

Il Trovatore
(The Troubadour)

1985

Saturday, May 24, 1986 8:00 PM
Thursday, May 29, 1986 7:30 PM
Tuesday, June 3, 1986 8:00 PM
Friday, June 6, 1986 8:00 PM
Thursday, June 12, 1986 8:00 PM
Sunday, June 15, 1986 2:00 PM
Wednesday, June 18, 1986 7:30 PM

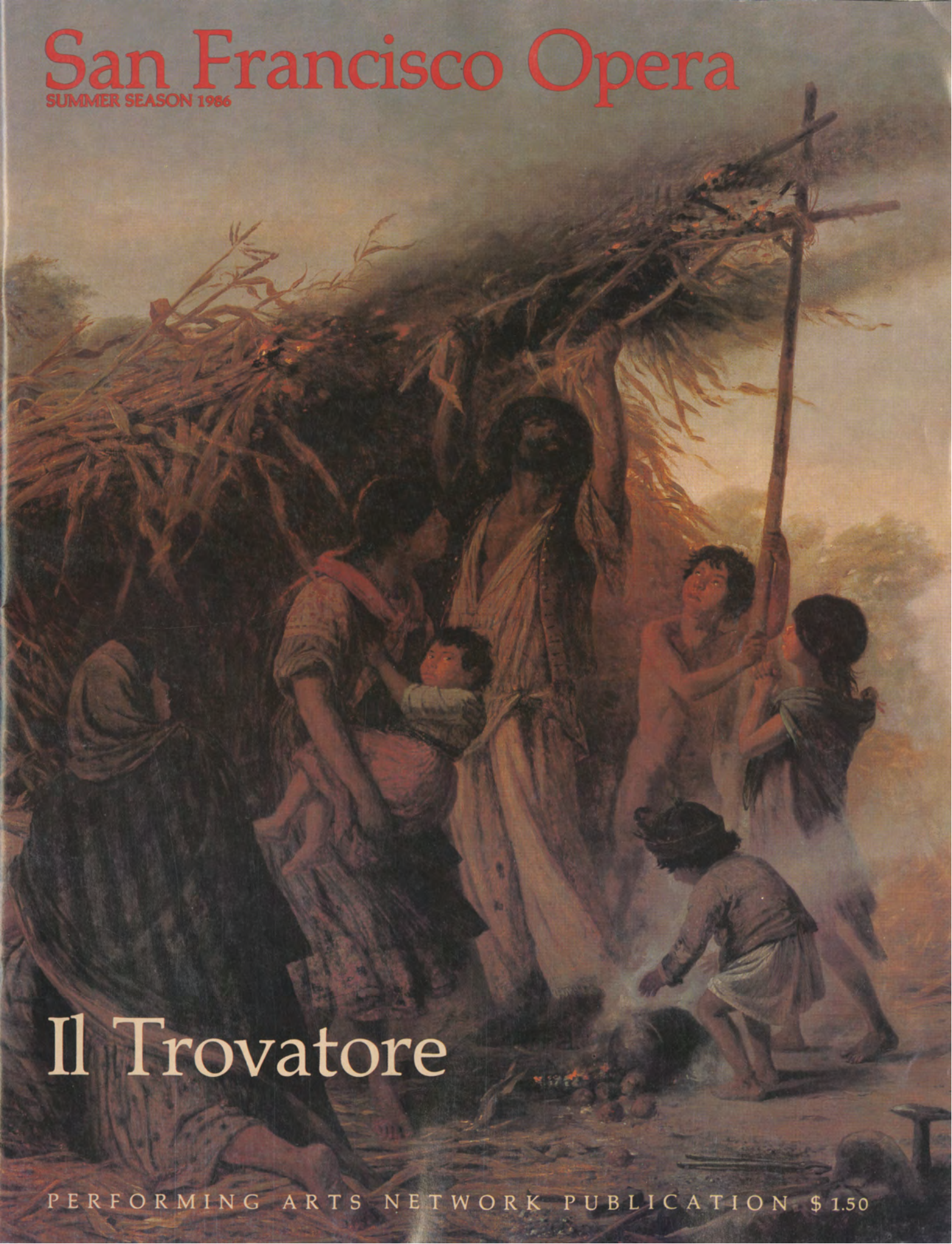
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SUMMER SEASON 1966



Il Trovatore

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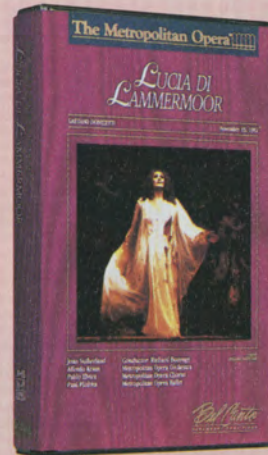
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Ernani (New!)

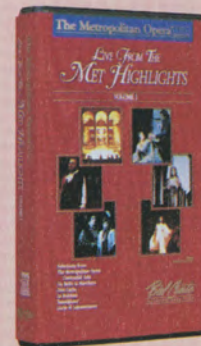
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Don Carlo	\$79.95*
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*double cassette

San Francisco Opera

Terence A. McEwen, *General Director*

Sir John Pritchard, *Music Director*

Il Trovatore

1986 SUMMER SEASON

FEATURES

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The prominent Verdi scholar provides an introduction to this hardy perennial, along with some fascinating side views.
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by Nina Beckwith
A closer look at what happens behind the scenes during San Francisco Opera Center's auditioning process.
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COVER:

William Hahn (1829-1887),
The Burning of the Gypsy Hut
(Düsseldorf, 186?)
Oil on canvas, 38¼ x 63⅛ in.

The original painting is in the possession of the Kerwin Galleries in Burlingame and is reproduced here by their kind permission.

Photo: Schopplein Studio

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

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Reid W. Dennis



Tully M. Friedman

From the Chairman of the Board and the President

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

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

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

The 1986 presentation of *Cavalleria/*

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

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

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

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

Reid W. Dennis, Chairman
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General Director's Message

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

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

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

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

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

Welcome to the 1986 Summer Season!

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "J. M. Scherl".

San Francisco Opera

Terence A. McEwen, *General Director*

Sir John Pritchard, *Music Director*

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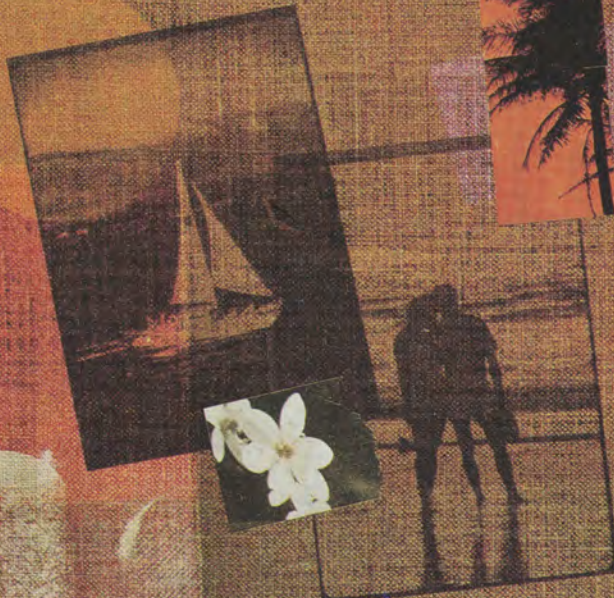
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Subscribers to San Francisco Opera's Summer and Fall Seasons have already been alerted to this once-in-a-lifetime event, celebrating the 25th anniversary of Joan Sutherland's San Francisco Opera debut and of Pavarotti's first operatic appearance, in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

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

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



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San Francisco Opera

Terence A. McEwen, *General Director*

Sir John Pritchard, *Music Director*

1986 Summer Season

Opening Night

Saturday, May 24, 8:00

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

Tuesday, May 27, 8:00

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

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

Thursday, May 29, 7:30

Il Trovatore Verdi

Saturday, May 31, 8:00

Lucia di Lammermoor Donizetti

Sunday, June 1, 2:00

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

and

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

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

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

Tuesday, June 3, 8:00

Il Trovatore Verdi

Wednesday, June 4, 7:30

Cavalleria Rusticana Mascagni
and

Pagliacci Leoncavallo

Thursday, June 5, 7:30

Lucia di Lammermoor Donizetti

Friday, June 6, 8:00

Il Trovatore Verdi

Saturday, June 7, 8:00

Cavalleria Rusticana Mascagni
and

Pagliacci Leoncavallo

Sunday, June 8, 2:00

Lucia di Lammermoor Donizetti

Tuesday, June 10, 8:00

Cavalleria Rusticana Mascagni
and

Pagliacci Leoncavallo

Wednesday, June 11, 7:30

Lucia di Lammermoor Donizetti

Thursday, June 12, 8:00

Il Trovatore Verdi

Friday, June 13, 8:00

Cavalleria Rusticana Mascagni
and

Pagliacci Leoncavallo

Sunday, June 15, 2:00

Il Trovatore Verdi

Tuesday, June 17, 7:30

Cavalleria Rusticana Mascagni
and

Pagliacci Leoncavallo

Wednesday, June 18, 7:30

Il Trovatore Verdi

Thursday, June 19, 8:00

La Voix humaine Poulenc
Armstrong*

Johnson/Zambello/Joël/Halmen/Munn

and

San Francisco Opera Premiere
The Medium Menotti

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

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

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

Friday, June 20, 8:00

Lucia di Lammermoor Donizetti

Saturday, June 21, 8:00

La Voix humaine Poulenc
and

The Medium Menotti

Sunday, June 22, 1:00

Cavalleria Rusticana Mascagni
and

Pagliacci Leoncavallo

Tuesday, June 24, 7:30

La Voix humaine Poulenc
and

The Medium Menotti

Wednesday, June 25, 8:00

Lucia di Lammermoor Donizetti

Thursday, June 26, 8:00

La Voix humaine Poulenc
and

The Medium Menotti

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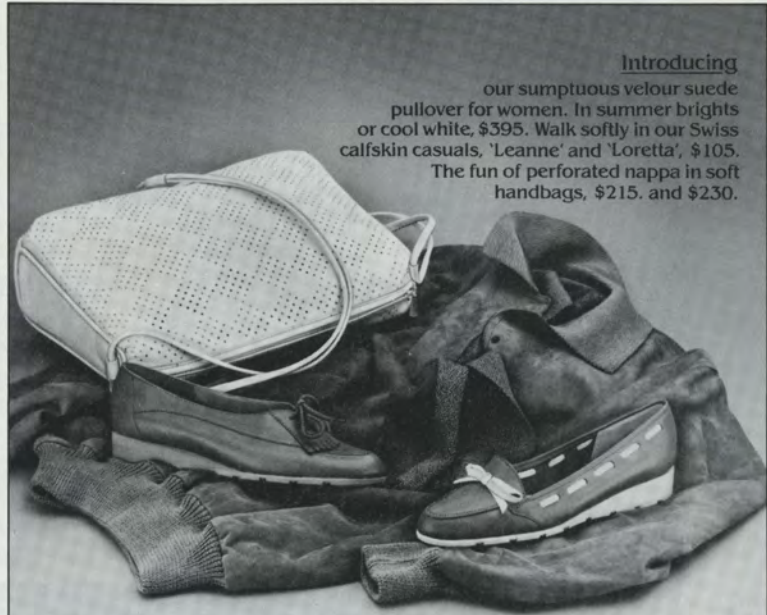
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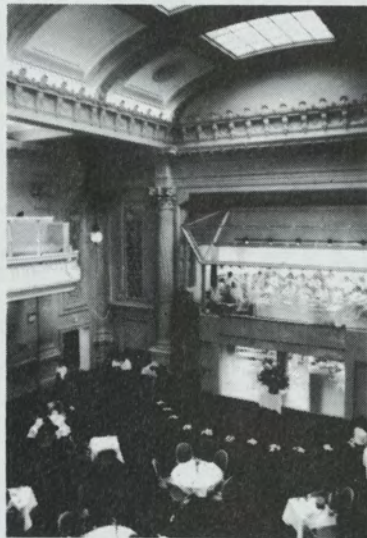


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Il Trovatore

By JULIAN BUDDEN

"Once more Il Trovatore cries
A tale of deeper wrong"

Alfred Noyes's poem, *The Barrel-Organ*, is often quoted as evidence of the low esteem in which the composer of *Il Trovatore* and *La Traviata* was held in England during the early years of this century—largely on the basis of a sentence which does not occur in it ("The music's only Verdi"). No matter; the inference is plain without it: *Il Trovatore* is essentially fodder for the barrel-organ (like many people Noyes probably meant the street-piano).

But even this is a tribute, however back-handed, to the opera's popularity, which from the start had been so great as to surprise even the composer himself, much as that of *Faust* would surprise Gounod. "If you go to the Indies or into the heart of Africa," Verdi wrote to a friend in 1862, "you will always hear *Il Trovatore*." He was hardly exaggerating. Within months of the premiere at the Teatro Apollo, Rome, on January 19, 1853, parodies of it were springing up in Italy and abroad. The avowedly plagiarizing hero of Lauro Rossi's *Il Maestro e la Cantante*, written in 1867, quotes more extensively from Verdi's heroic opera than from any other. The decidedly unheroic policemen of *The Pirates of Penzance* who proclaim their departure while declining to depart would immediately recall to the Victorian opera-lover the Count of Luna's men who repeatedly declare their intention of hiding while remaining visible throughout. The baby-swapping in *H.M.S. Pinafore* and *The Gondoliers* is obviously designed to awaken memories of Azucena's absent-mindedness. In 1857 Verdi had been commissioned to provide a French version, complete with statutory ballet, for

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

performances at the Paris Opéra. Needless to say, it did far better business than works such as *Les Vêpres Siciliennes* and *Don Carlos* which had been composed specifically for the Parisian stage.

Not everyone took the opera to their hearts. Charles Dickens, whose musical taste was uncertain to say the least, was quite sure that he did not like *Il Trovatore*. The painter Delacroix, an habitu  of the Th atre des Italiens, records in his diary an evening in 1855 in which "I go to *Il Trovatore* . . . I am bored and miserable and get a fresh cold. Nothing can match the sterility of this music, which is all noise with no trace of melody." To the earnest Wagnerian it summed up all that was most trivial in contemporary Italian opera. When B low penned his famous sneer at the *Requiem*, which he had not heard and had no intention of going to hear, he had only to refer to its author as the "composer of *Il Trovatore*" to convey to his German readership the full extent of his scorn. Fortunately, he lived to eat his words.

Indeed, the pendulum would eventually swing the other way. The Verdi renaissance of the inter-war years and after raised this most popular of operas to a pinnacle of respectability that might have made even Verdi smile. The flamboyant critic and writer, Bruno Barilli, for whom *Falstaff* was merely the darling of the pedagogues, waxed lyrical over the "scarlet music" of *Il Trovatore*. The conductor Gianandrea Gavazzeni likened its position in Italian music to that of the *St. Matthew Passion* in German. More recently, in his unfinished book *Abitare la Battaglia* (translated by Professor Roger Parker as *The Story of Giuseppe Verdi*), the Shakespearean scholar Gabriele Baldini placed the opera near the summit of Verdi's achievement in tragedy, second only to *Un Ballo in Maschera*.

All of which indicates a very special place for *Il Trovatore* in the canon of nineteenth-century opera, however high or low we may finally rate it. As usual,

Bernard Shaw, writing in 1917, has some pertinent things to say on the subject. "*Il Trovatore* is, in fact, unique, even among the works of its own composer and its own country. It has tragic power, poignant melancholy, impetuous vigor, and a sweet and intense pathos that never loses its dignity. It is swift in action, and perfectly homogenous in atmosphere and feeling. It is absolutely void of intellectual interest; the appeal is to the instincts and to the senses all through. If it allowed you to think for a moment it would crumble into absurdity like the garden of Kling-sor." Shaw is speaking here as an intellectual and a Wagnerian. It is certainly true that, whereas Wagner's characters live and move under an increasing burden of memory, those of *Il Trovatore* are supremely unreflective. Hearing that Leonora is about to take the veil, Manrico, still convalescent from his wounds, hastens to prevent her. Told that his supposed mother is to be burned at the stake, he does not hesitate to tear himself away from his bride and go to her rescue. In a word, *Il Trovatore* is *par excellence* an opera of present feeling, in which past events are never recollected in tranquillity but, like Azucena's burning of her child, re-lived with fierce intensity.

Strangely for so apparently spontaneous a work, *Il Trovatore* had a long and difficult gestation. Originally, it seems, Verdi had intended it as a follow-up to the "revolutionary" (his own term) *Rigoletto* and at the same time as a preparation for *King Lear* that he intended to write with Cammarano (Piave having disqualified himself in the composer's eyes as a Shakespearean librettist by his poor verses for *Macbeth*). While *Rigoletto* was still in rehearsal, Verdi wrote to the poet, "I would like two women; the principal one to be the gypsy, a remarkable character, from whom we'll take the title of the opera. The other can be a comprimaria (supporting role)." As in the earlier opera, then, the main subject was to be parental love, with a female instead of a male

protagonist. Clearly the experience of *Rigoletto* was echoing in his brain when he wrote to Cesare De Sanctis, a Neapolitan friend: "the greater the novelty, the freer the forms that [Cammarano] presents me with, the better I shall do. He can do exactly as he pleases; the bolder he is the happier he will make me."

But in asking for novelty from Cammarano, Verdi had misjudged his man. For the talents of this most accomplished of romantic librettists lay in the opposite direction—in an ability to reduce the most extravagant of plots to the traditional pattern of two-movement arias, three-movement duets, recitatives and concerted finales, and of removing any political or religious sting that might offend the censor. His treatment of Gutiérrez's powerful *El Trovador* was no exception. Indeed, the detailed synopsis that he sent to Verdi in April 1851 nearly caused the composer to abandon the project altogether. However, after suggesting certain modifications, all of which were adopted, he allowed himself to be propelled along the lines that Cammarano had indicated. But their collaboration was a protracted one, for Verdi was much taken up with domestic affairs. It was at this time that he moved with Giuseppina Streponi to the farm at S. Agata, the present Villa Verdi, settling his parents, who had occupied it previously, at Vidalenzo. The move was not accomplished without acrimony. Verdi's father, appointed to look after his son's property in his absence, had proved an inefficient manager; and Verdi had not only to pay off his debts but even found it necessary to communicate with him through a lawyer over their respective rights. In the middle of an awkward family situation, his mother died. Some months later Verdi and Giuseppina left for Paris to arrange a contract with the Paris Opéra for what would become *Les Vêpres Siciliennes*, returning to Busseto in March of 1852. Work on *Il Trovatore* was resumed, only to be interrupted by the death of Cammarano in July. He had completed the

ANTONIO VASSELLI

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TITO DI GIO. RICORDI

IL TROVATORE

Dramma in quattro parti di Salvatore Cammarano

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A scene from Il Trovatore as reproduced on an early libretto cover, and later enhanced by a colorist.



Manrico, Leonora and Inez, as imagined in a 19th-century engraving by N. Thomas.



The final scene of *Il Trovatore*, in a highly creative etching by N. Thomas.

libretto according to the agreed specifications. But, as usual, there were late adjustments to be made—lines added or altered as the music took shape. For this purpose, De Sanctis suggested the young poet Leone Emanuele Bardare who, he declared “was in his seventh heaven at the prospect of working for Maestro Verdi.” Most of Bardare’s work was concerned with filling out the part of Leonora so as to

give it parity with that of Azucena. Originally she was to have been a “*comprimaria*.” What brought about the change of plan?

A possible factor was the appearance at the Teatro Grande, Trieste, in the spring season of 1852, of another *Trovatore* by one Francesco Cortesi, composed to a libretto by Antonio Lanari, son of the famous impresario of that name. Here

Azucena (sic) is indeed the *prima donna assoluta* and Eleonora (sic) a small role with only a “*romanza*” to herself. Verdi must have known of its existence if only from the columns of Ricordi’s house magazine, the *Gazzetta Musicale di Milano*, of which he was an assiduous reader. Not only that, the part of the gypsy heroine had been taken by Rosina Penco, future creator of his own Leonora. It was not the first time that a subject of his choice had been anticipated. His *Ernani* in Venice had been preceded by that of Mazzucato in Genoa, his *Attila* by that of Malipiero in the same city. In such cases it was advisable to minimize the possibilities of comparison, if only to avoid the charge of plagiarism. This, surely, is one reason why the vocal distribution of *Ernani* and the plot of *Attila* came to diverge from the composer’s original intentions.

In the case of *Il Trovatore*, the change was entirely beneficial. By constructing the opera on the polarity of two equal *prima donnas*, the first primarily lyrical in expression, the second primarily dramatic, Verdi succeeds in bringing the personality of each more sharply into focus. Leonora is the epitome of everything aristocratic. She sings in long, lyrical lines with the occasional burst of glittering coloratura. Azucena is a woman of the people with a characteristic style of short phrases and piquant rhythms. Each singer tends to move in her own circle of keys at opposite ends of the tonal spectrum. Above all, in Azucena Verdi for the first time creates a mezzo-soprano role of equal importance with his soprano lead but of a totally different character—a female equivalent of the baritone. His model is generally held to be Fidès in Meyerbeer’s grand opera, *Le Prophète*, which Verdi certainly knew and admired (he might even have witnessed its premiere in 1849 since he was in Paris at the time). Fidès, written for the mezzo-soprano Pauline Viardot-García, was the first of the great mother-figures in opera; Azucena, following at a distance of four years, has been called “Fidès in Romany.” In fact, she is far wilder and more energetic than her predecessor. To create the part, Verdi had in mind the singer Rita Gabussi, a self-styled soprano (in fact a mezzo) who specialized in tempestuous roles such as Mercadante’s Medea and Giovanna la Pazza (alias Madge Wildfire) in Federico Ricci’s *La Prigione di Edimburgo*, based on Walter Scott’s *The Heart of Midlothian*—a consideration that may furnish a clue as to the literary ancestor of Azu-



Members of the San Francisco Opera 1931 Chorus are captured during a final rehearsal for *Il Trovatore*.

cena herself.

Antonio García Gutiérrez, like all Spanish playwrights of his generation, was steeped in the romantic literature of France and England, in Byron, Hugo, and Scott. Among the best known of the Waverley novels, though now almost totally forgotten, was *The Pirate*. Schubert set one of the poems it contains; the conductor Dietsch, to whom Wagner sold the libretto of *The Flying Dutchman*, rechristened some of its characters with names from Scott's novel. Set in the Shetlands, it features a strange "spae-wife" of whom everyone is in awe—Norna of the Fitful Head. From time to time she is haunted by visions of a fire in which her own father perished, the memory of which fills her with a sense of guilt. The hero and the villain of the plot, both rivals in love, are revealed to be half-brothers. Norna is the mother of one of them, but is somewhat confused as to which. After the hero has been wounded in a duel, she nurses him back to health believing him quite wrongly to be her son . . . The parallel with Azucena is far from exact, but it is near enough. Not that there is any reason to suppose that Verdi himself was aware of any such derivation. The fact remains that Azucenas turn up quite

frequently in the Waverley novels. Meg Merrilies in *Guy Mannering*, Madge Wildfire's mother, Mother Macneven in *The Abbot* all belong to that ilk. Whether he knew it or not, Verdi has given us in Azucena the fullest operatic realization of a Walter Scott archetype.

The contrast between *Il Trovatore* and its predecessor *Rigoletto* could hardly be greater. In the earlier work, the action develops in a straight line, causing the characters to evolve with it. In *Il Trovatore* they remain at the end what they had been at the beginning, while the situations succeed one another sometimes without any apparent connection. As a result, the libretto is often held up as a by-word for unintelligibility—unjustly so, however. The information is all there, set out in accordance with Cammarano's usual method. Many libretti of the time contain a printed "antefatto" summarizing the events that have taken place before the rise of the curtain. This Cammarano always sought to avoid. Either he shows the events happening in a "prologo," as in *Alzira* or in the first scenes of *Luisa Miller*; or else he has them narrated in the course of the opera itself as in *Il Trovatore*. Indeed, no other Italian opera contains such an abundance of narrative. But to Verdi,

what counted was not so much the events themselves as the emotions that they arouse in the singer. Were it otherwise, we should all be tempted to smile at Azucena's "Condotta ell'era in ceppi" instead of being moved by it. When Leonora tells Ines (and us) how she first made Manrico's acquaintance, we pay no heed to the actual circumstances but merely bask in the musical transfiguration of a woman in love. There is enough in the text to tell us that a civil war is in progress, that Manrico is an officer in the service of the rebellious Duke of Urgel, while the Count of Luna is a loyalist grandee. To enjoy the opera, all we need to know is that they are rivals in love, each able, on occasion, to summon a troop of followers to their aid; that Manrico is the hero and Luna a villain, if not wholly lost to a sense of honor. In other words, the situations themselves are always crystal clear, as befits what is essentially an opera of the expanded moment. In this, it harks back to the heroic operas of Rossini with their ample lyrical designs, based on the twin principles of balance and contrast—but with this important difference: in *Il Trovatore*, recitative is kept to a minimum, while the set numbers are marked by an

continued on p.47



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ARTIST PROFILES

IL TROVATORE



GHENĂ DIMITROVA

Dramatic soprano **Ghenă Dimitrova** makes her San Francisco Opera debut as Leonora in *Il Trovatore* during the 1986 Summer Season. World renowned as a leading interpreter of the Verdi and Puccini dramatic soprano roles, the Bulgarian artist made her operatic debut at the Sofia Opera as Abigaille in *Nabucco*. In 1972 she was among the singer laureates at the International Competition in Treviso for her interpretation of Amelia in *Un Ballo in Maschera*. From 1975 to 1977 she appeared in numerous countries in Central and South America, including Brazil and Mexico. She was extremely successful in Caracas, where her performances included *Ernani*, *Un Ballo in Maschera*, *La Fanciulla del West*, *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Pagliacci*. At the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires, she was acclaimed for her *Turandot* (1977) and returned to that theater for five consecutive seasons. After several appearances at the Bolshoi in Moscow in 1978, Miss Dimitrova made her debut at the Vienna State Opera, where her assignments have included *Tosca* and *Cavalleria Rusticana*. Following her Vienna debut, she was soon in demand all over Germany, singing in Munich, Berlin, Hamburg and Düsseldorf. In 1980 she tri-

umphed in *La Gioconda* at Verona, where she has since sung regularly, appearing in *Aida* (1980), *Nabucco* (1981), *Macbeth* (1982) and *Turandot* (1983). Her 1984 engagements included *Nabucco* in Barcelona and at Carnegie Hall, and *Tosca* in Madrid. In the summer of 1984, Miss Dimitrova sang in a new production of *Macbeth* at the Salzburg Festival, returning for the production's revival in 1985. This was followed by *Turandot* at Covent Garden, and *Macbeth* in Paris. Current and future engagements include *La Gioconda* in Chicago, *Aida* for the opening of the 1985-86 season at Milan's La Scala, and the opening of the 1986-87 season there in *Nabucco*. In addition to her numerous recital and concert appearances, Miss Dimitrova has recorded Abigaille in *Nabucco*, Giuseppe Sinopoli conducting; the role of Leonora in the complete recording of Verdi's *Oberto*; Amneris in *Aida*; and albums of Puccini, Tchaikovsky, and Italian opera arias. Miss Dimitrova can be seen on videotape as Abigaille in *Nabucco* and in the title role of *Turandot*, both from the Verona Arena productions, and as *Aida* and *Giselda* in Verdi's *I Lombardi* from La Scala productions.



DOLORA ZAJIC

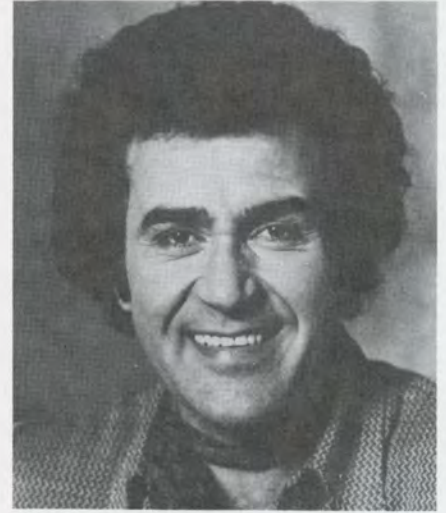
Mezzo-soprano **Dolora Zajic** is Azucena in *Il Trovatore*, a role she recently performed for the first time with the Reno Opera. An Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center for two years, she was seen in San Francisco most recently as Dame Quickly in the 1985 Fall Season student and family performances of *Falstaff* in the triumphant Jean-Pierre Ponnelle production. Earlier in 1985 she appeared as Schwertleite in *Die Walküre* during the Ring Festival, and for the Opera Center's 1985 Showcase series portrayed Bertarido in Handel's *Rodelinda* and Marcolfa in Conrad Susa's *The Love of Don Perlimplin*, a role she created at the opera's world premiere. A Nevada native, she made her 1984 Company debut as a Priestess in the Summer Season production of *Aida* and returned that fall for roles in *Ernani*, *Elektra* and *Rigoletto*. Miss Zajic participated in the 1983 Merola Opera Program, appearing in *The Tales of Hoffmann* at Stern Grove, and portrayed Suzuki in Western Opera Theater's touring production of *Madame Butterfly*. Among her numerous awards are a 1986 study grant from the Astral Foundation of Philadelphia, a bronze medal at the VII International Tchaikovsky Competition



SUSAN PATTERSON

in Moscow in 1982, and the first prize of the 1986 Richard Tucker Awards, the first mezzo-soprano so honored. Future engagements for the young artist include Azucena with the Manitoba and San Diego operas, Amneris in *Aida* with the Houston Grand Opera, Verdi's Requiem with the Oakland Symphony, and concert performances of Prokofiev's *Alexander Nevsky* with the National Symphony of Washington D.C., Mstislav Rostropovich conducting. Miss Zajic will soon record the role of Preziosilla in Verdi's *La Forza del Destino*, Riccardo Muti conducting.

Alabama native **Susan Patterson** makes her San Francisco Opera debut during the 1986 Summer Season as Inez in *Il Trovatore* and as Mrs. Gobineau in *The Medium*. The young soprano is a graduate of the universities of Samford and Florida State, and is currently working toward a doctorate at Indiana University. Her college performance credits include roles in *Tamerlane*, *The Daughter of the Regiment*, *Die Fledermaus*, and *Così fan tutte*. As a member of the 1985 Merola Opera Program, Miss Patterson appeared as Marguerite in *Faust* at San Francisco's Stern



FRANCO BONISOLLI

Grove, and also portrayed Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* for Western Opera Theater's 1985-86 National Tour. Currently an Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, she recently appeared as Violetta in *La Traviata* with the Opera Center Singers in Palm Springs, and sang three roles for the 1986 Showcase Hindemith double bill: Helen in *There and Back* and Lucia I/Lucia II in *The Long Christmas Dinner*. The recipient of several prizes and grants, including a Rotary Scholarship to study at the Verdi Conservatory in Milan, Miss Patterson was a Metropolitan Opera National semi-finalist, and won the Florence Bruce Award at the Opera Center's 1985 Grand Finals. She will appear in four roles with the Company this fall, including Marguerite in the special matinee performances of *Faust*.

Italian tenor **Franco Bonisolli** sings Manrico in *Il Trovatore*, a role he has sung at the Salzburg Easter Festival, in Vienna, Hamburg, London, Barcelona, Cape Town, at the Verona Arena, and in many other cities. He most recently appeared in San Francisco during the 1985 Fall Season as Calaf in *Turandot*. He made his Company

debut on the opening night of the 1969 season as Alfredo in *La Traviata*, (a role he performed on film three times), and returned as Don José in *Carmen* (1981), Enzo in *La Gioconda* (1983) and Radames in *Aida* for the 1984 Summer Season. Other roles in his repertoire include Des Grieux in *Manon* and *Manon Lescaut*, Arnold in *Guillaume Tell*, *Otello*, *Andrea Chénier*, *I Vespri Siciliani*, *Luisa Miller*, *La Bohème*, *La Favorita*, *La Fanciulla del West*, *L'Elisir d'Amore*, *Cavalleria Rusticana*, *Pagliacci*, *Rigoletto*, *La Forza del Destino*, the Verdi Requiem, Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle* and *Stabat Mater*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Les Pêcheurs de Perles*, *Faust*, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, *L'Africaine*, *Roméo et Juliette*, *Benvenuto Cellini*, *La Damnation de Faust*, *Werther*, *L'Enfance du Christ*, *Tosca*, *La Rondine*, *Simon Boccanegra* and *Norma*. He also sings such rarities as Rossini's *La Donna del Lago* and *L'Assedio di Corinto*, Gluck's *Paride ed Elena*, Giordano's *Fedora* and works by Scarlatti, Pergolesi and Monteverdi. Bonisolli has appeared in all of the world's principal opera houses as well as the festivals of Verona, Salzburg Easter Festival, Munich, Bilbao, and on the Metropolitan Opera tour. He also frequently gives orchestra concerts in

many of the world's performing centers. Recent engagements include the opening of the Hamburg Opera season in *La Traviata*, opening the Vienna Staatsoper season in *Aida*, concert performances of *William Tell* at Carnegie Hall, *La Favorita* in Hamburg, *Turandot* at La Scala and Covent Garden, inauguration of the Verona Arena with *Trovatore* and performances of *Aida* and *Norma* at the Munich Festival, *Un Ballo in Maschera* for the Washington Opera, *Un Ballo in Maschera* and *Manon Lescaut* in Hamburg, *Turandot* and *Trovatore* in London, and a Gala Concert at the Vienna Musikverein, after which he was presented with the prestigious "Kammersänger" title by the Austrian government. Future engagements include performances of *Il Trovatore* in Washington, D.C. Bonisolli's discography includes complete recordings of *Tosca*, two versions of *Trovatore*, *La Traviata*, *Rigoletto*, *Cavalleria Rusticana*, *I Masnadieri*, Leoncavallo's *Bohème*, Bizet's *Djamileh*, Gluck's *Paride ed Elena* and *Iphigénie en Tauride*, as well as several recitals and an album of Neapolitan and Italian songs and duets with Mirella Freni.



SILVANO CARROLI

Venetian-born baritone **Silvano Carroli** returns to San Francisco Opera to portray the Count di Luna in *Il Trovatore*. During the 1985 Fall Season he recreated the role of his 1982 Company debut, Count Anckarström (Renato) in *Un Ballo in Maschera*. He also appeared locally in one of his signature roles, Iago in *Otello*, for the 1983 Fall Season. Considered a true Verdi baritone, Carroli began his career by winning first prize in the Palermo National Voice Competition in 1957 and in the Teatro Le Fenice Contest in Venice in 1963. He was invited to join the Fenice opera school that same year, and made his professional debut with the company as Marcello in *La Bohème*. He has since carved a major career in the world's important houses, including La Scala, Covent Garden, the Vienna State Opera, and with the companies of Berlin, Hamburg, Munich, Paris, Rome and Barcelona, among others. He made his American debut in the title role of *Simon Boccanegra* during La Scala's 1976 tour to Washington, D.C., and gave his first performances with an American opera company the following year when he portrayed Scarpia in *Tosca* for the Opera Society of Washington. He made his debut with the Lyric



GIORGIO ZANCANARO

Opera of Chicago in 1978, singing Ezio in *Attila*. In 1983 he bowed with Opera Colorado as Iago, and that fall made his East Coast debut in the title role of *Macbeth* for the Connecticut Grand Opera. Late that season he made his Metropolitan Opera debut as Don Carlo in *La Forza del Destino*. Carroli has scored major successes at many of the world's major music festivals, including those at Orange, Verona, Sofia and the Pro Musica Festival in Spain. Recent engagements include the title role of *Don Giovanni* in Rome, *Macbeth* and *Escamillo* in *Carmen* in Barcelona, *I Lombardi* at La Scala and the Paris Opera, and *Attila* in Turin. He can be seen as Jack Rance on a videodisc of the Covent Garden production of *La Fanciulla del West*.

Italian baritone **Giorgio Zancanaro** returns to San Francisco Opera as the Count di Luna in *Il Trovatore*, a role he recently recorded with Plácido Domingo for Deutsche Grammophon, Carlo Maria Giulini conducting. He has also sung the role in Vienna, Hamburg, and in a new production at the Metropolitan Opera. He made his Company debut during the 1977

Fall Season as Valentin in *Faust* and Riccardo in *I Puritani*, and will return this fall as Don Carlo in *La Forza del Destino*. A native of Verona, Zancanaro won an international vocal competition in Milan in 1969 and the international Verdi Voices Competition of Busseto in 1970. Since his operatic debut in *I Puritani* in Milan, Zancanaro appeared extensively throughout Italy. Success in that country brought him important engagements in Munich, Hamburg, Vienna, Zurich, and at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden. In addition, he has sung regularly at the European music festivals of Orange, Lille, Marseilles, Toulouse, Monte Carlo and Salzburg. His repertoire includes the baritone leads in *Cavalleria Rusticana*, *Pagliacci*, *Andrea Chénier*, *Un Ballo in Maschera*, *Madama Butterfly*, *La Traviata*, *Carmen*, *Aida*, *Luisa Miller* and *Don Carlo*. Future engagements include performances of *Rigoletto* in Dallas, *I Puritani* in Zurich, Vienna and Hamburg, *Cavalleria Rusticana* in Vienna, *Don Carlo* in Lausanne and Bonn, and *William Tell* in Zurich.



PHILIP SKINNER

Bass-baritone **Philip Skinner** is Ferrando in *Il Trovatore*. He made his San Francisco Opera debut during the 1985 Fall Season as Quinault in *Adriana Lecouvreur*, and most recently appeared in the Opera Center's Showcase productions of Hindemith's *There and Back* and *The Long Christmas Dinner*. Currently an Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, Skinner was a participant in the 1985 Merola Opera Program, portraying Méphistophélès in *Faust* and the title role of *Don Giovanni*, going on to tour with Western Opera Theater in the latter role. He has sung with Kentucky Opera, the Columbus Symphony, the Savannah Symphony, and at the San Antonio Festival in such roles as Timur and the Mandarin in *Turandot*, *Escamillo* in *Carmen*, Don Fernando in *Fidelio*, and the King of Egypt in *Aida*. A graduate of Northwestern University, Skinner received his master's degree from Indiana University, where he has performed in several productions. His concert work includes performances of Haydn's *The Seasons*, *The Creation* and *Lord Nelson Mass*, the last named being at the Spoleto Festival. This summer he performs the Mozart Requiem with the Columbus Symphony,



DENNIS PETERSEN

Christian Badea conducting. Skinner will be heard with the Company this fall in five roles, including Méphistophélès in the special matinee performances of *Faust*.

Dennis Petersen, who made his San Francisco Opera debut during the 1985 Fall Season in five roles, portrays Ruiz in *Il Trovatore*. The Iowa-born tenor made his professional debut in 1979 in two Bizet operas produced by the Theater Opera Music Institute, *Don Procopio* and *Djamileh*. He has since sung various leading tenor roles, including Rodolfo in *La Bohème* with the Brooklyn Lyric Opera, a performance that led to an invitation to tour in that part with the Texas Opera Theater. After appearing in a concert production of Wagner's *Rienzi* with the Opera Orchestra of New York, Petersen has since been engaged by the same group to sing in *Benvenuto Cellini*, *Nabucco* and *William Tell*. Recent engagements have included *La Traviata* and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony in Eugene, Oregon; a tour of *Rigoletto* with the New York City Opera National Company; Mendelssohn's *Die Erste Walpurgisnacht* with the New York Choral Society; a major tri-

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Text by SALVATORE CAMMARANO

After the play by ANTONIO GARCÍA GUTIÉRREZ

Il Trovatore

(in Italian)

Conductor

Andrew Meltzer

Stage Director

Irving Guttman

Designer

Wolfram Skalicki

Lighting Supervisor

Joan Arhelger

Chorus Director

Richard Bradshaw

Associate Chorus Director

Ernest Fredric Knell

Musical Preparation

Jeffrey Goldberg

Robert Morrison

Christopher Larkin

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First performance:

Rome, January 19, 1853

First San Francisco Opera performance:

October 6, 1926

SATURDAY, MAY 24 AT 8:00

THURSDAY, MAY 29 AT 7:30

TUESDAY, JUNE 3 AT 8:00

FRIDAY, JUNE 6 AT 8:00

THURSDAY, JUNE 12 AT 8:00

SUNDAY, JUNE 15 AT 2:00

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 18 AT 7:30

CAST

(in order of appearance)

Ferrando Philip Skinner

Inez Susan Patterson*

Leonora Ghena Dimitrova*

Il Conte di Luna Silvano Carroli
(May 24, 29; June 3, 6)
Giorgio Zancanaro
(June 12, 15, 18)

Manrico Franco Bonisoli

Azucena Dolora Zajic

A gypsy Monte Pederson

A messenger Kevin Anderson

Ruiz Dennis Petersen

Soldiers, nuns, gypsies

*San Francisco Opera debut

TIME AND PLACE: Fifteenth-century Spain

ACT I
Scene 1: The palace at Aliaferia
Scene 2: The palace gardens
Scene 3: A gypsy camp in Biscay

INTERMISSION

ACT II
Scene 1: The convent near Castellor
Scene 2: A military encampment
Scene 3: The fortress of Castellor

INTERMISSION

ACT III
Scene 1: A tower in Aliaferia palace
Scene 2: The prison in Aliaferia palace

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after the lights have dimmed.*

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

*The performance will last approximately
three hours and fifteen minutes.*

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All performances of *Il Trovatore* feature Supertitles
by Christopher Bergen, San Francisco Opera.

Il Trovatore/Synopsis

ACT I

SCENE 1—The retainers of Count di Luna listen to Ferrando, their captain, who tells how the Count's father once burned an old gypsy woman at the stake for witchcraft. In revenge, the gypsy's daughter stole the infant brother of the present Count and burned the child to death. As the clock strikes midnight, Ferrando finishes his chilling tale, and the superstitious men run off in fright.

SCENE 2—In the garden of the palace, Leonora, the queen's lady-in-waiting, confides to her companion, Inez, how she has fallen in love with an unknown troubadour-knight who has been coming to serenade her. Inez has misgivings about the stranger, but Leonora refuses to forget him. After the two women enter the palace, Count di Luna appears. He, too, is in love with Leonora and plans to marry her. His thoughts are interrupted by the strains of a serenade as the troubadour enters. Leonora comes out of the palace, and in the darkness mistakes the Count for her beloved. After accusing her of infidelity, Manrico, leader of the rebel forces under the Prince of Biscay, reveals his identity and challenges the Count to a duel.

SCENE 3—Azucena, the dead gypsy's daughter, is sitting by a fire at a gypsy camp in the mountains. As day breaks, the gypsies take up their usual tasks, hammering on their anvils and working at their handicrafts. In a trance, Azucena relives the events of her mother's death on the funeral pyre and is haunted by her final cry for vengeance. The gypsies leave to sell their wares in the neighboring villages. When they are alone, Manrico asks Azucena to elaborate on the story she has just told. In near delirium, she tells him of the abduction of the Count's child and the burning—not of di Luna's brother, but of her own son. Manrico, who has always believed Azucena to be his mother, is puzzled by what he has heard. After regaining her senses, Azucena convinces him that he is indeed her son and instills in him the need to kill his enemy, the Count. A messenger arrives informing Manrico that Leonora, believing him killed in battle, is about to take the veil at a nearby convent. Despite Azucena's protests, he rushes off to stop her from renouncing the world.

ACT II

SCENE 1—In the cloister of the convent, di Luna and his attendants are planning Leonora's abduction. She enters with a group of her friends. Manrico appears with his followers, who fight off the Count's retainers, allowing the troubadour to escape with Leonora.

SCENE 2—The Count is laying siege to the enemy fortress, Castellor. A gypsy woman is brought into the camp and Ferrando recognizes her as the murderess of di Luna's brother. In despair, she utters Manrico's name, doubling the Count's fury and his delight at her capture.

SCENE 3—Inside the fortress, Manrico and Leonora are about to be married. Ruiz, Manrico's friend, arrives with the news that Azucena has been captured and is to be burned at the stake. Leonora tries to detain him, but Manrico hurries off to save the gypsy.

ACT III

SCENE 1—Both Manrico and Azucena have been imprisoned. Leonora has come to the prison tower prepared to die near her beloved. When the Count appears, Leonora offers herself to him in exchange for Manrico's life. Di Luna accepts the proposal joyously, and as he is giving orders to his guards, Leonora swallows poison from her ring, determined that the Count's sole reward will be her lifeless body.

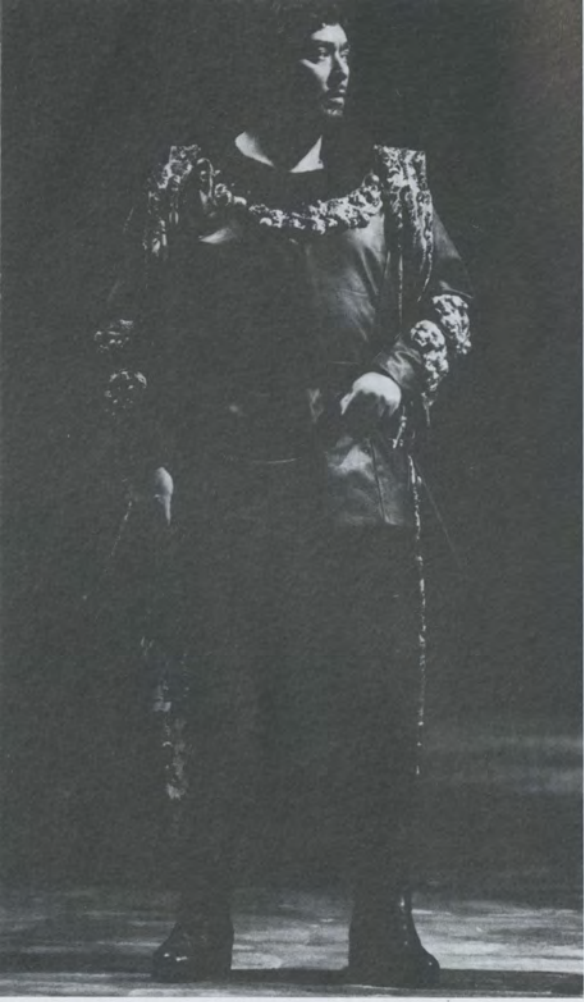
SCENE 2—Inside the dungeon, Azucena is tormented by the memory of her mother's death. Manrico tries to comfort her by reminding her of their peaceful days in the mountains of Biscay. Leonora enters and tells Manrico that he is free, but he suspects the price of his freedom and curses her. As the Count appears, he overhears her tell Manrico in her dying breath that she has preferred death to life without him. Enraged, the Count sends Manrico to the block. Azucena awakens to Manrico's cries, and di Luna forces her to witness the execution. The gypsy now reveals to the Count that Manrico was his brother. Crying out, "Mother, you are avenged!" she falls lifeless to the ground.

Il Trovatore

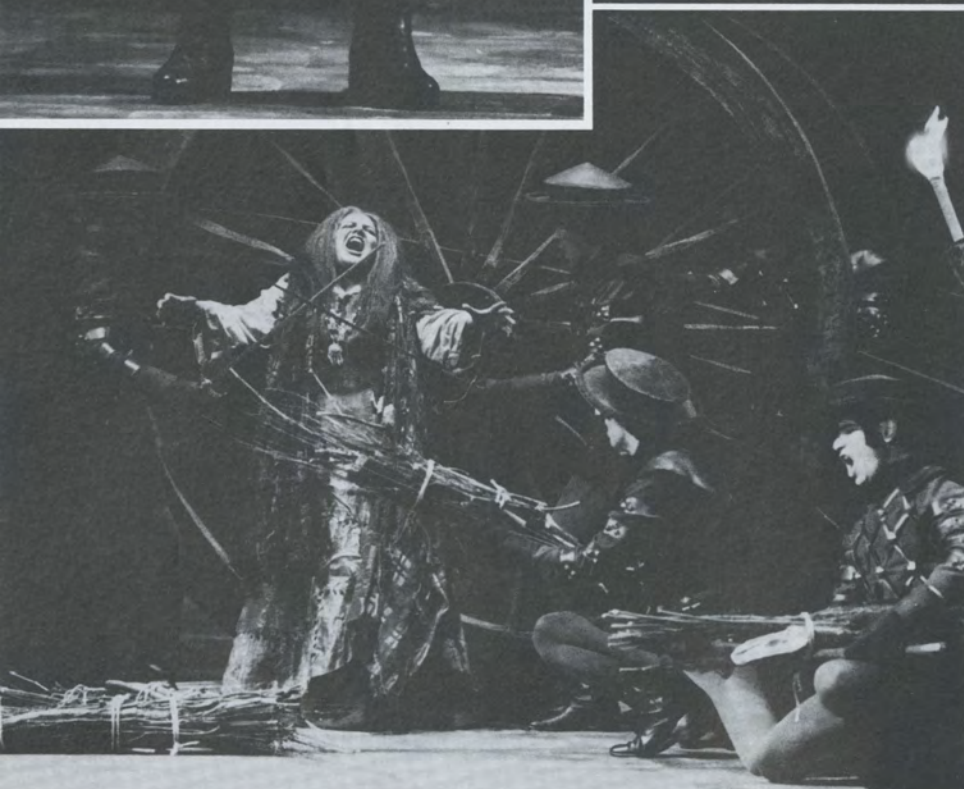
Photos taken in rehearsal by Marty Sohl



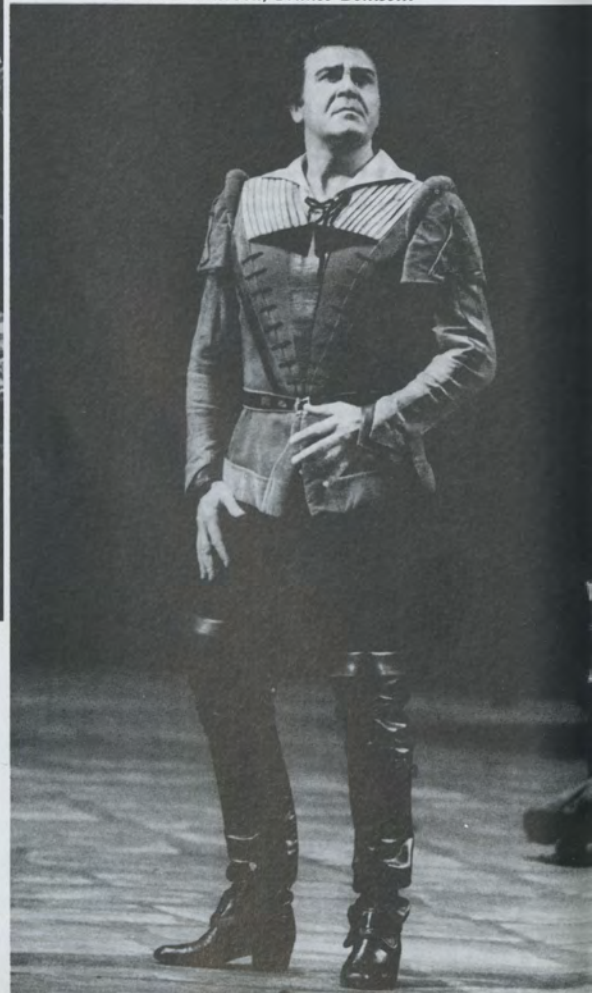
Dolora Zajic, Monte Pederson



Ghena Dimitrova, Franco Bonisoli



Dolora Zajic

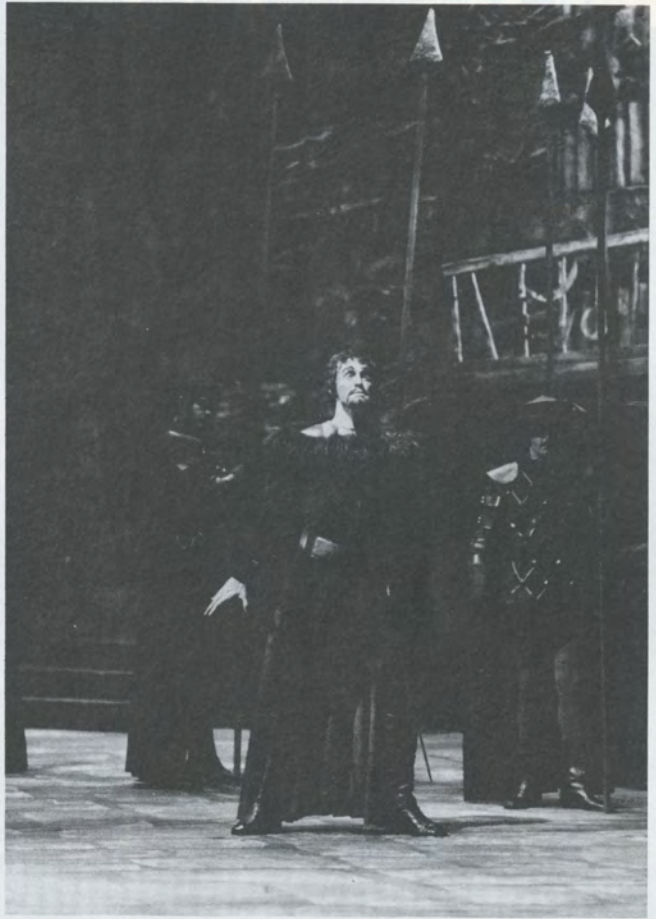


Franco Bonisoli

(above left) Silvano Carroli



Franco Bonisoli, Dennis Petersen



Philip Skinner



Ghena Dimitrova



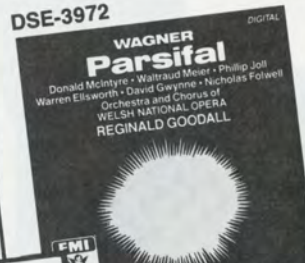
Susan Patterson

(right) Franco Bonisoli, Dolora Zajic



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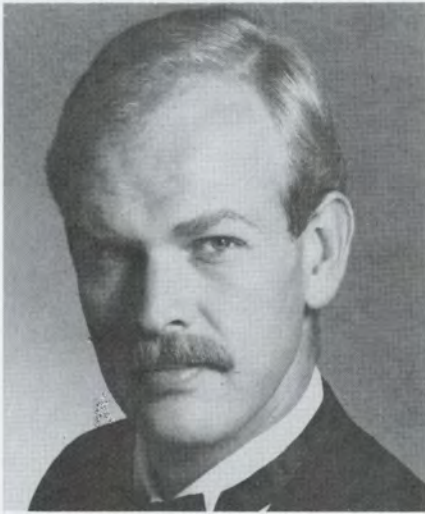
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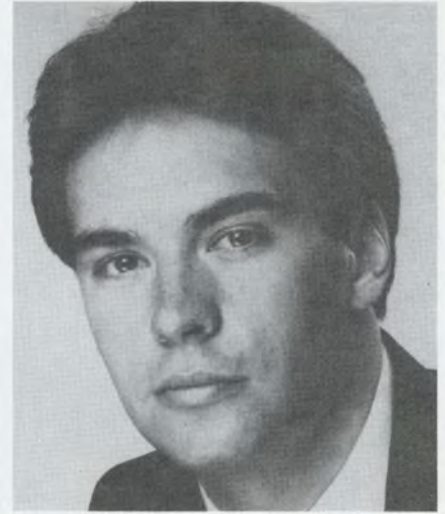
MONTE PEDERSON

continued from p.31

umph as a last-minute replacement for the tenor soloist in Britten's *War Requiem* with the Philadelphia Orchestra; a New York concert series of works by Mozart, Salieri and Haydn; and operetta performances for the New York City Opera Education Department. Petersen returns to San Francisco Opera during the 1986 Fall Season as Don Basilio in *Le Nozze di Figaro* and as Kunz Vogelgesang in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*.

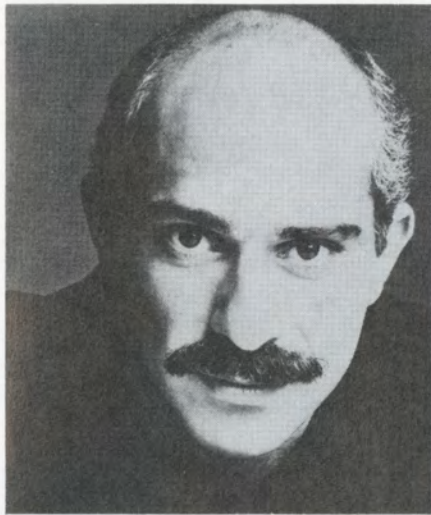
Currently an Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, bass-baritone **Monte Pederson** made his Company debut during the 1985 Fall Season in four roles: a Mandarin in *Turandot*, the Jailer in *Tosca*, the First Mate in *Billy Budd*, and Pistola in the family performances of *Falstaff*. He most recently portrayed Don Geronio in Rossini's *The Turk in Italy* during the Center's Showcase season. Pederson participated in the Merola Opera Programs of 1983 and 1984, appearing in productions of *Falstaff*, *La Cenerentola* and *The Tales of Hoffmann*, and also toured with Western Opera Theater in

Madame Butterfly and *Cenerentola*. He has performed with the North Bay Opera, the Marin Opera, Pocket Opera and Midsummer Mozart Festival. With the Concert Opera Association of San Francisco, Pederson was heard in Donizetti's *Lucrezia Borgia* at Davies Symphony Hall, appeared in Pocket Opera concert presentations of Handel's *Imeneo* (title role), Donizetti's *Maria Stuarda* (Talbot) and *La Cenerentola* (Don Magnifico), and with West Bay Opera in the title role of Wagner's *Der Fliegende Holländer*. Recent performances include the role of the High Priest in Spontini's *La Vestale* with the Concert Opera of S.F., and as bass soloist in Shostakovich's Fourteenth Symphony with the Chamber Symphony of San Francisco. He will sing Dr. Bartolo in *Le Nozze di Figaro* this summer at the Carmel Bach Festival. Pederson appears with San Francisco Opera during the 1986 Summer Season as a gypsy in *Il Trovatore* and as Mr. Gobineau in *The Medium*, and returns to the Company this fall to sing five roles.



KEVIN ANDERSON

Tenor **Kevin Anderson**, who made his San Francisco Opera debut during the 1985 Fall Season as a Servant in *Lear* and as the Prince of Persia in *Turandot*, returns as a Messenger in *Il Trovatore*. A graduate of the University of Wyoming, he participated in the Merola Opera Programs of 1983 and '84, during which he appeared in productions of *The Tales of Hoffmann*, *Madama Butterfly* and *Falstaff*. He toured for two seasons with Western Opera Theater, portraying Goro in *Madame Butterfly* and Ramiro in *La Cenerentola*. He has also toured with the San Francisco Opera Center Singers as Nemorino in *The Elixir of Love*. For the Chautauqua Opera Festival, his credits include the roles of Little Bat in *Susannah* and the Tenor in *The Impresario*, and in 1979 he appeared as Toby in the Central City Opera production of *The Medium*. The Illinois native was a member of the Santa Fe Opera Company Apprentice Program in 1982, and in 1984 he made his Michigan Opera Theatre debut with the company's 1984 residency tour, during which he portrayed Martin in Copland's *The Tender Land*. He has sung in the San Francisco Symphony Pops Concerts series, and his



ANDREW MELTZER

assignments with Pocket Opera include Leicester in *Maria Stuarda* and Pluto in *Orpheus in the Underworld*. Anderson recently made his Carnegie Hall debut in a concert performance of Strauss' *Capriccio*, and made his debut at the Teatro Olimpico in Vicenza in Vivaldi's *Il Giustino*. His Marin Opera credits include Roméo in Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette* and, most recently, the role of Will Parker in *Oklahoma*.

Musical Adviser and Resident Conductor of the San Francisco Opera and the Music Director of the San Francisco Opera Center, **Andrew Meltzer** is on the podium for *Il Trovatore*. He most recently conducted the Center's Showcase production of Rossini's *The Turk in Italy*. Having made his debut with the San Francisco Opera in the 1982 Summer Season with *The Barber of Seville*, he returned for *Così fan tutte* in the summer of 1983 and *Die Fledermaus* in 1984. During the 1983 Fall Season, he led performances of *La Gioconda*. Meltzer made his West Coast conducting debut with Spring Opera Theater in 1974, leading performances of Cavalli's *L'Ormino*, which he also conducted for the 1983 Showcase. In 1974 and '75 he was



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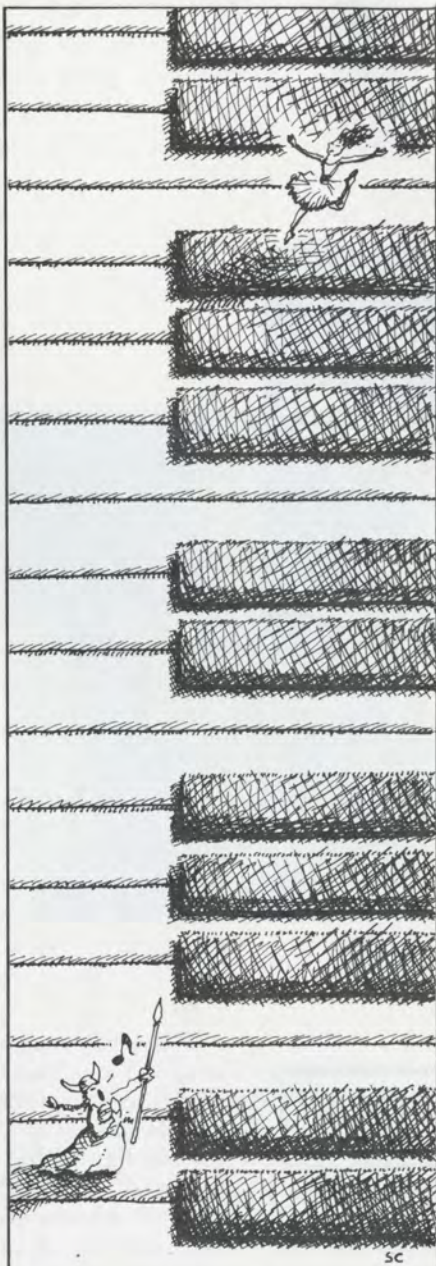
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IRVING GUTTMAN

music director of the Merola Opera Program, conducting *The Magic Flute*, *Carmen* and *The Barber of Seville*, and in 1975 he held the same position for Western Opera Theater, leading performances of *Trouble in Tahiti* and *The Tales of Hoffmann*. In 1984, he was at the podium for the world premiere of Conrad Susa's *The Love of Don Perlimplin* at the State University of New York at Purchase, and in 1985 for the Opera Center Showcase revised version of the same work. He had conducted for the Michigan Opera Theatre, Edmonton Opera, New York City Opera, Vancouver Opera, the Minnesota Opera, Houston Opera and Spoleto Festival USA. Additional credits include the European tour of the Houston Grand Opera production of *Porgy and Bess*, and guest engagements with the Orchestre Lamoureux of Paris. He also led concert performances of *Trouble in Tahiti* and *The Medium* for Radio France, as well as a special Bach Tricentenary concert. This fall, he will lead San Francisco Opera performances of *La Forza del Destino*.

After making his San Francisco Opera debut during the 1983 Summer Season as director of *La Bohème*, Irving Guttman returns to the Company for the 1986 Summer Season to stage *Il Trovatore*. The Canadian director had his first engagement in San Francisco during the 1961 Spring Opera Theater season, directing *Carmen* (Marilyn Horne's first *Carmen* and James King's first *Don José*), and *La Traviata*. He returned the following year for *Manon* and, once again, *La Traviata*. Guttman's first professional stage work was with the Canadian Opera Company. He then entered the field of television, working for Montreal's "L'Heure du Concert" on the CBC French network, staging 65 operatic productions and introducing such Canadian talent as Maureen Forrester, Jon Vickers and Louis Quilico. He made his stage debut at the Montreal Festivals with a production of *The Marriage of Figaro*. His American debut took place in Santa Fe, directing the world premiere of Carlisle Floyd's *Wuthering Heights*. Since then, Guttman has been invited to direct throughout the United States, Canada, Spain and South America for such companies as the Opera Company of Philadelphia, the Portland Opera,

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WOLFRAM SKALICKI

Wolfram Skalicki is the designer of *Il Trovatore*, a production that was originally seen here in 1968 and repeated in 1975 and 1981. His long association with San Francisco Opera began in 1962, with his designs for the Company premiere of *The Rake's Progress*. Other Skalicki settings seen here include *The Queen of Spades*, *Fidelio*, *Parsifal*, *Pelléas et Mélisande*, *Tannhäuser*, *Les Troyens*, *Faust*, the complete 1967-72 Ring cycle, *Aida*, *L'Africaine*, *Andrea Chénier* and *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk (Katerina Ismailova)*. A native of Vienna, the stage designer launched his career with the sets and costumes for a production of *Così fan tutte* at the Vienna Academy of Music, and subsequently became associated with the Vienna Burgtheater. With his wife, costume designer Amrei Skalicki, he has collaborated on productions in Vienna, Lyons, Marseilles, Strasbourg, Dortmund, Munich, Geneva, and other cities. They include designs for *Lulu*, *Giovanna d'Arco*, *Boris Godunov* and *Tristan und Isolde*. Recent productions designed by Skalicki include *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* and *Pelléas et Mélisande*

in Innsbruck, *Un Ballo in Maschera* for Fort Worth Opera, and *Falstaff* and *Death in Venice* for the Canadian Opera Company in Toronto, the latter a Canadian premiere. In addition, his designs have been exhibited in Vienna, Zurich, Bayreuth, New York and San Francisco.

'round Midnight menu

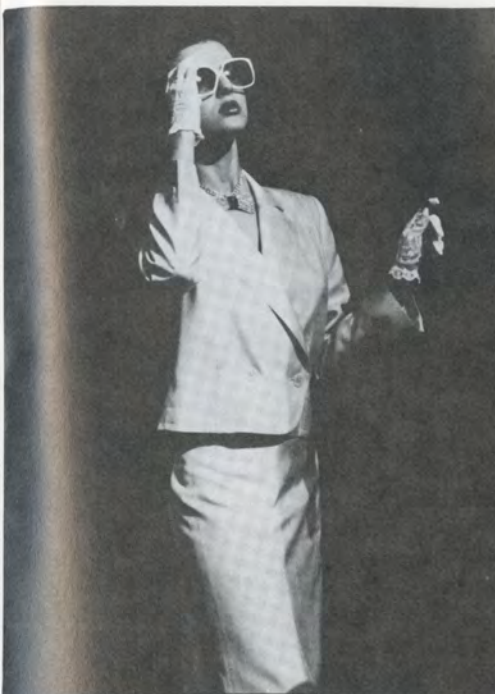
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SIR PETER PEARS
(1910-1986)

Although Peter Pears never sang with the San Francisco Opera, his passing in early April has deeply saddened all of us. Known to everyone through his many superb recordings, he also created leading roles in many world premieres of operas written by his life-long friend Benjamin Britten: the title role of *Peter Grimes*, the Male Chorus in *The Rape of Lucretia*, the title role of *Albert Herring*, Captain Vere in *Billy Budd*, Essex in *Gloriana*, Quint in *The Turn of the Screw*, Flute in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the Madwoman in *Curlew River*, Sir Philip Wingrave in *Owen Wingrave*, and Aschenbach in *Death in Venice*.

During my years in the world of music, I was lucky enough to spend many delightful hours in the company of this extraordinary man. I always felt that the time spent with him was a learning experience. He had the qualities of a benevolent professor, whether analyzing a Schubert song, telling me why I should visit India, or describing his dreams for the Aldeburgh Festival—he always made me feel richer for the conversation we had. He was also one of the most riveting dramatic figures on stage; he could remain absolutely still and make it impossible for you to look elsewhere. Apart from the famous Britten roles, he was a perfect Pandarus in Walton's *Troilus and Cressida* and Tamino in *The Magic Flute*.

The artist's obituary in *The New York Times* ended with a brief sentence: "There are no survivors." This may be a fact, but it is not true. We all mourn, as survivors do, the passing of an exceptional artist, a brilliant musician, and an extraordinary human being.

Terence A. McEwen

Il Trovatore

continued from p.25

unremitting forward thrust, often by a quality which Basevi, the earliest of Verdian scholars, writing during the composer's lifetime, described as "insistenza"—a pounding reiteration of certain melodic figures. The language is that of Italian romantic opera purged of everything purely hedonistic or decorative; the structure is one of opposing forces held in a dynamic equilibrium.

"All you need for *Il Trovatore* are the four greatest singers in the world." Caruso's celebrated dictum exaggerates of course. The part of Azucena, though infinitely rewarding ("If I were a prima donna," Verdi wrote to a friend, "that's the role I would choose to sing!") does not make abnormal demands on the interpreter. The other three principals are a different matter. Not only is the trajectory of their melodies particularly wide; they require a full weight of the expressive power at every point of the compass. In Leonora's "Tacea la notte" the center of vocal gravity seems to rise with every phrase. Verdi's writing for baritone is notoriously high; but in "Il balen del suo sorriso" it is the relatively low first stanza, calling for a quality of rich velvet, that creates problems for the average Count of Luna. Manrico, suspended as he is between the worlds of Leonora and Azucena, needs all the weapons in the tenor's armory. In "Ah si, ben mio; coll'essere" he must be the tenderest of lyrical poets, only a moment later to scale heroic heights in "Di quella pira." However, the sustained high Cs that most Manricos insert into this last were not written by Verdi. They were first introduced by the Roman tenor Enrico Tamberlick, creator of Don Alvaro in *La Forza del Destino*. Famous for his trumpet-toned high notes, he had put a high C sharp into the name-part of Rossini's *Otello*. However, on visiting the composer himself in order to give him a demonstration, he was told firmly to hang up his C sharp in the hall and retrieve it on his way out. With Verdi he was more successful. Having tried out his new parlor trick in the provinces, he asked the composer's permission to perform it at La Scala since "the public will certainly want it." "Far be it from me to deny the public what it wants," Verdi replied drily; "just see to it that it's a good high C." There is no written confirmation of this anecdote; the present writer heard it from Martinelli, who had it from Zenatello. But it has all the marks of authenticity. ■

Summer Season 1986



Claudia Muzio, in Leonora's bridal robes, faces the smiling Manrico of Tandy MacKenzie, a Scottish-Hawaiian tenor who substituted on short notice for the indisposed Francesco Merli. San Francisco Opera, 1932.



Giovanni Martinelli was Manrico; Luisa Silva, Azucena, in San Francisco Opera's 1931 presentation of *Il Trovatore*.

Next, Please...

Those Heart-Stops Called Auditions

By NINA BECKWITH

On a bright January day in New York, a marrow-chilling wind from the Hudson River whips around Morningside Heights. Up there is the Manhattan School of Music; its Borden Hall is this day's venue for the 1986 San Francisco Opera Auditions.

From ten in the morning until six at night—it's utterly dark and much colder by then—young singers afflicted with varying degrees of opera fever pace up and down backstage behind the black curtain, chat with the volunteer who checks them in, or stand wrapped in concentration, waiting for the summons "Next, please." One after another they step through the curtain to the piano on the forestage, handing the accompanist their music, sometimes letting the sheets fall through anxious fingers.

After ten years of voice study—perhaps half their lives—after the university, the conservatory, the studio and workshop performances, in some cases after roles in professional productions, they have five minutes to knock the socks off their hearers and gain entry into the country's most prestigious professional training program, the San Francisco Opera Center.

It's *A Chorus Line* but with a difference. Every one of the 280 singers auditioned that week in New York; every one of the 600 others heard in Denver, Tucson, San Francisco and Chicago, and after New York in Waco, Los Angeles and Seattle, dreams of becoming a Pavarotti or a Pinza, a Te Kanawa or Horne, a Milnes, a Price—you name them: an opera superstar.

They come in all shapes and sizes, from every kind of regional and cultural background, and they need not be Americans (the Auditions are open to all who qualify), though most of them are. They can audition only three times for San Francisco, must be between 20 and 30 years old if they are sopranos, 20 and 34 for all other voice types. Each aspirant must list on the application six operatic (not oratorio) arias he or she is prepared to sing in at least two languages plus English.

The massive job of organizing next year's round of Opera Center Auditions begins in June for the Merola Program's Executive Director Alice Cunningham and her assistant, Suzanne Needles, just when the 20 to 25 successful auditioners

of the preceding winter arrive in San Francisco to begin their Merola training. Over 3,000 applications are sent out, at least half of them at written or phoned requests from individual applicants, each of whom must secure and enclose sealed reference forms from two musical authorities, teachers, coaches or conductors.

When the applications arrive, they must be screened and all the data entered into the computer. "The computer allows us the time to deal in a decent human way with the people, not just the papers," Suzanne Needles says. In each of the eight cities expenses for the hiring of halls, mailings, travel and judging are underwritten by volunteer committees or local opera lovers. In most places money prizes are also donated, to be awarded to the two or three outstanding auditioning singers. And the volunteers themselves are on hand to make the young singers welcome and try to put them at ease before the adrenalizing audition itself.

Last January in New York it got even colder and windier the next day when the Auditions moved downtown to Merkin Hall at Goodman House, near Lincoln Center, the Met, and New York City Opera. Suzanne Needles was in the lobby to welcome the singers along with volunteer Claire Meltzer, who happens to be the mother of Andrew Meltzer, San Francisco Opera's Resident Conductor and Musical Adviser, and the Music Director of the Opera Center.

"It's tough on these young singers," Claire Meltzer feels. "They have to go out cold on that stage and give their all, and that takes a lot of guts. I feel for them. Sometimes I even feel like mothering them."

"Next, please" comes the call. Inside the hall, each candidate has to negotiate the long reach of uneven low steps leading from the lobby doors and then climb a short flight to the stage, the accompanist and the piano. Andy Meltzer greets each one by name, asking which aria is to come first, saying something calming if he feels that the singer is particularly tense.

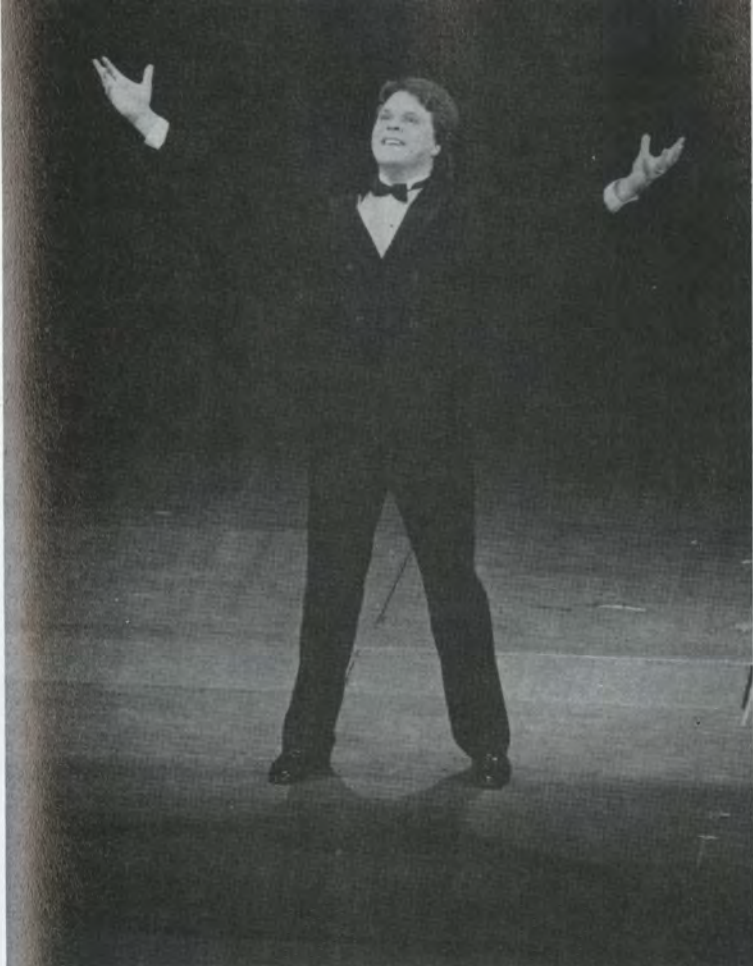
During the next hour, the San Francisco team—Meltzer, Christine Bullin, Manager of the Opera Center, and Matthew Farruggio, the Opera's Production Supervisor—hears "Che gelida manina" six times. They'll hear it many more times since the word is out that one of the

summer operas will be *La Bohème*. But for each young tenor it's a new love scene and he clasps that gelid little hand with all his musical ardor. Several sopranos sing "Come scoglio" from *Così fan tutte* and for each it is just what the text implies—a reef on which she must not founder. Some are simply not yet able to command the technical skill needed for such arias. Some skate right through, tossing off whatever they are asked to sing with apparent ease. There are people who audition well, just as there are good exam students. But the judges must imagine how that voice will sound to an audience throughout an evening, not only an aria, and whether that young artist has the capacity to give a varied performance. At the end, Meltzer says "Thank you." Very few of the singers reply with more than "Thank you." But when those few say something like "It was a pleasure to sing for you," everyone smiles.

For two more days the pageant continues. Most of the voices are adequately trained; the Italian, French and German diction is passable; the movements contained. Once in a while there is an unusually beautiful voice; a very musical, expressive rendition; an especially attractive young man or woman, already poised and comfortable on the stage. If a long scene is chosen, Meltzer warns the singer that he may stop him or her and ask for another kind of aria. Only rarely do the judges exchange brief remarks *sotto voce*. They watch and they listen with seemingly untiring attention.

The admirable accompanist for all the New York auditions this year is Martha Gerhart. She has been coaching singers for 20 years, seven of them with the Merola Program. During one of her brief breaks, she talks about the challenges auditions present. "Some singers don't even mark the cuts they will make in their music," she says. "They're just not sufficiently prepared. Others audition just for the experience. It isn't easy for the singers to show all they have in that short time, nor is it easy to listen to each one with the curiosity and the patience needed to make that important choice.

Nina Beckwith is a free-lance writer specializing in arts. A former Time magazine overseas correspondent, she writes and edits Bene Legere, the newsletter of the General Library, U.C. Berkeley.



Mark Delavan concludes his aria at the 1985 San Francisco Opera Center Audition Grand Finals. The bass-baritone was heard this spring in two leading parts of the Showcase season, and is making his debut with the San Francisco Opera this fall with roles in *Faust*, *Eugene Onegin* and *Manon*.



Soprano Katherine Harris waits in an Opera House dressing room during the 1985 Audition Grand Finals. PHILLIPS

"I'm for the singers. They're so desperately hopeful. But they shouldn't be encouraged to go out and audition too soon. Go when you're ready to win it."

Coincidentally, that evening on television there's a program about the young Scottish opera star Isobel Buchanan, who is shown coaching with Sir John Pritchard, San Francisco Opera's new Music Director. "She needs the informed listener," he says. "All young singers do. Good as she is, she can't dig it out all on her own."

On Friday, the finalists are called. The tension level is noticeably higher but so is the level of vocal quality and artistry. Winnowed down to 29, the finalists are given a bit more time for their arias and occasionally asked to do something they hadn't planned. "How's your high E-Flat?" Meltzer asks soprano Donna Zapola. "Hit it!" She does and it comes out ringing. "Good," he says, smiling.

That afternoon the finalists gather in an upstairs room for the awarding of cash prizes to the three of them judged to have given the best performances, and for something they all find even more rewarding. Each one has the opportunity for a

private talk with each of their listener/judges.

With their suitcases piled in a corner, Bullin, Meltzer, and Farruggio spend two hours talking with the singers, giving reactions and suggestions when they are asked, getting to know how they feel about themselves and their careers. Decisions may have been made, but at this time they are not made known. There is a plane to catch and three more cities to cover. As it turned out, eleven of the New York auditioners were accepted into the Opera Center programs, out of a total 1986 group of 24.

One of those waiting that day to talk with Meltzer was mezzo-soprano Emily Manhart. She was in the Merola Program two years ago and toured with Western Opera Theater in *La Cenerentola*. She now lives in New York, has been giving a number of auditions, and wants to return to Merola this year.

"Auditions are always heart-stops," she says. "Thomas Stewart says that the best thing about having an established career is that you don't have to audition any more.

"It's very different from performing.

Not only do you go on alone and cold, no orchestra, no staging, but it's another thing to sustain a character throughout an entire performance and have others around you to help you be that character. In an audition it's 'OK, thank you. Now we'd like to hear...' and you've got to switch to something else.

"A day doesn't go by that I don't think of something I've gotten from Merola, including help with auditions themselves. Ethel Evans coached us. I didn't realize at the time how important the things she said were going to be. For instance, she told us 'When you're singing a hard passage, don't move around. People don't want to be distracted: they want to hear the high notes or the fast coloratura.' There are many arias I've worked on where I've decided that here I'm going to 'do an Ethel:' hold it till the hard part's over.

"The San Francisco auditioners are much friendlier than others. You know that they're listening attentively to you. In many auditions the people sit there and eat their bologna sandwiches and write letters and talk right through. Here you can get reactions from the people right



General Director Terence A. McEwen congratulates mezzo-soprano Dolora Zajic at the Audition Grand Finals' 1983 awards ceremony. Opera Center Manager Christine Bullin stands behind Miss Zajic; seen applauding are Western Opera Theater Music Director Evan Whallon (l.) and Merola Opera Program President James Schwabacher.

afterward, the little steers. How else are you going to know? I was in one competition where I asked for comments and was told I had to wait a year."

While opera lore abounds with audition success stories, such as George London's being signed on the spot by the Vienna State Opera and offered Amosro in *Aida*, a role he had never studied, much less performed, there are far fewer accounts by those whose job it is to listen to auditions and make the fateful decisions.

Halfway through the New York round, Andrew Meltzer talked in his hotel room, where he was swallowing quantities of vitamin C to stave off flu and fatigue. In addition to hearing all the singers, he had spent an extra day auditioning young pianist-coaches, four of whom are accepted for the Merola Program each year. If auditioning as a singer seems rough enough, try sight-reading the rapid-fire Gypsy dance from the second act of *Carmen* and singing it to your own accompaniment, which is the kind of thing these musicians have to be able to do.

"We have the reputation of being the best audition to go to in terms of making the singers feel most comfortable, most encouraged, treated most humanely—like people," he says. "I like that, I'm proud of it and I wouldn't do anything to lose it. But it takes a lot of work to get that reputation. It's tiring, but so is conducting an opera like *Trovatore* and I like that, too. I try to encourage people to do their best and that requires being courteous and

friendly always, and paying close individual attention to them. I want to hear their best because that's the only way to find out if they've got anything special.

"Without these young artists there's no San Francisco Opera Center. They are what it's about. It also feeds into the main Company, giving us singers for the fall and summer seasons, and enabling us to present interesting repertoire in the *Showcase* seasons. It's all part of the artistic life of the Company. The creation of the Opera Center was meant to help young singers and give them a home base for an extended period when they can in fact earn their living singing and increase their knowledge and skill."

Meltzer first came to San Francisco in 1974, when he was still in his twenties, as Music Director of the Merola Program and Western Opera Theater for three years. In January of 1982 he returned as Resident Conductor and Musical Adviser to the Opera and became Music Director of the Opera Center when it was formed that year.

Asked to spell out what he looks for in opera aspirants, he says "Voice first. But I'm also looking for someone who's artistic, who communicates, someone who is musical. A singer who doesn't move me as being musical I would not be likely to take, no matter how gorgeous the voice.

"We hear a lot of good voices, musical, well coached. Most of the singers are attractive but not creative: they haven't yet given themselves permission to be creative. Only a very few get hold of a

piece of music and whether you like it or not, they communicate it to you. Talent is what I look for, and personality. I have to think of what it's going to be like to live with these people in the Opera House and on tour with Western Opera Theater.

"Sometimes we hear a particularly talented artist who may never be a principal and we encourage that also. I don't want only future Mimis and Rodolfos. We have a young woman in the Adler Fellowship Program now who may become one of the great character singers. It will depend on her development, but when we heard her audition there was such an obvious theatrical talent that ignoring it would have been foolish."

As Musical Adviser to General Director Terry McEwen, Meltzer is closely concerned with the esthetic of San Francisco Opera as a whole. "Terry and I knew when we started working together that we have very similar tastes in singing and in the art form itself," he says. "That was what he needed in someone in my job. He solicits my advice, he believes in my taste. Of course we disagree on occasion, but generally we see things the same way."

McEwen calls the audition team "one of the secrets of our success. Andy, Christine, Matt Farruggio and Jimmy Schwabacher are all vocal enthusiasts and connoisseurs. I trust their vocal judgment, not only as individuals but as a group because they balance each other beautifully. If they hear something extraordinary, I can be sure that we're not going to miss a young Chaliapin or a young Caruso just because we don't happen to have

another bass or tenor part."

CASTING is naturally an important consideration during the Auditions, now that the various parts of the Opera Center have become coordinated into a continuing sequence of performance and career development opportunities. One of the Merola summer operas becomes the Western Opera Theater fall and winter touring production, with double and even triple casts. Now the largest opera touring company in the nation, Western Opera Theater tours to 18 states from coast to coast, giving young singers unmatched professional performing experience.

It was not ever thus. James Schwabacher has been listening to auditions for close to 40 years and has been President of the Merola Opera Program since it was started in 1957. He himself auditioned for Gaetano Merola, founder of San Francisco Opera "but he didn't have much background on me," he recalls. "The third time I auditioned for Merola he gave me the role of Tamino in *The Magic Flute* and then various comprimario roles which weren't good for me. Now we hear our young singers again and again in coaching sessions and performances, and we feel fairly certain that we know what they can do on the stage and what's right for them.

"In the old days," Schwabacher remembers, "we went all over the West with Kurt Herbert Adler and Matt Farnuggio, before the Auditions became nationwide, and we did find singers but they weren't ready for us. That's how the Merola Program started, because we decided to train our own young singers. Now it's part of the Opera Center and we're getting more and better singers to audition for us because they know it's a real bridge to San Francisco Opera."

Christine Bullin confirms that even compared to five or ten years ago the level of young American singers has risen dramatically. "And now the best ones are finding their way to us," she says. "Auditions can be heart-stops for us, too. We're looking for that person to come out and be IT. We go into auditions with a lot of enthusiasm, also because the stakes are very high. We've achieved a lot, we've committed ourselves to a lot, and it's to our advantage to keep fresh and make good decisions because we have so much riding on it.

"It's very important to have those talks afterward with the singers," she feels, "to get them up close and look into their eyes and see what's in there. If you have two people who are comparably

talented and one is an ungracious person or one whose eyes are dead, that has to enter into the decision. The way they respond to criticism is also an indication. It's hard for anyone to sit there and take it, but singers might as well know that in their lives, especially at this stage, if they come here that's what they're going to get, every single day.

"Each one is breaking the fear barrier, and how they deal with the fear you know they feel is another important element. Often people who are very proficient at auditioning turn out to be essentially cold and when you get them on an opera stage, they just . . . disappear."

She vividly remembers the auditions of the singers who are now San Francisco's brightest rising young stars, among them Cheryl Parrish, Ruth Ann Swenson, Dolora Zajic, David Malis, and Jacob Will. "Not only how they sang," she says, "but what they conveyed of magnetism and of their qualities as people. Of course there's an undeniable satisfaction in seeing your judgment vindicated."

A lovely vindication happened this year while the New York auditions were going on. There were Christine, Andy, and Matt, listening to those hundreds of people who wanted in. Down the street there was Cheryl Parrish appearing in the "Pavarotti Plus" special on national television with Pavarotti himself and a group of America's most promising young singers.

That fear barrier can have its uses for a singer, as David Malis has found. "Fear is an emotion, and you can learn to turn it into the feeling you need for the piece you are singing," he says. "Otherwise it beats you down. Besides, there's really less pressure than when you sing for your peers, for people you know. An audition is an opportunity to test yourself against yourself. You've done the woodshedding work, now get out there and perform."

He knows whereof he speaks. An Adler Fellow in 1983 and 1984, Malis is the winner of a National Institute of Musical Theater first prize, and of the 1985 *Singer of the World* Contest, held in Cardiff, Wales, and sponsored by the British Broadcasting Corporation. This summer he appears in *Pagliacci*.

Dolora Zajic, who sings the role of Azucena in *Il Trovatore*, thinks that "auditions are marvellous experience. It's not only the performance they judge: it's how you walk on stage, how you present yourself, hold yourself. They can tell about your confidence the minute you open the door.

STEVENS



Bass Kevin Langan on the Opera House stage, rehearsing for the 1979 Audition Finals.

CUNNINGHAM



Mezzo-soprano Kathryn Cowdrick auditions for the General Director in the set of San Francisco Opera's 1984 *Don Pasquale*.



The 1985 Family Performances cast of *Falstaff* was virtually a list of Opera Center members. Top row, l. to r.: Monte Pederson (*Pistola*), Dolora Zajic (*Quickly*), Gretchen Mueller (stage manager), Dennis Petersen (*Bardolfo*), Robin Thompson (stage director), Richard Pendergraph (*Falstaff*), Andrew Meltzer (conductor; Opera Center music director), Joseph De Rugeris (prompter), Nikki Li Hartliep (*Alice*), David Malis (*Ford*), Elizabeth Bachman (production assistant). Bottom row, l. to r.: Lori Harrison and Bess Sherman (production assistants), Daniel Harper (*Dr. Caius*), Sasha Radetsky (*Falstaff's page*), Kathryn Cowdrick (*Meg*), Li-Chan Chen (*Nannetta*), James Schwisow (*Fenton*), Paula Williams and Laurie Feldman, assistant stage directors.

"One of the important things auditions teach you is what pieces work best for you," she says. "Singers should sing what they do best; that's one of the signs of an artist who knows where he or she is going. Young singers are often so anxious to get the job or the prize or the grant they don't realize that what they are getting is the door closed in their faces by doing pieces not right for them or that they're not sure of. Sing what you feel good singing."

New York was the last city to be added to the San Francisco audition rounds. Earlier there had been some doubts because so many other opera companies auditioned in New York. But Matthew Farruggio, who started auditioning for San Francisco in 1957, and who has staged nearly all of the Merola Program productions since then, plus a great many operas on the War Memorial stage including this summer's *Lucia di Lammermoor*, feels that "the more opportunities you give young singers, the better chance they have of succeeding. They need the exposure, they need the experience of being heard."

"If you're in the business," he says, "you can tell pretty much in five minutes what a voice can do, whether the singer is doing the right material or the wrong. You also have to find out in those five minutes what kind of an artist this person

is, whether the charisma is there. A lot of people who can't audition well, who are constricted by the fear, the sweat, may turn out to be good performers. You learn to tell by experience. I wouldn't have known how to listen to auditions if I hadn't done it myself. I spent many years trying to get jobs in show business in New York and sometimes it worked and sometimes it didn't. Obviously it worked enough for me to stay alive.

"You could sense, almost smell, the excitement and the fear. Very often it would affect you. When you see people backstage at auditions, waiting to be called, they don't congregate and talk to one another; they separate in seventeen directions. They are trying to collect themselves in order to do what they have to do. You have to have been there to understand, either through your own profession or through a lot of exposure to it."

What Farruggio looks for in auditions is the person "who is—horrible word—exploitable." At the Opera Center, unlike the conservatory or workshop, they don't have months to learn a role. They may have four weeks, if they're lucky, or they may have to learn a role and be ready to perform in no time at all. "The tempo, the whole fiber of their existence is performing, with the proper training on a professional level," he says. "That's why the

Opera Center is so fantastic. We were thinking of this kind of thing back in the '50s and in the '80s it has become what one dreamed it would be.

"We bring these young people into a world-class opera company. We tell them 'You are going to be working with great artists and you have to be good enough to be onstage with those Dames—Joan Sutherland, Kiri Te Kanawa, Gwyneth Jones.'

"In the early days there were times when we had 250 people audition in a period of a few days and maybe we'd find two singers. Then everybody came, so we said they must have three arias, then four, and now it's six in three languages which takes out the people who are not really meant to be in the business because they haven't become interested enough to do those things, or they're too young to know.

"One time there was a lady who came in and said she wanted to accompany herself on the zither. We let her. That gal could have had a job in any club in the world—it was lovely. But how many operas do you know where somebody accompanies herself on a zither? Another time a woman came in and said 'I want to sing "M'appari"' (from the opera *Martha*, one of Caruso's big numbers). I said, 'Well, that's a tenor aria.' 'I know,' she said, 'but I like it.' ■

These People Are Having The Real Fun: The Medallion Society

By DON McCONNELL

What gives Opera patrons the chance to see the Chairman of the Board put his hand in the mouth of a bear from *Siegfried*, to be the first to see the set of a new production, or to complete an Opera evening by dining with the cast? Through contributing to the San Francisco Opera, and particularly by joining the Medallion Society, these and other unique, interesting, and conversation-inspiring opportunities can become part of one's Opera experience.

The most generous of the Opera's donors belong to the Medallion Society. The Society consists of people who donate \$1,500 or more annually. There are thirteen categories for opera contributors, beginning with Guild member (\$30-\$59) and concluding with the Medici Circle (\$50,000 and up). The distinction between the groups lies in the level of benefits donors receive. And these become notably more individual and more fun at the level of the Medallion Society.

What kinds of benefits can the Opera afford to give? Obviously, the Opera tries to contain the cost of benefits: donors expect that their money will be used to strengthen performances, not be returned to them as expensive benefits. What the Opera can offer is entry to the theatrical world of opera production. Opera singers often love to meet their fans, but seldom 1,000 at a time. The same is true of stage designers and costumers. The level of involvement and contact with the people who make opera happen is far greater for Society members.

For one thing, they have their own "staff" at the Opera, and a Medallion Society phone number to call. Molly Waste, Patron Services Manager, and an assistant spend much of their time handling Society member requests. They act as intermediaries with the ticket office, catering services, parking attendants, and the dozen other aspects of opera-going. They also attend most performances to extend a personal welcome to members.

Many of the benefits are planned and hosted by the Society's volunteer officers. The Society president is the tireless and

Don McConnell is an opera subscriber and a former marketing and corporate affairs executive for a national retail chain. He is now a freelance writer living in Oakland.

dedicated Harriet Meyer Quarré, who herself credits much of the success of recent Society events to her co-chairs, Mrs. John Renshaw and Mrs. Gordon Bellis.

Free (and secure) parking. Some of the most attractive Society benefits are the most mundane. The most popular benefit is parking privileges.

The nearby Performing Arts Garage is



Baritone James Morris and Carol Buck Sells at the 1985 Medallion Society Awards Luncheon.



Having been lured to the podium by a trio of Rhinemaidens, General Director Terence A. McEwen is serenaded by basses Kevin Langan and James Patterson. The occasion was the 1985 Medallion Society Awards Luncheon.



San Francisco Opera's Costume Director Jenny Green points out some accessory details during a tour of the Costume Shop, as Medallion Society members look on.

usually full by performance time. Society members, however, have space set aside for their use, without charge. When the garage is turning away other cars, room is still found for members who are subscribers.

The nicest luncheon of the season. It's the nicest for opera lovers, anyway. This event, at which awards are given to major donors, is held in early December in the foyer of the opera house, which is transformed into an elegant dining room. Members of the Company sit with Society members at small tables.

The high points of the 1985 luncheon were the surprises. The program went according to plan for a while: James Morris, the Wotan and Scarpia of last season, took on a lighter role as the Man of La Mancha, and General Director Terence McEwen presented awards to the four major funders of the *Ring*. Suddenly the Rhinemaidens appeared, luring McEwen to the dais where he was greeted by Kevin Langan and James Patterson singing a special duet dedicated to him.

The Awards Luncheon (as well as the Society) is only three years old, but by last year its reputation brought a flurry of last-minute requests for tickets.

The best seats at rehearsals. Several dress rehearsals during the season are open to donor categories below \$1,500. For many people, these are as much fun as the performances, more fun for fans of the unexpected. As a result, some open rehearsals are crowded, particularly since nobody may sit on the orchestra level. If you have the energy, you can get a good seat, because no seats are reserved—except for Society members. Society members show their passes and are seated at the box level. There is also a dress

rehearsal set aside only for members of the Medallion Society.

All of these benefits are available to members in the first category, \$1,500 to \$2,499. At levels above that, the number of donors becomes smaller and the acknowledgements even more special.

You can become more deeply acquainted with the production of an opera at each higher level of Society membership. At the level of \$2,500 and above, members can attend the first "OCA" (or orchestra/chorus/artists) rehearsal in the stage set. It's the point at which the forces of an opera are brought together, and the unforeseen can occur.

Another popular benefit at this level is a close look at some phase of opera production. Last year it was the Opera's costume shop, a unit with an international reputation. Society members met at the Opera and boarded a chartered bus which took them to the shop's Market Street address. Inside, Jenny Green, the Opera's resident costuming genius, explained the mysteries of the craft.

She explained that the gowns are made of silk or other natural fabrics rather than synthetics. Under the intense lights of the stage, the difference is obvious. More importantly, the singers are working hard and need fabrics that breathe. To complete the "field trip" atmosphere, discussion continued over box lunches, served at the shop's workbenches.

At the donor level of \$5,000 and above, members are invited to a buffet dinner hosted by Terry McEwen, scheduled just before a dress rehearsal. Terry, a world-class raconteur, briefs members on the performance to come, occasionally noting which artists are nervous, singing new roles, or suffering throat ailments. For

Society members at this level, the Opera will also arrange a private operatic recital for a private party or business function. The expenses are borne by the member, but the ability to arrange such a function is open only to Society members.

Upper level benefits. Those giving \$10,000 or more are invited to a cast party after a performance. Last year, Society members met the cast of *Falstaff*, and the party was held at the Pacific Heights home of a member of the Opera Board. Ingvar Wixell turned out to be the wit of the party offstage as well as on, and Mrs. Wixell equalled him in charm. The party began after the performance and continued into the morning hours, both inside the house and in a tent on the lawn.

Donors of \$25,000 or more are invited to a private meeting with the General Director, Chairman of the Board, and President of the Opera, or they may prefer to follow a new opera production through all of its stages. Those who give \$50,000 or more are invited to a private dinner with the General Director and cast members before a rehearsal. At these levels, of course, contributors can arrange activities that suit their special needs or tastes.

The primary benefit. Society activities have brought real pleasure to members. Still it's obvious that contributors do not put a hard dollar value on the benefits they receive. The real reason they contribute is to allow the San Francisco Opera to mount productions the equal of any in the world. The ability to see such productions within a few miles of home is the primary and compelling benefit. Happily enough, it's a benefit not exclusive to Society members; they share it with everyone who attends a performance. ■

Services

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

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

Look for this bus, marked "47 Special," after each performance in the bus zone at Van Ness Avenue and Grove Street—across Van Ness from the Opera House. Its route is: North on Van Ness to Chestnut, then left to Divisadero where it turns left to Union. It continues on Union over Russian Hill to Columbus, then left to Powell—then right to the end of the line at North Point.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Children of any age attending a performance must have a ticket.

Management reserves the right to remove any patron creating a disturbance.

For lost and found information, inquire at check room No. 3 or call (415) 621-6600, 9 A.M. to 4 P.M. For the safety and comfort of our audience all large parcels, backpacks, luggage, etc., must be checked at the Opera House cloakrooms.

Taxi Service Patrons needing a cab at the end of the performance should reserve one with the doorman at the Taxi Entrance before the end of the final intermission.

Performing Arts Center Tours Tours of the San Francisco Performing Arts Center, which include the War Memorial Opera House, the Louise M. Davies Symphony Hall and the Herbst Theatre take place as follows: Mondays, 10:00-2:30 on the hour and half hour. Davies Hall only: Wednesday 1:30/2:30—Saturday 12:30/1:30. All tours leave from Davies Symphony Hall, Grove Street entrance. General \$3.00—Seniors/Students \$2.00. For further information, please call (415) 552-8338.

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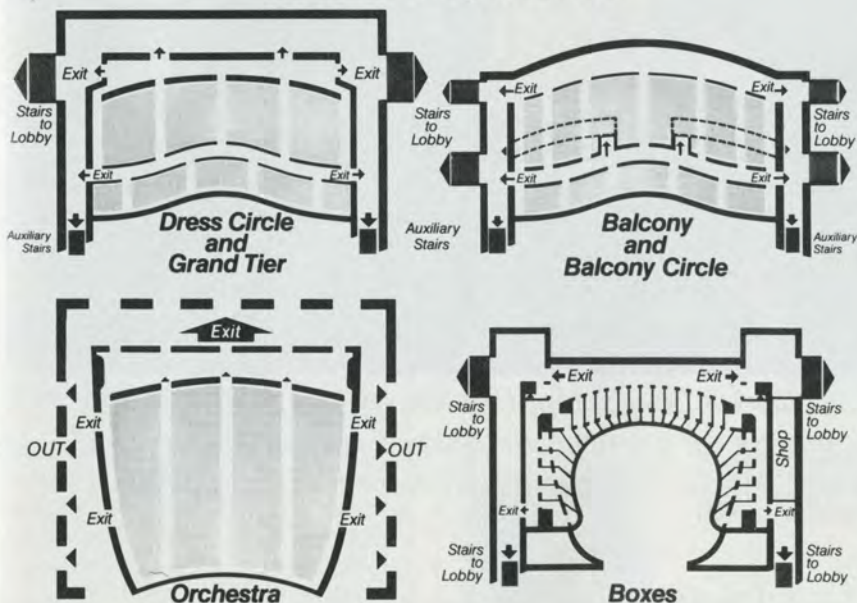
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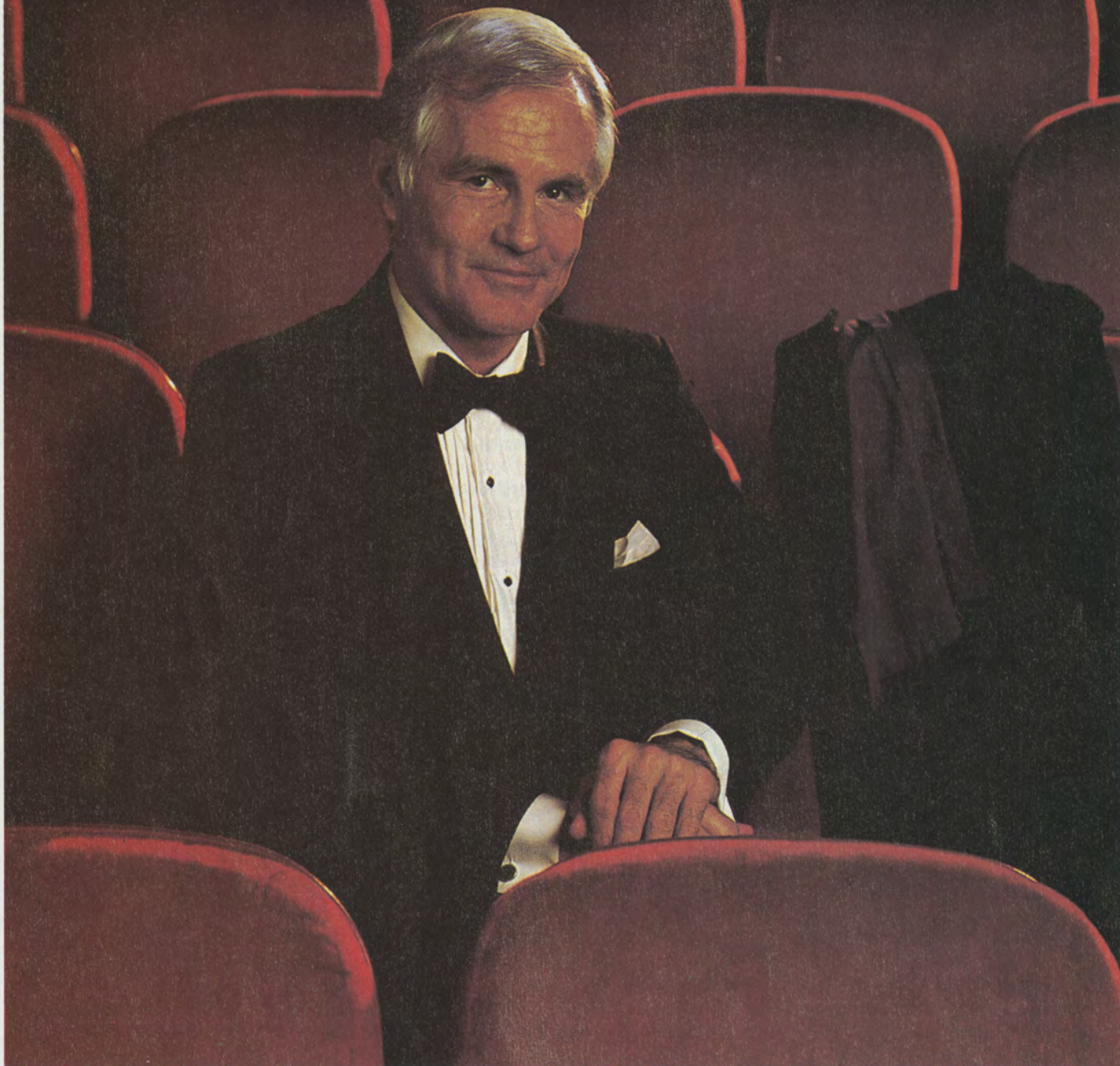
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CAV/PAG 8pm	TRUOVATORE 8pm	CAV/PAG 7:30pm		LUCIA 8pm	TRUOVATORE 8pm	CAV/PAG 8pm
8	9	10	★ 11	12	13	14
LUCIA 8pm	CAV/PAG 8pm	LUCIA 7:30pm		TRUOVATORE 8pm	CAV/PAG 8pm	
15	16	17	18	19	★ 20	21
TRUOVATORE 2pm	CAV/PAG 7:30pm	TRUOVATORE 7:30pm	VOCE/MEDIUM 8pm	LUCIA 8pm		VOCE/MEDIUM 8pm
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
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Medallion



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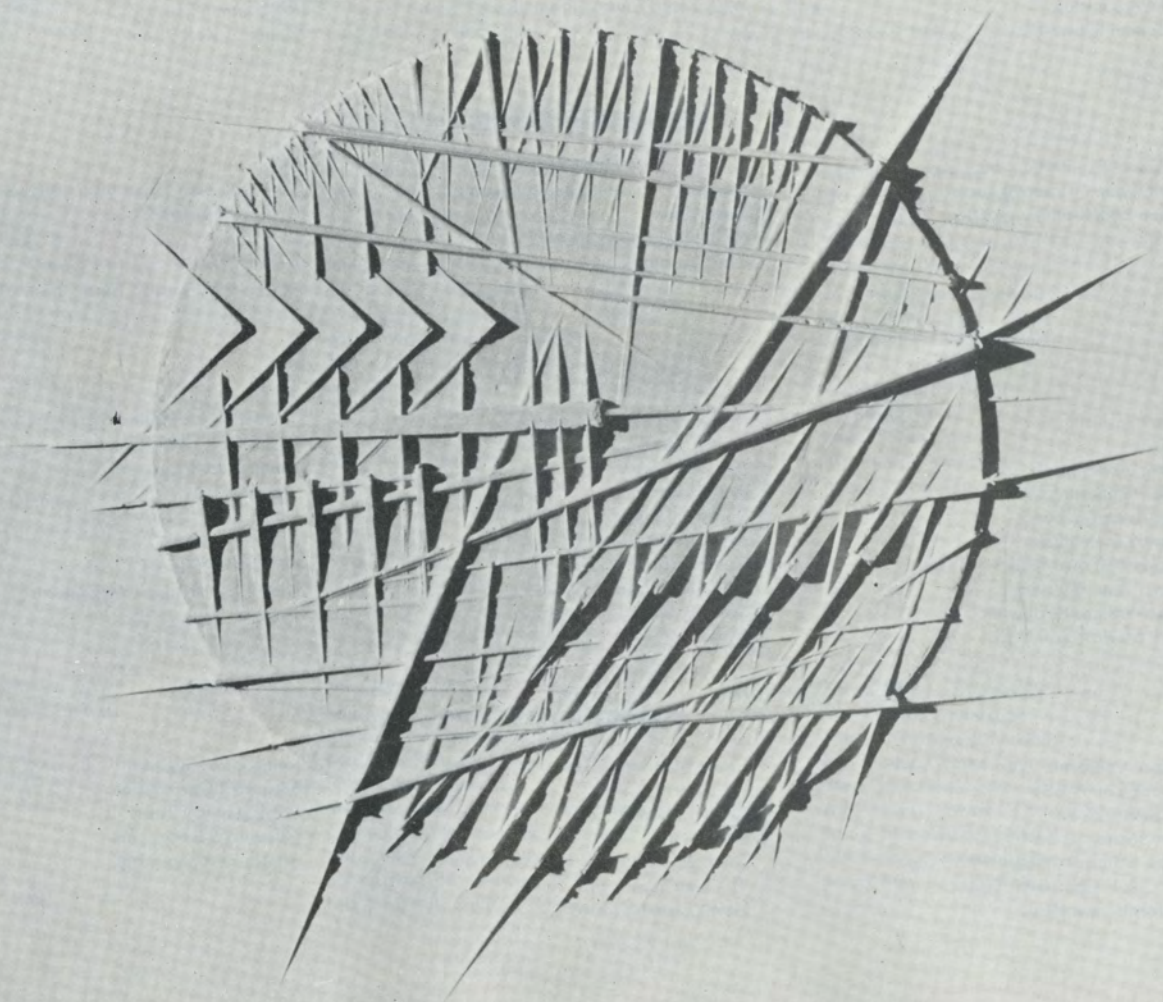
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All rehearsals are subject to space availability, change of scheduling, and management decisions.

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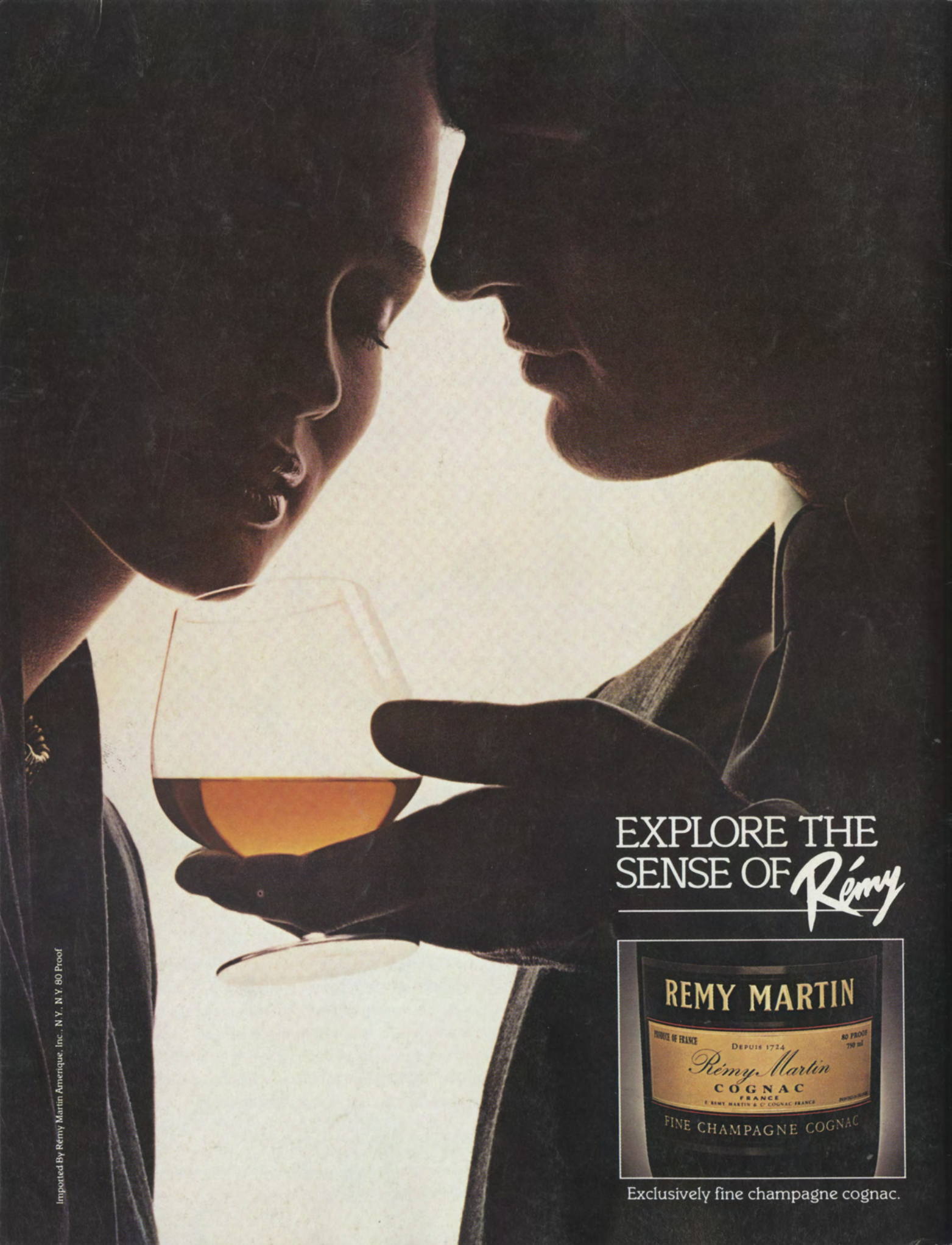
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PIERO CAPPUCILLI

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

