Canio. The composer agreed and cannily wrote the Prologue, which not only gave Tonio an aria but also meant that the popular Maurel would be the first singer seen by the audience of the premiere.

The work was not introduced at La Scala, but at the smaller Teatro Dal Verme, then under the management of the impresario Carlo Superti, associated with the publisher Sonzogno. Superti, a few years before, had been manager of the opera house in Rio de Janeiro, when the young cellist Arturo Toscanini made his emergency debut as conductor. And it was Toscanini, not yet famous, whom Superti chose to conduct the premiere of *Pagliacci*. In the weeks before the first performance, the short, tubby composer would arrive, breathless, at the conductor's apartment in Via Torino, having climbed the numerous flights of stairs. On other occasions, Toscanini would go to the composer, who lived with his friend Berta (later Signora Leoncavallo) and his brother, in some rented rooms. The preparation of the opera was arduous, and

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FIORENZA COSSOTTO

Celebrated as one of the great dramatic mezzo-sopranos of our time, **Fiorenza Cossotto** returns to San Francisco Opera during the 1986 Summer Season as Santuzza in *Cavalleria Rusticana*, following her most recent triumph here as Ulrica in the 1985 Fall Season production of *Un Ballo in Maschera*. Her previous San Francisco appearances include Amneris in *Aida* (1977) and Azucena in *Il Trovatore* (1981). A leading artist at Milan's La Scala since her 1957 professional debut as Sister Mathilde in the world premiere of Poulenc's *Dialogues of the Carmelites*, she has since appeared in all of the world's major opera houses and festivals. It was her performance in the title role of Donizetti's *La Favorita* at La Scala in 1962 that catapulted her to international stardom. She made her American debut at the Lyric Opera of Chicago in 1964 in the same work and three years later gave her first New York performances when Herbert von Karajan led the Scala company in the Verdi Requiem. She bowed at the Metropolitan Opera as Amneris in 1968, and has since appeared with the company as Adalgisa in *Norma* (the role of her 1965 Paris Opera debut), Azucena, Laura in *La Gioconda*, the Princess of Bouillon in *Adriana Lecouvreur*, Eboli in *Don Carlo*, Santuzza, and again as Amneris in the



DIANA SOVIERO

1985 telecast of *Aida*. During the 1985-86 season, she sang her first Dame Quickly in Verdi's *Falstaff* at the Met, Azucena in Hamburg, Munich, Mannheim and Palermo, and the Princess in *Adriana* in Catania, among other engagements. Widely praised for her many recordings, Miss Cossotto has an extensive discography on several major labels, including complete recordings of Verdi's *Aida*, *Un Ballo in Maschera*, *La Forza del Destino*, *Un Giorno di Regno*, *Macbeth*, *Rigoletto*, *Il Trovatore* and the Requiem, as well as *Norma*, *La Sonnambula*, *La Favorita*, *Cavalleria Rusticana*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *La Gioconda* and *Madama Butterfly*.

Lyric soprano **Diana Soviero** returns to San Francisco Opera as Nedda in *Pagliacci* during the 1986 Summer Season. She most recently appeared here as Norina in Donizetti's *Don Pasquale* (1984), and made her Company debut as Anne Trulove in the David Hockney-designed production of Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress* (Summer, 1982). Recognized throughout the United States and Europe as a prominent singing actress, she has made many important international debuts in recent seasons: she bowed at Houston Grand Opera as Nedda in *Pagliacci*, and at Dallas

Opera as Liù in *Turandot*. Her Lyric Opera of Chicago debut was in one of her most famous roles—Mimi in *La Bohème*, the vehicle of her European operatic debut at Zurich Opera. Particularly identified with the role of Violetta in *La Traviata*, Miss Soviero has sung this role at the Hamburg State Opera (1982), Montreal Opera, South Africa Opera and in numerous other productions throughout the United States. A frequent performer with the New York City Opera, she has also interpreted the roles of Mimi, and Marguerite in *Faust* with that company. Her 1983 Toulouse performance as Marguerite was telecast throughout Europe, and she soon made her Paris debut as Margherita in Boito's *Mefistofele* for Radio France under Nello Santi. In 1984, she made her Italian debut in the title role of Massenet's *Manon* at the Rome Opera, and was then immediately invited to sing Cio-Cio-San in *Madama Butterfly* at the Puccini Festival in Torre del Lago. Recent engagements include her Vienna debut as Liù opposite Gheena Dimitrova, a new production of *La Traviata* in Paris, *Faust* in Nice, her first *Manon Lescaut* in Fort Worth, and her first performances of Juliette in Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette* to open Montreal Opera's 1986 season. Miss Soviero's upcoming engagements include her Bavarian State Opera debut in Munich as *Manon*. She will also appear as Cio-Cio-San in productions of *Madama Butterfly* in Edmonton, Winnipeg and San Juan, and in the fall of 1986 will add to her repertoire the roles of Alice Ford in *Falstaff* in Parma, Desdemona in *Otello* in Miami, and the title role of Puccini's *Suor Angelica* in Madrid.

Mezzo-soprano **Cristiane Young** makes her San Francisco Opera debut as Mamma Lucia in *Cavalleria Rusticana* during the 1986 Summer Season. She was recently seen in three roles in the San Francisco Opera Center's 1986 Showcase Hindemith double-bill: Mother Bayard and Ermengarde in *The Long Christmas*

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The 1986 presentation of *Cavalleria/Pagliacci* is sponsored, in part, by a grant from the Koret Foundation.

Opera in one act by PIETRO MASCAGNI

Text by GIOVANNI TARGIONI-TOZZETTI and GUIDO MENASCI

Based on the play by GIOVANNI VERGA

Cavalleria Rusticana

(in Italian)

Conductor

Anton Guadagno

Production

Jean-Pierre Ponnelle

Stage Director

Vera Lúcia Calábria

Designer

Jean-Pierre Ponnelle

Lighting Designer

Thomas J. Munn

Lighting Supervisor

Joan Arhelger

Chorus Director

Richard Bradshaw

Associate Chorus Director

Ernest Fredric Knell

Musical Preparation

Susanna Lemberskaya

Robert Morrison

James Johnson

Joseph De Rugeriis

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First performance:

Rome, May 17, 1890

First San Francisco Opera performance:

September 24, 1927

CAST

Turiddu Ermanno Mauro

Santuzza Fiorenza Cossotto

Mamma Lucia Cristiane Young*

Alfio Piero Cappuccilli*

Lola Kathryn Cowdrick

Peasants, villagers

*San Francisco Opera debut

TIME AND PLACE: Easter Sunday, around 1930;
a village in Southern Italy

INTERMISSION
(Continued on p. 33)

Cavalleria Rusticana/Synopsis

Returning from military service, Turiddu found his fiancée Lola married to a prosperous wagon owner and driver, Alfio. To get his revenge, he seduced Santuzza. Lola, in her jealousy, took up with him again in an adulterous affair.

As the curtain rises, Turiddu's voice is heard praising Lola and, from afar, one hears men and women singing the joys of spring and love: as if in a nightmare, Santuzza envisions the love between Turiddu and Lola. Instead of going for wine in Francofonte, she tells Mamma Lucia, Turiddu has spent the night with Lola while Alfio was away. Alfio suddenly arrives and is suspicious at having seen Turiddu lurking about his house. As a warning to Turiddu, he publicly boasts of his love for Lola and of her fidelity. The Easter Sunday procession emerges from the church, with the religious fervor mounting to hysterical fever pitch. Santuzza cannot enter the church, for everyone knows she has sinned with Turiddu, and she considers herself excommunicated and damned. She joins her voice to the others, provoking general disapproval. Once the crowd leaves, Santuzza accosts Turiddu, who tries in vain to deny his affair with Lola.

Just then Lola passes on her way to church, which leads to an ironic exchange between the two women. Santuzza and Turiddu engage in a storm of recriminations, before Turiddu breaks away and goes into church. When Alfio arrives to join his wife at church, Santuzza cries out in her grief and jealousy that Lola has been unfaithful to him. Too late, Santuzza realizes that the bloodthirsty desire for vengeance she has set off in Alfio will doom Turiddu.

Both Lola and Turiddu emerge from mass and realize by Santuzza's vengeful smile that she has betrayed their secret to Alfio. As a final provocation, Turiddu publicly offers a toast to Lola, then drinks heartily to bolster his courage. Alfio enters, and the ritual challenge to a duel occurs. In keeping with custom, Turiddu draws Alfio's blood by biting his ear, which signifies a fight to the death. In a moment of weakness towards Santuzza that earns the crowd's scorn, Turiddu asks Alfio and, later, Mamma Lucia to care for Santuzza if he should not return; he had promised, he says, to marry her. With Mamma Lucia and Santuzza standing face to face, the cries of the village women announce Turiddu's death. Santuzza's nightmare has come full circle.



CRISTIANE YOUNG



KATHRYN COWDRICK



ERMANN0 MAURO

continued from p. 27

Dinner and Aunt Emma in *There and Back*. As a 1985 Merola Opera Program participant, she appeared as Martha in *Faust* at San Francisco's Stern Grove. A current Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, Miss Young is a theater graduate of Occidental College and has pursued graduate voice studies at Indiana University with Margaret Harshaw. Her university performance credits include such roles as Erda in *Das Rheingold*, Public Opinion in *Orpheus in the Underworld*, and the title role of Handel's *Tamerlane*. The young singer returns to San Francisco Opera during the 1986 Fall Season as Grandmother Burya in *Jenůfa*, and as Martha in the special matinee performances of *Faust*.

Mezzo-soprano **Kathryn Cowdrick** appears as Lola in *Cavalleria Rusticana* and as Mrs. Gobineau in *The Medium* during the San Francisco Opera 1986 Summer Season. She recently sang two roles in the San Francisco Opera Center's 1986 Showcase: Zaida in Rossini's *The Turk in Italy* and Genevieve in *The Long Christmas Dinner*. The Pennsylvania native made her Company debut in the fall of 1985 in

Adriana Lecouvreur and was also seen that season as Meg Page in the matinee performances of *Falstaff*, and in *Der Rosenkavalier*. A participant in the 1984 Merola Opera Program, Miss Cowdrick received the Gropper Memorial Award at the Program's Grand Finals. During that summer she performed the role of Meg Page in *Falstaff* at Stern Grove and Tisbe in *La Cenerentola* at Villa Montalvo. She toured with the Center's Western Opera Theater as both Cenerentola and Tisbe in *Cenerentola*, and was named to a 1985 Adler Fellowship. This past spring she performed with the San Francisco Opera Center Singers as Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus* and Flora in *La Traviata*. A professional speech therapist, she received much of her professional training at Juilliard's American Opera Center. In 1983 she appeared in Barber's *Antony and Cleopatra* at Charleston's Spoleto Festival, which was later issued on a Grammy award-winning recording, and in *Madama Butterfly* at the Spoleto Festival in both Charleston and Italy. Miss Cowdrick appears this summer as Marcellina in *The Marriage of Figaro* at the Carmel Bach Festival, and returns to San Francisco Opera during the 1986 Fall Season as Siebel in *Faust*, Karolka in *Jenůfa*, and Rosette in *Manon*.

Ermanno Mauro returns to San Francisco Opera as Turiddu in *Cavalleria Rusticana* and Canio in *Pagliacci* during the 1986 Summer Season. His most recent appearances here were as Maurizio in the 1985 Fall Season opening production of *Adriana Lecouvreur*. A leading tenor with the Metropolitan Opera and a regular performer at the Vienna State Opera, the Paris Opera and the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, he made his San Francisco Opera debut during the 1982 Fall Season as Pollione in Bellini's *Norma* with Joan Sutherland and Marilyn Horne, and returned the following year to garner high acclaim in *Manon Lescaut* opposite Mirella Freni in the title role. Born in Trieste, he later moved to Canada and made his professional debut with the Canadian Opera Company in Toronto in *Il Trovatore*, replacing the originally scheduled tenor on short notice. He was then invited to join the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, where he remained as principal tenor through 1975. He made his German debut in 1972 as Rodolfo in *La Bohème* in Frankfurt, and made a number of important international debuts in quick succession. In 1975, he bowed at the Vienna State Opera as Manrico in *Il Trovatore*, in 1976 as Don Alvaro in *La Forza del Destino*

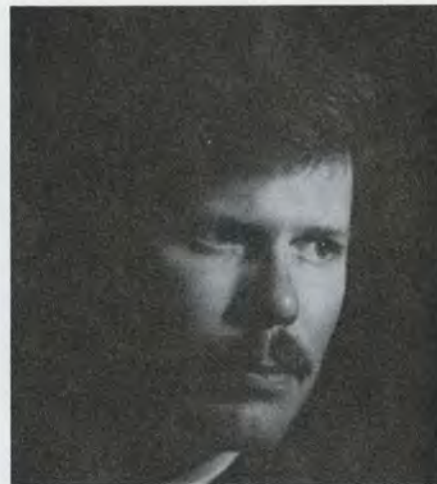
at the Paris Opera, and in 1977 made his Italian debut as Don José in *Carmen* in Genoa. He made his American debut in 1974 as Cavaradossi in *Tosca* in San Diego and then gave his first New York performances as Calaf in *Turandot* with the New York City Opera, where he also appeared as Rodolfo, Andrea Chénier and as Faust in Boito's *Mefistofele*. The year 1978 marked his Metropolitan Opera debut as Canio in *Pagliacci*; his La Scala debut as Manrico; and his Rome Opera debut as Radames in *Aida*. During the 1985-86 season, Mauro appeared in a new production of *Manon Lescaut* in Florence, and as Calaf and Manrico at the Hamburg State Opera. During the fall of 1985, he sang his first stage performances of the title role of Verdi's *Otello* at the Dallas Opera, added the role of Paolo in Zandonai's *Francesca da Rimini* to his repertoire at the Met, and made his Lyric Opera of Chicago debut as Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly*. Other recent engagements have included performances of *Manon Lescaut* in Munich and New York, Manrico in Brussels, the title role of *Ernani* at the Met, and Calaf at the Deutsche Oper Berlin.

Baritone **Piero Cappuccilli** makes his San Francisco Opera debut as Alfio in *Cavalleria Rusticana* and Tonio in *Pagliacci* during the 1986 Summer Season. Born in Trieste, he studied singing there at the Teatro Giuseppe Verdi, and in 1957 made his debut at the Teatro Nuovo in Milan as Tonio and was immediately engaged for performances of *Tosca* at the Teatro La Pergola in Florence. He made his debut at La Scala in 1964 in *Lucia di Lammermoor* and has sung there regularly ever since. His American debut was in 1969 at the Lyric Opera of Chicago in Verdi's *I Due Foscari*, and he has since returned there for productions of *Simon Boccanegra*, *La Favorita*, *La Traviata*, *Otello*, *Macbeth* and *Ernani*. He made his Covent Garden debut in 1967 in Luchino Visconti's new production of *La Traviata* and returned



PIERO CAPPUCCILLI

there in 1974 to sing Iago in *Otello*. In 1975 he took part in a highly successful production of *Un Ballo in Maschera* that was telecast by the BBC. In 1981 he toured with the Royal Opera in *Otello*, a triumph which he repeated on the Covent Garden stage in 1983. Among his recent performances are *Simon Boccanegra*, *La Traviata* and *Otello* in Munich; *William Tell*, *Macbeth*, *Otello* and *Il Trovatore* in Hamburg; *Attila*, *Andrea Chénier* and *Rigoletto* in Vienna; 12 different Verdi operas, as well as *La Wally*, *Andrea Chénier*, *Il Tabarro* and *La Bohème* at La Scala; and *Luisa Miller* at the Paris Opera production. Recent performances include *Ballo* in Geneva and Bonn, *La Traviata* in Berlin, *Macbeth* in Salzburg and Vienna, *Ernani* in Chicago, *William Tell* at New York's Carnegie Hall, *Otello* in Munich and *Simon Boccanegra* in Orange. This season, Cappuccilli will appear in *Don Carlos* at Salzburg and at the Lyric Opera of Chicago in *Un Ballo In Maschera*. His many recordings include *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Don Giovanni*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *La Gioconda*, *Aida*, *La Forza del Destino*, *I Puritani*, *Un Ballo in Maschera*, *Il Trovatore*, *Don Carlos*, *Simon Boccanegra*, *Nabucco*, *Rigoletto*, *Macbeth*, *I Masnadieri*, *I Due Foscari* and *Cavalleria Rusticana*, among others.



DAVID MALIS

Baritone **David Malis** portrays Silvio in *Pagliacci* during San Francisco Opera's 1986 Summer Season. He most recently appeared with the Company during the 1985 Fall Season in four roles: Ping in *Turandot*, Silvano in *Un Ballo in Maschera*, and Ford in the family performances of *Falstaff*. He made his San Francisco Opera debut during the 1984 Summer Season in *Don Pasquale*, and performed four roles during the 1984 Fall Season. A native of Georgia, Malis participated in the 1982 and '83 Merola Opera Programs, appearing in *Madama Butterfly* and *Rigoletto* at Villa Montalvo and in *The Magic Flute* and *Tales of Hoffmann* at Sigmund Stern Grove. He was heard as Sharpless and Yamadori in Western Opera Theater's 1983 tour of *Madame Butterfly*. A 1984-85 Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, he appeared in the 1985 Showcase production of Susa's *The Love of Don Perlimplin*, repeating the title role that he created in the work's world premiere in 1984. He also toured last year with the San Francisco Opera Center Singers as Eisenstein in *Die Fledermaus*, and was featured in the Schwabacher Debut Recital Series. Among Malis's numerous awards are the Gold Medal and George London Award from the National Institute of Musical Theater, and the

continued on p. 40

Conductor

Anton Guadagno

Production

Jean-Pierre Ponnelle

Stage Director

Vera Lúcia Calábria

Designer

Jean-Pierre Ponnelle

Lighting Designer

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Chorus Director

Richard Bradshaw

Associate Chorus Director

Ernest Fredric Knell

Musical Preparation

Susanna Lemberskaya

Jeffrey Goldberg

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FRIDAY, JUNE 13 AT 8:00

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SUNDAY, JUNE 22 AT 1:00

Cavalleria Rusticana

Opera in one act by RUGGERO LEONCAVALLO

Text by the composer

Pagliacci

(in Italian)

CAST

(in order of appearance)

Tonio (Taddeo) Piero Cappuccilli

Canio (Pagliaccio) Ermanno Mauro

Nedda (Colombina) Diana Soviero

Beppe (Arlecchino) David Gordon

Two Farmers Matthew Lord
Raymond Murcell

Silvio David Malis

Pantomime by Hannah Kahn
Robert Neifeld
David-Israel Sandler

Peasants, villagers

TIME AND PLACE: The Feast of the Assumption, around 1930;
a village in Southern Italy

*Latecomers will not be seated during the performance
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*The performance will last approximately
three hours and ten minutes.*

Supertitles provided through a grant from American Express
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All performances of *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Pagliacci* feature
Supertitles by Paul Moor.

Pagliacci/Synopsis

In the Prologue, Tonio, a clown in a small theatrical road company, announces that the author has written a true story about actors, who share the same joys and sorrows as other human beings.


On the Feast of the Assumption, a company of touring actors, accompanied by excited villagers, arrive at the outskirts of a small village in southern Italy. Canio, head of the troupe, announces that the performance will begin at 11 that evening. When one of the crowd suggests that Tonio is courting Nedda behind his back, the jealous Canio warns that he tolerates no flirting with his wife. Canio joins a group of villagers and goes off to the nearby inn. The *zampognari* (bagpipers) enter the square and entertain the gathered villagers before they go to the church, leaving Nedda alone in her thoughts. Disturbed by her husband's suspicious glances, she envies the freedom of the birds that soar overhead. Tonio, who has listened to Nedda's reverie, tries to make love to her, but she strikes him, sending him away in a rage. A moment later her lover, the villager Silvio, appears; taking Nedda in his arms, he persuades her to run away with him at midnight. Meanwhile, after spying on them, Tonio leaves to report the tryst to Canio, who returns from the inn and discovers the guilty pair. A chase ensues, but Silvio manages to escape. Though

threatened with a knife, Nedda refuses to divulge her lover's name, and Beppe, another actor, has to stay Canio's hand. Tonio advises the enraged husband to wait until evening for vengeance. Alone, Canio laments his lot as an actor, laughing through his tears for the public's amusement.

The villagers assemble to see the play, and Nedda, collecting money for the performance, exchanges some words with Silvio, assuring him of their rendezvous. The *commedia* begins, which is based on the familiar tale of Pagliaccio and Colombina. In the absence of her husband, Pagliaccio (played by Canio), Colombina (Nedda) is serenaded by her lover Arlecchino (Beppe). Together they drive away her servant, the buffoon Taddeo (Tonio). Colombina and Arlecchino dine together and plot to poison Pagliaccio, whose approach interrupts their love-making. After Arlecchino has escaped, Taddeo with pointed malice assures Pagliaccio of his wife's innocence. Obsessed with jealousy, Canio forgets he is onstage and demands that Nedda name her lover. She tries to continue the play, as the audience gradually realizes the reality of the situation. Beppe tries to intercede, but Tonio holds him back. Maddened by her continued defiance, Canio stabs Nedda and Silvio, who has rushed forward to help her. Canio cries out that the comedy is finished.

Cavalleria Rusticana

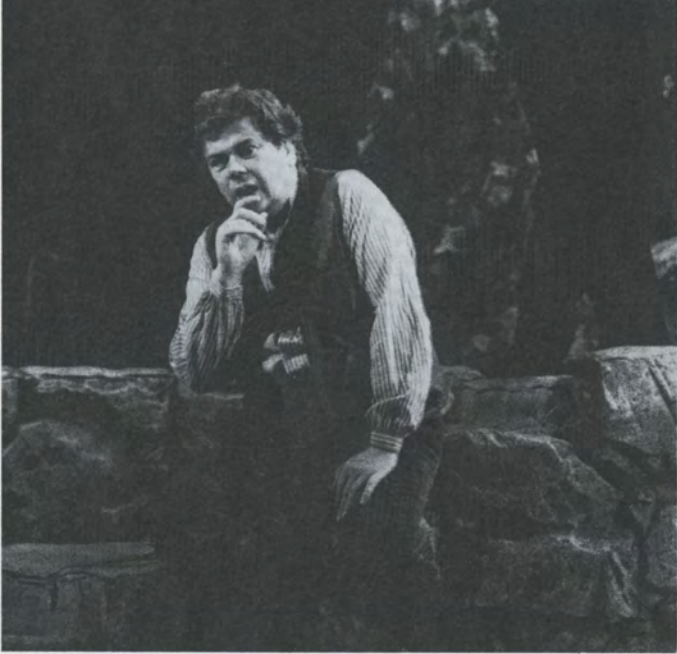
Photos taken in rehearsal by David Powers



Fiorenza Cossotto



Kathryn Cowdrick, Fiorenza Cossotto



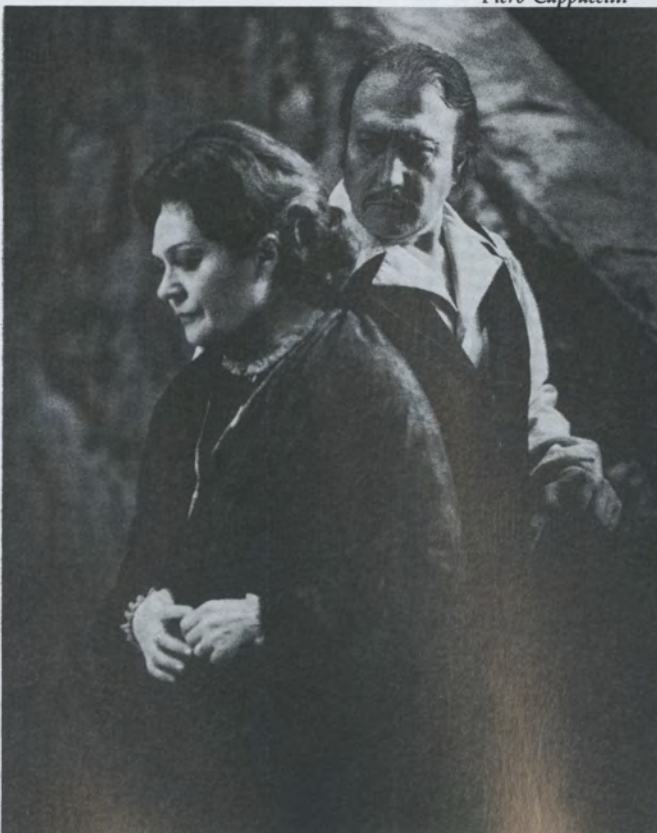
Ermanno Mauro



Piero Cappuccilli



Cristiane Young



Fiorenza Cossotto, Piero Cappuccilli



Fiorenza Cossotto



Pagliacci

Photos taken in rehearsal by David Powers

Piero Cappuccilli



Diana Soviero, David Gordon



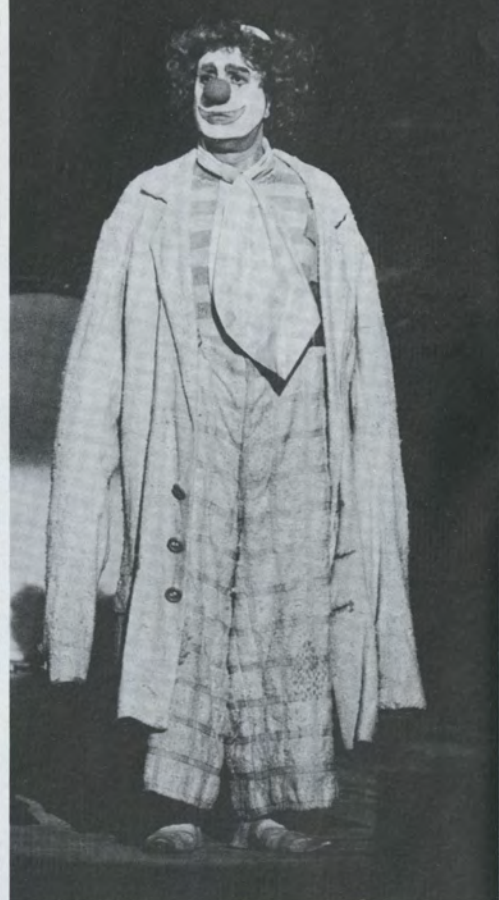
Ermanno Mauro, Diana Soviero



Ermanno Mauro, Piero Cappuccilli



Ermanno Mauro



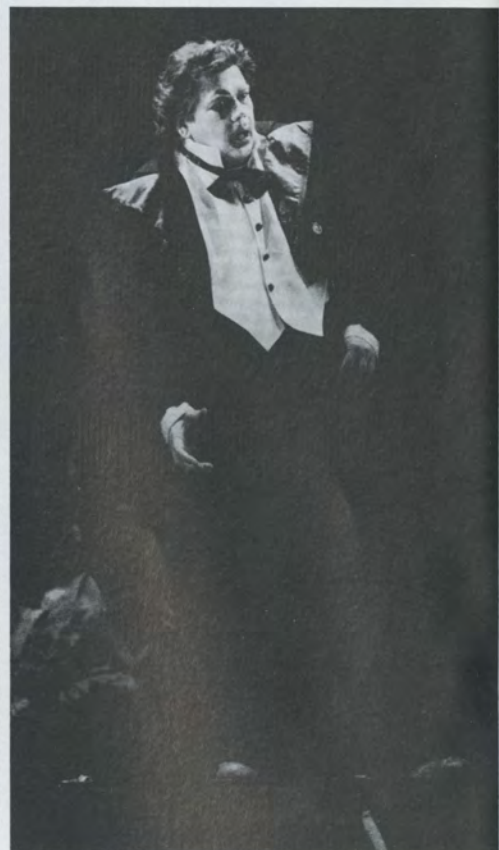
Piero Cappuccilli



Ermanno Mauro

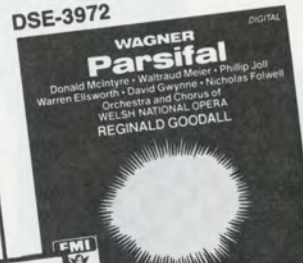


David Malis, Diana Soviero



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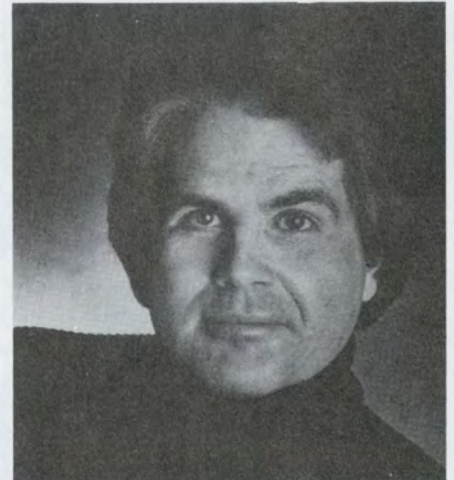


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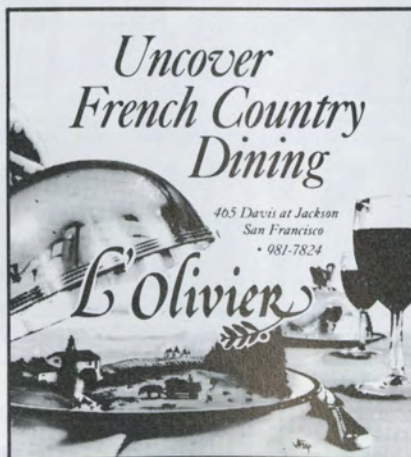
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Cardiff Singer of the World Competition, sponsored by the Welsh National Opera and the BBC. As a result of the latter award, he was chosen to replace an indisposed Håkan Hagegård for a series of three concerts with the Stockholm Chamber Orchestra in the Royal Palace. Recent engagements include a concert performance of Strauss' *Intermezzo* at Carnegie Hall and Orff's *Carmina Burana* with the symphonies of Modesto and Marin. Future assignments include a concert broadcast of Duparc songs with the BBC Orchestra in Wales, debuts with the San Diego Opera as Belcore in *L'Elisir d'Amore*, the Mobile Opera as Marcello in *La Bohème*, and the Netherlands Opera in the title role of *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*.

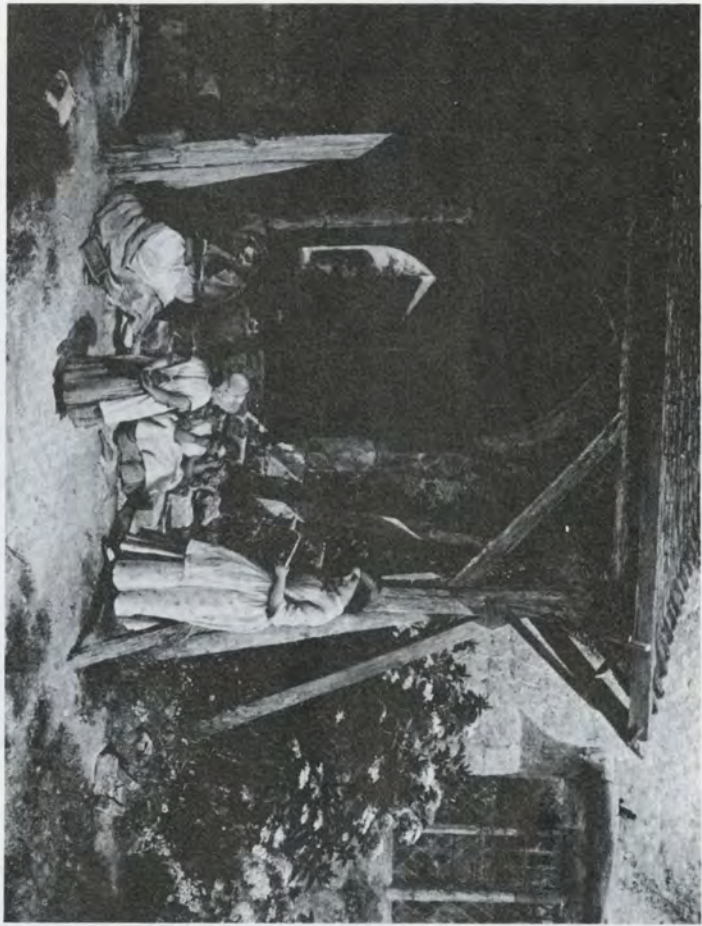
Pennsylvania-born tenor David Gordon appears as Beppe in *Pagliacci* during San Francisco Opera's 1986 Summer Season, and returns this fall as David in *Die Meistersinger*, a role which he initially performed in his Company debut during the 1981 Summer Season. He most recently sang here in the 1983 Fall Season, appearing in three roles: Brighella in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, the Dancing Master in



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Manon Lescaut, and the Simpleton in *Boris Godunov*. His earlier S.F. Opera portrayals include Pang in *Turandot* for the 1982 Summer Season and Mime in *Das Rheingold* in the summer of 1983. In addition to his local credits, Gordon has sung over 50 roles with the Lyric Opera of Chicago, the Houston Grand Opera, the Washington Opera, and others. For four seasons he was a leading tenor at the Landestheater in Linz, Austria, where he sang in over 300 performances of 19 different operas. A busy concert artist, he has been guest soloist with the orchestras of Vienna, Boston, Washington, D.C., Montreal, St. Louis, Salzburg, Seattle and Vancouver, and has sung at festivals in Tokyo, Stuttgart, Buenos Aires, Toronto, Spoleto (USA), the Mostly Mozart Festival, and at the Festival Casals. Gordon is also a frequent recitalist and guest artist with leading chamber music ensembles including the Emerson String Quartet, the Folger Consort and the Hesperus Baroque Ensemble. He appears regularly with contemporary music groups in New York, Boston, and San Francisco, and is a member of the Bach Chamber soloists of New York and the 20th-Century Consort, an ensemble in residence at the Smithsonian Institute. Recent performances include his debut at the Hamburg State Opera as Nemorino in *L'Elisir d'Amore*, his Metropolitan Opera debut as the Philistine Man in Handel's *Samson*, and performances of Orff's *Carmina Burana* with the Oakland Symphony. Gordon will make his first appearance with the San Francisco Symphony in 1987 with performances of Schönberg's *Gurrelieder*.

Anton Guadagno returns to the War Memorial Opera House podium for performances of *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Pagliacci* during San Francisco Opera's 1986 Summer Season. He made his Company debut during the 1974 season, leading the celebrated performances of

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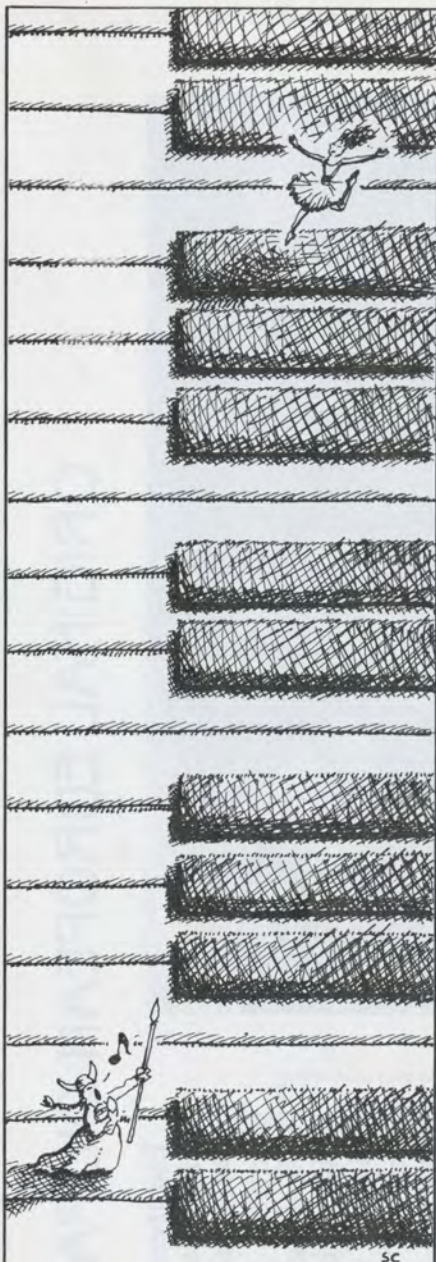
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ANTON GUADAGNO

The Daughter of the Regiment with Beverly Sills, previously appearing here to conduct the 1969 Spring Opera Theater production of Puccini's *La Rondine*. Internationally renowned as a conductor of both opera and symphony, Guadagno was born in Italy and graduated from Palermo's Vincenzo Bellini Conservatory and Rome's Saint Cecilia Conservatory. He continued his musical studies with post-graduate work at the Salzburg Mozarteum. His professional life has earned him honors in all of the world's major opera houses, including the Metropolitan Opera, Vienna State Opera, Royal Opera House Covent Garden, the Verona Arena, the Teatro San Carlo in Naples, the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires, the Teatro Liceo in Barcelona, New York City Opera, Munich Opera, and the Paris Opera. He has served as Music Director of the Lyric Opera of Philadelphia, and Principal Conductor of the Cincinnati Opera, and is currently Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of the Palm Beach Opera. He has conducted regularly at the Vienna Staatsoper since 1972, and his conducting assignments there during the 1985-86 season included *La Traviata*, *Il Trovatore*, *The Barber of Seville*, *La Bohème* and *Luisa Miller*. He recently led perfor-



JEAN-PIERRE PONNELLE

mances of *Aida* and *Adriana Lecouvreur* at the Munich Opera, and will in the near future conduct *La Forza del Destino* at the Baltimore Opera, and *Macbeth* with the Portland Opera. Maestro Guadagno's appearances in Verona won him the Golden Baton of Toscanini, and the Association of Italian Artists chose him for the Golden Applause Award. His discography includes recordings with Renata Tebaldi, Montserrat Caballé, Shirley Verrett, Ghena Dimitrova, Franco Corelli, Sherrill Milnes, Plácido Domingo and Luciano Pavarotti.

One of the world's most noted and discussed directors and designers, **Jean-Pierre Ponnelle** is responsible for the concept and design of *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Pagliacci*, productions which were first seen at San Francisco Opera during the 1976 season, and revived in 1980. He returned here last fall to recreate his production of Reimann's *Lear* (which received its American premiere during San Francisco Opera's 1981 Summer Season), and to direct his new production of *Falstaff*. Ponnelle studied at the Sorbonne in Paris, his native city, and in 1952 created the scenery for the world pre-

miere of *Boulevard Solitude*, Hans Werner Henze's first opera. During the 1950s he designed for the principal German theaters, both opera and drama, and made his design debut at the Vienna Staatsoper, the Rome Opera, the Opéra-Comique in Paris and in San Francisco where his American debut was marked by productions of Orff's *Carmina Burana* and *The Wise Maiden* in 1958. He returned to San Francisco in 1959 for the American premiere of *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. In 1968 he began to assume dual responsibility as director/designer with productions of *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and *Così fan tutte* at the Salzburg Festival, where he has returned for numerous productions. The first American project both designed and directed by Ponnelle was San Francisco Opera's *La Cenerentola*, seen here for the first time in 1969 and revived for the 1974 and '82 Fall Seasons. Other Ponnelle San Francisco productions include *Così fan tutte*, *Otello*, *Der Fliegende Holländer*, *Turandot*, *Tosca*, *Gianni Schicchi*, *Il Prigioniero*, *Idomeneo* and *Carmen*. His productions have been seen in all of the world's major houses. In 1981, he staged *Tristan und Isolde* at Bayreuth, a production that was subsequently filmed. His latest productions at the Salzburg Festival are *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, *The Magic Flute* and *Idomeneo*. For the Zurich Opera, he mounted a highly acclaimed Monteverdi cycle and is also staging an ongoing Mozart cycle: *Mitridate*, *Idomeneo* and *The Abduction from the Seraglio*. Other successes in the past years include Wagner's *Liebersverbot* (Munich), *Così fan tutte*, *Le Nozze di Figaro* and *Don Giovanni* (Paris), *Parsifal* (Cologne), *Fidelio* (Berlin), *Aida* (Covent Garden), *La Clemenza di Tito* (Metropolitan Opera), *Cardillac* (Munich), *Cavalleria Rusticana/Pagliacci* (Vienna), and *Lulu* (1985 Munich Opera Festival). Future plans include a new *Frau ohne Schatten* at La Scala, *Ariadne auf Naxos* at Houston, and the world premiere of a new Reimann opera, *The Trojan Women*, at Munich. Television viewers have been privileged to see many of his productions,

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THOMAS J. MUNN

returned to San Francisco Opera to assist Ponnelle in the American premiere of Reimann's *Lear* for the 1981 Summer Season, repeating the same assignment and also assisting Ponnelle on *Falstaff* during the 1985 Fall Season. For the Company's 1981 Fall Season, she assisted director Sam Wanamaker on the new production of *Aida* that was telecast to Europe via satellite and was later shown on cable television in the U.S. Since 1981, Miss Calábria has been working as a freelance director. She has worked on a new production of Strauss' *Daphne*; also *Eugene Onegin*, *Otello*, *Così fan tutte*, *Werther*, *Fidelio* and the Munich world premiere of *Lear*, assisting such directors as Ruth Berghaus, Filippo Sanjust, Gian Carlo Menotti, and Götz Friedrich. She has also worked with director Brian Large on television productions of Puccini's *Il Trittico*, Verdi's *I Lombardi*, and Giordano's *Andrea Chénier*, that were televised from La Scala in Milan. Recent projects include assisting Ponnelle on *Idomeneo* in Salzburg, *The Flying Dutchman* at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, *Manon* in Vienna and Munich (telecast) and *Carmen* and *Parsifal* in Cologne. Earlier this year she assisted director Derek Bailey on television productions of *Aida* and *Madama Butterfly* that were broadcast from La Scala.

Thomas J. Munn is the lighting designer for San Francisco Opera's 1986 Summer Season productions of *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Cavalleria Rusticana/Pagliacci* and *La Voix humaine*. In his eleventh year with the Company, he created the lighting for seven productions last fall: *Adriana Lecouvreur*, *Lear*, *Orlando*, *Turandot*, *Falstaff*, *Un Ballo in Maschera* and *Billy Budd*. Since 1976 he has been responsible for lighting over 80 productions for San Francisco Opera, including the lighting and special effects for all four of the operas of last summer's Ring Festival. He has also designed the scenery as well as the lighting for *Nabucco* and *Salome* in 1982, *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* in 1981, *Roberto Devereux* and *Pelléas et Mélisande* in 1979, and *Billy Budd* in 1978. In addition to his numerous design credits for the War Memorial stage, Munn has designed scenery and lighting for Broadway, Off-Broadway, regional theater, ballet and film. 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, the Pavarotti concert in 1983, in addition to Copland's *The Tender Land* for Michigan Opera Theatre, and the world premiere of Robert Ward's *Abelard and Heloise* for the Charlotte Opera. Recent

projects include productions for the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Houston Grand Opera and the Netherlands Opera, in addition to the scenery and lighting designs of *Coppélia* for the Hartford Ballet. Munn is consultant for the Muziektheater in the Netherlands, a new opera house currently under construction and scheduled to open in September of this year.



Mary Costa as Nedda; Jon Vickers as Canio in San Francisco Opera's 1964 production of *Pagliacci*.



Mario del Monaco as Canio in San Francisco Opera's 1962 *Pagliacci*.

years later Toscanini used to tell friends how, after the first performance, he came home exhausted, fell on his bed, and slept all night in his full dress, starched white shirt, and shoes.

That was the night of 21 May 1892, the greatest night in Leoncavallo's life. Not everything had gone well with the performance: the strolling troupe's donkey in the opening scene, afflicted with stage fright, had slipped and almost fallen over the footlights, arousing the audience's laughter, which continued as the dazed animal brayed and kicked. But the audience liked the music: several numbers had to be repeated, and there were fifteen curtain-calls at the end, to reward the stellar cast. Besides Maurel, there was the soprano Adelina Stehle (who a few months later created the role of Nannetta in Verdi's *Falstaff*, with Maurel), and the tenor Fiorello Giraud, later to become an outstanding interpreter of Wagner in Italy. The second tenor, Francesco Daddi, had the opera's hit aria, Arlecchino's Serenade, which he then always had to sing twice and sometimes three times, at the insistence of the audiences.

The critics were less enthusiastic, and the powerful *Corriere della Sera*, gazing into its clouded crystal ball, decreed: "A success as immediate as it is ephemeral." Actually, *Pagliacci* quickly traveled from Milan to other theaters and to other

countries: it was translated into Czech, Russian, German, English, Swedish, and French in the space of two years. G.B. Shaw, alias Corno di Bassetto, saw the opera in London and wrote: "The moment you hear *Pagliacci*, you feel it is all up with *L'Elisir*. It is true that Leoncavallo has shewn as yet nothing comparable to the melodic inspiration of Donizetti; but the advance in serious workmanship, in elaboration of detail, in variety of interest, and in capital expenditure on the orchestra and the stage, is enormous."

Shaw's crystal ball, of course, was also murky. Donizetti and *L'Elisir d'Amore* are still going strong, perhaps stronger than Leoncavallo, though *Pagliacci* is holding its own in the world repertory, and there are even some timid attempts occasionally to revive other Leoncavallo operas. Not long ago the Teatro San Carlo in Naples staged the odd, but interesting *Edipo Re*, composed for Titta Ruffo; and the Leoncavallo *Bohème*, admittedly inferior to Puccini's but still charming and affecting, is also performed from time to time and, in Italy, has been recorded.

But in the Leoncavallo canon it is *Pagliacci* that remains alive, because with all its violence and romance and theatricality, it still breathes the air of real life. As the composer insisted, it was based on a real-life event. One evening, when Ruggero was a small boy, living in the Cala-

brian town of Montalto Uffugo, his parents allowed him to go to the theatre, accompanied by a manservant. As they were leaving after the performance, the manservant was stabbed by a jealous rival. The aggressor, whose name was D'Alessandro, was tried and sentenced before Ruggero's father, a high magistrate. As has been pointed out by Mario Morini, Italy's leading authority on Leoncavallo and his times, the libretto of *Pagliacci* was also influenced by *La femme de Tabarin* of Catulle Mendès (who threatened to sue Leoncavallo for plagiarism, but then withdrew the charge) and by *Un drama nuevo* by Manuel Tamayo y Baus. But, as Morini also says, the story of the tragic clown, obliged to laugh while his heart is breaking, was traditional and familiar. Leoncavallo's innovation was to bring it, with truculent, aggressive vigor, into the opera house. His *Pagliacci* was not the first opera of the *verismo* school, but it was perhaps the most *verista*. Tonio sings in the Prologue: "For we are men of flesh and blood." Though critics have sometimes denied this reality, audiences—and, for that matter, interpreters—have felt it and cherished it. ■

William Weaver's *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Pagliacci* notes are reprinted by permission of London Records, a Division of PolyGram Classics, Inc.

Giovanni Verga: An Old Fashioned Innovator

By MARC ROTH

An old Italian proverb cited by Luigi Barzini in his book *The Italians* reads, "Fidarsi è bene, non fidarsi è meglio" (to trust is good, not to trust is better). Perhaps our discussion of *verismo* could begin and end right here, for certainly the operas *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Pagliacci* demonstrate the consequences of this proverbial wisdom.

The Sicilian stories and novels of Giovanni Verga (1840-1922), said to be influenced by the pillars of European naturalism, Zola and Flaubert, were like the island itself, provincial and out of step with the modern Europeans. Yet this would be to their ultimate advantage when the importance of Verga's writing became recognized after World War I. As a point of comparison, we can look at an example of good naturalism, August Strindberg's foreword to *Miss Julie* in which the author tells us what is modern about his tragedy:

I see Miss Julie's tragic fate to be the result of many circumstances: the mother's character, the father's mistaken upbringing of the girl, her own nature, and the influence of her fiancé on a weak, degenerate mind. Also, more directly, the festive mood of Midsummer Eve, her father's absence, her monthly indisposition, her preoccupation with animals, the excitement of dancing, the magic of dusk, the strongly aphrodisiac influence of flowers—to which must be added the

Marc Roth, vice president of a San Francisco investment firm, is a former assistant professor at the U.C. Berkeley Department of Dramatic Art. He writes frequently for various national publications on operatic and drama topics.

urgency of the excited man.

What is remarkable about Strindberg's play is that all of the above possible causes (plus some others which he thinks of later) are there. As an enthusiastic follower of Zola, Strindberg ably demonstrated in both word and deed that the basis of his drama was scientific and therefore modern.

Verga, on the other hand, broke new ground by being more old-fashioned. He read Zola and claimed to have been influenced by him. Interestingly, both men left their rural backgrounds and escaped temporarily to the city, but both returned to their birthplaces for their most significant subject matter. Yet again, the differences in approach might ultimately outweigh the similarities of circumstance. In preparation for his novel *La Terre* (The Earth), Zola returned to the Provence region where he gathered tomes of documents about the seasonal activities of village life, compiled case histories so that the human conduct portrayed in his million-word novel could be analyzed "scientifically." Since one of the many main characters happens to be a shepherd, we learn the details of his occupation:

The rams were castrated when they were two months old and brought up to be sold, while the ewes were kept in order to replenish the flock while the oldest among them were sold every year. The rams served the ewes at fixed dates; they were Dishleys crossed with Merinos, proud creatures with a stupid gentle look, heavy heads, and the large round noses of passionate men. There was a suffocating stench in

the sheep-pen, the smell of ammonia which rose from the litter, old straw which was covered with a fresh layer only every three months.

The presumable rationale for these details about the breeding of the rams and ewes is that their pen lies below the loft in which Jacqueline, the farmer's mistress, is lying in the hay with the head shepherd. We can find similar situations in the stories of Giovanni Verga, but the depiction of such scenes by the so-called founder of *verismo* is very different from that of the founder of naturalism. In his story *La Lupa* (The She-wolf), written at the same time as *Cavalleria Rusticana*, Verga portrays an overpowering siren who drags down the men of her village, kicking and screaming. She is powerless to curb her obsession and the men are powerless to guard against it. Her daughter is married, against her will, to the handsome herdsman Nanni so that *La Lupa* can make him her next victim. First she tempts him with a jug of wine in the heat of a Sicilian afternoon:

Nanni opened his eyes wide like a disturbed child, half awake, seeing her erect above him, pale with her arrogant bosom, and her eyes black as coals, and he stretched out his hand gropingly to keep her off. "No! No good woman goes roving between vespers and night," sobbed Nanni, pressing his face down in the dry-grass, clutching his hair with his hands. "Go away! Go Away! Don't come back into the stackyard again!"

She did indeed go away, *la lupa*, but fastening up again the coils of her superb black hair, staring straight in

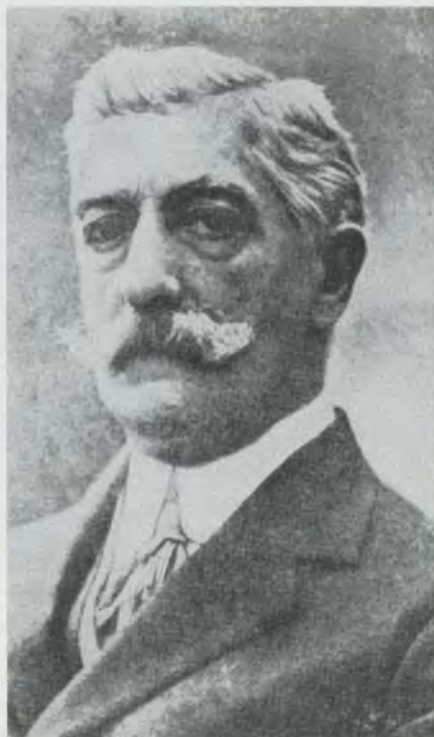
front of her, as she stepped over the hot stubble, with eyes black as coals. And she came back into the stackyard time and again, and Nanni no longer said anything; and when she was late coming, in the hour between vespers and night, he went to the top of the white, deserted road to look for her, with sweat on his forehead.

The translator of the above selection was an enthusiastic English admirer of Verga by the name of D. H. Lawrence. The affinity that Lawrence felt for Verga is worth exploring in some detail. One of the English novelist's many stops in his extended exile from the English midlands where several of his works are set, was Sicily. Soon after his arrival in 1916 Lawrence began to read Verga and considered the possibility of translating his works: "He exercises quite a fascination on me, and makes me feel quite sick at the end. But perhaps that is only if one knows Sicily. Do you know if he is translated into English?" Over the next eight years Lawrence would translate most of Verga's short stories and his two major novels, *I Malavoglia* and *Mastro Don Gesualdo*. Lawrence's fascination with Verga stemmed from his saturation with Sicily and his sense that the true character of the land and its people was expressed in *Cavalleria Rusticana*. In her essay on D.H. Lawrence, Diana Trilling noted that although Lawrence and his wife Frieda traveled constantly and never established a permanent home, they were very "home-making people"—avoiding hotels, always doing their own housekeeping and, most importantly, able to establish temporary roots almost immediately. His absorption in Sicily was quickened by his sense of the land being both primitive and Greek; qualities which he commented upon in his preface to *Cavalleria Rusticana*: Sicily, the beautiful, that which goes deepest into the blood. It is so clear, so beautiful, so like the physical beauty of the Greek. Yet the lives of the people all seem so squalid, so pottering, so despicable—like a crawling of beetles. And then the moment you get outside the grey and squalid walls of the village, how wonderful in the sun, with the land lying apart.

A further elaboration upon the Greekness of the place occurs in his preface to *Mastro Don Gesualdo*:

The Sicilians today are supposed to be the nearest descendants of the classic Greeks, and the nearest thing to classic Greeks in life and nature. And perhaps it is true. Like the classic Greeks the Sicilians have no insides, introspectively speaking. But, alas, outside they have no busy gods. It is their great loss. Because Jesus is to them only a wonder-man who was killed by foreigners and villains, and who will help you to get out of hell, perhaps.

When considering any of Lawrence's many pronouncements we have to bear in



Giovanni Verga, 1840-1922.

mind that his thinking was essentially poetic and not always consistent. Nevertheless, there is a traceable pattern in his ideas about Sicily and Verga which can shed valuable light upon the prose, theatrical and operatic versions of *Cavalleria Rusticana*. The bad guys in Lawrence's mind were the philistines, the northerners, and the moderns. The philistines wanted life without passion, the northerners (i.e. British, Russians, Germans) were producing literature which had destroyed the Homeric idea of the hero by making him too self-conscious, and the moderns were deluded in thinking that a life based on reason was a way out

of the post-war mess. Lawrence uses his ideas about Verga's realism to take stabs at these groups. In the preface to *Mastro Don Gesualdo*, for example, he playfully ridicules the grand masters of Russian fiction:

The Russians carry us to the great lengths of introspective heroism. They escape the non-heroic dilemma of our age by making every man his own introspective hero. The merest scrub of a pickpocket is so phenomenally aware of his own soul that we are made to bow down before the imaginary coruscations of suffering and sympathy that go on inside him. No matter how much of a shabby little slut you may be, you can learn from Dostoyevsky that you have the most tender, unique soul on earth!

Fortunately, Lawrence notes, the Sicilian has not got there yet and perhaps never will. Taken, however, with the right grain of salt, the above comment can aid our understanding of the *verismo* in *Cavalleria Rusticana*. The characters we meet in Verga's works are trapped between the conflicting forces of passion and frustration. They are necessarily thickskinned, narrow-minded and unbenevolent. Whatever redemption is available occurs in momentary bursts of tragic awareness; in Turiddu's case, for example, it is the realization that he bears responsibility for the suffering he has caused and must atone for. And this shock of recognition is precisely that, for in Verga's Sicilian universe, introspection was not a luxury enjoyed by the peasant class.

In exploring Lawrence's affinity for Verga we must also look to some significant points of personal identification. Lawrence, forever at odds with his critics and generally unappreciated by audiences during his lifetime, praised Verga for his apparent disdain for popularity: "As a man Verga never courted popularity, any more than his work courts popularity. He kept apart from all publicity, proud in his privacy." When Lawrence began translating Verga, the Sicilian author was living out his last years at his familial villa near the seaport of Catania. He died in 1922 at the age of 82. All of his writing was done before he turned 40 and in "exile" (he lived in Florence and Milan); he spent the last forty years of his life in aristocratic isolation from the bohemian circles of his youth. Lawrence, who used his literary talents to escape from the English Mid-

lands coal-mining community into which he was born, paid Verga yet another compliment when he called him "a real provincial (who) felt that the world must be conquered."

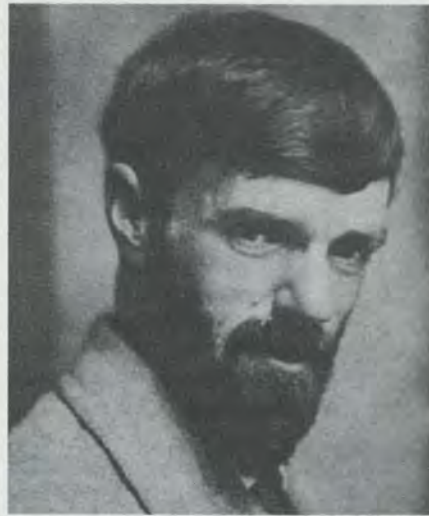
More significant points of identification, however, can be found in the content of Verga's stories and novels. When he first read *Cavalleria Rusticana*, Lawrence called it "a veritable blood-pudding of passion." Although the comment is playfully overstated, one could say that the main dramatic event in Verga's prose is the battle between reason and passion with reason inevitably succumbing. Lawrence seemed especially drawn to the repeated event of vengeful husbands punishing their wives' lovers:

Verga was fascinated, after his mortification in the *beau monde*, by pure naiveté, and by the spontaneous passion of life, that spurts beyond all convention or even law. Yet as we read, one after the other, of these betrayed husbands killing the correspondents, it seems a little mechanical . . . We think to ourselves how stupid of Alfio, of Jeli, to have to go killing a man and getting themselves shut up in prison for life, merely because the man had committed adultery with their wives. Was it worth it? Was the wife worth one year of prison, let alone a lifetime? . . . Nowadays we have learnt more sense, and we let her go her way. We are so much more reasonable.

To a certain extent, Lawrence is talking out of both sides of his mouth and enjoying it. The author of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* perhaps did find the vengeance of husbands old-fashioned. Yet the prefaces to his translations of Verga are filled with praise for the understanding of the essentially passionate forces of human nature. As we noted earlier, Lawrence's gripe with the modern world stemmed from what he viewed as the systematic elimination of passion by rationality which perpetuated an unhealthy world by assuring the continual victory of sophisticated forces over the naive, pure being. Verga turned to the Sicilian peasants to find what remained in individuals of the "non-didactic passionate life," but "he found it always defeated—he found the vulgar, the greedy always destroying the sensitive and the passionate. The vulgar and the greedy are themselves usually pea-

sants: Verga was far too sane to put an aureole around the whole class." In *Cavalleria Rusticana*, for example, Lola's preferring Alfio over Turiddu is based on the former's economic well-being; he has two wagons and four mules. Thus Alfio, the wronged husband, also has his assets to protect, and while not villainous in his heart, he is both victim and purveyor of convention.

Lawrence continually praises Verga for being "out-of-date" and hopes that the Europeans now suffering from the "Chekhovian after-influenza of inertia and will-lessness" might come to appreciate Verga's old-fashioned virtues. The one place where Lawrence slights Verga is as



David Herbert (D.H.) Lawrence, 1885-1930.

literary theorist, and here he takes a few cuts at the *verismo* movement and its promotion of what he termed "self-effacement in art." His particular gripe is with the preface to the story entitled *Gramigna's Mistress* in which Verga argues that "the hand of the author should remain absolutely invisible: then it will have the imprint of an actual happening without retaining any point of contact with its author, any stain of the original sin." The notion of the invisible author was a staple of late 19th-century realistic literary thinking. Italian literary historians cite Verga's preface as one of his primary links with the *verismo* movement. Lawrence, on the other hand, who never mentions the word *verismo* in his preface, attempts to distance both Verga and himself from literary labels: "any wholesale creed in art is dangerous . . . Anything more confused, more silly, really,

than the pages prefacing the excellent story *Gramigna's Mistress* would be hard to find, from the pen of a great writer. The moment Verga starts talking theories, our interest wilts immediately."

Lawrence admired the opera *Cavalleria Rusticana* about as much as he respected Verga's ideas on literary theory. He even erroneously credited Verga with penning the libretto:

Everybody knows, of course, that Verga made a dramatized version of *Cavalleria Rusticana*, and that this dramatized version is the libretto of the ever-popular little opera of the same name. So that Mascagni's rather feeble music has gone to immortalize a man like Verga, whose only popular claim to fame is that he wrote the aforesaid libretto. But that is fame's fault, not Verga's.

Unfortunately, Lawrence slighted Verga on the importance of the drama. Although not in the business of writing plays, Verga, at the urging of a friend, decided to dramatize some of his stories. With his first effort, *Cavalleria Rusticana*, his timing turned out to be perfect. The play was performed, at first reluctantly, by the Carlo Rossi company of Turin. Their leading actress, Eleonora Duse, took the role of Santuzza. To have the play performed, Verga agreed to forgo the author's customary percentage of the opening night box office income and, in an even more unusual concession, had to provide the costumes himself. His first dramatic effort turned out to be a significant turning point both for Duse and Italian theater. Duse's performances of Santuzza in England and the U.S. quickly became legendary, drawing the unqualified praise of George Bernard Shaw:

Duse is the first actress whom we have seen applying the method of the great school to characteristically modern parts or to characteristically modern conceptions of old parts. . . I should say without qualification that it is the best modern acting I have seen. . . Now I confess that even to me the illusion created by Duse was so strong that the scene comes back to me almost as an event which I actually witnessed. Looking at Duse, I pitied Santuzza as I have often pitied a real woman in the streets miserably trying, without a single charm to aid her, to beg back the affection of some cockney Turiddu.



Ancient Enna, Sicily. Engraving after Castro Giovanni.

(Our Theatres in the Nineties)

Shaw and the many others who enthusiastically praised Duse's Santuzza could not have made such statements were it not for Verga's expansion of the role in the transition from short story to one-act play. In the short story, Santuzza is a pawn between Turiddu and Lola. Her appearances are brief. None of the memorable confrontations with Turiddu or Nunzia (Mamma Lucia of the opera) are even suggested in the story, and the first Santuzza is not the full-bodied creation we meet in both the play and the opera. She does not agonize with or about Turiddu and seems to have no problem telling Alfio straight away about his Lola: "You're right to bring her presents . . . because when you're away your wife makes a cuckold of you in your own house." Neither is there a hint of any self deprecation as we have in the play and opera when Santuzza says to Alfio, "No, no, don't thank me, I'm wicked." With Santuzza's expanded role a major change occurs

in Turiddu's recognition of his own responsibility for the suffering he has caused. In the story he tells Alfio, "I'd let you kill me but before I came here I saw my old mother who got up to see me leave, pretending she was feeding the chickens, as if she knew; and I swear to God I'll kill you like a dog not to make the old woman cry." In the theatrical and operatic versions, however, Turiddu has not only his mother's pain but the public and private humiliation of a wronged woman on his hands and accordingly he tells Alfio: "I'd let myself be slaughtered without a word but I have Santa [Santuzza] on my conscience."

In the transformation from a short story to a one-act play, the rough edges of the story are smoothed out into more lengthy and well-made confrontations. Nevertheless, we could still apply D.H. Lawrence's comment about feeling sick at the end because the theatrical versions throw punches at us which are both swift and stark. In this respect Verga's Sicilian stories and plays are similar to works by

Georg Büchner, especially the play *Woyzeck* which also provided the basis for one of the most important modern operas. When *Woyzeck* tells his wife Marie in a rare moment of calm over their sleeping child that "us poor people even sweat in our sleep," we are very much in the universe of Verga's Sicilian peasants. Interestingly, both writers remained neglected until championed by another writer who likewise was not well received in his own time due to problems with censors. In Büchner's case, his advocate was the playwright Frank Wedekind, whose treatment of sexuality in *Lulu* and *Spring's Awakening* got him into some of the same difficulties as befell D.H. Lawrence. Verga, Büchner and the writers daring enough to promote them, all meet Friedrich Nietzsche's definition of the "untimely author who writes against his time and thereby influences it in the hope of benefitting a future time." Ultimately, this is perhaps the most constructive way to appreciate the *verismo* of Giovanni Verga. ■



Ebe Stignani as Santuzza; Alessandro Ziliani as Turiddu in the 1938 San Francisco Opera production of *Cavalleria Rusticana*.

the performances, the final decision would be made. The first to be performed was Nicola Spinelli's *Labilia*. Mascagni wrote his librettists that it had gone "so-so. The music is good, elegant, aristocratic, but it does not convince . . . But Spinelli achieved a nice success and deserved it, because he is a fine young man."

Cavalleria came next. Mascagni made some last-minute changes in the text, lightened some of the orchestration, attended the rehearsals. In the same letter quoted above (written on May 14), he said: "I'm too excited to speak to you at length, as I would like, of the performance my music will receive. All I will say is that the artists sing it with great passion and the musicians of the orchestra are mad about my opera. Last night at the orchestral rehearsal I received real ovations . . . Everything leads me to hope for success, but I am so afraid. . . I have changed the Alfio twice, and the Lola three times. . ."

But three days later he could send his friends the joyous telegram: "Success of *Cavalleria* incomparable. . ." And then he wrote to his father: "I still haven't recovered from the emotion and the confusion. I would never have imagined such enthusiasm. Everyone applauded. In the orchestra, everyone was on his feet. . . All

the ladies, including the Queen, clapped their hands. . . I have signed a contract with Sonzogno which for two and a half years will bring me twelve or fifteen thousand lire. The first prize is mine. Sonzogno will give me three hundred lire a month. My position has completely changed. . ."

It is not hard to imagine that festive evening at the Teatro Costanzi, and—besides the novelty and worth of Mascagni's music—the success was due also to the presence in the cast of two favorite singers, Gemma Bellincioni (Santuzza) and her husband, Roberto Stagno (Turiddu), both admired for their acting ability as well as for their voices. The conductor was the fiery Leopoldo Mugnone. Needless to say, the previous success of Giovanni Verga's original story and his dramatic adaptation of it (a vehicle for Eleonora Duse) had also helped pave Mascagni's way.

In the years that followed, that way was often troubled. Mascagni enjoyed other successes, many of them, both musical and official. He was awarded high honors. His works were performed—sometimes only once—all over the world. Books and articles were written about him. But the heady, total triumph of 1890 was never repeated. His work, his musical

nature were often misunderstood. Scholars, who like to establish schools and categories and movements, for a long time tended to lump together such different composers as Mascagni, Leoncavallo, Cilea, Giordano—even Puccini—in the so-called "young school." More deleteriously, critics invented a musical *verismo* movement, to correspond with the literary movement, of that name. It was logical that, since Verga was the leading Italian *verismo* writer, Mascagni—after the success of *Cavalleria* and the evidence of that success in numerous imitations—should be placed among the leaders of musical *verismo*. In writing his stories and novels of humble Sicilian life, Verga—friend and admirer of Zola—was deliberately pursuing an artistic program, a credo. In writing his popular opera, Mascagni was simply writing an opera. Verga's peasants are quite unlike Mascagni's chorus, who sing of flowers and love; and even Turiddu, though he has some naturalistic touches, is basically a tenor-hero, even down to his drinking song; just as Alfio, with his traditional *aria di sortita*, is the classic operatic villain-husband.

An early, but extremely perceptive Italian critic, Giannotto Bastianelli, wrote of the work: "*Cavalleria* is a *verismo* opera more because of its libretto than because of any natural requirement of the composer." Other composers *did* self-consciously write *verismo* operas about various kinds of low life, mostly in Southern Italy; but even the best of them—like Wolf-Ferrari's *The Jewels of the Madonna*—are now long forgotten and unlikely to enjoy many revivals.

Mascagni's own later operas, for the most part, had little to do with *verismo*: his pastoral *L'Amico Fritz*, his legendary *Isabeau*, his exotic *Iris*, his commedia dell'arte *Le Maschere*. They bear witness to Mascagni's inquisitive spirit, his eagerness to venture along new paths. But they, too, despite their merits, have not become part of the standard, bread-and-butter repertory.

Only *Cavalleria* lives on—this burst of youthful inspiration, this cry of desperate self-assertion, a fierce and vital reaction to the monotony of Cerignola. N.B. In compiling the above note, the author has drawn on several sources, in particular: *Pietro Mascagni, contributi alla conoscenza della sua opera* (Livorno, 1963), and *Pietro Mascagni*, edited by Mario Morini (Sonzogno, Milano, 1964). ■

Company Profiles: Emilio Aramendia

This on-going series of interviews introduces our readers to a cross-section of San Francisco Opera Company members who never get to take a curtain call, but whose activities are very important in the process of making opera happen.

Because he's so often asked why he doesn't build houses instead, San Francisco Opera stage carpenter Emilio Aramendia has a pointed, hairtrigger reply: "Give me a break. Anybody can build a house. But here you're not building something for a contractor, or for someone you'll never even see. Here at the Opera you're doing it live for 3,000 people. And you know what? You just can't beat it."

Married nine years, the father of two, and the conscientious descendant of a Basque family line of teachers, the 35-year-old Aramendia clearly has an appreciation of permanence and tradition—not, however, in his line of work, where newness, change, and excitement have come to matter far more. "An outside carpenter," he comments with a neutrality that substitutes for disdain, "puts something together to stay together. In theater carpentry, things are built to come apart and go back together any number of times. In seconds."

The speed obviously holds no terror for Aramendia, an irrepressibly enthusiastic type whose combined volubility and boyish good looks (a resemblance to Joel Grey is often pointed out to him) conspire to make his every word completely convincing. In fact, it's obvious that the pace of life backstage is one of the enticements for him. Perhaps predictably bemused at the dated perception of the stagehand as a lumbering, cigar-smoking, vaguely suspi-

cious lecher, Aramendia insists, "That's not where we're at anymore. The people on the crew today have interests outside the theater as well—a whole range of other interests." Still, one has to wonder whether he's generalizing from his own experience.

Although his stagehand career spanned the entire existence of Bill Graham's Winterland as well as "my favorite 600 performances of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* at the Little Fox—I went through five cast changes," his San Francisco Opera career began with the 1972 and '73 seasons, "when our *Tosca* and *Rigoletto* were new productions." What's more, during his entire first decade "in the business," he was going to school as well. After a start in pre-med at Berkeley ("I thought I was going to be a physical therapist"), he ultimately earned a bachelor's in psychology and a master's in special education, both from San Francisco State.

He taught from 1978 to 1984, first in bilingual education and, finally, as an "itinerant" teacher of students with visual impairments. Not surprisingly, the aspects of teaching he liked best—the "spur-of-the-moment problem solving" and "what we liked to call task analysis, breaking a task down into its individual components, which usually results in the discovery that a 'simple' task really isn't"—are the ones he likes most about his current work. But, he insists, it was more

than the roar of the greasepaint and smell of the crowd that beckoned him back to the wings. Besides suffering his own version of the burnout syndrome: "I was tired," he says candidly, "of being broke by the fifth of the month."

Backstage at the Little Fox, Aramendia "did everything. I did the lighting, ran the show, and served as carpenter, electrician, prop man, you name it." At the Opera, an older and wiser Aramendia is not interested in doing everything at once; he'd just like to do everything eventually. "The longer I'm here, the more experienced I become—and the more I realize I have to learn. The technology changes, and designers keep coming up with new ideas. An aspect of this job that I particularly like is that you're always learning."

There is a discernible quality of self-recognition in Aramendia's description of the new stage hands, the "green peas," who arrive at the beginning of each season and are immediately overwhelmed by the Opera House, "which still has a certain mystique about it. When you first see and hear everything that's going on, this place really is larger than life."

One of the jobs of the stage carpenter (the company now employs 34 of them) is to finish the building of the sets which are begun in the company's scene shops. "Generally," Aramendia explains, "a show is still pretty rough when it arrives in the patch [house lingo for the enlarged backstage area in the Opera House's 1979 addition], and we have, at most, three or four days to tech it out, to work out all the kinks. That includes everything, the carpentry, the lights, the sound—the works! It gets frantic and crazy. I suppose I could look at it all as stress—but I don't. It's like a runner's high. I get off on it. And it's not like you have just one opening night and then do a show 300 times. There are ten opening nights!"

He is hardly the first to have noticed



Emilio Aramendia, pausing between stage assignments.

that the productions themselves are getting bigger. But since the crews have been increasing in size commensurately, bigger shows, for him, translate into more on-the-job excitement. "The job is about 40 percent strength and 60 percent finesse," he says. "The physical strength of the biggest guy on the crew—and he's really big—shouldn't come into play any more than mine does, and I'm just five-foot-eight. It's all a matter of balance, and knowing how to pick a piece up." The blocking of almost any of the scenes the audience sees on stage pales before the complexity of the movement backstage. In the biggest of the company's shows, such as the new Ponnelle *Carmen*, the backstage work is, Aramendia says, "choreographed."

Another example he cites is the John Conklin *Ring*, which, he says, "sometimes involved seven units moving simultaneously, plus things flying in and out

through the air. It was a really busy show." He has particularly vivid memories of *Das Rheingold*, in which Valhalla was depicted both on a grand scale and in miniature. "We had to get from Little Val to Big Val in a minute and fifteen seconds, in a set change involving 100 feet of depth and 60 feet of width. There were probably 100 people involved in that set change—and because there was music going on during the change, it had to be done quietly!"

Although the last thing he's doing during a set change is listening to the music, Aramendia doesn't miss a beat when asked if he has been bitten by the opera bug. "Yeah, it happened," he says, "and it happened early on, too. I had worked for Bill Graham for years, so it was rock and roll every weekend—and I loved it, and still do. But the first time I heard *Rigoletto*, I thought, 'This is wonderful.' And I'll never forget the *Tosca* in the

1972 50th-anniversary season. I had a door cue. All of a sudden I found myself three feet away from this voice that was all but making my ears ring. It was Plácido Domingo's.

"But you have to remember: they're not singing for us in the wings. We just get the overflow. And just like the stars, all of us backstage are there to play for the house. If you don't lose sight of that, then everything's okay. When you remember that everything is relative to knocking the socks off a sold-out house, it helps to keep your head on straight.

"People always say how wonderful it must be working at the Opera House, always being right in the thick of things. Well, sometimes it isn't all that wonderful. A 70-hour week just isn't wonderful. But then you hear the applause from the audience, or read the reviews—and that's what it's all about. That's where I get my stuff." ■

—Timothy Pfaff

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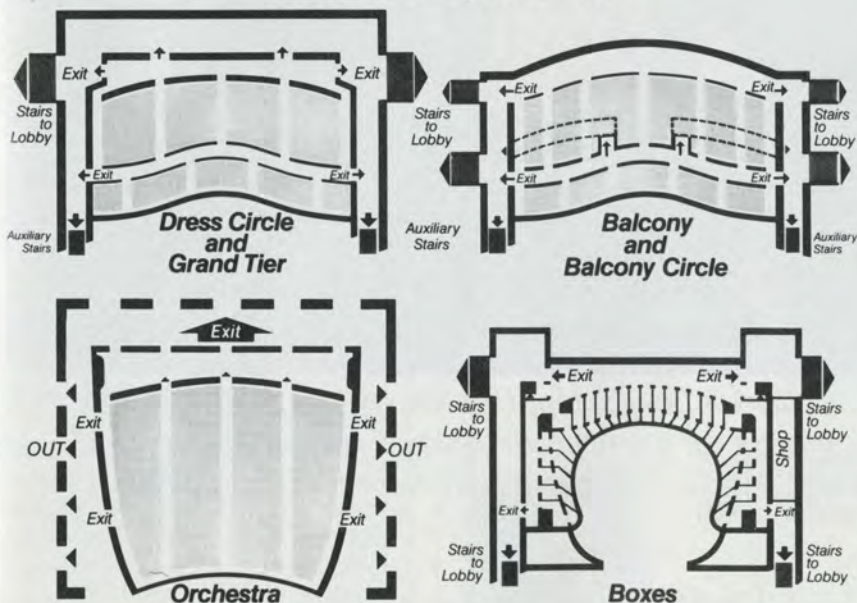
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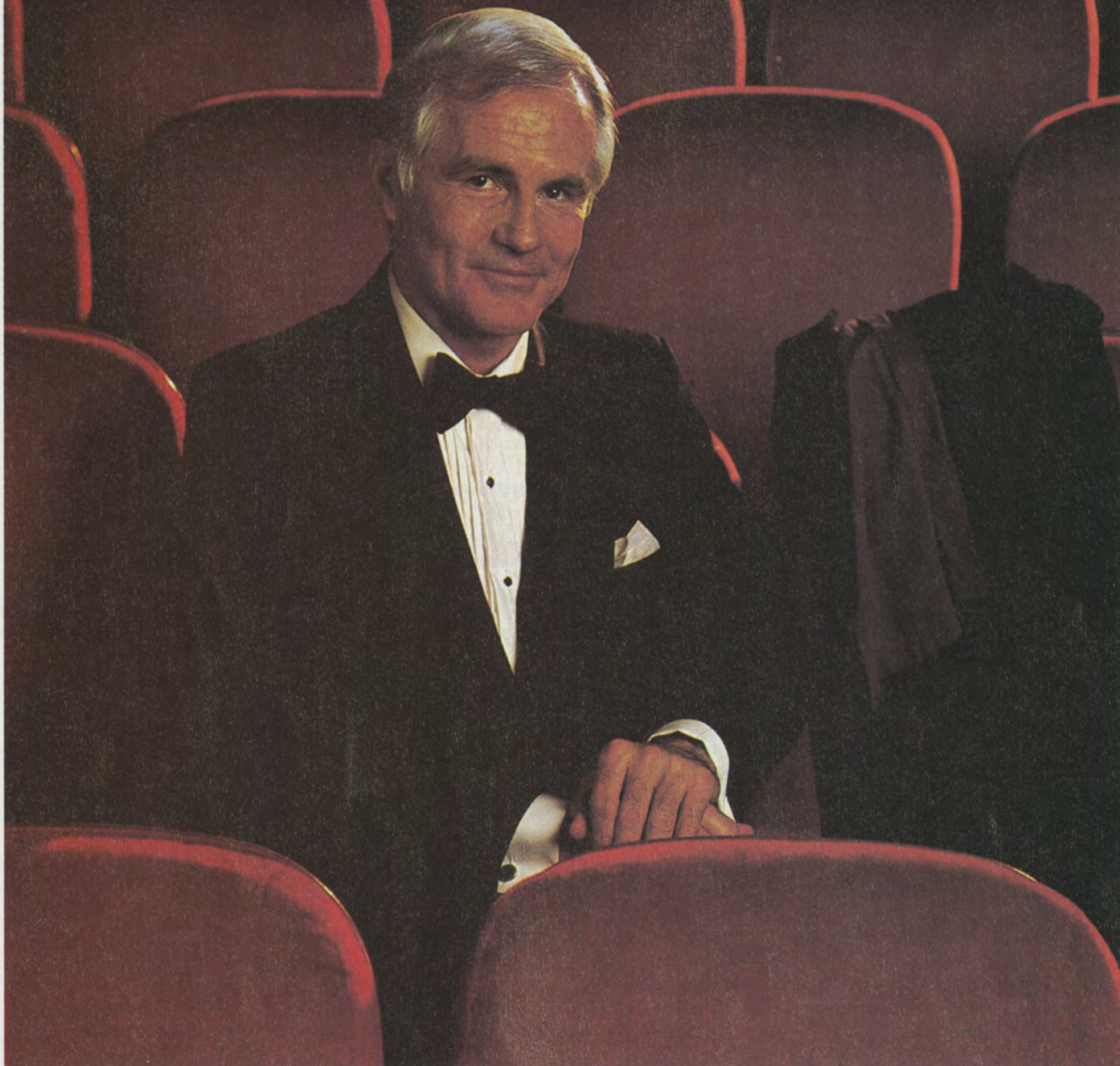
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Medallion



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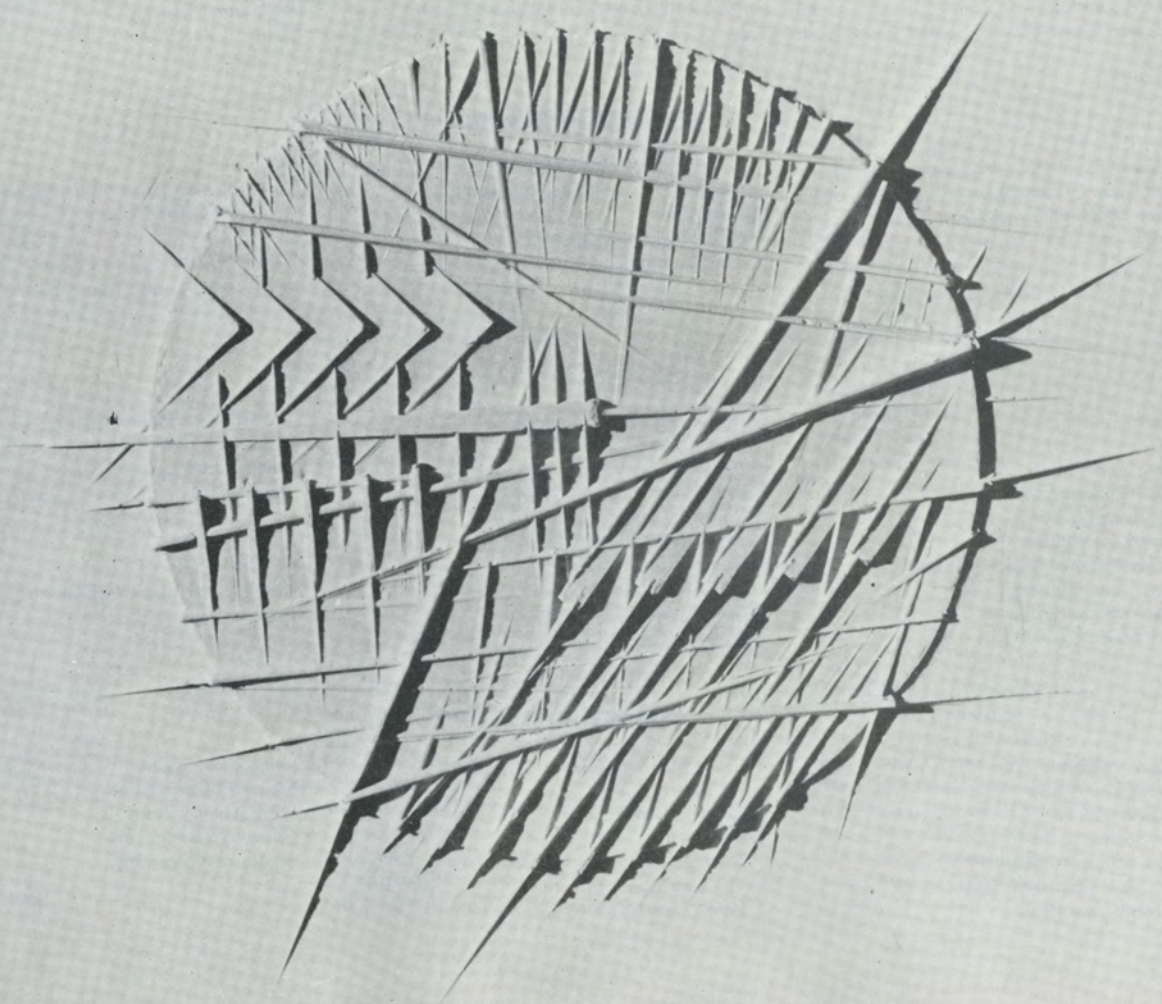
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All rehearsals are subject to space availability, change of scheduling, and management decisions.

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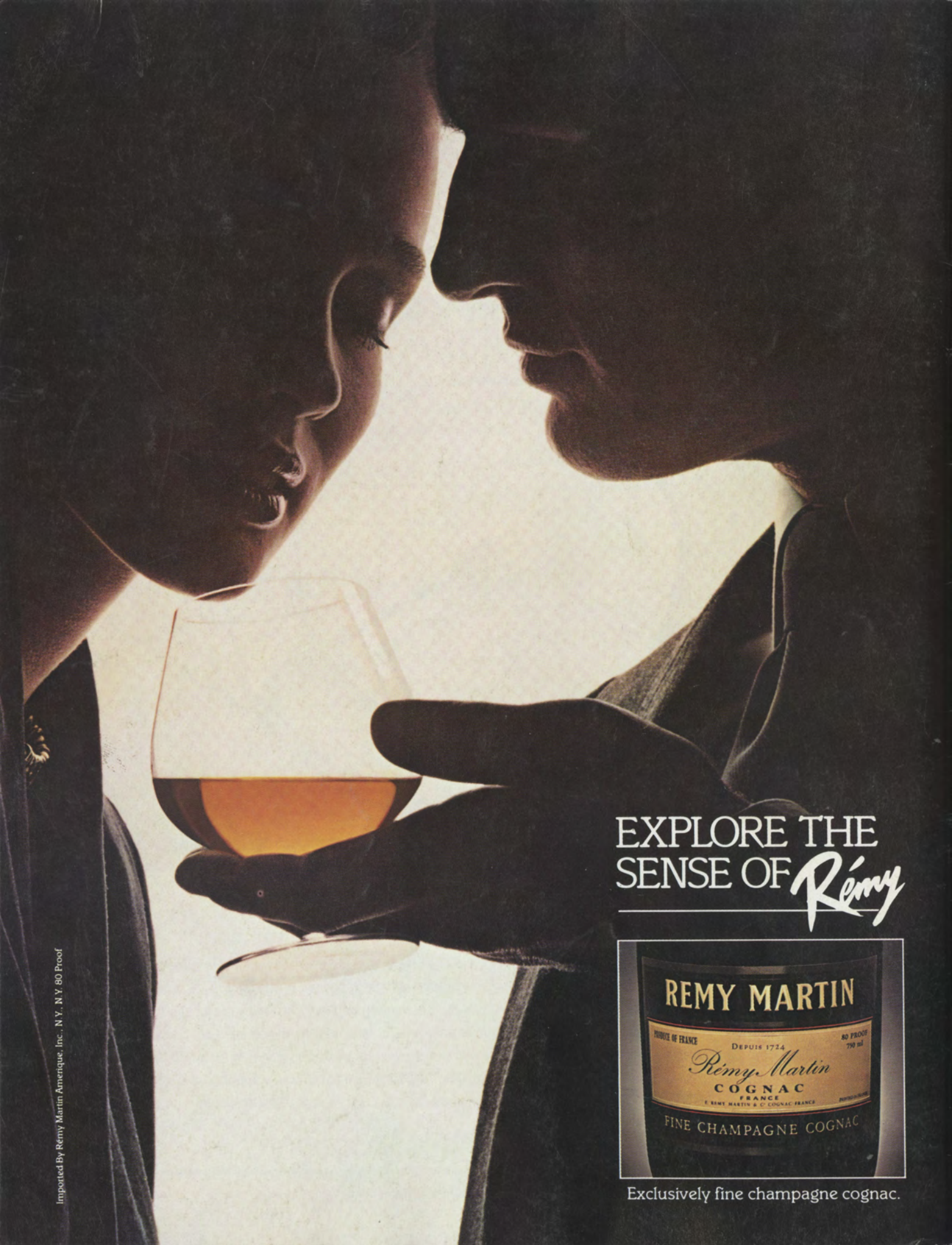
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PIERO CAPPUCILLI

Baritone **Piero Cappuccilli** made his San Francisco Opera debut earlier this season in the roles of Alfio in *Cavalleria Rusticana* and Tonio in *Pagliacci*. On short notice, he also assumed the role of Count di Luna in the last three performances of *Il Trovatore*. Born in Trieste, he studied singing there at the Teatro Giuseppe Verdi, and in 1957 made his debut at the Teatro Nuovo in Milan as Tonio and was immediately engaged for performances of *Tosca* at the Teatro La Pergola in Florence. He made his debut at La Scala in 1964 in *Lucia di Lammermoor* and has sung there regularly ever since. His American debut was in 1969 at the Lyric Opera of Chicago in Verdi's *I Due Foscari*, and he has since returned there for productions of *Simon Boccanegra*, *La Favorita*, *La Traviata*, *Otello*, *Macbeth* and *Ernani*. He made his Covent Garden debut in 1967 in Luchino Visconti's new production of *La Traviata* and returned there in 1974 to sing Iago in *Otello*. In 1975 he took part in a highly successful production of *Un Ballo in Maschera* that was telecast by the BBC. In 1981 he toured with the Royal Opera in *Otello*, a triumph which he repeated on the Covent Garden stage in 1983. Among his recent performances are *Simon Boccanegra*, *La Traviata* and *Otello* in Munich; *William Tell*, *Macbeth*, *Otello* and *Il Trovatore* in Hamburg; *Attila*, *Andrea Chénier*, and *Rigoletto* in Vienna; 12 different Verdi operas, as well as *La Wally*, *Andrea Chénier*, *Il Tabarro* and *La Bohème* at La Scala; and *Luisa Miller* at the Paris Opera production. Recent performances include *Ballo in Geneva* and Bonn, *La Traviata* in Berlin, *Macbeth* in Salzburg and Vienna, *Ernani* in Chicago, *William Tell* at New York's Carnegie Hall, *Otello* in Munich and *Simon Boccanegra* in Orange. This season, Cappuccilli will appear in *Don Carlos* at Salzburg and at the Lyric Opera of Chicago in *Un Ballo in Maschera*. His many recordings include *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Don Giovanni*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *La Gioconda*, *Aida*, *La Forza del Destino*, *I Puritani*, *Un Ballo in Maschera*, *Il Trovatore*, *Don Carlos*, *Simon Boccanegra*, *Nabucco*, *Rigoletto*, *Macbeth*, *I Masnadieri*, *I Due Foscari* and *Cavalleria Rusticana*, among others.

This afternoon's performance of *Cavalleria Rusticana*
and *Pagliacci* will be conducted by
Maestro Carlo Felice Cillario.

June 22, 1986

