Tosca

1985

Saturday, October 26, 1985 8:00 PM Tuesday, October 29, 1985 8:00 PM Sunday, November 3, 1985 2:00 PM Wednesday, November 6, 1985 7:30 PM Saturday, November 9, 1985 8:00 PM Tuesday, November 12, 1985 8:00 PM Friday, November 15, 1985 8:00 PM

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Tosca

PERFORMING ARTS NETWORK PUBLICATION



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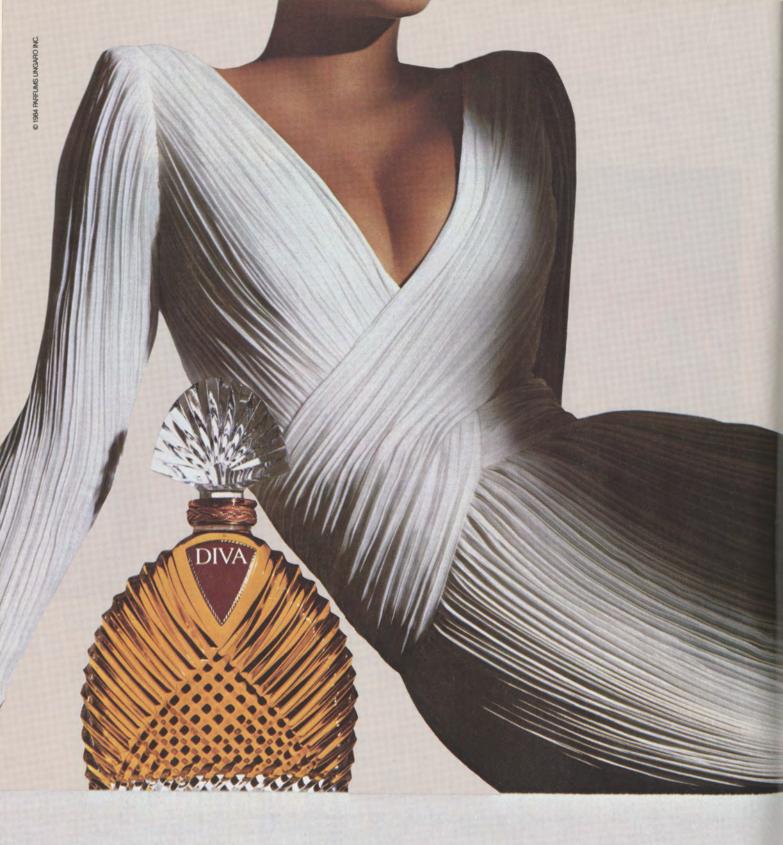












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San Francisco Opera

Terence A. McEwen, General Director

Tosca

FALL SEASON 1985

FEATURES

- Tosca: An Abundance of Music by David Hamilton An enlightened and enlightening introduction to the perennial favorite.
- Giovanni Martinelli at 100 by Allan Ulrich 32 San Francisco Opera's primo uomo is the subject of this appreciation on the 100th anniversary of his birth.
- Supertitles: A New Dimension in Opera Production by Deborah Young 58

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COVER:

Jean Baptiste Camille Corot (1796-1875) View of Rome: The Bridge and the Castle of St. Angelo with the Cupola of St. Peter's. Oil on paper, mounted on canvas 8% x 15 in.

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From the Chairman of the Board and the President



Reid W. Dennis

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Tully M. Friedman

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

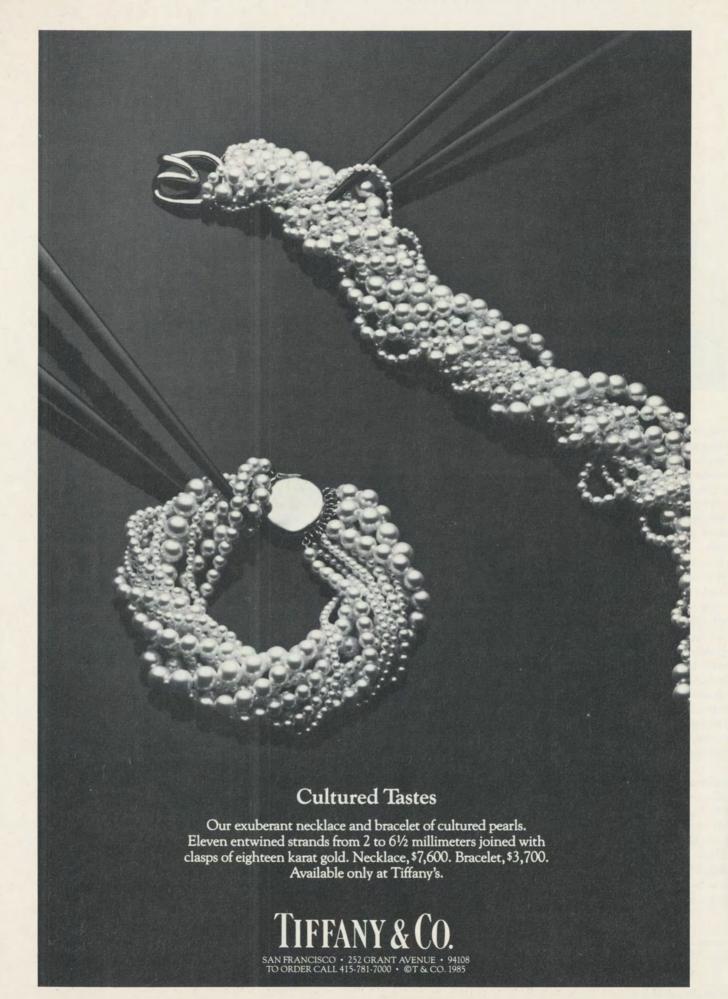
We have presented a very special year of operatic events. To maintain this operatic legacy that is such an important part of San Francisco life, we need your continued support.

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

Reid W. Dennis, Chairman Tully M. Friedman, President You are cordially invited to visit a McGuire showroom accompanied by your interior designer or architect. In San Francisco, 151 Vermont Street at 15th, (415) 986-0812. In Los Angeles, Pacific Design Center, Space 542, (213) 659-2970.



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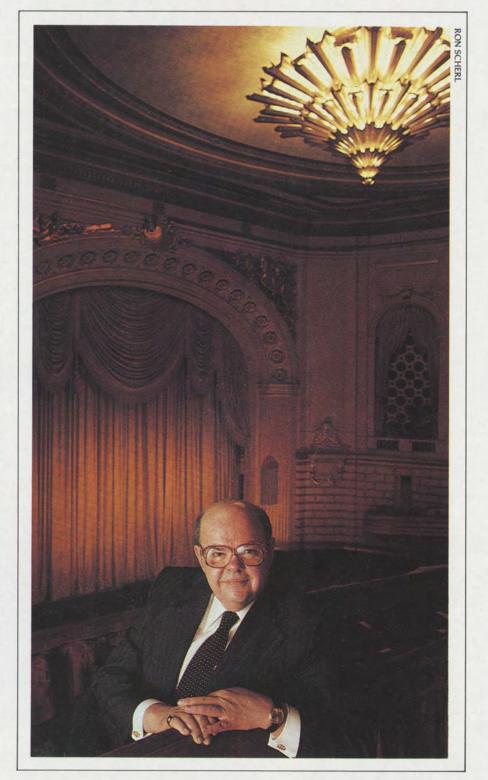
General Director's Message

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

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

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

Our team welcomes you to the 1985 Fall Season.



I AME

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Fall Season 1985

13

San Francisco Opera

Terence A. McEwen, General Director

1985 Fall Season

Friday, September 6, 7:30

Opening Night

Adriana Lecouvreur Cilea Scenery and costumes from the

Metropolitan Opera Association.

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

Saturday, September 7, 8:00

Lear Reimann

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

Silja, Dernesch, Greenawald/Stewart, Langdon-Lloyd, Ludgin, Knutson, Trussel, Ulfung, Duykers, Noble, Patterson, Anderson*

Layer**/Ponnelle/Ponnelle/Halmen/Munn

Tuesday, September 10, 8:00 Adriana Lecouvreur Cilea

Thursday, September 12, 7:30 Lear Reimann

Friday, September 13, 8:00

Adriana Lecouvreur Cilea

Saturday, September 14, 8:00 San Francisco Opera Premiere

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

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

Sunday, September 15, 2:00 Lear Reimann

Monday, September 16, 8:00 Adriana Lecouvreur Cilea

Tuesday, September 17, 8:00 Lear Reimann

Wednesday, September 18, 7:30 Orlando Handel

Friday, September 20, 8:00 Lear Reimann

Saturday, September 21, 8:00 Orlando Handel Sunday, September 22, 2:00 Adriana Lecouvreur Cile

Tuesday, September 24, 8:00 Orlando Handel

Wednesday, September 25, 7:30 Adriana Lecouvreur Cilea

Thursday, September 26, 8:00

Turandot Puccini

Produced in cooperation with the opera companies of Dallas, Houston, and Miami.
The revival of this production is made possible, in part, through a much-appreciated grant from the Koret Foundation.

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

Friday, September 27, 8:00 Lear Reimann

Saturday, September 28, 8:00 Adriana Lecouvreur Cilea

Sunday, September 29, 2:00 Turandot Puccini

Wednesday, October 2, 8:00 Turandot Puccini

Thursday, October 3, 8:00 Orlando Handel

Friday, October 4, 8:00

Werther Massenet

Scotto, Parrish/Kraus, Dickson, Capecchi,
Petersen, Patterson, Maxham*

Plasson*/Uzan*/Rubin/Munn, Arhelger

Saturday, October 5, 8:00 Turandot Puccini

Sunday, October 6, 2:00 Orlando Handel

Wednesday, October 9, 7:30 Turandot Puccini

Thursday, October 10, 8:00 **Werther** Massenet

Saturday, October 12, 8:00 **Turandot** Puccini Sunday, October 13, 2:00 Werther Massenet

Tuesday, October 15, 8:00 Turandot Puccini

Wednesday, October 16, 7:30
Werther Massenet

Friday, October 18, 8:00 Turandot Puccini

Saturday, October 19, 8:00 Werther Massenet

Sunday, October 20, 2:00 New Production

Falstaff Verdi

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

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

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

Tuesday, October 22, 8:00 Werther Massenet

Wednesday, October 23, 8:00 Falstaff Verdi

Friday, October 25, 8:00 **Werther** Massenet

Saturday, October 26, 8:00 Tosca Puccini

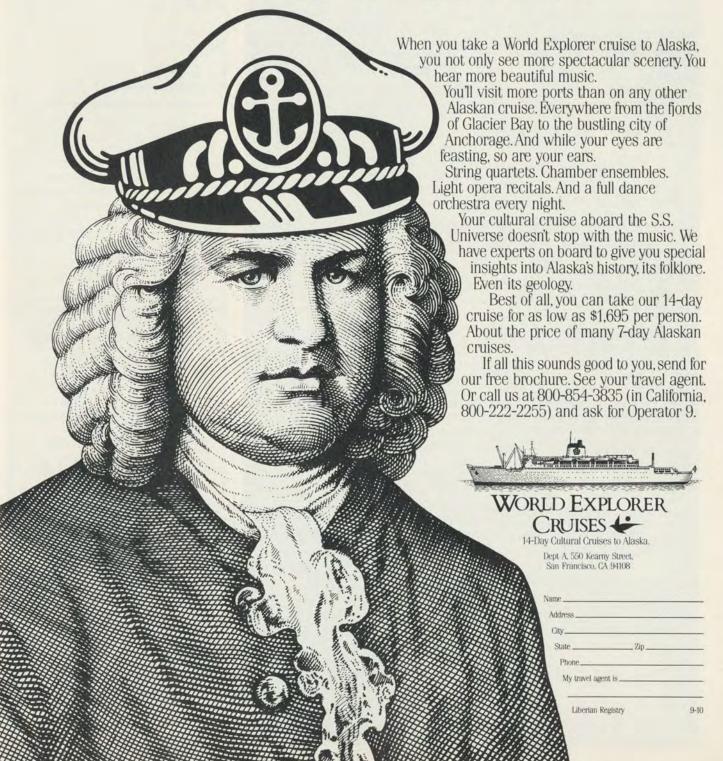
This production was originally made possible through a grant from the Charles E. Merrill Trust

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

Sunday, October 27, 2:00 Falstaff Verdi

Tuesday, October 29, 8:00 Tosca Puccini

Alaska and Bach.



Wednesday, October 30, 7:30 Falstaff Verdi

Saturday, November 2, 8:00 Falstaff Verdi

Sunday, November 3, 2:00 Tosca Puccini

Tuesday, November 5, 8:00 Falstaff Verdi

Wednesday, November 6, 7:30 Tosca Puccini

Thursday, November 7, 8:00

Un Ballo in Maschera Verdi

This production was originally made possible through a gift from a friend of the San Francisco Opera. The revival of this production is made possible through the generosity of Bernard and Barbro Osher.

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

Friday, November 8, 8:00 Falstaff Verdi

Saturday, November 9, 8:00 Tosca Puccini

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

Tuesday, November 12, 8:00 Tosca Puccini

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

Thursday, November 14, 8:00
Billy Budd Britten
Costumes from the Royal Opera, Covent
Garden

Duesing, King, Morris, Glossop, Busterud, Garrett*, Wexler, Schwisow*, Gudas, Kelley, Harper, Parce*, Pederson, MacAllister, Pendergraph Leppard/Coleman/Munn, Piper/Munn

Friday, November 15, 8:00 Tosca Puccini

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

Tuesday, November 19, 8:00 Billy Budd Britten

Wednesday, November 20, 8:00 Un Ballo in Maschera Verdi Thursday, November 21, 8:00 Production new to San Francisco

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

Friday, November 22, 8:00 Billy Budd Britten

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

Sunday, November 24, 2:00

Der Rosenkavalier Strauss

Monday, November 25, 8:00 Family Performance

Falstaff Verdi Hartliep, Zajic, Cowdrick, Chen/ Pendergraph, Malis, Schwisow, Peterson, Harper, Pederson Bradshaw/Ponnelle/Thompson/Ponnelle/

Tuesday, November 26, 8:00

Der Rosenkavalier Strauss

Wednesday, November 27, 7:30 Billy Budd Britten

Friday, November 29, 8:00

Der Rosenkavalier Strauss

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

Saturday, November 30, 8:00 Billy Budd Britten

Sunday, December 1, 2:00 Un Ballo in Maschera Verdi Monday, December 2, 8:00

Der Rosenkavalier Strauss

Tuesday, December 3, 8:00 Billy Budd Britten

Wednesday, December 4, 7:30

Der Rosenkavalier Strauss

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

Saturday, December 7, 8:00

Der Rosenkavalier Strauss

Sunday, December 8, 2:00 Billy Budd Britten

**American opera debut *San Francisco Opera debut

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

Repertoire, casts and dates subject to change.

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

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

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

These matinees will be performed with Supertitles by Paul Moor.

Kirsten Flagstad Exhibition

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

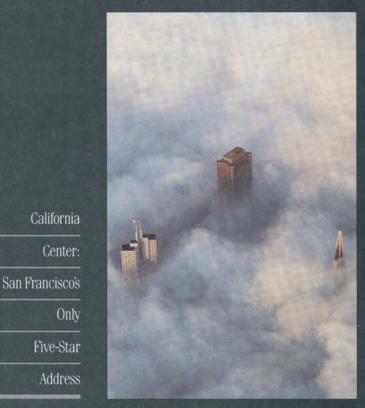
Sennheiser Listening Devices

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



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Piano: Byron Janis, Tamas Vasary, Philippe Moll, Joseph Villa. Violin: Viktoria Mullova, Uto Ughi. Cello: Frans Helmerson. Flute: James Galway. Trumpet: Maurice Andre. Viola: Milton Katims. Voice: Wilhelmenia Fernandez, Kimball Wheeler. Oboe: Hans de Vries. Ensemble: Meliora String Quartet. Orchestra: Polish Chamber Orchestra. Recorder: Michala Petri. Special Appearance: Free Flight, Cy Coleman, Bobby Mac Ferrin. Musical Host and Pianist: Dr. Karl Haas.

Itinerary: Port Everglades, Cap Haitien, Willemstad, Cartagena, San Blas Islands, Cristobal, Gatun Lake (Panama Canal), Playa del Carmen, Port Everglades.

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1985 Fall Opera Previews

Information on opera previews and lectures is carried in San Francisco Opera Magazine in order to enable patrons to make advance plans.

The following is a list of previews and lectures that are open to the public.

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD

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

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

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD PREVIEWS

MARIN

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

Adriana Lecouvreur	
Arthur Kaplan	9/5
Orlando Robert Jacobson	9/12
Turandot	7114
William Huck	9/19
Falstaff James Keolker	10/17
Billy Budd Michael Mitchell	11/7
Der Rosenkavalier Speight Jenkins	11/14

NORTH PENINSULA

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

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

Lurandot	
Eugene Marker	9/19
Werther	
James Keolker	10/3
Falstaff	
James Keolker	10/16
Der Rosenkavalier	
Speight Jenkins	11/13

SOUTH PENINSULA

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

Orlando	
Robert Jacobson	9/10
Turandot Arthur Kaplan	9/17
Falstaff James Keolker	10/15
Billy Budd	10/13
Michael Mitchell	11/12
Der Rosenkavalier Speight Jenkins	11/19

SAN JOSE OPERA GUILD

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

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

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

SONOMA COUNTY CHAPTER

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

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

Werther	10/1, 11 a.m. preview;
James Keolker	12:30 p.m. luncheon
	El Dorado Hotel
40	5 - 1st St. West. Sonoma

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

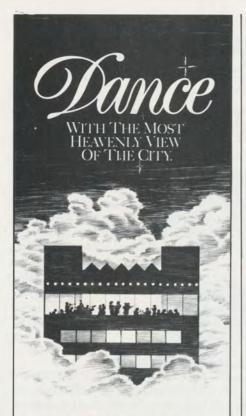
Der Rosenkavalier	11/12, 6 p.m.
Speight Jenkins	reception
	7 p.m. preview
	Wild Oak Saddle Club
6600	Toney Dr., Santa Rosa

JUNIOR LEAGUE OPERA PREVIEWS

All Junior League opera previews will be held in Herbst Theatre in the Veterans Building, Van Ness at McAllister. Lectures begin at noon and there is no admission charge. For information, please call (415) 347-6920 or (415) 342-2463.

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

continued on p.62



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Tosca:

An Abundance of Music

By DAVID HAMILTON

In May 1889, Giacomo Puccini wrote to his publisher Giulio Ricordi about Victorien Sardou's two-year-old play La Tosca, a skilful confection combining historical drama, revolutionary politics, love and religion, architectural spectacle, melodrama, and Grand Guignol into a closely plotted mechanism of evertightening tension. "In this," Puccini averred, "I see the opera which exactly suits me, one without excessive proportions, one which is a decorative spectacle, and one which gives opportunity for an abundance of music" The operatic Tosca would take more than a decade to reach the stage of Rome's Teatro Costanzi, on January 14, 1900: rights had to be cleared, Manon Lescaut and La Bohème intervened, the subject was even for a time detoured to another composer, a libretto satisfactory to the very fussy composer had to be made, and work was interrupted while Puccini went to supervise foreign premieres of earlier operas. In the end, of course, he proved himself correct: it was a smashingly suitable subject for him, economical (three taut, concise acts), picturesque (set in three famed examples of Roman architecture), and-not least-rich in musical possibilities

However, that "abundance of music" for which Puccini foresaw an opportunity was not the same kind of abundance (nor even the same kind of music) found in earlier Italian operatic masterpieces, which were built as successions of arias, duets, choruses, and ensembles. In *Tosca*, to be sure, the tenor has two solos:

David Hamilton, music critic of The Nation and a contributing editor to Opus, is also the author of A Listener's Guide to Great Instrumentalists and of many articles on contemporary music, opera, and recordings.



Scenes from three San Francisco Opera presentations of Tosca: (above) Act I—The San Francisco Boys Chorus during the melee with the Sacristan in 1978. (below) Act II—Gwyneth Jones as Tosca agonizes over the dead body of Scarpia (Justino Díaz) in 1982. (right) Hana Janku surveys Baron Scarpia's safe conduct seconds before her vertical exit.

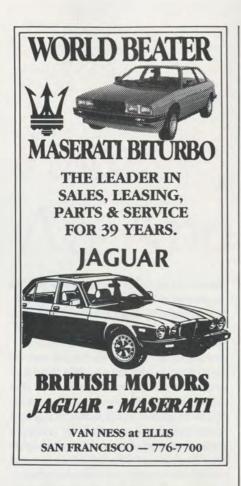




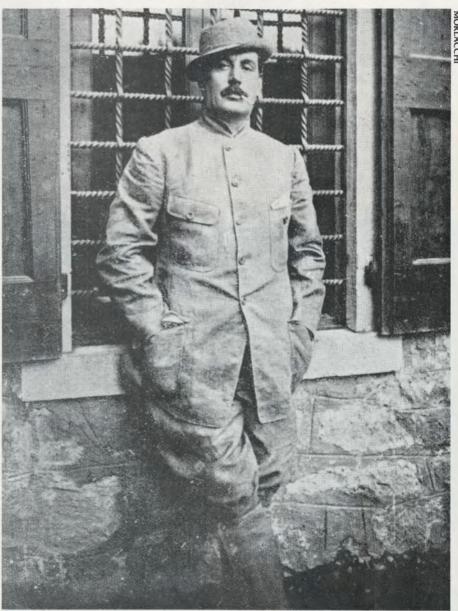
"Recondita armonia" in the first act, "E lucevan le stelle" in the last. The prima donna has her "Vissi d'arte" in Act II, and she and the tenor share duets in the first and last acts. The baritone dominates a choral production number at the end of the first act, but his arioso-like solos in the second act scarcely resemble arias in the old sense. And that is the sum total of Tosca's set pieces. (In the second act, prima donna and chorus sing a cantata celebrating the supposed victory of General Melas over Napoleon; although this cantata, heard from offstage, was once recorded as a 78 rpm single, it is less music in its own right than "audible scenery," its a cappella purity acting as an ironic contrast to the inquisition in progress on stage.)

The relative novelty of the drama's structure troubled even Tosca's librettists. Giuseppe Giacosa (whose main responsibility it was to versify the adaptation of Sardou's play made by Luigi Illica) complained to the publisher Giulio Ricordi in August of 1896: "The first act is all duets. In the second, all duets: except for the brief torture scene, only two people are on stage. The third act is nothing but an interminable duet." Giacosa was exaggerating, of course, and he was thinking in terms of traditional opera made primarily of set pieces; nor could he imagine what was just around the corner—for example, Richard Strauss' Elektra, which is literally nothing but a sequence of one-on-one confrontations between the protagonist and the other characters.

In terms of musical structure, hardly any of what Giacosa described as "duets" are treated as such by Puccini. Most of the music in *Tosca* is organized in another way—what one review of the premiere aptly described as "the mobile or kaleidoscopic background that in *Bohème* Puccini took pleasure in and that in *Tosca* he delights in." In part this is dictated by the







Giacomo Puccini, 1858-1924.

subject matter, more violent than that of Manon Lescaut or Bohème, more dependent on intense emotions and fast-moving, surprising developments, offering fewer opportunities for lyrical expansion. But it also results from a significant feature of Sardou's play, which was designed as a vehicle for the great French actress Sarah Bernhardt to use on her international tours: in order that audiences could appreciate the progress of the action—and Bernhardt's histrionic powers—even if they didn't understand a word of French, the canny playwright included prominent episodes that unfolded in pantomime.

The most famous of these pantomime scenes precedes the murder in the

second act, as Tosca takes a drink of wine to steady herself and espies on Scarpia's supper table a means of escaping from her desperate predicament. For this episode, as for the torture of Cavaradossi and the "mock" execution. Puccini had to find non-vocal music to sustain mood and tension; traditional "set pieces" were out of the question. The somber string melody that accompanies Scarpia's writing of the safe-conduct and Tosca's appropriation of the knife (it appears again after the murder, another scene primarily in pantomime) circles around and around, always returning to its starting note-but never quite predictably: there's always enough unfamiliarity to keep our anxie-



Victorien Sardou, 1831-1908.

ties on edge.

At other points, Puccini counts on familiarity for his effects. He carefully plants his musical seeds so that by the time a melody is exploited for its greatest impact, it is already familiar to us. Tosca enters the church of Sant' Andrea della Valle in Act I to a broad melody played by flute and solo cello, two octaves apart, over plucked strings. She herself doesn't really sing this tune-she picks and snatches at it. In Act II, this melody furnishes the central substance of her prayer, "Vissi d'arte"; now her duetting with the orchestra is at a higher vocal and emotional pitch, and she eventually soars up into the climactic phrases along with

the orchestra, at last giving us the satisfaction of release. Thus, while vividly reminding us of the passionate, impetuous woman we met earlier—and of the contrast with her present state, reduced to desperation by Scarpia's villainy—this melodic recurrence is anything but anticlimactic.

Most potent of Puccini's musical symbols is the one that stands for Scarpia himself. When the orchestra fires it across the opera's bow, so to speak, we don't yet know what these chords with the brutal harmonic cross-cutting stand for, but we won't miss them when they recur—first, softly, when the fugitive Angelotti discovers the key to the Attavanti chapel, and



Opera in 1934.



Lawrence Tibbett sang Scarpia at the San Francisco Opera in 1928, 1936 and 1949. This photo dates from 1936.

then, after the love duet, when he actually names the hated police chief. Thereafter, Puccini plays with this motive's harmonic ambiguity, yielding a cadence of triumphant menace at the end of Act I, a chilling turn at the end of Act II. (When Scarpia interrogates the Sacristan in Act I, a frightened, scurrying version of the latter's characteristic figure is embedded within the police chief's chords.) Nor does it vanish with Scarpia's demise, for his revenge on Tosca and Cavaradossi outlives him: the same harmonies cast subtle shadows over the pastoral music at the beginning of the last act.

The musical idea that immediately follows the Scarpia chords at the opera's beginning is treated at greater length: the violent descending chords associated with Angelotti's flight form the basis of the entire opening episode, both in their original form and in a contrasting quieter, more extended form. Puccini's resourcefulness at ringing changes on such an idea, keeping it moving to create a mood, yet not distracting us from the drama with overmuch novelty or showy dexterity, can be seen again in the immediately following episode, which treats at similar length Sacristan's spastically dancing tune.

In a traditional nineteenth-century aria, the orchestra introduces the main melody in a truncated form, then steps back and leaves to the singer the entire burden of restating it completely and rounding it out in a satisfying way. Neither of Cavaradossi's famous solos works like that, however. We tend to assume that "Recondita armonia," which begins after a brief orchestral introduction, ends after the tenor's high note: "Tosca, sei tu!"—that's when we interrupt to applaud, at any rate, and it's where separate recordings of the aria have always finished. But what Puccini actually set up is more elaborate:

- A orchestral introduction
- B Cavaradossi's opening phrases, describing Tosca: "Recondita armonia..."
- C broader melody, as he describes the unknown woman he has seen praying in the nearby chapel: "e te, beltade ignota ..."
- A' return of orchestral introduction, abridged: "L'arte nel suo mistero ..."

- B' return of tenor's opening phrases:
 "...nel ritrar costei ... Tosca, sei tu!"
 (where we applaud)
- C' return of the broader melody in the orchestra, while the Sacristan continues his mutterings about irreligious followers of Voltaire.

This last comes to a full close and a pause, which is where the whole unit really ends. Of course Puccini knew that the audience would interrupt to applaud—but by making the tenor's soliloquy part of a longer musical form he minimized its isolation from the continuing flow of the action. (He also kept the solo itself quite brief, and had the Sacristan mutter underneath it for further verisimilitude.)

Cavaradossi's other aria is also carefully planned and prepared. Its somber melody, which in only fourteen measures rises to a passionate climax and collapses to a grim cadence, is first heard in the strings as Cavaradossi is brought up to the platform of the Castel Sant'Angelo. While he converses with the jailer, scraps of love music are heard in the orchestra, and



Leontyne Price as Tosca and Renato Cioni as Cavaradossi, just before his "Vittoria" outburst in Act II. San Francisco Opera, 1963.

when he sits down to write a last letter to Tosca, the most important of these love themes is sung by the first cellist, accompanied in luscious harmonies by a trio of colleagues. A wash of harp arpeggio, and then a clarinet plays the earlier somber melody (now in a higher key) while the tenor muses, as if speaking rather than singing, on low repeated notes. Only upon another repetition of the melody, when our anticipation is fully aroused, does the singer himself take it up, bringing it to a passionate climax doubled by three octaves of strings. As in "Vissi d'arte," the effectiveness of this depends on the fact that we have twice already heard the melody in less powerfully emotional sonorities.

Not incidentally, the subject matter of this aria was a bone of fierce contention between Puccini and his librettists. Illica and Giacosa furnished a reflective, philosophical "farewell to life and art"-very much the sort of thing, in fact, that Giordano's Andrea Chénier sings at the parallel moment in his opera (for which, not coincidentally, Illica was also the librettist). But Puccini wanted a declaration of physical passion; to him, Cavaradossi's republican politics were only historical window-dressing for his drama of love, lust, and violence (quite the opposite of Verdi, who used melodrama as an occasion-even a "cover"-for his own nationalistic sentiments). Puccini got his way, playing the already-composed melody to Illica and Giacosa with his own dummy words.

What immediately follows "E lucevan le stelle" is also carefully prepared: the love theme just now heard from the cellos is taken up by the full orchestra in an increasingly ecstatic development: Cavaradossi had dreamed about seeing Tosca again and making love to her-and now, impossibly, she is here. For this, Puccini clearly wants something very flexible in the way of tempo, something that will help the audience share Cavaradossi's emotional roller-coaster-ride: halfway through the first bar, he asks for a ritard, then repeatedly alternates instructions to get faster and to slow down, as the music all the while increases in volume and intensity. (That kind of elasticity is not easy to bring off, as attested by a touching story told by the late John Culshaw in his memoir, Putting the Record Straight. When Herbert von Karajan was recording Tosca in Vienna in 1962, he several times lis-

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Dorothy Kirsten sang the first Tosca of her career at the San Francisco Opera in 1951, returning for the same role in nine more seasons. In 1960, Tosca opened the season with Miss Kirsten in the title role and a remarkable Scarpia: Tito Gobbi,

tened to this passage as played in the famous La Scala recording conducted by Victor de Sabata, and then said, "No, he's right but I can't do it. That's his secret." No doubt part of de Sabata's secret was simply the Scala Orchestra's inbred and continually nurtured feeling for the Puccini idiom.)

Over and above such formal strategies, *Tosca* has more general unifying features, in particularly certain melodic fingerprints—the sort of thing Verdi referred to as the "tinto," the characteristic color, of a particular opera. For example, a large family of melodies progress up and down over the interval of a third: in

Act I alone, the above-mentioned theme to which Tosca enters (and its cadence-figure, which takes on an independent life as a cadence-figure during Tosca's section of the love duet beginning "Non la sospiri la nostra casetta"); Cavaradossi's ardent declaration "Qual'occhio al mondo può star di paro"; the ominous theme representing Scarpia's search for Angelotti ("fuggì pur ora da Castel Sant'Angelo"); the bells that accompany Scarpia's approach to Tosca with holy water; even the choral *Te Deum* melody.

(In fact, this last is a real liturgical melody, supplied to Puccini by a Roman priest, Don Pietro Panichelli—a character-

istic example of the composer's meticulous insistence on authentic detail. Puccini had met Don Pietro Iwho was also instrumental in locating verses in the appropriate dialect for the offstage shepherd who sings at the beginning of the last act] in November 1897, during a special "field trip" to Rome for the purpose of visiting the platform of the Castel Sant'Angelo at dawn to hear firsthand the churchbells of Rome greeting the day—the sounds he would evoke in the passage following the shepherd's song. In his concern for accuracy, Puccini far outstripped Sardou, whom he visited in 1899 when the playwright was preparing a revival of La Tosca with Bernhardt: "In sketching the panorama. [Sardou] wanted the course of the Tiber to be seen passing between St. Peter's and the Castello!! I told him that the flumen flows past on the other side, under the Castello. But he, as calm as a fish, said: 'Oh, that's nothing!' A fine fellow, all life and fire and full of historicaltopo-panoramical inexactitudes.")

Two incarnations of this "thirds" melody-type play prominent roles in Act II. The first comprises simply three descending notes—the first thing heard in the act. After Scarpia slams the window on the offstage cantata, these three descending notes assume a menacing form that resounds throughout the questioning of Cavaradossi. When, following the removal of Mario, as Scarpia turns his unctuous charm on Tosca ("La povera mia cena fu interrotta"), the three notes resume their original guise, they have acquired distinctly more ominous associations.

A second form of the thirds melodytype also appears on the second act's opening page: the up-and-down melody of the tenor's "Qual'occhio al mondo," sounded by a clarinet—in Scarpia's lascivious musings, it evidently represents Cavaradossi, whom he wishes to supplant as Tosca's lover. Later, made more ominous by a dotted rhythm (and by off-beat treading in the bass), this figure measures the early phases of Cavaradossi's interrogation, as the offstage cantata is sung elsewhere in the Palazzo Farnese. And during Tosca's pleas in the torture scene it emerges, between urgent high notes, in the form we know best from the end of "Vissi d'arte" ("perchè me ne rimuneri così?") In the last act, it will even be embedded in the somber tread of the orchestral theme that dominates the



Renato Capecchi, seen at the San Francisco Opera in a variety of character portrayals, sang the first Tosca Sacristan of his career at the San Francisco Opera in 1970.

firing-squad scene.

Puccini's *Tosca* is, in fact, a highly sophisticated work on many levels. When dealing with enormously popular theatrical works, two assumptions are easily made: (1) that the qualities on which their popular appeal is based were always apparent, and (2) that those qualities are all on the surface. The history of *Tosca* shows that the first assumption isn't correct: even the librettists missed its point, while the "unseemly" violence of the action offended critical judgment (audiences were still growing accustomed to Sicilian and Calabrian peasants behaving thus on the operatic stage, and here

were people of a higher social class indulging in equally crude passions), and the apparent "scrappiness" of the music also took some getting used to. In recent years, with the perspective of time, criticism and scholarship have begun to take Puccini's achievement more seriously, to appreciate the amount of sheer musical craftsmanship—planning and organization, care for detail-it entailed, over and above the obvious power of musical invention that it manifests. And a sensitivity to that craftsmanship—in developing ideas, building form, establishing melodic and emotional color—can surely increase our enjoyment of Tosca on repeated hearings.



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Giovanni Martinelli at 100

MORTON PHOTOS

By ALLAN ULRICH

The contemporary opera-going audience has been so conditioned to think of the legends of the lyric stage as belonging to a misty and irretrievable past that it comes as a jolt to realize that tenor Giovanni Martinelli would have celebrated his 100th birthday this autumn, on October 22, to be precise.

Although the decades have revolved to the century point, Martinelli still seems palpably close to us for two reasons. He survived until the age of 84, sang in pubic after a fashion until the age of 81 and remained an avuncular, leonine-haired presence in both the corridors of the old and new Metropolitan Opera Houses until the late 1960s.

Then, too, there are Martinelli's many recordings, from legitimate sources

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



Giovanni Martinelli. 1885-1969.





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GIUSEPPE GIACOMINI



IAMES MORRIS

Romanian soprano Maria Slatinaru returns to San Francisco Opera in the title role of Tosca, a role with which she is closely identified and has sung to acclaim in opera houses around the world, including Paris, Vienna, Hamburg, Berlin (East and West), Cologne, Frankfurt, Zurich, Stuttgart and Brussels, among others, and which she will perform next year at the Metropolitan Opera in New York. She made her American debut with San Francisco Opera during the 1983 Fall Season, singing the title role of La Gioconda. Miss Slatinaru made her first operatic appearances as Elisabetta in Don Carlo at the Romanian Opera of Bucharest and was immediately re-engaged for subsequent appearances as Leonora in Il Trovatore with that company, of which she is a resident member. She toured with the Romanian Opera Ensemble in 1970, visiting Belgium, Greece and West Germany. Her first appearance with a German company took place in Lübeck in 1972, and the following year she became a member of the Deutsche Oper am Rhein in Düsseldorf. She subsequently began a series of guest appearances with the major companies of Germany, including those of Berlin, Hamburg, Munich, Cologne, Stuttgart and Frankfurt. Her 1977 French debut at Toulouse was a turning point in her career when she performed Leonore in Fidelio, one of her signature roles in which she has scored triumphs in Vienna, Berlin, Munich, Frankfurt, Stuttgart, Basel, Nancy and Angers. In 1981, Miss Slatinary made her Italian debut at La Fenice in Venice, where she appeared as Minnie in La Fanciulla del West, followed by performances of Andrea Chénier in Verona. Her engagements for 1984-85 have included Tannhäuser with the Opera du Rhin, Fidelio in Lille and Frankfurt, Manon Lescaut in Verona and Aida in Australia. Next year she will again portray La Gioconda in Berlin. Miss Slatinaru can be

heard on the Integrale label in complete recordings of *Turandot* and *La Forza del Destino*, as well as in albums of lieder by Schumann and Wagner and opera arias.

Internationally acclaimed Italian tenor Giuseppe Giacomini gives his first complete opera performances at the War Memorial as Cavaradossi in Tosca, the role he sang in his 1979 San Francisco Opera debut during a Company tour to Manila, the Philippines. He has also been applauded as Cavaradossi in Rome, Florence, Caracas, and at the Metropolitan Opera in New York, and he will sing the role next year at Covent Garden. A native of Padua, Giacomini made his operatic debut at Vercelli in 1967, singing Pinkerton in Madama Butterfly. Since then he has won acclaim in the world's major theaters, including Covent Garden, the Bavarian State Opera in Munich, La Scala in Milan, the Berlin Deutsche Oper, the Vienna Staatsoper, the Paris Opera, and the companies of Hamburg, Frankfurt, Lisbon, Madrid, Prague, Zurich, Geneva and Brussels, among others. He made his American debut in 1975 as Dick Johnson in a Hartford Opera production of La Fanciulla del West, and bowed at the Metropolitan the following year as Don Alvaro in La Forza del Destino, a role he subsequently sang in a "Live from the Met" telecast. Other important assignments at the Met include Pinkerton. Canio in Pagliacci, the title role of Don Carlos, the new 1982 Met production of Macbeth, and an appearance on the internationally televised Met Centennial Gala. Additional projects with Met Music Director James Levine include La Forza del Destino at the Ravinia Festival and a complete recording of Norma. During the 1983-84 season he bowed with the Lyric Opera of Chicago as Radames in Aida and with the Dallas Opera as Don Alvaro. His international credits include Radames at the Verona Arena and at Caracalla, Calaf in *Turandot* at the Paris Opera, *La Bohème* in Rome, and Manrico in *Il Trovatore* at Covent Garden. Next year he undertakes the title role of *Otello* for San Diego Opera.

Bass James Morris returns to San Francisco Opera to sing the first Tosca Scarpia of his career and Claggart in Billy Budd. He made his 1981 Company debut as Assur in Semiramide and during the 1985 Ring Festival won international acclaim as Wotan in Das Rheingold and Die Walküre, the first time he had ever sung the Rheingold role. He recently sang Wotan in Die Walkure for his Vienna Staatsoper debut, following his first performance of that role with the Opera Company of Baltimore, his birthplace, in 1983. Morris became the youngest male singer on the Metropolitan Opera roster when he was 23. Four years later, a last-minute cancellation put him on the Met stage as Don Giovanni, a role he has sung to critical and public applause in numerous Met seasons, as well as those of the four villains in The Tales of Hoffmann, Claggart in Billy Budd, and leading roles in Macbeth, La Forza del Destino, Don Carlo, Otello, Carmen, Peter Grimes and The Barber of Seville, among others. In recent seasons Morris sang his first Dutchman in Der Fliegende Holländer at Houston Grand Opera and appeared as Silva in Ernani with Miami Opera. He has also performed with Lyric Opera of Chicago, as Henry VIII in Anna Bolena with the Canadian Opera and Michigan Opera Theatre, and was heard as Méphistophélès in Berlioz's The Damnation of Faust with the Philadelphia Opera. Morris has appeared at the Salzburg and Edinburgh Festivals and has sung the role of Banquo in Macbeth at the Glyndebourne Festival. Elsewhere in Europe, he has been heard at







RENATO CAPECCHI



FRANK KELLEY

Strasbourg's Opera du Rhin in Les Contes d'Hoffmann, at Florence's Teatro Comunale in Le Nozze di Figaro, in Madrid in Norma and in Barcelona in La Favorita and Carmen. In great demand as a concert singer, he was soloist last March in the Verdi Requiem with Edo de Waart and the San Francisco Symphony.

Bass-baritone Stanley Wexler returns to San Francisco Opera as Cesare Angelotti in Tosca. Last heard here as Kuno in concert performances of Der Freischütz during the 1985 Ring Festival, he made his Company debut in the fall of 1980, when he appeared in five operas. He was heard as Kromow in *The Merry Widow* in the 1981 Fall Season and returned the next year for roles in the Summer Season Barber of Seville and Julius Caesar, and in Salome that same fall. He portrayed both Benoit and Alcindoro in the 1983 Summer Season La Bohème, and in 1984 sang the first Alberich of his career in Siegfried. Acclaimed for his comic as well as serious portrayals, he was Mozart's Figaro in 1981 with Spring Opera Theater and has toured with Western Opera Theater as Figaro, Dr. Bartolo in The Barber of Seville and in the title role of Don Pasquale. Wexler made his 1981 Houston Grand Opera debut as Don Pedro in La Périchole and since 1979 has appeared in numerous roles with Kansas City Lyric Theatre, including the title role of Don Giovanni. Other American companies with which he has appeared include Santa Fe, New England Chamber Opera, the Wolf Trap Company, Boris Goldovsky's opera company, Minnesota Opera, Augusta Opera and San Francisco's Pocket Opera. Since his New York City Opera debut in La Bohème in 1982, he has returned for numerous assignments with that company, including Zuniga in Carmen, Danilo in The Merry Widow, Dr. Bartolo, Baron

Douphol in La Traviata, Sparafucile in Rigoletto, Colline in La Bohème, and the title role of Harold Prince's production of Sweeney Todd. Most recently he won acclaim in New York as Leandre in The Love for Three Oranges.

Italian bass-baritone Renato Capecchi returns to San Francisco Opera in three roles: the Bailiff in Werther, the Sacristan in Tosca and Faninal in Der Rosenkavalier. He made his 1968 Company debut in Il Barbiere di Siviglia and has since returned for nine additional productions, including La Forza del Destino, La Cenerentola, Tosca, Così fan tutte and Manon Lescaut. He made his professional debut with the Italian Radio in 1948, followed by his stage debut as Amonasro in Aida with the Teatro Comunale of Reggio Emilia in 1949. A familiar figure on the world's foremost operatic stages, Capecchi has a repertoire of over 300 roles and has recorded more than 30 operas complete, as well as several special programs of Italian music. For the 1976 Merola Opera Program, he directed the American stage premiere of Donizetti's L'Ajo nell'Imbarazzo and Gazzaniga's Il Convitato di Pietra at the Paul Masson Winery, and instructed the young singers in classic commedia dell'arte traditions. Other directorial credits include Il Barbiere di Siviglia with the Chautauqua and New Orleans Opera, Il Matrimonio Segreto in Santa Fe, Così fan tutte in Connecticut and La Fille du Régiment at New York City Opera. Among his many engagements last season were La Bohème at the Met, The Marriage of Figaro at Avignon, Alfonso in Così fan tutte for Dallas Opera, Geronimo in Il Matrimonio Segreto for Santa Fe Opera, and Bartolo in The Barber of Seville at the Vienna Staatsoper. On this year's Met tour he will be seen in La Bohème and L'Italiana in Algeri, and will make his American recital debut at Carnegie Hall in

March. Especially interested in working with young singers, Capecchi holds teaching positions with the American Opera Company at Juilliard, the University of Colorado at Boulder (where he has directed *The Barber of Seville*) and at the Music School in Detmold, West Germany, where he has staged Galuppi's *Il Filosofo di Campagna*.

Tenor Frank Kelley returns to San Franciso Opera for three roles: Pang in Turandot, Spoletta in Tosca and Squeak in Billy Budd. He made his 1983 Company debut as the Dancing Master in the Fall Season production of Ariadne auf Naxos and returned the following summer as Dr. Blind in Die Fledermaus. A native of Florida, Kelley participated in the 1983 Merola Opera Program, during which he appeared as Frantz in The Tales of Hoffmann at Stern Grove and Goro in Madama Butterfly at Villa Montalvo, and won the Bernhardt N. Poetz Memorial Award at the San Francisco Opera Auditions Grand Finals. A specialist in early music, Kelley is currently in his third year as featured performer with the Boston Camerata. His engagements this year include appearances at the New England Bach Festival, the Boston Early Music Festival and the Marlboro Music Festival in Vermont, as well as programs of medieval music in Florence and Ravenna, Italy. In January he was the Evangelist in Bach's St. Matthew Passion with Joshua Rifkin's Bach Ensemble of New York in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and was heard in Boston and Toronto in Handel's L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato, a piece he has recorded for Arabesque records. Last March he was heard in Bach's St. John Passion at Davies Symphony Hall with the California Bach Society. Kelley made his Carnegie Hall debut in Handel's Messiah last year, an

continued on p.44

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The revival of this production is made possible, in part, by a grant from Pacific Telesis Foundation.

Opera in three acts by GIACOMO PUCCINI

Text by LUIGI ILLICA and GIUSEPPE GIACOSA

Based on the drama La Tosca by VICTORIEN SARDOU



Conductor Carlo Felice Cillario Production Jean-Pierre Ponnelle Stage Director Matthew Farruggio Set Designer Jean-Pierre Ponnelle Costume Designer Martin Schlumpf Lighting Supervised by Thomas J. Munn Sound Designer Roger Gans Chorus Director Richard Bradshaw Musical Preparation James Johnson Christopher Larkin Joseph De Rugeriis Mark Haffner Prompter Jonathan Khuner Assistant Stage Director Sharon Woodriff

San Francisco Boys Chorus Louis Magor, Director

Stage Manager Jerry Sherk

Costumes executed by Grace Costumes, Inc., New York Baldwin organ provided courtesy of Baldwin Piano & Organ Center, Santa Clara, California

First performance: Rome, January 14, 1900 First San Francisco Opera performance: October 2, 1923

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 26 AT 8:00 TUESDAY, OCTOBER 29 AT 8:00 SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 3 AT 2:00 WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 6 AT 7:30 SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9 AT 8:00 TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 12 AT 8:00 FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 15 AT 8:00 **CAST** (in order of appearance)

Cesare Angelotti Stanley Wexler
Sacristan Renato Capecchi
Mario Cavaradossi Giuseppe Giacomini
Floria Tosca Maria Slatinaru
Baron Scarpia James Morris
Spoletta Frank Kelley
Sciarrone Richard Pendergraph
Voice of a shepherd Rachel Lopez
Jailer Monte Pederson
Soldiers, police agents, priests, citizens

PLACE AND TIME: Rome in June of 1800

ACT I Interior of the church of Sant'Andrea della Valle

INTERMISSION

ACT II A room in Scarpia's apartments in the Farnese Palace

INTERMISSION

ACT III A terrace of Castel Sant'Angelo, outside the prison

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

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

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

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

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

Tosca/Synopsis

ACT I

Cesare Angelotti, a political prisoner who has just escaped from the Castel Sant'Angelo, seeks refuge in the Attavanti Chapel of the church of Sant'Andrea della Valle. He hides at the approach of the Sacristan who is soon followed by the painter Mario Cavaradossi. The Sacristan recites the Angelus while Cavaradossi climbs the scaffold and begins to work on his painting, pausing to admit that his portrait of the Mary Magdalen was inspired not only by a model but by his beloved Floria Tosca, a famous Roman opera singer. The scandalized Sacristan leaves. Angelotti comes out of hiding and begs Cavaradossi's assistance. The painter, thrusting a lunch basket into his hands, urges Angelotti back into the chapel as the voice of Tosca is heard. He hides as Cavaradossi admits Tosca into the church. She demands to know why she was kept waiting, and suspects Cavaradossi of talking with another woman. He reassures her of his love, and the pair agree to meet that evening at Cavaradossi's villa. With Tosca gone, Angelotti reappears and Cavaradossi vows to save him. A cannon shot is heard announcing the escape of a prisoner: Angelotti. Cavaradossi leaves with the pursued man in order to hide him at his villa. The Sacristan returns and gathers choristers around him, telling them they must rehearse for a special performance of a cantata that evening celebrating a defeat for Napoleon; Tosca will be the soloist. At that moment, the Roman chief-of-police, Baron Scarpia, arrives searching for Angelotti. His men find the Attavanti Chapel open, but all that remains is a fan with the family crest on it, and the empty lunch basket. The Sacristan expresses amazement, as earlier he had noticed that the painter had not touched his meal. Scarpia puts two and two together and realizes that Cavaradossi had aided Angelotti's escape. Suddenly Tosca returns, and Scarpia uses the fan to convince her that Cavaradossi had fled with another woman, thus awakening jealousy in her again. He hopes Tosca will then lead him to Cavaradossi and thus to Angelotti. He orders his spies to follow her as she leaves the church, then joins in the Te Deum, swearing he will capture not only the painter, but Tosca as well.

ACT II

Scarpia is dining alone in his quarters in the Farnese Palace, anticipating the pleasure of bending Tosca to his will. His henchman Spoletta appears and reports that Tosca has led Scarpia's spies to a remote villa, and though Angelotti was not to be found, they had arrested Cavaradossi. The painter is brought in as Tosca's voice is heard from the concert in the courtyard below. Tosca, who had been summoned by Scarpia, is shocked to see Cavaradossi who quietly warns her to reveal

nothing about Angelotti. Scarpia tries to get the location of Angelotti's hiding place from her, but she insists that she knows nothing. When Cavaradossi, however, is put to torture in the next room, she reveals the secret, asking Scarpia for Cavaradossi's freedom in return. Scarpia has Cavaradossi brought back in. Delirious from torture, Cavaradossi hears Scarpia order his men to the villa, curses Tosca and cries defiance at the tyranny of Scarpia and the foreign oppressors he represents. At that moment word arrives that the earlier report of Napoleon's defeat at Marengo was incorrect. Instead, Napoleon was the victor. Cavaradossi cries out with joy and is dragged from the room to prison. Tosca pleads for her lover's life, and Scarpia offers her an exchange: if she will give herself to him, he will give Cavaradossi back to her. In despair she pleads for mercy, protesting that she has never done anything to deserve being faced with such a terrible proposition, but realizes she must agree to the bargain. Scarpia tells Tosca there must be a mock execution, and circuitously orders Spoletta to make preparations for a real one. He then prepares a safeconduct pass for Tosca and Cavaradossi and comes to claim his prize. She grabs a knife from the table and stabs him, then takes the safe-conduct pass from the dead man's hand and flees the room.

ACT III

On a terrace of Castel Sant'Angelo, outside the prison, the voice of a shepherd is heard at dawn while one by one the bells of Rome strike the hour. Cavaradossi is brought in for his execution, which is an hour away. He bribes the jailer with a ring for the permission to write a farewell letter to Tosca. Left alone, he recalls pleasant memories of her. She suddenly hurries in, explaining that there is to be a mock execution in which he is to pretend that he has been shot. She also tells him about Scarpia's murder and of the safe-conduct pass that will then get them out of Rome before the murder is discovered. He can hardly believe the news and looks in wonder at the delicate hands that dared so much to save him. The lovers ecstatically plan for the future, but are interrupted by the arrival of the soldiers. As the firing squad advances and takes aim, Tosca retires with a final word to Cavaradossi about how to fall realistically. The soldiers fire and Cavaradossi falls. Tosca bids him to wait until all are gone, then asks him to rise and come away with her. She hurries to Cavaradossi and is horrified to discover that he is dead and that the execution was real after all: Scarpia betrayed his promise. Distant shouts announce that Scarpia's murder was discovered. As Spoletta, Sciarrone and the soldiers rush in to seize Tosca, she climbs to the fortress parapet and leaps to her death.

Tosca

Photos taken in rehearsal by Marty Sohl

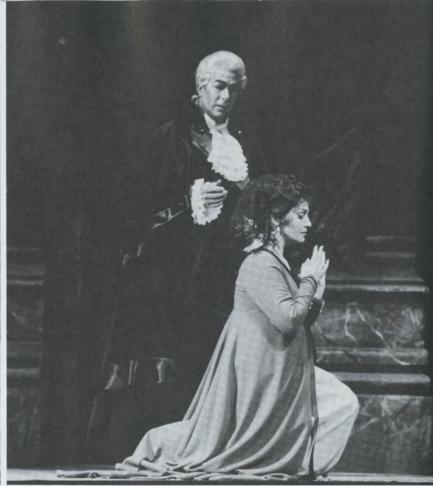


Maria Slatinaru





Renato Capecchi



(above) James Morris, Maria Slatinaru

(below) Giuseppe Giacomini, Maria Slatinaru







(below) Giuseppe Giacomini, Maria Slatinaru









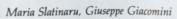
(above) Renato Capecchi, members of the San Francisco Boys Chorus



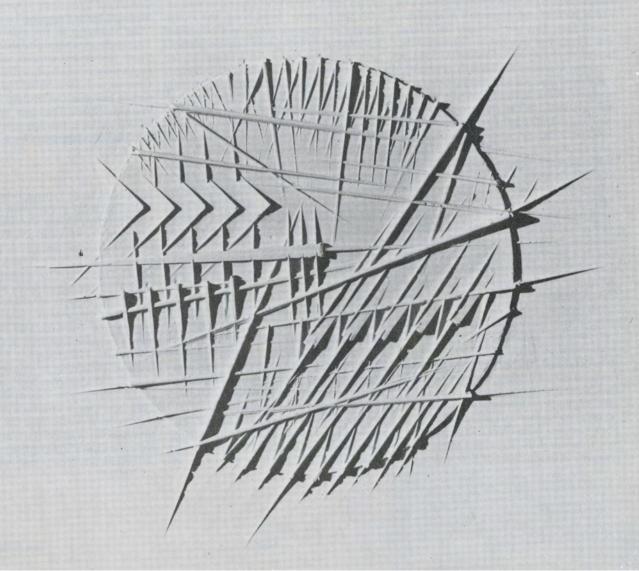
James Morris, Richard Pendergraph, Frank Kelley



Giuseppe Giacomini, Monte Pederson



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IEAN-PIERRE PONNELLE

In his 30th season with San Francisco Opera, production supervisor Matthew Farruggio directs Tosca, a work he staged for the Fall Seasons of 1965 and '82 and in 1962 for Spring Opera Theater. Last fall he directed Madama Butterfly, a work he had staged previously for 1965 Spring Opera Theater, for the Merola Opera Program in 1963, '73 and '78, and for the Fall Seasons of 1968, '71 and '80. Other Fall Season projects include The Barber of Seville (1965), Rigoletto (1966), LaBohème (1967 and '69), Il Trovatore (1975), La Forza del Destino (1976), Faust and Aida (1977) and the Family performances of Lucia di Lammermoor (1981). He directed a number of Spring Opera Theater productions in the War Memorial: La Bohème (1961 and '64); Rigoletto (1963 and '65); Lucia di Lammermoor and Il Trovatore (1966); The Pearl Fishers (1967); The Abduction from the Seraglio (1968), and La Rondine (1969). As a director of the Merola Opera Program, he coaches young professional American singers in stage deportment and other aspects of opera performance, and has staged Merola productions of Faust, The Tales of Hoffmann, Falstaff and Rigoletto, in addition to directing the last-named work for Western Opera Theater. Farruggio's own performing career has included appearances on Broadway in Lady in the Dark, One Touch of Venus and Call Me Mister, and he has sung on the stages of the Metropolitan Opera, City Center Opera and the Lyric Opera of Chicago. A pioneer in early television opera projects, he studied production in Vienna and Salzburg. In 1981 he staged Aida for Utah Opera, returned in 1981 for Cavalleria Rusticana and Pagliacci and, most recently, staged Girl of the Golden West for that company. He has also directed productions in Vancouver, Houston and Honolulu.

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

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







MONTE PEDERSON



CARLO FELICE CILLARIO

continued from p.35

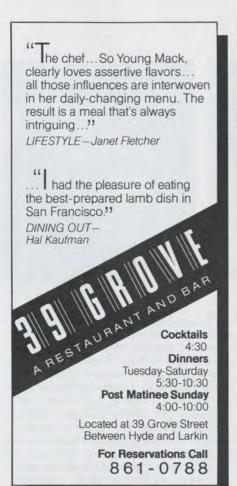
assignment he will repeat this year at Carnegie Hall and in Toronto. He has also appeared with the Glimmerglass Opera Company, the Cincinnati Opera Company, the Bronx Opera and the Opera Ensemble of New York. He made his Cleveland Orchestra debut last May in Stravinsky's *Renard* and next May will bow with the National Symphony Orchestra in *Oedipus Rex*. Other upcoming assignments include a production of *Don Giovanni* to be performed on original instruments with Banchetto Musicale in Boston.

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

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

Carlo Felice Cillario returns to the War Memorial podium for Tosca, a work he has conducted for numerous major opera companies, including the historic Zeffirelli production at Covent Garden with Maria Callas and Tito Gobbi, and this season's opening night production at the Metropolitan Opera. It was also the vehicle of his San Francisco Opera debut when he opened the 1970 Fall Season, during which he also conducted Verdi's Nabucco. He returned the following year for Il Trovatore, and in 1973 led performances of Donizetti's La Favorita. During the 1975 Fall Season, Maestro Cillario conducted L'Elisir d'Amore and Norma. He began his

musical career as a concert violinist, and in 1942 began to concentrate on conducting both opera and symphonic concerts. In 1946 he organized the Orchestra da Camera in Bologna and two years later founded the Symphony Orchestra of the University of Tucuman in Argentina. Subsequent conducting positions included two years as resident conductor of the Orquesta Sinfonica del Estado of Buenos Aires, five years in a similar capacity with the Angelicum Chamber Orchestra of Milan and two years as musical director of the Elizabethan Opera Trust of Sydney. His opera credits now include productions with all of the world's major companies, including Covent Garden, the Glyndebourne Festival, La Scala in Milan, the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires, the Rome Opera, the Verona Arena, the Teatro Regio of Turin, La Fenice in Venice, the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, the Paris Opera, Hamburg Staatsoper, the Vienna Staatsoper and the companies of Munich and Berlin. He is a frequent guest conductor with the Australian Opera, where his assignments have included Don Giovanni, Die Zauberflöte, Il Trittico, Macbeth, The Cunning Little Vixen, Die Walküre, La Fanciulla del West, Otello, Falstaff, Fidelio, Das Rheingold and Aida. His numerous appearances with the Royal Opera of Stockholm include Macbeth, Medea, Falstaff and, at the Drottningholm Court Theatre, La Cenerentola and Cimarosa's Il Fanatico Burlato. He recently composed a fantasy and fugue for string quartet based on a free transcription of Verdi's Falstaff.







Fol de Rol 1985: 'A Masked Ball'

Fol de Rol, San Francisco Opera Guild's biggest party of the year, takes place at San Francisco Civic Auditorium Monday, November 11, at 8 p.m. (Doors open at 6 p.m.) This year's program, *A Masked Ball*, features entertainment by some of San Francisco Opera's most illustrious artists.

Together with Opera Guild Board member and Fol de Rol Chairman, Peggy Olsen, I. Magnin and well-known San Francisco designer John Calori will create a magical decor reflecting the gala's theme. Jess Thomas, world-renowned tenor and Bay Area resident, will be Master of Ceremonies for this year's Fol de Rol, which features the San Francisco Opera Orchestra conducted by Richard Bradshaw, and the San Francisco Opera Ballet. Dancing to the music of the Walt Tolleson Orchestra follows the performance.

The history of Fol de Rol goes back to the early 1950s when the Opera Guild was seeking innovative fund-raising ideas to support its student matinee program. The Fol de Rols of the past have fostered a tradition of irreverent, light-hearted nonsense which, of course, is the true meaning of "Fol de Rol." The legends generated by Fol de Rol are many: who can forget Lily Pons, scantily clad, singing "Diamonds are a Girl's Best Friend" or Blanche Thebom as Lady Godiva belting out "I'm Gonna Wash That Man Right Out of My Hair"—or Frank Sinatra's one-

of-a-kind Master of Ceremonies, or John Denver's duets with Plácido Domingo, or Leontyne Price and Régine Crespin "miaowing" their way through Rossini's riotously funny Cat Duet.

Fol de Rol is the major fund-raising event of the Opera Guild. Proceeds support educational programs that benefit student, senior and handicapped citizens throughout the Bay Area and, in addition, help to underwrite production costs for the San Francisco Opera Association. Artists donate their time and talent to ensure a spectacular program.

Tickets for sponsor tables are available at \$125 per person. Tickets for patron tables are \$75 each. Sponsor and patron tickets include main floor seating, a box dinner provided by Max's of San Francisco Catering, and dancing following the entertainment. Reservations for sponsor and patron tables may be made by writing or calling the San Francisco Opera Guild, 301 Van Ness Ave., San Francisco, CA 94102 (415) 565-6432. A portion of sponsor and patron ticket costs is tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Dress circle and balcony tickets, priced \$5 - \$20, may be purchased at the Opera House Box Office. Dress circle and balcony ticket holders may purchase tickets for dancing after the show for an additional \$10. To charge by phone, call (415) 864-3330 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. daily.



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Martinelli continued from p.32



Martinelli as Pollione in San Francisco Opera's 1937 Norma.

and otherwise. Lo-Fi or No-Fi, these documents reveal a voice of astonishingly modern sensibility. If, in the sonic presence of some of the legendary talents (tenor Fernando de Lucia and soprano Luisa Tetrazzini are two of many who come to mind), the contemporary ear must make stylistic adjustments, in Martinelli's case one feels the pure, timeless quality of the utterance, the ardor, commitment and dramatic candor molding and propelling each and every phrase with universal appeal.

San Franciscans of long memory should cherish Giovanni Martinelli. He played a principal role in Gaetano Merola's pioneering attempt to establish a major international opera company by the Golden Gate, both launching the institution on its first opening night and participating intimately in seven different seasons here over the succeeding 16 years.

Yet, at least for public consumption, Martinelli proved a generous, even charitable colleague, leading a life free of scandal or obvious superstar cataclysms. Like virtually every tenor of his era, he remained, to some extent, in the shadow of one artist, whom he commemorated 50 years after his death, by stating, "If you were to put together the voices of Gigli, Pertile, Martinelli, Lauri-Volpi, Schipa, and the rest, their combination still wouldn't be fit to kiss Enrico Caruso's shoes." On hearing Gigli at his Met debut, Martinelli despaired to soprano Rosa Ponselle: "After he sang his first three phrases, I could see my whole career going right out the window!" Critics have often vielded to the comparison of Caruso's gold to Martinelli's silver, a journalistic oversimplification, but not without an iota of truth. Yet we must remind ourselves (and Martinelli's recordings make the reminder an easy one) that silver remains a highly precious and infinitely versatile metal,

Giovanni Martinelli was born in the small town of Montagnana in the province of Padua, of a family scarcely remembered now for its musicality. He had planned to follow his father into a career of cabinet-making, but early on, Martinelli's voice destined him for another voca-

While serving in the Italian army, he had taken up the clarinet, but the bandmaster, Lieutenant Girolamo Gaudino, discovered in the burly youth a promising

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Luisa Silva as Azucena, Giovanni Martinelli as Manrico in San Francisco Opera's 1931 Trovatore.

tenor. Martinelli's stage debut came in 1908 in his hometown as the Messenger in *Aida*. Reminiscing about that historic occasion many years later for the British Institute of Recorded Sound, Martinelli recalled that "the leading tenor predicted that if I studied well and was serious in my work, in three years I would be singing Radames. In three years I had sung the part of the young Egyptian warrior in the first of some 350 performances—my final appearance as Radames taking place in

1948."

The Montagnana debut earned Martinelli the hefty sum of three lire, but it stimulated the interest of a trio of wealthy Milanese, who jointly agreed to sponsor his education in Milan, principally with the famed Professor Mandolini. His "angels" were to pay all his expenses as a student, including board, lodging, clothing and voice and piano lessons, until he was able to support himself. They reserved the right "to terminate this contract if, in their

opinion, they do not find in Mr. Martinelli all the qualities necessary to make him a first-class artist, or in case he shows some vocal, or intellectual or musical defects, or also on account of irregular conduct in his private life." Note that the parties who had this contract drawn up were not so much sponsors as they were investors, and wise investors, too: they reaped their share of Martinelli's earnings for the next 20 years.

The Milanese public first heard Martinelli on December 3, 1910, in the tenor part of Rossini's Stabat Mater. Three-anda-half weeks later he made his debut on the stage of the Teatro dal Verme in the title role of Verdi's Ernani, summoning all his resources and all his grit to belt out a high D-flat at the conclusion of the tenor's first-act aria, "Come rugiada al cespite." The Victor recording of the excerpt, inscribed a scant five years later, reveals a voice of thrilling brightness, less reckless perhaps than it sounded the evening of that debut, but marked with a shade of expressive vibrato and a fullness of phrasing that signified an international star in the ascendant.

That evening led to immediate engagements in Ancona, Rome, Brescia, Genoa, Turin, Monte Carlo, Brussels and Budapest. But Martinelli attracted the most attention as Dick Johnson in the 1911 Italian premiere at Rome's Teatro Costanzi of Puccini's La Fanciulla del West. On one of his annual summer visits to Italy, the Metropolitan Opera's general director, Giulio Gatti-Casazza, heard the tenor and immediately signed him for the 1913-14 season. One of those Milanese sponsors negotiated the contract.

Before the Met, there was London's Covent Garden, to which he returned for several decades, and where, in 1937, he would appear in the celebrated Grand Coronation Season production of Puccini's *Turandot*, opposite the most noted princess of the pre-Nilsson era, Dame Eva Turner. After Martinelli's April 1912 debut, in the opera you are hearing today, the esteemed Herman Klein described his voice as "luscious, ringing, musical and delightful to hear. The moment he finished 'Recondita armonia,' the house rose at him."

Tosca, in fact, served as the vehicle for Martinelli's American debut, not in New York, but in Philadelphia, where the





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Martinelli as Samson in the 1933 production of Samson et Dalila.



Caught backstage between acts of a 1933 San Francisco Opera performance of Samson et Dalila (l. to r.) Ezio Pinza as the High Priest, Cyrena Van Gordon as Dalila, and Giovanni Martinelli as Samson.

performance was notable both for his costars—soprano Mary Garden and baritone Vanni Marcoux—and for the fact that the sofa in Scarpia's apartment in Act 2 collapsed relatively early in the proceedings. On November 20, he first performed at the Met in *La Bohème*. He would appear at that house for 33 consecutive seasons energizing more than 650 performances in 36 operas. Add to that 350 performances with the company on tour, and you're left with an enviable record of over 1,000 appearances.

Later, Martinelli would recall one of his historic collaborations at New York's most prestigious company. The narrative seems typical of his artistry:

"Il Trovatore had been out of the repertoire of the Metropolitan for seven seasons. Toscanini, who had worked hard on the opera with Verdi, was determined to show a Trovatore as Verdi would have wanted it. The result was a veritable revolution in thought on the opera.

"The first rehearsals for *Trovatore* were called in October of 1914. We had a minimum of fifty rehearsals of two hours or more duration for each Our cast included Emmy Destinn, Marguerite Ober, Pasquale Amato and Leon Rothier ... Toscanini allowed me the interpolated B Flat at the end of 'Deserto sulla terra'

and also in 'Ah! si ben mio.' The first aria was made into a minstrel's serenade establishing the character of Manrico from the outset, but the warrior in the young man was best exemplified by the concluding high note. In 'Ah! si ben mio," Toscanini pointed out that the two verses were identical, and for this reason the B Flat was allowed even by Verdi.

"Toscanini stressed the importance of the words in emphasizing the story of *Trovatore*. Ridiculous as it may seem to us, this story is indispensable to the music, for Verdi set every word and every nuance, and unless each is given its relative importance, it loses value and the whole inter-



Martinelli portrayed Eleazar in La Juive at the San Francisco Opera in 1935 and 1936. Singing Rachel in both seasons was soprano Elisabeth Rethberg.

pretation falters and suffers.

"To me Verdi was King. He was my Emperor of Opera, and I was but a disciple gifted by Almighty God with the power to interpret the King of Music's message to the world. That is my epitaph, and no man could have a prouder one."

Mr. Gatti-Casazza cast Martinelli with a prodigality that might have daunted any mere mortal tenor, mixing lyric and heroic assignments with almost shameless abandon. There were the world premieres of Giordano's Madame Sans-Gêne and Enrique Granados's Goyescas (on his return to Europe, the composer perished when a German submarine sank his ship in the English Channel). And there was Gabriele Adorno in the American premiere of Verdi's Simon Boccanegra, and the first Met performances of Don Carlos

and Weber's Oberon.

The latter marked the first pairing of Martinelli and the greatest American soprano of the first half of the century, a relationship that would metamorphose into artistic gold through 19 years and more than 100 joint appearances. In her posthumous memoir, A Singer's Life (Doubleday, 1982), Rosa Ponselle offers a glowing tribute to her erstwhile colleague:

"He was, first of all, an extraordinary physical specimen: he was broadshouldered, massively built and his smile instantly revealed his sunny disposition. His face, crowned by an unruly mane of auburn hair, had a rugged handsomeness rarely seen among tenors. His voice and his physique were a perfect match.

"The inner man," Ponselle continued,

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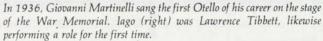
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Martinelli's only San Francisco Opera Andrea Chénier took place during the 1931 season. His Maddalena was Elisabeth Rethberg.

"was every bit as attractive. He was perhaps the least temperamental of any tenor I have known, and was in many ways the most consistent. Conductors would always count on Giovanni to act and sing a role just as the composer would have wanted; he allowed himself few liberties within a score. It was for this reason that despite limited vocal abilities, compared to some of his contemporaries, he often outshone them. His voice was not what one would call intrinsically beautiful, nor his method entirely flawless; but the *effect* of his singing was never less than magical.

"While his range was considerable (I rarely recall his having trouble with the

high C), he was at his best in rapidly sung dramatic arias, where his voice could cut through a Verdi orchestra and chorus with little difficulty. Yet in soft, slow, legato moments he became so preoccupied with his technique that he would perspire profusely and would begin to oversalivate. Only those who knew him well and sang often with him were aware of his uncertainties. What offset them were his fine acting, sensitive musicianship, and complete identification with the characters he sang. In later years these qualities made him one of opera's finest Otellos, after the bloom of his youthful voice was gone."

It was from the Met that Maestro Merola came to fetch Martinelli when the conductor-turned-impresario first conceived the possibility of a new opera company for San Francisco. A visit to Stanford University for the "Big Game" convinced Merola that Memorial Stadium could turn into a West Coast version of the Baths of Caracalla. So, for the pilot festival in June of 1922, he invited Martinelli to appear in *Pagliacci* (a ballet divertissement filled out the program), *Carmen* and *Faust*.

The Peninsula festival was not a notable success (three of the four performances attracted less than half the 17,000 capacity). But the venture had whetted Merola's thirst, and despite severe undercapitalization, he announced a season

opener for September 26, 1923, at the Civic Auditorium. Even though his fee was rumored at the (then) astronomical sum of \$2,000 a performance, it was felt that Martinelli's lofty Met reputation would guarantee a lively box office. The curtain went up on this *Bohème* without a stage rehearsal, but there was little doubt that Martinelli and the rest of the cast (Queena Mario as Mimì, Alfredo Gandolfi as Marcello, Louis D'Angelo as Schaunard, Polish bass Adamo Didur as Colline) were no strangers to the material.

The judgment of the local press on Martinelli generally accorded with verdicts elsewhere. Ray C.B. Brown in the San Francisco Chronicle on September 27: "Despite the acoustical traps that the auditorium sets for the voice, the beauty of his legato phrasing and the penetrating sweetness of his tone were strongly in evidence He was so deliberate in the delivery of the 'racconto' in the first act as to lag a bit behind the orchestra at times Mention of this sedateness of tempo in certain moments should not be taken to mean that he was wanting in emotional

fervor. There was abundance of the lover's fire in his wooing and an affecting warmth in his voicing of the heart's suffering. His acting was spontaneous and free from affectation."

No equivocation clouded Redfern Mason's review in the San Francisco Examiner: "Martinelli is probably the finest Rodolfo of the contemporary stage. While his voice has not the opulence of Caruso's, the fine sensitiveness of its tone suggests a background of culture which the great Enrico did not possess. The duo between him and Queena Mario in the first act was done in a vein of the finest tone-poetry."

In all, Martinelli sang 14 roles over eight seasons at the S.F. Opera. Merola accorded him three additional opening nights: 1933 (Samson et Dalila), 1936 (Eléazar in Halévy's La Juive) and 1937 (Aida). The city was not destined to hear him in any of the operas we would consider unusual today. But there were enormous compensations. There was Canio, an impersonation that had so stirred Caruso, often thought supreme in the role, that the Neapolitan tenor had

given Martinelli one of his own clown costumes. About a performance of *Pagliacci*, Mason wrote on September 25, 1927: "The largest audience of the season went into rapture over Martinelli's singing of 'Vesti la giubba.' Martinelli has the rare gift of being able to express strong emotion while observing that just reserve which distinguishes the artist from the singer who uses every ounce of power he possesses. Excess in art is a form of weakness."

Hearing Martinelli's recordings, few listeners find it easy to believe that his voice endured into his eighth decade. The secret lay in an agenda, in which the genuinely heroic assignments were incorporated into his repertoire only gradually. By the time Martinelli added Verdi's Otello, he was 51, his powers mature and sophisticated. He performed the role for the first time ever at the War Memorial in 1936, and Fried, then at the Examiner, registered his reaction on November 21:

"The character of Shakespeare's Moor seems to appeal to his imagination with peculiar force. In few of his roles is he



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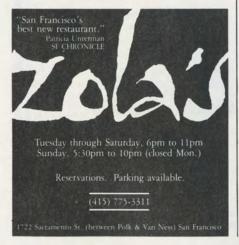
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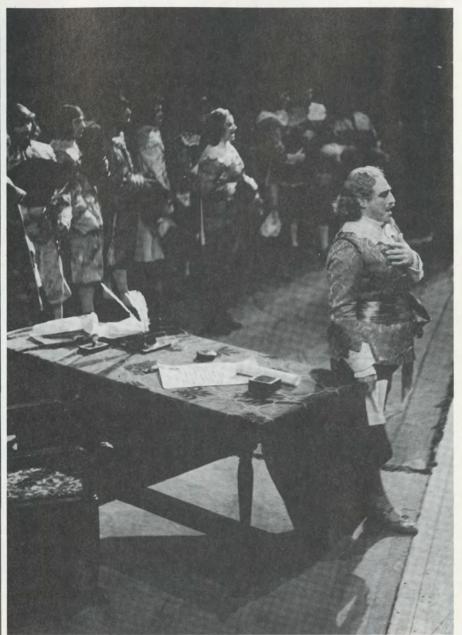
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Martinelli during "La rivedrà nell'estasi" in Un Ballo in Maschera at the San Francisco Opera in 1937. Oscar was sung by Charlotte Boerner.

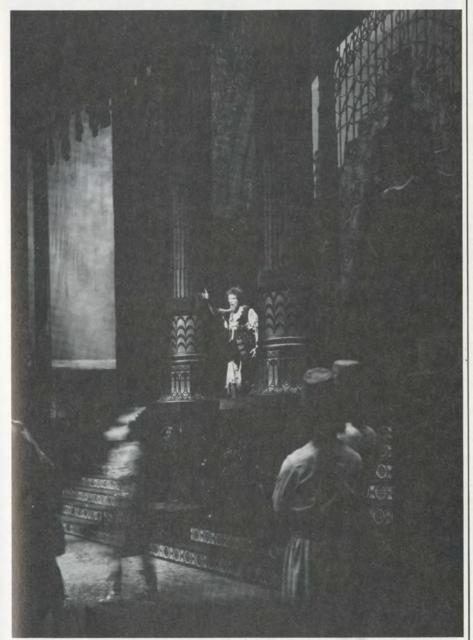
so penetrating a histrion as he was last night. Quickly in turn and by contrast he expressed Othello's imperiousness, his lovable sincerity and his maddened pathetic fury."

Three years later, Martinelli recorded Otello's Act 3 soliloquy and the death scene, and one senses in those performances a molten liquidity of sound and a magisterial manner that implies tremendous power without straining for effect. Later airchecks of Met performances reveal a slight diminishing of resources, while spotlighting another facet of the

character, his vulnerability and helplessness in the face of his consuming jealousy. Modern Otellos may have lacked Martinelli's equipment, but surely, they have heeded and incorporated his insights.

Otello was one of the two roles Martinelli repeated in his last season here in 1939. The opera had been revived for him at the Met two years earlier, after a long absence, and he sang the part until 1947 in Philadelphia, at which time he was 62.

Yet, some inner fount of wisdom told Martinelli when to leave a role alone.



Giovanni Martinelli as Samson in the 1933 production of Samson et Dalila, about to bring the house

Prodded by impresarios and fans, he attempted his first Tristan in Chicago in 1939, opposite Kirsten Flagstad. The reviews were respectful rather than delirious, and he immediately dropped the Wagner role from his repertoire.

There is perhaps no more amazing document in the Martinelli discography than his last recording of "Or son sei mesi" from La Fanciulla del West, which he commemorated in a New York studio with a piano accompaniment in 1962, marking the 50th anniversary of his debut in the part under the supervision of the

composer and Arturo Toscanini. Yes, the voice is patently that of an old man and the monologue has been transposed down. But Martinelli's vocalism remains squarely on pitch and imbued throughout with that inimitable Italianate squillo, the ringing, penetrating quality that separates real tenors from ordinary singers. It was a gift Martinelli apparently possessed from the beginning, and, even if there had not been so much else to extol about his artistry, it would have sufficed to distinguish him from mere mortals.











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Supertitles: A New Dimension in Opera Production

Coordinating all the production elements required to produce opera is an enormous task. An average production contains between 75-100 stage, lighting and sound cues, all requiring careful coordination and rehearsal. Technical rehearsals have now become even more complex as the newest production concept -- subtitles -- becomes a permanent part of opera production throughout the nation.

Approximately 50 opera companies in the country now use subtitles, or Supertitles as they are known at the San Francisco Opera, to translate the opera from its original language to English via captions projected on a screen above the stage. Since the introduction of Supertitles to the San Francisco Opera in 1983, the development of this popular form has necessitated a new department to produce a full season of titled productions.

This translation technique was originally developed for the San Francisco Opera by Stage Director Francesca Zambello and Production Stage Manager Jerry Sherk. But what started out as a process to title just a few operas per season has now turned into a year-round, full-time job. Christopher Bergen, the Opera's Supertitles Administrator since April of this year, is involved in all aspects of the Supertitle process — from translation, script development, and slide production to maintaining and administering the Opera's current stock of Supertitles

available for rental by other opera companies. Chris's past experience as a copy editor, fluency in German and French, and knowledge of Russian and Italian serve him well in undertaking the complexities of this job.

The first step in producing Supertitles is the development of the script. For this Fall Season's Supertitles, the script-writing task is shared by Bergen, Production Stage Manager Jerry Sherk, Musical Administrator Clifford Cranna, Stage Director Francesca Zambello and Paul Moor, a writer for *Musical America*. The guiding principle behind this translation process is that each script must be appropriate to the particular concept of the production.

Bergen notes that "we are not trying to produce another design element to the production, rather we are trying to complement the action onstage." A number of guidelines are followed which assist the translators in working towards this goal:

 The aesthetic experience of the audience is always the highest consideration. Upstaging the onstage action is avoided whenever possible so that the audience can focus on the stage images and the music rather than on reading the text. If a particular idea can be clearly articulated by stage action alone, a projected translation for that moment may not be needed.



American Express presents a check for 1985 Fall Season Supertitles: (l. to r.) David Standridge, Senior Executive Vice President, Shearson Lehman Bros. Inc.; Terence A. McEwen, General Director, San Francisco Opera; Mary Poland, Vice President, Development, San Francisco Opera Guild; Richard Selmeier, Regional Vice President, American Express.

- The text cannot be completely, literally translated. Repetitions are avoided and while writing in complete sentences is preferable, a complete thought is usually included in one slide.
- To avoid ambiguity as to who is talking to whom, character names are sometimes worked in even where they don't occur in the libretto.
- Careful attention is paid not only to what is said and when, but also to such subtle considerations as to how quickly the projection appears or fades away, always following the lead provided by the composer in the score.

Because different operas require different approaches, a number of interpretive styles, including the rendering of straightforward dialogue to the translation of the more poetic passages of some arias, are used. Since the aim is to express the intent of the composer and the director best for each production, the overall look of the Supertitles is also an important consideration. In *Orlando*, for example, a different typeface is used that will best represent the baroque period of music.

After the script has been approved, it is sent to The Slide Factory, where the titles are typeset and reproduced on 35mm film. After carefully reviewing the film for accuracy, the tedious process of individually mounting, numbering and arranging the slides in order begins. Even though this process has been streamlined since the San Francisco Opera began producing Supertitles in 1983, Bergen is working towards even greater efficiency

in the slide production process through the use of a communications modem, which should be fully operative this season.

Dress rehearsals provide one of the first opportunities to view the Supertitles in a complete run-through of the production. These rehearsals enable the Supertitle Department to check the appropriate placement of all cues and to review the text for punctuation and spelling errors. It is also the first opportunity that the artists have to note audience reaction to their performances. Artists are often caught off guard at the unexpected response of the audience as a result of their increased understanding of the text.

The response from visiting artists — both American and international — to Supertitles has been largely favorable. Most feel that their performances are greatly enhanced because the audiences are deriving more meaning from the opera. They also appreciate the high quality production of the Supertitles here in San Francisco. James Morris, who sang in the Summer *Ring* Festival and who will return for *Tosca* later in the Fall Season, feels that the San Francisco Opera's Supertitles are the best that he has seen.

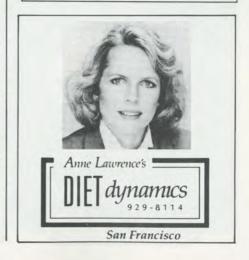
Mezzo-soprano Marilyn Horne sings with Supertitles for the first time at the San Francisco Opera in 1985 and comments, "The fact that we have Supertitles for *Orlando* is a tremendous plus. This is the first time that I've ever sung with Supertitles, and I think it's almost as good as singing *Orlando* in Italy, where the opera is in their native tongue." Soprano Cheryl Parrish, a graduate of the Opera Center training program, who sings two major roles in the Fall Season, also



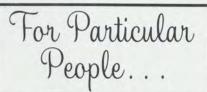
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Aida, presented during the San Francisco Opera 1984 Summer Season, was one of the first operas presented on the stage of the War Memorial to be provided with Supertitles. The photo shows a "title" projected during the Nile Scene.

applauds Supertitles. "I get more enjoyment out of my performance with Supertitles because I know the words are more important to the audience. It's like singing in the audience's native language."

Following the conclusion of the 1985 Fall Season, the San Francisco Opera will have provided Supertitles for a total of 19 productions since 1983. The Company continues to receive positive letters regarding the use of Supertitles. There is even a demand for titles for productions sung in English! With this kind of community support, says General Director Terence McEwen, "Supertitles are here to stay!"

-Deborah Young

American Express Company **Underwrites Supertitles**

Supertitles provide effective com- the 1985 Season." munication between composers, peraward was made on behalf of all American thropic budget of \$11 million. Express Companies, including American American Express Companies in the Bay project to continue. Area to help make Supertitles possible for

This significant grant represents one formers, and their audiences, a communi- of the largest awards given to arts organcation that is the key to increasing the izations by American Express in 1985. appreciation for opera and to developing The Company's philanthropic program is new audiences for the art form. This committed to helping arts organizations philosophy is shared by the American broaden their audiences in communities Express Company, whose generous grant where American Express employees live of \$100,000 to the San Francisco Opera and work. Approximately \$2.2 million will this year will underwrite the expenses of be given to arts organizations throughout the 1985 Fall Season Supertitles. The the nation this year, from a total philan-

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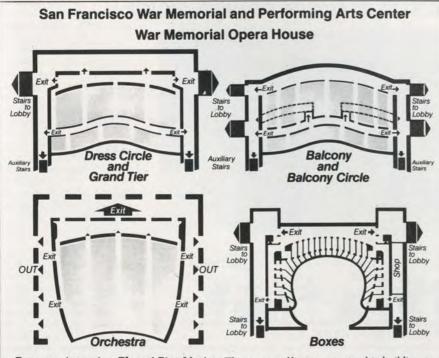
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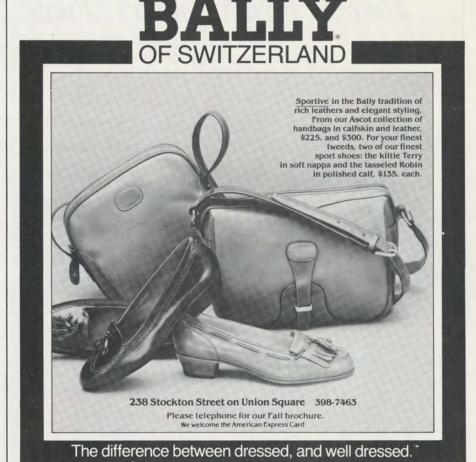
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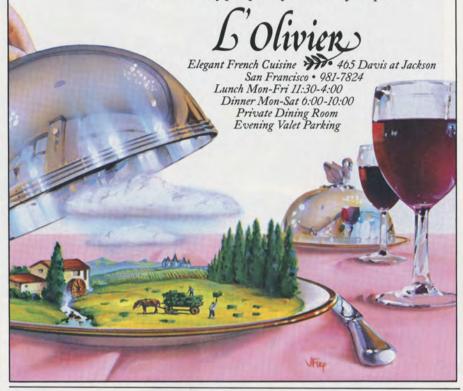
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