Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg
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1986

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Thursday, October 23, 1986 7:00 PM
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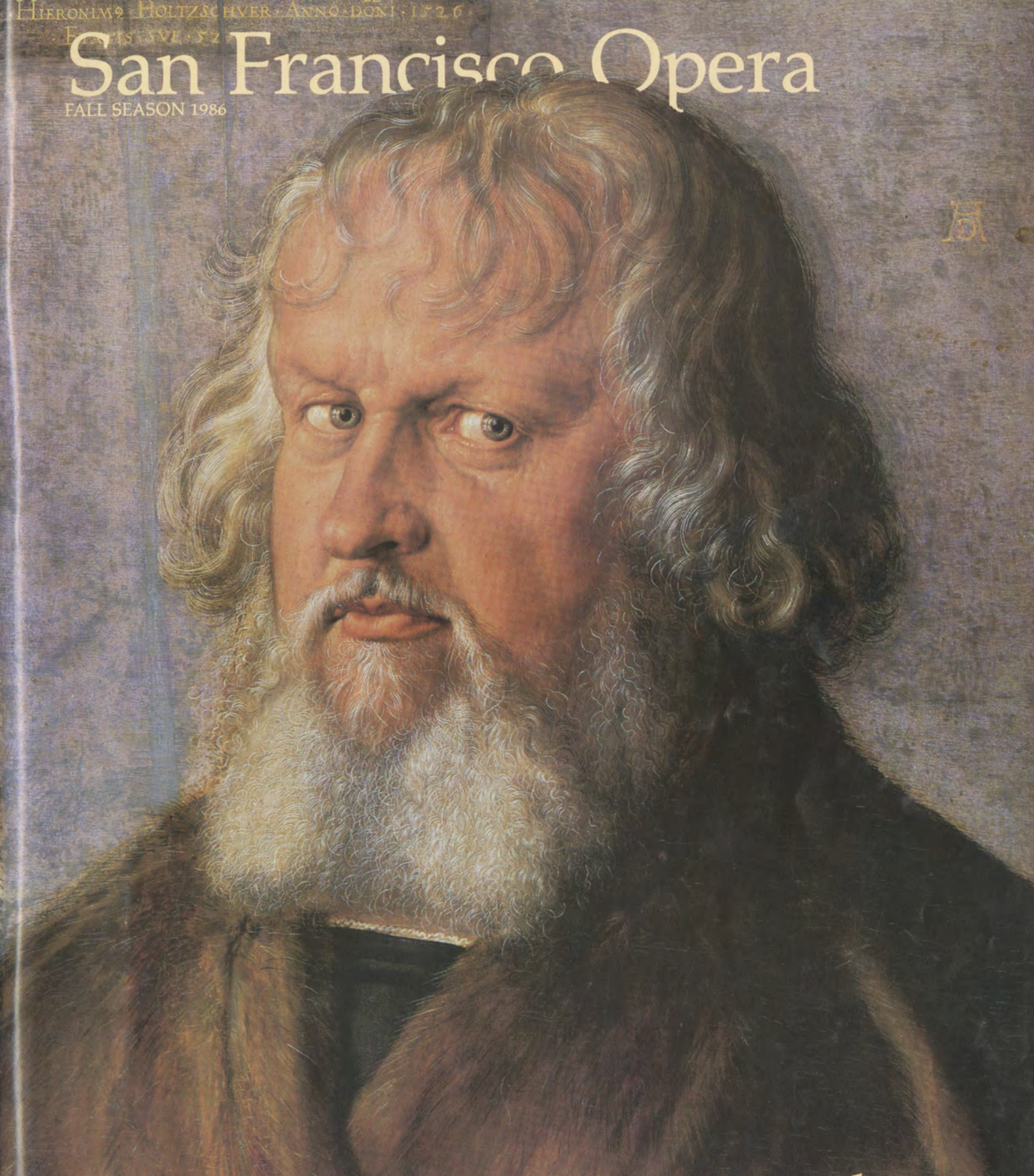
FALL SEASON 1986



Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg

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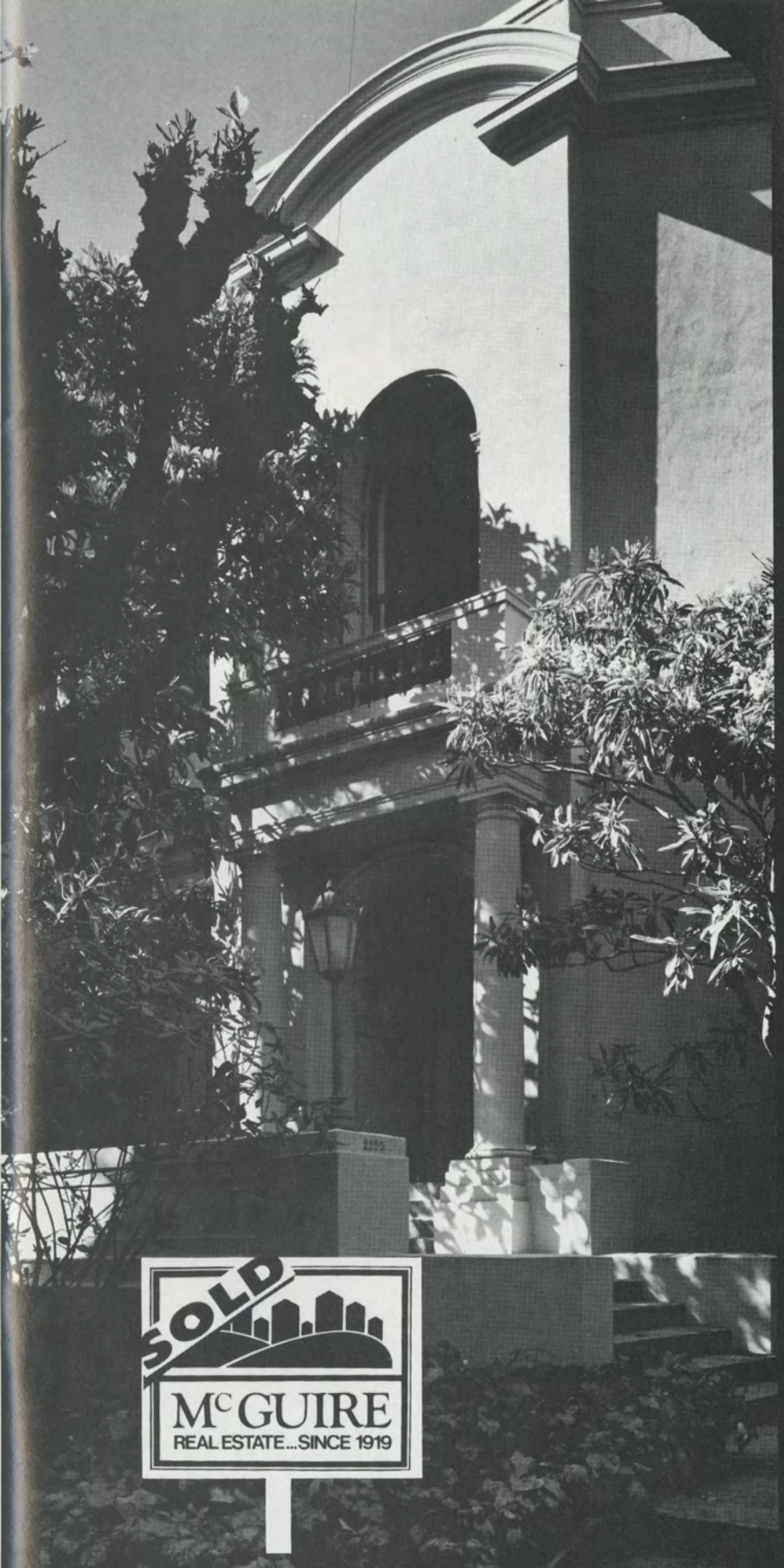

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Terence A. McEwen, *General Director* — Sir John Pritchard, *Music Director*

Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg

FALL SEASON 1986

FEATURES

DEPARTMENTS

COVER:

Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528)
Hieronymus Holzschuher, 1526
Oil on linden wood, 48 x 36 cm

Gemäldegalerie
Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz,
Berlin (West)

Photo: Jörg P. Anders, Berlin

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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

At the beginning of San Francisco Opera's 1986 fall program, we have the pleasure of welcoming you once again to a season that combines repertory favorites with masterpieces less frequently encountered on the opera stages of the western world. During the course of the season, the curtain will go up on ten operas, three of which will be presented in totally new productions. The ten operas that make up our fall repertoire will be staged in both traditional and modern ways and will echo with the sounds of five different languages, all made accessible by a popular innovation, Supertitles.

The San Francisco Opera is fortunate in having a staunch group of supporters, whose generosity is vividly reflected in this fall's season. Our new productions will come to us through the courtesy of three generous donors: Mr. Evert B. Person underwrote our new *Don Carlos*, which will be given for the first time in its original French; a much-needed new production of a repertory favorite, *La Bohème*, will be presented in memory of George L. Quist; and *Macbeth*, in a strikingly new format, will come to us through the generous grant of the L.J. Skaggs and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation.

Four of our revival productions will be presented through the courtesy of AT&T (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), Bernard and Barbro Osher (*Jenůfa*), Friends of Richard K. Miller (*La Forza del Destino*), and Mr. and Mrs. J. Frederick Kohlenberg (*Manon*).

A generous grant from Chevron U.S.A. will enable us to enjoy Supertitles in *Don Carlos, Le Nozze di Figaro, Jenůfa, La Forza del Destino* and *Faust*; a deeply appreciated gift from Frank Tack will make them available for *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*.

In acknowledging our governmental funding sources this year, we take particular pleasure in announcing that we have achieved the first-year goal of the National Endowment for the Arts' Challenge Grant, a feat that was accomplished through the concerted efforts and contributions of the Opera's Executive Committee, Board of Directors and close friends of the Opera. Funds from the grant and related matching gifts will be used to augment the Company's Endowment Fund. Special thanks are also due the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation for its generous three-year grant, earmarked for the development of the San Francisco Opera Center.

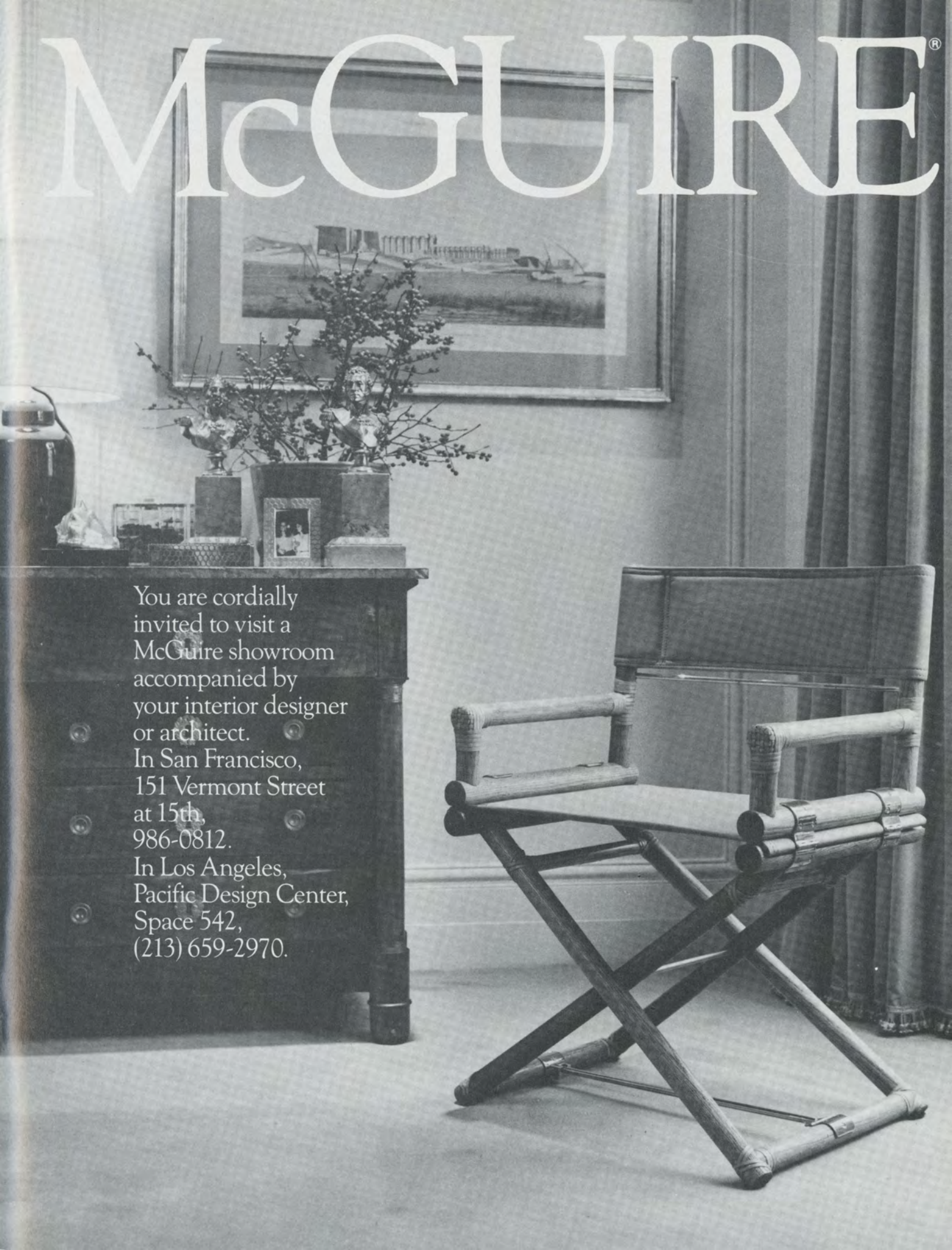
The Hotel Tax Fund, Mayor Dianne Feinstein, Chief Administrative Officer Roger Boas and the California Arts Council have all once again provided us with their much-appreciated support. The San Francisco Opera Guild, the Merola Opera Program and the War Memorial Board of Trustees also deserve our appreciation for their continued support.

The Board of Directors has this year been enriched by the addition of five new members. Internationally acclaimed mezzo-soprano Marilyn Horne heads the list, the first time a singer has joined our ranks; we are also proud to welcome prominent civic leader Charlotte Mailliard, as well as businessmen Evert B. Person, William Rollnick and F.J. Thomas Tilton. All five new members are active in numerous civic organizations and are significant additions to our Board.

In closing, we would again like to remind our loyal friends and supporters that, although our financial position is strong, and while slightly over half of our income is provided by ticket sales—an impressive statistic by any major opera company's standards—we are still left with a large amount that has to be raised in order to end the year in the black.

A very special opera season is about to begin. It continues a tradition of prominence that is sometimes taken for granted. Maintenance of this tradition, such an important part of what makes life in the Bay Area so special, requires dedication. We encourage and urge you to give us your continuing or new support.

Reid W. Dennis, Chairman
Tully M. Friedman, President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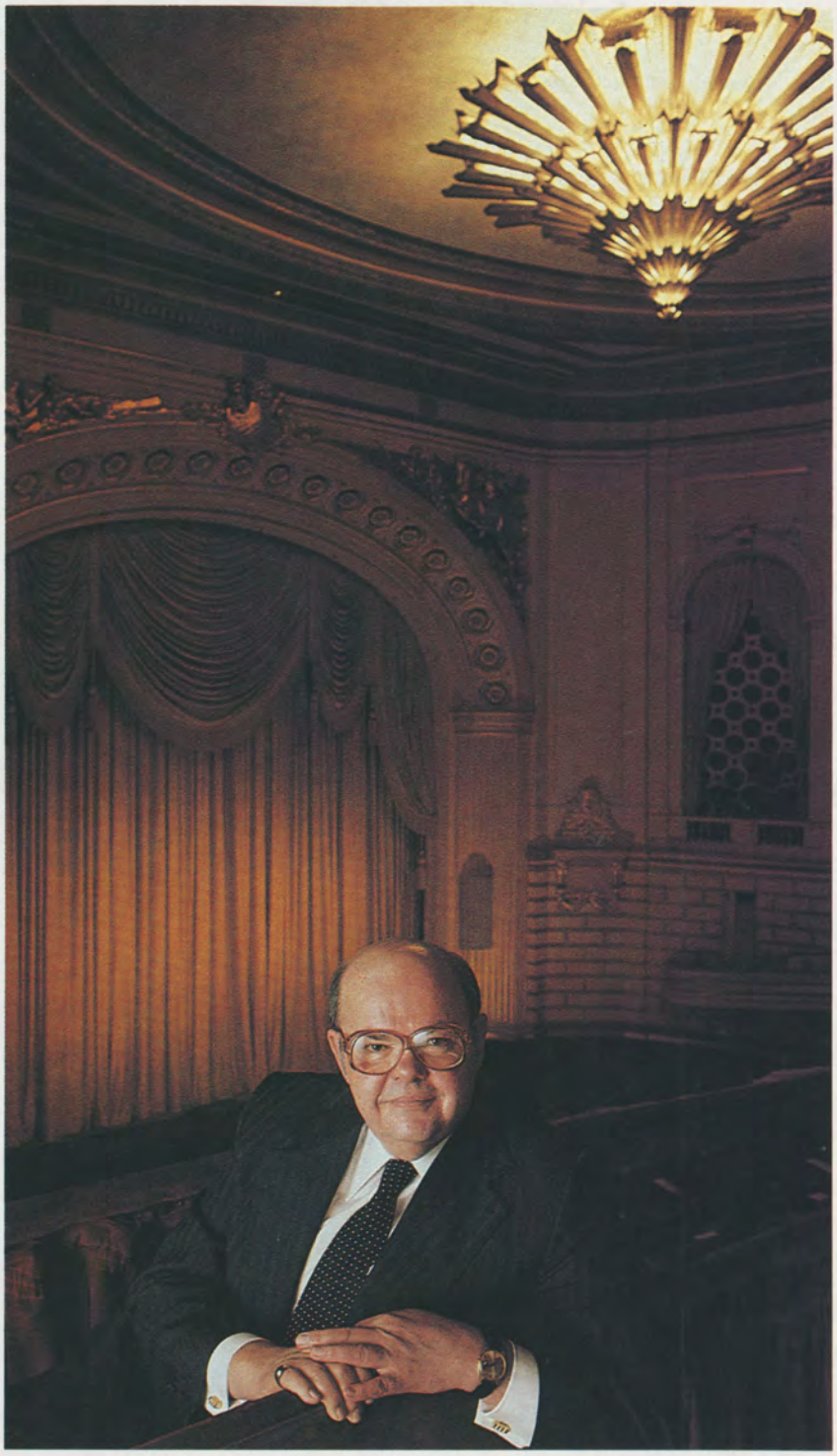
General Director's Message


RON SCHERL

As we begin San Francisco Opera's 64th annual Fall Season, I would like to share with our audiences several thoughts regarding the direction our Company is taking.

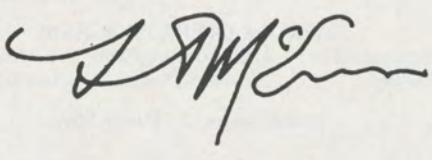
It is my belief that no opera company can achieve the steady progress necessary for vital artistic development without firm convictions—and dreams. With the emergence of superior-quality American artists from the ranks of our Opera Center, some of whose achievements you have witnessed recently on this stage, I really believe that we can develop into the kind of opera company Arturo Toscanini dreamed about in the 1920s: an ensemble company, with stars. This kind of company will consist of a solid, defined base of artists, grown and trained in our own environment, with the added number of world-traveling stars who are part of opera's special glamour. Our Opera Center graduates will thus not be restricted to supporting roles; they will share the stage with international stars, both as their support and as their equals. In the 1985 Fall Season, and in this year's Summer and Fall Seasons, we have taken steps in that direction.

I further believe that our Company, which is already respected world-wide, can also become one that will be *envied* world-wide, as a place where audiences are given the deep satisfaction of following brilliant new careers from their beginnings to their integration into the international opera scene.

This year's Fall Season also illustrates one of the challenges I faced when I first moved to San Francisco and saw the necessity of re-building the standard repertoire, since many of our productions for the great masterpieces of the 19th century had grown old. This season, we will unveil new stagings of one Puccini and two Verdi operas, and each has a very special point of interest.

The new *Don Carlos*, musically speaking, should be closer to what Verdi had in mind when he wrote the opera than any major production in recent years. It is performed in the original French, and our production emphasizes the horrors of the Inquisition and the oppressive pall it must have thrown over Europe at the time. Our *Bohème*, in its turn, highlights Paris, the city that gave birth to the bohemian revolution in art and literature, a fact about the background to this beloved Italian opera that tends to be forgotten. The *Macbeth* production promises to provide as direct an emotional wallop as the Shakespeare play does at first encounter.

Welcome to our 1986 Fall Season!



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San Francisco Opera

Terence A. McEwen, *General Director* — Sir John Pritchard, *Music Director*

1986 Fall Season

Opening Night
Friday, September 5, **7:00**
New Production
Don Carlos Verdi
Lorengar, Toczyska, Voigt*, S. Patterson; Shicoff, Titus, Lloyd, Rouleau*, Skinner, De Haan, Anderson, Delavan*
Pritchard (September 5, 10, 13, 17, 20), Johnson (September 28; October 1)/Cox/Lazaridis*/Gardner**/Munn

San Francisco Opera expresses its deep appreciation to Mr. Evert B. Person for his generous gift to underwrite this new production.

Saturday, September 6, **7:30**
Le Nozze di Figaro Mozart
Te Kanawa, Rolandi, Quittmeyer, Christin*, Chen; Ramey, Devlin, Korn*, Dennis Petersen, Harper, Pederson
Tate/Copley/Brown/Arhelger

The revival of this production is made possible, in part, by a grant from AT&T.

Tuesday, September 9, **7:30**
Le Nozze di Figaro Mozart

Wednesday, September 10, **7:00**
Don Carlos Verdi

Friday, September 12, **7:30**
Le Nozze di Figaro Mozart

Saturday, September 13, **7:00**
Don Carlos Verdi

Sunday, September 14, 2:00
Jenůfa Janáček
Beňačková*, Rysanek, Young, Voigt, Cowdrick, Chen, Hartliep, Shaghoian; Ochman, Rosenshein, Pederson, Coles*
Mackerras/Weber/Bauer-Ecsy/Munn

The revival of this production is made possible by a generous gift from Bernard and Barbro Osher.

Tuesday, September 16, **7:30**
Le Nozze di Figaro Mozart

Wednesday, September 17, **7:00**
Don Carlos Verdi

Friday, September 19, 8:00
Jenůfa Janáček

Saturday, September 20, **7:00**
Don Carlos Verdi

Sunday, September 21, **1:30**
Le Nozze di Figaro Mozart

Tuesday, September 23, 8:00
Jenůfa Janáček

Wednesday, September 24, **7:30**
Le Nozze di Figaro Mozart

Thursday, September 25, **7:30**
La Forza del Destino Verdi
Slatinaru, Forst, Bruno; Cossutta, Brendel, Plishka, Fissore, Andreolli, J. Patterson, Skinner, Coles
Arena/Calábria/Samaritani/Munn

This production was originally made possible by a gift from the estate of William H. Noble and friends of the San Francisco Opera.

The revival of this production is made possible by friends of Richard K. Miller and dedicated to his memory.

Friday, September 26, **7:30**
Le Nozze di Figaro Mozart

Saturday, September 27, 8:00
Jenůfa Janáček

Sunday, September 28, **1:00**
Don Carlos Verdi

Tuesday, September 30, **7:30**
La Forza del Destino Verdi

Wednesday, October 1, **7:00**
Don Carlos Verdi

Thursday, October 2, **7:30**
Jenůfa Janáček

Saturday, October 4, **7:30**
La Forza del Destino Verdi

Sunday, October 5, 2:00
Jenůfa Janáček

Tuesday, October 7, 8:00
Faust Gounod
Johnson, Cowdrick, Christin; Kraus (October 7, 10, 16), TBA (October 22, 25, 30; November 2), Lloyd, Titus, Delavan
Fournet/Zambello/Skalicki, Munn/Mahoney/Munn

Thursday, October 9, **7:30**
La Forza del Destino Verdi

Friday, October 10, 8:00
Faust Gounod

Sunday, October 12, **1:30**
La Forza del Destino Verdi

Tuesday, October 14, **7:00**
Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg Wagner
Studer*, Walker; Tschammer, King, Trempont, Rydl, Gordon, Del Carlo, Emde, J. Patterson, Dennis Petersen, Pederson, Duykers, Coles, Harper, Potter, MacAllister
Adler/Brenner/Oswald/Munn

This production was originally made possible by the Robert Watt Miller Memorial Fund.

Wednesday, October 15, **7:30**
La Forza del Destino Verdi

Thursday, October 16, 8:00
Faust Gounod

Saturday, October 18, **7:30**
La Forza del Destino Verdi

Sunday, October 19, **1:00**
Die Meistersinger Wagner

Wednesday, October 22, **7:30**
Faust Gounod

Thursday, October 23, **7:00**
Die Meistersinger Wagner

Friday, October 24, 8:00
New Production
La Bohème Puccini
Miricioiu, Izzo D'Amico* (October 24, 28, 31; November 4), Gustafson (November 6, 9, 12, 15); Cupido (October 24, 28, 31; November 4), Lima (November 6, 9, 12, 15), Krause, Pendergraph, Langan, Del Carlo, Gudas, Harper, Pederson, Coles
Arena/Freedman/Mitchell/Button*/Munn

This production is dedicated to the memory of George L. Quist.

Saturday, October 25, 8:00
Faust Gounod

Sunday, October 26, **1:00**
Die Meistersinger Wagner

Tuesday, October 28, 8:00
La Bohème Puccini

Wednesday, October 29, **7:00**
Die Meistersinger Wagner

Thursday, October 30, 8:00
Faust Gounod

Friday, October 31, 8:00
La Bohème Puccini

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Sunday, November 2, 2:00
Faust Gounod

Tuesday, November 4, 8:00
La Bohème Puccini

Thursday, November 6, 8:00
La Bohème Puccini

Friday, November 7, **7:00**
Die Meistersinger Wagner

Saturday, November 8, 8:00
Production new to San Francisco
Eugene Onegin Tchaikovsky
Freni, Walker, Cook, Donna Petersen; Allen*, Gulyás, Ghiaurov, Tate, Skinner, Delavan
Bradshaw/Copley/Don/Stennett/Munn/Sulich

This production is owned by the National Arts Centre of Canada and was originally produced for Festival Ottawa 1983.

Sunday, November 9, 2:00
La Bohème Puccini

Tuesday, November 11, 8:00
Eugene Onegin Tchaikovsky

Wednesday, November 12, **7:30**
La Bohème Puccini

Friday, November 14, 8:00
Manon Massenet
Greenawald, Chen, S. Patterson, Cowdrick; Araiza, G. Quilico*, Paul*, Corazza, Malis, Pederson, Delavan, Maxham
Fournet/Mansouri/Mitchell/George/Munn

This production was originally made possible by the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company and the late James D. Robertson.

The revival of this production is made possible by a deeply appreciated gift from Mr. and Mrs. J. Frederick Kohlenberg.

Saturday, November 15, 8:00
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Sunday, November 16, 2:00
Eugene Onegin Tchaikovsky

Wednesday, November 19, 8:00
New Production
Macbeth Verdi
Verrett, Voigt; Noble, Tomlinson, Popov*
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The San Francisco Opera gratefully acknowledges the generous grant from the L.J. Skaggs and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation to underwrite this new production.

Thursday, November 20, **7:30**
Manon Massenet

Friday, November 21, 8:00
Eugene Onegin Tchaikovsky

Saturday, November 22, 8:00
Macbeth Verdi

Sunday, November 23, 2:00
Manon Massenet

Tuesday, November 25, 8:00
Macbeth Verdi

Wednesday, November 26, **7:30**
Eugene Onegin Tchaikovsky

Friday, November 28, 8:00
Manon Massenet

Saturday, November 29, 8:00
Macbeth Verdi

Sunday, November 30, **1:00**
Eugene Onegin Tchaikovsky

Sunday, November 30, 8:00
Manon Massenet

Tuesday, December 2, 8:00
Macbeth Verdi

Wednesday, December 3, 8:00
Manon Massenet

Thursday, December 4, **7:30**
Manon Massenet

Friday, December 5, 8:00
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Saturday, December 6, 8:00
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Sunday, December 7, 2:00
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Nuremberg Used and Abused

By DAVID LITTLEJOHN

The imagination of the 19th and 20th centuries has burdened the city of Nuremberg with an almost unbearable weight of symbolism. Like other of the world's dream-cities (Alexandria, Istanbul, Paris, Venice), Nuremberg has been seized on by people living elsewhere to represent one thing or another, because of either real or imaginary qualities in its history and nature.

But few other cities have paid so heavy a price for the dream-images of them that non-natives have created and maintained. The story of Nuremberg is unique and impressive—particularly its story in the late 15th and early 16th centuries, the period that most of its idealizers choose to idealize. But that story has been rewritten and misread, used and abused many times since.

***

Reconstructing the "real" Nuremberg of its own Golden Age (from the birth of Albrecht Dürer, say, to the death of Hans Sachs: 1471-1576) requires that one abandon all subsequent images of the city.

Independent since 1219, Nuremberg grew in prosperity mainly because it was, for most of that one century, at the crossroads of a dozen trade routes. With a population of about 25,000 citizens behind its walls (and perhaps another 20,000 outside), it was one of the largest and richest cities in the German-speaking empire. Since 1422, even the imperial castle on the hill, about which it had grown, had been the property of the all-powerful city council.

The 42 members of the council had sole and absolute power over virtually every activity in the city. They kept Nuremberg as tightly self-contained and rule-bound a little beehive as Europe has ever known. The councilmen, almost all wealthy patrician merchants from the Top 40 families—those stout fellows one sees in paintings and engravings, with their fur-trimmed robes and velvet berets—established an intricate set of laws, and an extensive civic bureaucracy, to govern wages and prices, weights and measures, foreign relations, dance steps, the length of jackets, the quality of herring, and the texts of poems.

Wagner to the contrary, they forbade the town craftsmen to form guilds, so as not to risk protest demonstrations, or a dispersal of their own power. A street riot like that of *Die Meistersinger* (Act II) they would have had put down in no time. Not only had they no emperor, prince, viceroy, or bishop to tell them what to do; the council actually *ran* the town's 13 Catholic churches, convents, and monasteries: it appointed their pastors, administered their finances, legislated their morals. When Luther came along in the 1520s, this puritanical and fiercely independent city slipped from Catholic to Protestant with scarcely a ripple. Both Sachs and Dürer publicly welcomed the new dispensation. The council happily took over the rich monastic properties in the name of the city. Unfortunately, the Lutheran distrust of sacred images marked the end of rich commissions for many of Nuremberg's celebrated artists.

"Celebrated" may be overstating the case. Nuremberg of 1470-1570 was almost as famous for its fine craftsmanship as it was for its stable government, its mercantile prosperity, and its thick double circuit of walls. But what we think of as "art" was rarely taken with any special seriousness, despite the modern aesthetic assertions of Wagner's Pogner and Sachs. In 16th-century Nuremberg, Dürer was certainly respected, but primarily for his magical-realist technique and his popular woodcuts. For all his 3,848 songs, 133 comedies, and 530 poems (by his own count)—or perhaps because of them—Hans Sachs was regarded as a kind of droll civic father-figure. But he was no more considered a serious "artist" than the other versifying Rotarians who attended the weekly meetings of his Shopkeepers' Singing Club.

To mystical Germans looking at the city through the rose-stained glasses of a later generation, Nuremberg appeared as "the Florence of the North." But take away Dürer—who probably preferred Italy anyway—and one is left with a few highly-skilled wood and stone carvers, glaziers, engravers, and goldsmiths, whose workshops were judged by the city fathers no more important than those that turned out Nuremberg's excellent (and profitable) bells, cannons, scissors, toys, clocks, trumpets, and locks.

After his Italian travels, Dürer became part of a small Nuremberg cenacle of humanists—one or two genuine scholars, the rest fascinated dilettantes. But their private readings, their translations from the Greek and Latin, and their heady *conversazioni* had no effect whatever on the hard-working, penny-counting habits of their townsfolk, who—like Wagner's mastersingers—resisted every effort at innovation.

> From the mastersingers with their mass of punctilious rules guarded by official watchdogs, to the small band of humanists who dissected and criticized each other's books, from the physicians, so vain of their professional reputations, to the Protestant theologians who knew the truth when they saw it, men spoke and acted by codes according to which they approved and censured. The new, the different was everywhere regarded with suspicion. Nuremberg was emphatically an unintellectual society.... not a single thinker, poet, or scholar was able to impress his mind upon the city's civic personality. Nuremberg would have been exactly what she was had no one

---

David Littlejohn is a writer, critic, and professor of journalism at U.C. Berkeley, who normally reviews the San Francisco Opera for the London Times. *This fall, however, he is spending in Europe, checking out the competition.*

Dürer, The Willow Mills on the Pegnitz, *c. 1506. Watercolor and tempera on paper. Paris, Bibliotèque Nationale, Cabinet des Estampes.*

Set for Act II of San Francisco Opera's Die Meistersinger, *Roberto Oswald, designer.*

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written a book there or, for that matter, read one. (Gerald Strauss, *Nuremberg in the Sixteenth Century*)

For a short while—as long as prosperity maintained, as long as churches and rich merchants needed new buildings and decorations, as long as costly wars could be avoided and powerful nation-states had not rendered them obsolete—cities like Nuremberg could at least feel contented, secure, and self-righteous. With the shift of trade routes to Atlantic ports; with the emergence of Protestantism, and the trauma of the Thirty Years' War; with the consolidation of power in united kingdoms like Spain, France, and England, snug and prosperous little cities like Nuremberg lost much of their energy, their spirit, their very reason to exist. This *lack* of continued prosperity helps to explain why Nuremberg remained frozen in its 16th-century form. It was like an ancient ship caught in the ice, waiting to be discovered.

***

After three decades of religious wars, the city slept in its economic and cultural decline for the better part of two centuries. Educated Germans of the Enlightenment saw nothing but dark, clumsy Gothic crudeness in the native art and traditions it embodied. Passing through in 1790, Mozart wrote to his wife simply, "Breakfasted in Nuremberg, a hideous town." During the 17th and 18th centuries, more progressive German cities had adopted the new and sophisticated French or Italian models, or turned to ancient Greece and Rome for their inspiration.

It was Goethe himself, in an outburst of youthful enthusiasm for Strasbourg Cathedral in 1770, who gave the first notable German stamp of approval to the old native style. (He went on to praise Hans Sachs, the almost forgotten cobbler-poet.) Most cultural historians attribute the rediscovery of Nuremberg itself to two Berlin University students, Ludwig Tieck and Heinrich Wackenroder, who took a walking tour of the South during their spring break in 1796. They loved what they saw of Italy and the Rhine valley; but Nuremberg was a revelation:

"Nuremberg, thou once world-famous city!" wrote Wackenroder in 1796. "How gladly did I wander through thy crooked alleys; with what childlike love I contemplated thy old-world houses and churches, which so firmly bear the stamp of our old native art! How deeply do I love the products of that age, which bear so racy, strong, and genuine a character!"

Wackenroder and Tieck helped persuade a whole generation to "honor the German masters" (as Wagner's Sachs commands). At an exhibition on "The Romantic Discovery of Nuremberg," held at the city's German National Museum in 1967, misty, past-evoking paintings and drawings of the city by 25 romantic artists were displayed, along with rapturous, loving descriptions of the city by many of Germany's most famous early 19th-century writers. The tricentennial of Dürer's death was celebrated in Nuremberg in 1828 with an embarrassing excess of fervor. Longfellow—a great admirer of Goethe and German culture generally—celebrated his visit to Nuremberg in 1836 with one of his drippier poems. ("Through these streets so broad and stately,/ These obscure and dismal lanes,/ Walked of yore the Mastersingers,/ Chanting rude poetic strains.")

***

After the poets and painters came the tourists. From 1883 on, the indispensible Baedeker guides to Southern Germany led the seeker-after-art dutifully past every even marginally noteworthy building, sculpture, and painting in the city. While declaring "there is probably no town in Germany so medieval in appearance," they also reminded their English-speaking readers that "Great care should be taken to ensure that the sanitary arrangements are in proper order, including a strong flush of water and proper toilette paper."

"Year by year," began a guidebook of 1907, "many a traveler on his way to Bayreuth, many a seeker after health at German baths, many an artist and lover of the old world, finds his way to Nuremberg." It was "a city of the soul," with "a flavor indefinable, exquisite."

By the mid-19th century, a proper Grand Tour would have been unthinkable without a wistful pause at Nuremberg. The only qualms expressed by the Victorian and Edwardian guidebook writers were over the recent, almost *too* exact imitation-old Gothic buildings in the city, which tourists had a hard time distinguishing from the genuine article; and over the increasing number of factory

A street in old Nuremberg in 1839, as seen in a watercolor by Georg Christoph Wilder (1797-1855).

smokestacks that were beginning to surround the jewel-casket of Germania.

***

"Die romantische Entdeckung Nürnbergs"—the romantic discovery of Nuremberg—was more than just a local version of a European cultural craze, a trendy taste for the picturesque past. In Germany, far more than in England or France, it was also part of an aggressively anti-foreign movement, part of a defensive, irrational, and frequently monomaniac chauvinism.

Nuremberg satisfied the needs of romantic travelers, poets, and painters because it offered a virtually "unspoiled" image of a 14th-16th century town. But it also satisfied the needs of Germany-firsters, *Deutschland über Alles*-ians, because they thought it the purest possible representation of just how wonderful *German* culture could be, with no alien admixture of anything French or Italian.

This is one of the most important reasons why Richard Wagner chose Hans Sachs, the burgher-mastersingers, and the common *Volk* of 16th century Nuremberg to serve as both background and (much of the time) foreground for his most accessible and most popular opera. Sachs, he declared, was "the last embodiment of the artistically productive

LOCKHART

View of the roofs of old Nuremberg from the castle.

national spirit ... something different from the Latin type." He carefully studied historical accounts for his text, then incorporated actual verses of Sachs's, folk songs, and a Lutheran congregational chorale. He consciously strove for a musical style more simple and old-fashioned than was his own norm at the time.

In 1867, he had published a long essay entitled "German Art and German Politics," which has been called "his commentary on *Die Meistersinger*." In it, he wrote: "Ever since the regeneration of European folk-blood, considered strictly, the German has been the creator and inventor, the Romantic the modeller and exploiter; the true fountain of continual revolution has remained the German nature. In this sense, the dissolution of the 'Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation' gave voice to nothing but a temporary preponderance of the practically-realistic tendency in European culture"—which had now, he insisted, reached a nadir of spiritless decadence. The Thirty Years War (1618-48), he declared, had utterly destroyed German civic culture. It left all German art, for two barren centuries, in the hands of the petty princes. They, unfortunately, had simply imported or imitated spineless Latin art: tinny Italian operas, insipid ballets from France ("a vain and light-minded nation").

Late in the 18th century, a few prescient Germans, like Lessing and Winckelmann, recognized their "Ur-kinsmen in the divine Hellenes." (Wagner, like Hitler, acknowledged the ancient Greeks' as the only culture equal to the pure German.) Then the sublime Goethe symbolically wed Greek Helen to German Faust. Schiller, next, inspired a generation of patriotic German *Jünglings* to an ideal of *Volk und Vaterland*, around the time of the 1814 Wars of Liberation.

But since then, Wagner insisted, nothing; or at least nothing better, in German theater, than Rossini and Spontini, Dumas and Scribe, the penny-dreadful melodramas of Kotzebue ("the corrupter of German youth, the betrayer of the German folk"), fatuous actors and singers. Worst of all were the operatic travesties that Rossini had made out of Schiller's *William Tell*, and Gounod out of Goethe's *Faust*—"a repellent, sugary-vulgar patchwork, with all the airs and graces of a lorette, wedded to the music of a second-rate talent."

Somehow, Wagner declared, German art had to find its Folk-roots again—and above all, German theater, the Folk-art par excellence.

And where were German writers and composers to find their ideal inspiration? Not, surely, in the decadent, Paris-aping court theaters. And certainly not in the soulless, Jew-dominated commercial theater. No: look to "the Mastersingers of Nuremberg, [who] in the prime of classic humanism, preserved for the eye of genius the old-German mode of poetry."

Many observers have stressed the elements of historical authenticity in *Die Meistersinger*, from the correct architectural settings Wagner demanded for the 1868 premiere to David's recital of the mastersingers' rules and tones and modes. But more important than the opera's historicity, I believe, are the uses to which Wagner puts it.

Most of what Wagner wants to say is communicated musically, of course, and can never be reduced to a prose statement. He is "saying" things in this opera about true love and true art that have nothing specifically to do with German art or German culture. But in addition to his conscious choice of setting and subject, Wagner does from time to time repeat in the opera the ideas of his essay.

Nowhere in the opera are Wagner's own cultural and political opinions more clearly voiced than in Hans Sachs's final exhortation ("Habt Acht!") to the crowd, which they then take up *en masse* as the opera's closing chorus.

Beware! Evil tricks threaten us:—
If the *Deutsches Volk und Reich* should once decay
Under false foreign rulers
Soon no prince would understand his people any more,
And foreign mists, with foreign trifles,
They will plant in our German land;
No one would know any more what is German and true,
If it did not live in the honor of the German masters.
Therefore I say to you:
Honor your German masters! ...
And if you favor their endeavors,
Even if the Holy Roman Empire should dissolve into dust
For us there would still remain—Holy German Art!

***

The link between Wagnerism and National Socialism, between the muddled social thinking of Richard Wagner and that of Adolf Hitler, has probably been written about too much already.

Though the two men shared certain noxious racial and German-nationalist notions, Wagner *did* also create works of art which even the most scrupulous humanitarian can enjoy without guilt. Wagner cannot be blamed for the fact that Hitler enjoyed his works even more than some of us do—and no work more than *Die Meistersinger*, which he is reported as having seen more than 200 times.

Long before Hitler, *Die Meistersinger*'s vision of Nuremberg and Old Germany, and especially Hans Sachs's notorious "curtain speech," had made this work a special favorite of the newly-unified German empire. It was adopted as a kind of propaganda-piece by those who wanted to assert not only German national unity,

but also German superiority over "false foreign rulers."

Under the guiding spirit of H.S. Chamberlain, the dogmatic English anti-Semite who had married Wagner's daughter Eva in 1908 (and who first met Adolf Hitler in 1923), the annual Wagner Festival at Bayreuth became more and more an Aryan-nationalist celebration. When, after a ten-year wartime hiatus, the festival reopened (with *Die Meistersinger*) in 1924, it was firmly committed to the new National Socialist cause. At the opening performance that year, the audience rose to its feet at Sachs's "Habt Acht!" and remained standing to sing "Deutschland über Alles" at the close.

Nine months before, in September 1923, Adolf Hitler had personally chosen the city of Dürer, Sachs, and *Die Meistersinger* to be the site of his "National Socialist German Day"—the first of nine increasingly spectacular Nazi Party rallies to be held in Nuremberg. Flowers and flags were laid on; the imperial castle was illuminated; the market square was roped off for speeches.

Hitler liked the visual image of the city, its symbolic fortress-castle, the islanded river that ran through it, its surrounding walls with their sturdy gates and round towers, the hill-forest of steep roofs and church spires within. It seemed to give ancient Germanic roots, and thereby a spurious authenticity, to his movement. After 1933, it also asserted a connection between the Third Reich and the First—that loose federation of 300-plus German states and independent cities called the Holy Roman Empire, which had begun to offer some form of allegiance to a German "Kaiser" in the year 962.

For almost 200 years (1355-1523), Nuremberg had been the city in which every new Emperor held his first *Reichstag*, or parliament of German leaders. For more than 300 years (1424-1796), Nuremberg had the honor of serving as the civic safety-deposit box for the sacred imperial relics and regalia.

These two distinctions had, in Hitler's view, made Nuremberg the symbolic holy city of the First Reich; so he determined to make it his as well. In a folio of photographs of old Nuremberg, published in Bremen in 1940 for American readers, the author made explicit the connection between the old city and the new:

> From the Heidenturm of Kaiser Freidrich Barbarossa, in the Burg, float the colours of the new Reich, and over the Market Place which bears the Führer's name Young Germany marches every year. The Old City gives the proud consciousness of a great imperial and civic tradition, the town of the Reichsparteitag faith in the future.

Today, thanks to old newsreels and Leni Riefenstahl's 1935 film *Triumph of the Will*, most people probably identify the Nuremberg rallies of 1927-38 with the immense parade ground and arena southeast of the city. But the old city of Dürer and Sachs played its role as well, in these morale-building propaganda rituals.

Hitler was always officially received in Nuremberg at the 1618 Town Hall, with its great vaulted chamber dating from 1332. Each year the mayor of Nuremberg offered him some splendid and symbolic gift: one year an engraving of Dürer's "Knight, Death, and the Devil;" the next year, copies of Charlemagne's crown, orb, and scepter. Before Hitler's arrival, all the church bells of the city were ordered to ring for half an hour. The roads were hung with Nazi banners, the window boxes filled with flowers. Hitler received visiting foreign diplomats in the old imperial castle, where he expounded on the beauties of old Nuremberg. (He had tried, he explained, to clear the medieval sector of all "trashy imitations," and to restore its ancient charm.)

Day after day, the wide, winding streets of the city were filled with marchers (from 500,000 to a million party members descended on Nuremberg in September for the 1930s rallies), parading twelve abreast: first the Hitler Youth with their drums and banners; then a torchlight parade of up to 180,000 party leaders; finally the "march-past" of the Führer in "Adolf-Hitler-Platz" by 100,000 SA and SS men, and a closing serenade under his hotel window.

A highlight of the 1935 and 1936 rallies was a gala performance for the party elite at the Nuremberg Opera House of *Die Meistersinger*. For these performances, Hitler himself commissioned new sets and costumes, which were reproduced for almost every subsequent production of the opera during the Third Reich. The Festival Meadow set for Act III was backed by a long row of banners in perspective, exactly like those at the *Parteitag* rallies.

Two views of the Hans Sachs 1874 monument, located in the Hans Sachs Square in Nuremberg: "then" was taken towards the turn of the century; "now" was taken in 1985 (top).

***

One is tempted to believe that the next two nightmares in the life of this much put-upon city were visited upon it as punishments for its symbolic role as what Allied reporters liked to call the "birthplace" or the "nursery" of Nazism; "the heart of the world's enemy," in

Rebecca West's phrase. But this may not have been the case.

Nuremberg was bombed eleven times between September 1944 and April 1945, most devastatingly on January 2, when a thousand RAF planes all but obliterated the historic center in one twenty-minute raid. This was done not because it was Hitler's favorite city, not because of the Nuremberg laws or the Nuremberg rallies; but because it was an "important industrial and communications center" (something the romantic guidebooks rarely mentioned), manufacturing aircraft engines as well as pencils and toys. It was besieged and shelled for five straight days by the U.S. Seventh Army in the last days of the war, not because it was "quintessentially German;" but because the two SS-Panzer divisions remaining within its walls put up such a ferocious resistance.

At the end, three fourths of the buildings in the old town were destroyed. What was left for the Allied armies of occupation were piles of rubble stinking faintly of disinfectant, under which lay at least two thousand dead Germans. Half the population had fled; the remaining half lived on as best they could, many without food, in cellars and bomb shelters. The city's total wartime toll was estimated at 8000 dead, 12,000 missing, and 350,000 homeless. No German city except Dresden had been so totally wiped out.

On April 28, 1945, the London *Times* correspondent inventoried the incredible damage done to what he called "the finest medieval city in Germany." "'The best thing would be for the citizens to go and find a vacant piece of ground and build a new town,'" he quoted one Allied officer as saying. "This cannot be rebuilt," declared a member of the U.S. prosecution team in the fall of 1945.

But it was rebuilt. The "old city" tourists visit today is in great part a reconstruction. The pale stonework in the facade of St. Sebaldus's Church is all new; the darker stones inserted here and there were recovered from the ruins. Over and over, guidebooks and placards note, "Destroyed in 1945." The more important buildings, beginning with the castle, the two great churches, and the Dürer house were rebuilt to look more or less as they did in the 16th century; the ruins of others were simply cleared. A few—including St. Catherine's, the mastersingers' church—were left as ruins. A little Disneyland imitation of an Old Nuremberg street was built for quick-stop tourists behind the Frauentor gate.

***

"There are many reasons why Nuremberg in that October after the war was a most hated city. It had given its name in 1935 to the laws by which Jews were deprived of their rights as citizens ...If the highest Nazis were to be tried what better place could there be than Nuremberg?...Was it not here that Hitler's oratory had turned Germans into savage hordes calling for blood?" (Airey Neave, *On Trial at Nuremberg*, 1978)

In fact, Nuremberg was chosen for the international trials of Nazi war criminals because—as General Lucius Clay told

Hans Sachs at age 51 in a contemporary engraving.

Justice Robert Jackson, who was to head the tribunal—it had the only law court building still standing in any German city: the 1877 Palace of Justice, which Rebecca West called "an extreme example of the German tendency to overbuild...Its mass could not be excused, for much of it was a waste of masonry and an expense of shame, in obese walls and distended corridors."

Twenty-one Nazi leaders were lodged in the prison behind this building, while American, English, French, and Russian judges heard testimony from them, their attorneys, and their adversaries six hours a day, five days a week in Courtroom B. After nine months of hearings, sentences were passed. On October 17, 1946, eleven of them were hanged in the gymnasium of the prison.

***

The most famous of Hans Sachs's utterances in *Die Meistersinger* is his nationalistic exhortation, often misread and exploited during the Third Reich. But to my ears, his profoundly moving Act III soliloquy is Wagner's definition of the best possible symbolic role that this ancient city could have played in the heart of its tormented, sometimes dangerous, even barbarous land.

Reflecting on both the history of mankind and the mindless riots of the night before, the old man begins to despair of his city, his land, his century.

Wahn! Wahn!
Überall Wahn!
Madness! (or folly, fools, illusion,
delusion; the word doesn't
translate easily) Madness!
Everywhere madness!

Everywhere he sees people tormenting and beating one another, even themselves—"the old madness without which nothing can happen."

Midway in his reflections, Sachs pauses. The satisfying, stately, step-like "Nuremberg" motif breaks like sunlight through the melancholy clouds.

Wie friedsam treuer Sitten
Getrost in Tat und Werk,
Liegt nicht in Deutschlands Mitten
Mein liebes Nürenberg!
(How peacefully with its faithful
customs,
Contented in deed and work,
Lies in the middle of Germany
My beloved Nuremberg.)

More than any subsequent fantasy of *Altdeutsch* charm, or *Volkisch* art, or Teutonic superiority, this winning quatrain of Sachs's *does* describe the actuality of 16th-century Nuremberg—a solid, stolid, unified, hardworking, and contented conservative community. Had it been allowed to retain this image, and not been forced to serve the imaginative needs of others for so many years, the history of a city, a country, perhaps even a world might have shared more of the benevolent humanism of Wagner's Hans Sachs, and less of the *Wahn* of his confused compatriots. ■

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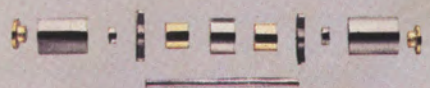

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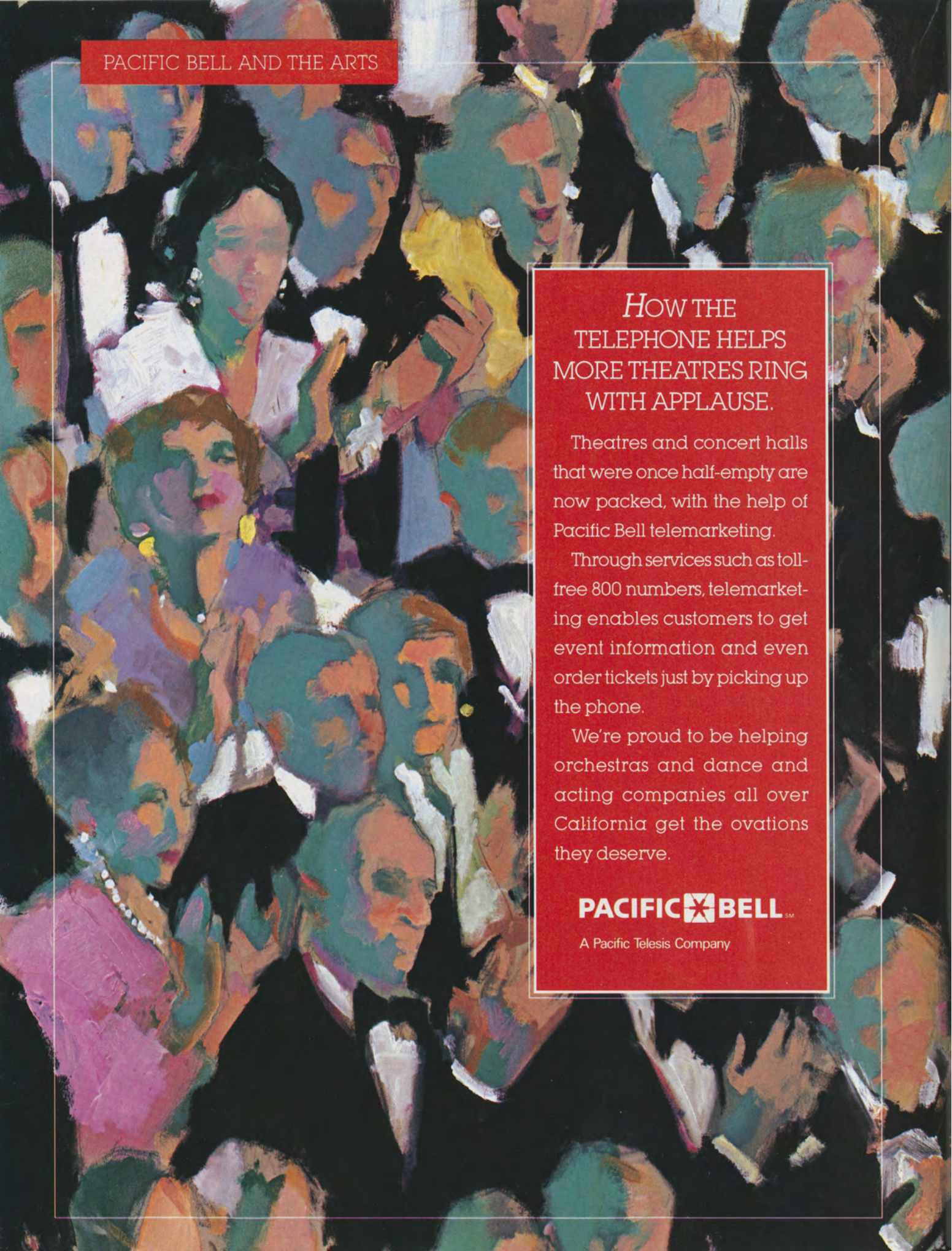

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CHERYL STUDER

Making her San Francisco Opera debut as Eva in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* is soprano **Cheryl Studer**. A former Metropolitan Opera Auditions winner, she completed her vocal training in Vienna with Hans Hotter. The Michigan native made her professional operatic debut during the 1980-81 season in Munich as the First Lady in *Die Zauberflöte*. After two years in Munich, she sang in Darmstadt, soon becoming an ensemble soloist at the Deutsche Oper Berlin during the 1984-85 season. Miss Studer came to international attention in 1983 as Irene in a new production of Wagner's *Rienzi* at the opening of the Munich Festival, and won critical acclaim for her American opera debut at the Lyric Opera of Chicago in 1984 as Micaëla in *Carmen* opposite Plácido Domingo. She created a sensation with her 1985 Bayreuth Festival debut as Elisabeth in *Tannhäuser*. A successful concert artist, she has performed with the Boston Symphony Orchestra under Seiji Ozawa, the Orchestra di Accademia di Santa Cecilia in Rome with Giuseppe Sinopoli, and frequently appears with Radio France, the Berlin Philharmonic, and in Vienna, Munich and Zurich. Other roles in her repertoire include Tatiana in *Eugene Onegin*, the title role in Janáček's *Katya Kabanova*, Marie in *The Bartered Bride*, Electra in *Idomeneo*, Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*, Violetta in *La Traviata*, Desdemona in *Otello*, Rosalinde in *Die Fledermaus*, the title role in Weber's *Euryanthe*, Freia and Gutrune in Wagner's *Ring*, Chrysothemis in *Elektra*, and the title role in Strauss' *Daphne*. Miss Studer's future engagements include appearances in Seattle and Chicago as Marguerite in *Faust*, Sieglinde in Nikolaus Lehnhoff's new production of the *Ring* cycle in Munich, Chrysothemis at the Paris Opera, her La Scala debut as Donna Anna under Riccardo Muti, and Elisabeth in *Tannhäuser* at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden.

SANDRA WALKER

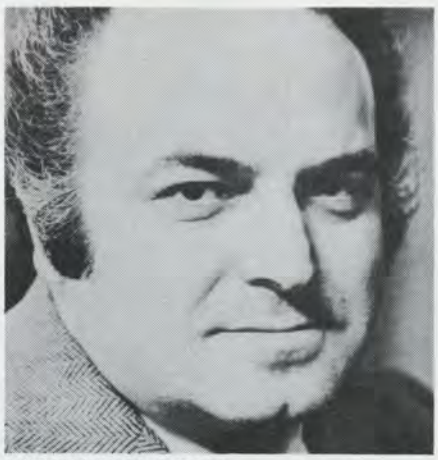
Mezzo-soprano **Sandra Walker** is Magdalene in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* and Olga in *Eugene Onegin*, a role that she has sung in a nationally telecast presentation from the Chicago Lyric Opera and which also served as her debut role with the Städtische Bühnen in Frankfurt. The North Carolina native made her Company debut in the 1972 production of Wagner's *Ring* cycle and returned in 1974 as Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly*. The 1976 Spoleto Festival was the occasion for Miss Walker's European debut in a highly acclaimed production of *The Rape of Lucretia* in which she sang the title role. She has performed on stage and in concert at music festivals throughout the United States, including Caramoor, Tanglewood, Robin Hood Dell and the premiere season of Spoleto U.S.A. in Charleston as the Secretary in *The Consul* which was telecast on PBS. She made her debut with the Santa Fe Opera in 1978 as Olga in *Eugene Onegin* and the following year Miss Walker was invited to South America to sing Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and *Carmen* at the Teatro Colón in Bogotá, Colombia. As a leading artist with the New York City Opera for six seasons, she won acclaim for her portrayals of the Secretary in *The Consul*, Desideria in *The Saint of Bleecker Street*, the Marchesa in the United States premiere of *The Voice of Ariadne* by Thea Musgrave, Suzuki and the title role in *Carmen*. For three seasons she was a featured artist at the Städtische Bühnen in Gelsenkirchen, Germany, and her roles there included Dorabella in *Così fan tutte*, Brangäne in *Tristan und Isolde*, Dame Quickly in *Falstaff*, Isabella in *L'Italiana in Algeri* and Orfeo in Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice*. In March of this year she made her Metropolitan Opera debut as Micah in a new production of Handel's *Samson*, a role which was also the vehicle for her debut at the Teatro Comunale in Florence. This season, Miss Walker will sing Fricka in new productions of *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre* at Frankfurt.

HANS TSCHAMMER

German bass **Hans Tschammer** returns to San Francisco Opera as Hans Sachs in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, a role he has sung to acclaim in Zurich and Düsseldorf. He made his San Francisco Opera debut as Fasolt in *Das Rheingold* during the 1983 Summer Season, when he also appeared as Hunding in *Die Walküre*, the vehicle of his 1983 American debut at the Metropolitan Opera. Born in Silesia, West Germany, Tschammer grew up in Bavaria and, after studying music at the Würzburg State Conservatory, had his first engagements in Regensburg and Aachen. At that time he continued his training at the Mozarteum in Salzburg and the Aachen Conservatory of Music. He participated in the 1973 Salzburg Festival production of Cavalieri's *Rappresentazione di Anima e di Corpo* and was thereafter engaged by the Graz Opera, where he sang principal roles for two seasons. In his earliest television appearance, he was presented by Anneliese Rothenberger as one of Germany's most promising young singers. For the last six years he has been with the Deutsche Oper am Rhein in Düsseldorf, singing bass roles and character parts, and expanding his acclaimed Wagner repertoire. Tschammer has made numerous guest appearances with the opera companies of Hamburg, Strasbourg, Munich, Geneva, Basel, Bonn, Lyons, Karlsruhe, Stuttgart, Paris and at Milan's La Scala. A highly respected concert artist, he has performed in that capacity in Vienna, Graz, Stuttgart and Munich. His recording credits include the Erato recording of *Parsifal* that was used as the soundtrack for Hans-Jürgen Syberberg's much-discussed film version of that opera. Recent engagements include performances of *Das Rheingold* in Barcelona and at the 1986 Bayreuth Festival, *Die Meistersinger* in Nice, and *Fidelio* at the Verona Arena. Future engagements include his Vienna State Opera debut as King Heinrich in *Lohengrin*.

JAMES KING

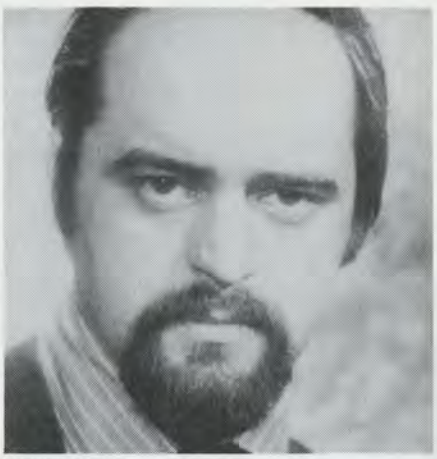
Tenor **James King** sings Walther von Stolzing in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, a role he sang with the Company in 1971. Last fall he appeared here as Captain Vere in *Billy Budd*, singing it for the first time in his career. King made his professional debut with Spring Opera Theater in 1961 as Don José in *Carmen* opposite Marilyn Horne. He first appeared with San Francisco Opera as Bacchus in *Ariadne auf Naxos* (a role he has sung nearly 400 times) and as Florestan in *Fidelio* during the 1969 season. In 1971, in addition to his first ever Walther, he sang Manrico in *Il Trovatore*, and in 1974 was heard in the title role of *Otello*. He brought one of his signature roles—The Emperor in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*—to the 1980 Fall Season, when he also sang Canio in *Pagliacci*. He has performed another of his signature roles here, Siegmund in *Die Walküre*, during the 1981 Fall Season. He bowed in Cincinnati as Bacchus in 1961 and the following year joined the Deutsche Oper Berlin, where his first assignment was Riccardo in *Un Ballo in Maschera*. Debuts at the world's major opera houses followed in quick succession, including the Vienna Staatsoper (Bacchus), the Bayreuth Festival (Siegmund), Covent Garden (Strauss' Emperor) and the Salzburg Festival (in *Iphigénie en Aulide*). Since his Metropolitan Opera debut as Florestan in 1966, he has been heard at that house in many roles including Siegmund, Lohengrin, Calaf in *Turandot*, Cavaradossi in *Tosca* and Don José in *Carmen*, the vehicle of his 1973 debut at Lyric Opera of Chicago. He has also scored triumphs at La Scala in Milan, Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires and at the Bolshoi Opera in Moscow, where he was invited to sing Otello. In addition to roles in the standard Italian and German repertoire, King also sings Jupiter in Monteverdi's *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria*, Apollo in Strauss' *Daphne*, Paul in Korngold's *Die Tote Stadt*, and Samson in *Samson et Dalila*. His extensive discography includes over 20 complete operas and numerous concert and recital discs. He has appeared in many television and film productions of operas, and has been



MICHEL TREMPONT

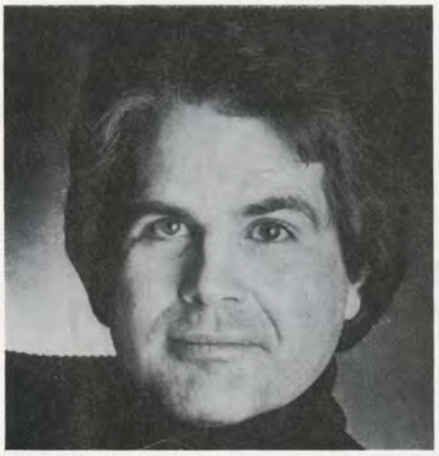
honored with the title of Kammersänger by the Vienna Staatsoper (where he has sung over 400 performances), the Bavarian Staatsoper in Munich, and the Deutsche Oper Berlin.

Returning to the site of his 1983 American debut as General Boum in Offenbach's *La Grande Duchesse de Gérolstein*, **Michel Trempont** is Sixtus Beckmesser in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. The Belgian lyric and buffo baritone began his musical studies in his native country and made his operatic debut in 1952 as Valentin in *Faust* at the Liège Opera. Since then he has appeared at the Theatre Royal de la Monnaie in Brussels and at the principal French opera houses in Marseilles, Strasbourg, Lyons and Bordeaux. In Paris he has sung the Figaros of *Le Nozze di Figaro* and *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Germont in *La Traviata* and Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly*. He has also appeared at the Teatro São Carlos in Lisbon, La Fenice in Venice, in Montreal and Mexico, at Covent Garden and at La Scala, where he was heard in *Benvenuto Cellini*. Recent engagements have included Massenet's *Don Quichotte* in Venice, Avignon and Basel, and *La Fille du Régiment* and *The Love for Three Oranges* at the Paris Opera. During the 1983-84 Paris Opera season, Trempont appeared in "Vive Offenbach," a triple-bill comprising Offenbach's *Pomme d'Api*, *Monsieur Choufleuri* and *Mesdames de la Halle*. He has sung frequently at the festival of Aix-en-Provence, where he was seen in *L'Italiana in Algeri* and *Così fan tutte*, among others. In 1984 he performed at the Paris Opera in Cimarosa's *Matrimonio Segreto* and in Naples in *Don Quichotte*. His many recordings include *Manon* with Beverly Sills; *Carmen* with Grace Bumbry; *La Vie Parisienne* with Régine Crespin; *La Périchole* with Teresa Berganza; *Orphée aux Enfers* with Mady Mesplé; a rare recording of Grétry's *Richard Coeur de Lion;* and Massenet's *Grisélidis*. Future engagements include *La Fille du Régiment* in Paris, and the world premiere of Rolf Liebermann's *La Forêt* in Geneva.



KURT RYDL

Austrian bass **Kurt Rydl** returns to San Francisco Opera as Veit Pogner in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, a role which was the vehicle for his Company debut in the summer of 1981 when he also performed Sparafucile in *Rigoletto*. Rydl then returned in the fall of the same year to sing Ramfis in *Aida*, Hunding in *Die Walküre* and Ferrando in *Il Trovatore*. He was first heard in this country as Rocco in *Fidelio* under Leonard Bernstein and as Bartolo in *Le Nozze di Figaro* under Karl Böhm during the 1979 tour of the Vienna State Opera, where he has been a member for several years. Rydl sang leading roles during that company's tour to Japan and he has recently appeared in Vienna in such operas as *Der Fliegende Holländer, Tristan und Isolde, Parsifal, Fidelio, Die Walküre, Tannhäuser, Der Rosenkavalier, Lucia di Lammermoor, Luisa Miller, Aida, Manon Lescaut* and *La Gioconda*. Highlights of recent seasons include *Turandot* at the 1983 opening of La Scala, *Roméo et Juliette, Luisa Miller* and *Die Walküre* in Barcelona, and *Attila* and *Lucrezia Borgia* in France. The 1984 season saw Rydl in a new production of *Simon Boccanegra* in Berlin as well as performances of *Rigoletto* and Verdi's Requiem in Italy. He has also performed in the music festivals of Bayreuth, Salzburg, Lyons, and at others held in Italy, Germany, Switzerland, France and the Iberian Peninsula. The 1985-86 season included 80 performances in Vienna with company premieres of *Maria Stuarda, La Gioconda,* and *Manon Lescaut*, as well as performances of Mahler's Eighth Symphony in London, Salzburg and Cologne. Rydl's plans for upcoming seasons include 50 performances in Vienna as well as *Der Fliegende Holländer, Tristan und Isolde* and a new production of *The Abduction from the Seraglio* at the 1987 Salzburg Festival. His impressive discography includes *Manon, Rigoletto, Die Fledermaus* and *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, while his future recording plans include *Madama Butterfly, Die Frau ohne Schatten* and a complete *Ring* cycle. He was recently honored in Vienna with the title of Kammersänger.



DAVID GORDON

After appearing here as Beppe in *Pagliacci* last summer, Pennsylvania-born tenor **David Gordon** returns to San Francisco Opera as David in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, a role which he initially performed in his Company debut during the 1981 Summer Season. He also took part in the 1983 Fall Season, appearing in three roles: Brighella in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, the Dancing Master in *Manon Lescaut*, and the Simpleton in *Boris Godunov*. His earlier S.F. Opera portrayals include Pang in *Turandot* for the 1982 Summer Season and Mime in *Das Rheingold* in the summer of 1983. In addition to his local credits, Gordon has sung over 50 roles with the Lyric Opera of Chicago, the Houston Grand Opera, the Washington Opera, and others. For four seasons he was a leading tenor at the Landestheater in Linz, Austria, where he sang in over 300 performances of 19 different operas. A busy concert artist, he has been guest soloist with the orchestras of Vienna, Boston, Washington, D.C., Montreal, Lisbon, St. Louis, Cleveland, Seattle and Los Angeles, and has sung at festivals in Tokyo, Stuttgart, Buenos Aires, Toronto, Spoleto (USA), the Mostly Mozart Festival, and at the Festival Casals. He appears regularly with contemporary music groups in New York, Boston, and San Francisco, and is a member of the 20th-Century Consort, an ensemble in residence at the Smithsonian Institution. Recent performances include his debut at the Hamburg State Opera as Nemorino in *L'Elisir d'Amore*, his Metropolitan Opera debut as the Philistine Man in Handel's *Samson*, Tom Rakewell in Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress* with the Washington Opera, and performances of Orff's *Carmina Burana* with the Oakland Symphony. Gordon will make his first appearance with the San Francisco Symphony in 1987 in Schönberg's *Gurrelieder*.

Bass-baritone **John Del Carlo** returns to San Francisco Opera as Fritz Kothner in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* and Benoit in *La Bohème*. Since his 1978 Company debut he has appeared in over 20 productions here, most recently as Donner in the 1985 Summer Season production of *Das*

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The Story Retold

By WILLIAM MANN

Even the anti-Wagnerites can find a good word or two to say for *Die Meistersinger*, and it's often declared the best introduction to Wagner opera. I don't agree myself: *The Flying Dutchman* is shorter and easier to listen to, and *Die Meistersinger* yields up its riches more generously when you have experienced the vastness of the *Ring* as San Franciscans have recently done. Wagner brought *Die Meistersinger* out in 1868, after *Tristan und Isolde*, to which it stands in even more startling contrast, and before any of the *Ring*, almost three quarters of which was already completed. He had originally planned it as a parody-sequel to *Tannhäuser* (Mastersingers after Minnesingers, as in history). After completing that opera in 1845, Wagner went off to Marienbad for a holiday, during which he read a history of German national literature: he was amused to learn about the role of the Marker in the activities of the Mastersingers during the 15th and 16th centuries, noting faults and chalkmarks on the slate. Wagner already knew Lortzing's comic opera *Hans Sachs*, and he knew something about the historical poet and cobbler (1494-1576). He began to imagine a scene with Sachs as Marker using the shoemaker's hammer instead of chalk (exactly as in Act II) and then he remembered a street-brawl which he had witnessed in Nuremberg, and the Night Watchman who still told the hours when Wagner was a boy in Leipzig. So Wagner's scenario grew. He identified himself at this stage with Walther von Stolzing, the forward-looking young poet and lover. The character of Sachs was still (as in Lortzing's opera) rather unsympathetic, the plot as a whole lacking in real humor. Wagner put it aside as *Lohengrin* increasingly took hold of his imagination. He was musically and philosophically not yet ready to make the most of the Nuremberg story, and during the years of waiting he was able to read and absorb much more detailed and attractive information about the Nuremberg Guild of Mastersingers.

Correctly, Wagner had sensed that he must compose this Hans Sachs opera as a relaxation from the serious opera on a similar subject. In one sense I believe that *Lohengrin* would have become a more attractive drama of chivalry if Wagner had preceded it by composing something less serious immediately after *Tannhäuser*. We may all be thankful that he kept *Die Meistersinger* until later.

The Prelude to Act I introduces us to

MORTON

The first San Francisco Opera presentation of Die Meistersinger *took place in 1931. This backstage group shows (l. to r.) Arnold Gabor who portrayed Beckmesser, Company general director Gaetano Merola, Eva in the person of Maria Müller, Friedrich Schorr as Hans Sachs, Gotthelf Pistor as Walther, and stage director Armando Agnini.*

William Mann is the author of books on the operas of Mozart and Richard Strauss. He recently retired from the staff of The Times, *London, after 34 years, 22 of them as chief music critic. He is an associate editor of* Opera *magazine.*

several musical themes which figure prominently in the opera: the initial blaze of C major represents the Guild of Mastersingers and later their banner which shows a picture of the biblical King David. A speeded-up version of the Mastersingers' theme stands for their boisterous apprentices, while a more lyrical melody is to appear as part of the hero's Prize Song. Virtually all the musical ideas in this overture reappear later. The end of the overture leads directly into the first scene in St. Catherine's Church. The organ resounds while the congregation sings a hymn about St. John the Baptist, since this Sunday is the day before the feast of St. John, Midsummer's Day. Between each line of the hymn, solo orchestral instruments interpolate phrases of ardor and longing. They refer to the young Franconian knight Walther von Stolzing who stands a little apart from the congregation and is trying quite successfully to attract the attention of a young lady, Eva Pogner, who sits in the back row of the church.

The service ends, the congregation leaves, and Walther presses through the crowd for a word with Eva. She finds excuses to send her nurse Magdalene away for a moment or so, and Walther eventually has time to ask whether Eva is yet betrothed. Eva is much moved by the question. When Magdalene returns we gather that Walther had seen Eva for the first time the previous evening, when he was her father's guest at supper. (Walther has come to town to sell some property through Pogner's agency.) Both had fallen in love at first sight. Magdalene explains that Eva *is* promised in marriage and that her bridegroom will be the winner in a song contest to be held the next day among the local guild of Mastersingers. Walther determines to take part in this contest but first he must be admitted to

continued on p.53

photo: N. Kozakewycz

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The revival of *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* is made possible through the generosity of Mr. and Mrs. Alfred S. Wilsey.

This production was originally made possible by the Robert Watt Miller Memorial Fund.

Opera in three acts by RICHARD WAGNER

Text by the composer

Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg

(in German)

Conductor
Kurt Herbert Adler
Stage Director
Peter Brenner
Designer
Roberto Oswald
Lighting Designer
Thomas J. Munn
Chorus Director
Richard Bradshaw
Chorus Preparation
Ernest Fredric Knell
Choreographer
Marika Sakellariou
Musical Preparation
James Johnson
Kathryn Cathcart
Mark Haffner
Jeffrey Goldberg
Svetlana Gorzhevskaya
Philip Eisenberg
Prompter
Philip Eisenberg
Assistant Stage Director
Laurie Feldman
Stage Manager
Jerry Sherk

Scenery constructed in
San Francisco Opera Scenic Studios

First performance:
Munich, June 21, 1868
First San Francisco Opera performance:
September 28, 1931

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 14 AT **7:00**
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 19 AT **1:00**
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 23 AT **7:00**
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26 AT **1:00**
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 29 AT **7:00**
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 1 AT **7:00**
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7 AT **7:00**

CAST

(in order of appearance)

Eva, Pogner's daughter	Cheryl Studer*
Magdalene, Eva's companion	Sandra Walker
Walther von Stolzing, a Franconian knight	James King
David, apprentice to Hans Sachs	David Gordon
Konrad Nachtigall, tinsmith	Thomas Potter
Augustin Moser, tailor	Dale Emde
Hans Schwarz, stocking-weaver	James Patterson
Sixtus Beckmesser, town clerk	Michel Trempont
Veit Pogner, goldsmith	Kurt Rydl
Kunz Vogelgesang, furrier	Dennis Petersen
Hermann Ortel, soap-maker	John MacAllister
Fritz Kothner, baker	John Del Carlo
Ulrich Eisslinger, grocer	Daniel Harper
Hans Foltz, coppersmith	Mark Coles
Balthasar Zorn, pewterer	John Duykers
Hans Sachs, shoemaker	Hans Tschammer
A night watchman	Monte Pederson

Guild members, journeymen, apprentices and townspeople
Acrobats and a juggler
Corps de ballet

*San Francisco Opera debut

TIME AND PLACE: 16th-century Nürnberg

ACT I St. Catherine's church

INTERMISSION

ACT II A street with the homes of Sachs and Pogner

INTERMISSION

ACT III *Scene 1:* The workshop of Hans Sachs
Scene 2: The festival site

Supertitles for *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* underwritten by a deeply appreciated gift from Frank Tack.

Supertitles by Christopher Bergen, San Francisco Opera.

Latecomers will not be seated during the performance after the lights have dimmed.
The use of cameras and any kind of recording equipment is strictly forbidden.
The performance will last approximately five hours.

Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg/*Synopsis*

ACT I

Walther von Stolzing, a nobleman, has recently arrived in Nürnberg. He has fallen in love with Eva, the daughter of the goldsmith Veit Pogner. As the curtain rises, the congregation in St. Catherine's church sings a chorale. Walther learns that Eva is to be the bride of the winner of a singing contest that will be held the next day by the Guild of the Mastersingers. Eva and her companion Magdalene leave Walther in the care of David, Hans Sachs's apprentice, who explains the complex rules of the contest to Walther. The mastersingers gradually arrive, led by Pogner and Beckmesser, the small-minded town clerk who himself hopes to win Eva's hand. Hans Sachs, the shoemaker, finally arrives, and the baker Kothner calls the roll. Pogner addresses the masters, telling them of the contest and the winner's prize: marriage to Eva, who can approve or reject him, but in any case he must be a mastersinger. Walther is introduced as a candidate for the guild; he is asked to tell of his background and training and is then invited to sing a trial song. Beckmesser, the official marker, is asked to take his position in the voting booth. Walther improvises a song about spring and love, violating a number of the mastersingers' rules, and soon Beckmesser's slate is full of the mistakes he has made. The meeting breaks up in disorder. Only Hans Sachs has heard something new and attractive in Walther's song.

ACT II

It is Midsummer Eve, and the apprentices are preparing for the feast day of St. John. Hans Sachs sits at his workbench, reflecting on the events of that morning and his feelings for Eva. Eva comes from her father's house and questions him about the results of the trial. Sachs, a widower, is himself very fond of Eva, but realizes that he is too old for her. He purposely criticizes Walther in order to test Eva's feeling for him. Realizing that Eva and Walther are in love, Sachs decides to help the young couple. He discovers that they are planning to elope, and prevents it by opening his door and letting light shine brightly across the road. Beckmesser now arrives to serenade Eva, and while he is tuning his lute, Sachs sings his own song. They agree that Sachs will "mark" Beckmesser's song by hammering on the new shoes he is making. The figure being serenaded, however, is actually Magdalene. The serenade and the hammering wake the neighbors and apprentices, Beckmesser is attacked by the jealous David, and in the ensuing brawl Sachs stops Eva and Walther from running away, taking Walther into his own house. Everybody leaves and the night watchman calls out 11 o'clock.

ACT III

Scene 1—Sachs is in his study and does not hear apologies offered by David for his part in the melee. David then recites a song of his own. Left alone, Sachs reflects on the madness and delusions of the world, and then on the love of Eva and Walther. Walther, who has spent the night in Sachs's house, tells him about a beautiful dream he had. Sachs writes it down, realizing that it is a prize song—only the final stanza is missing. While Sachs and Walther change into their festive robes, Beckmesser enters and finds the song. Thinking it was written by Sachs, he at first intends to steal it, but when Sachs comes back, is allowed to keep it. Eva enters, complaining that her shoes hurt, but really hoping to see Walther. While Sachs is attending to her shoe, Walther returns, and the sight of Eva inspires him to create the final stanza to his song. Calling in David and Magdalene, Sachs christens the new song and elevates David to the rank of journeyman. Everybody leaves for the festival site, where the final contest will take place.

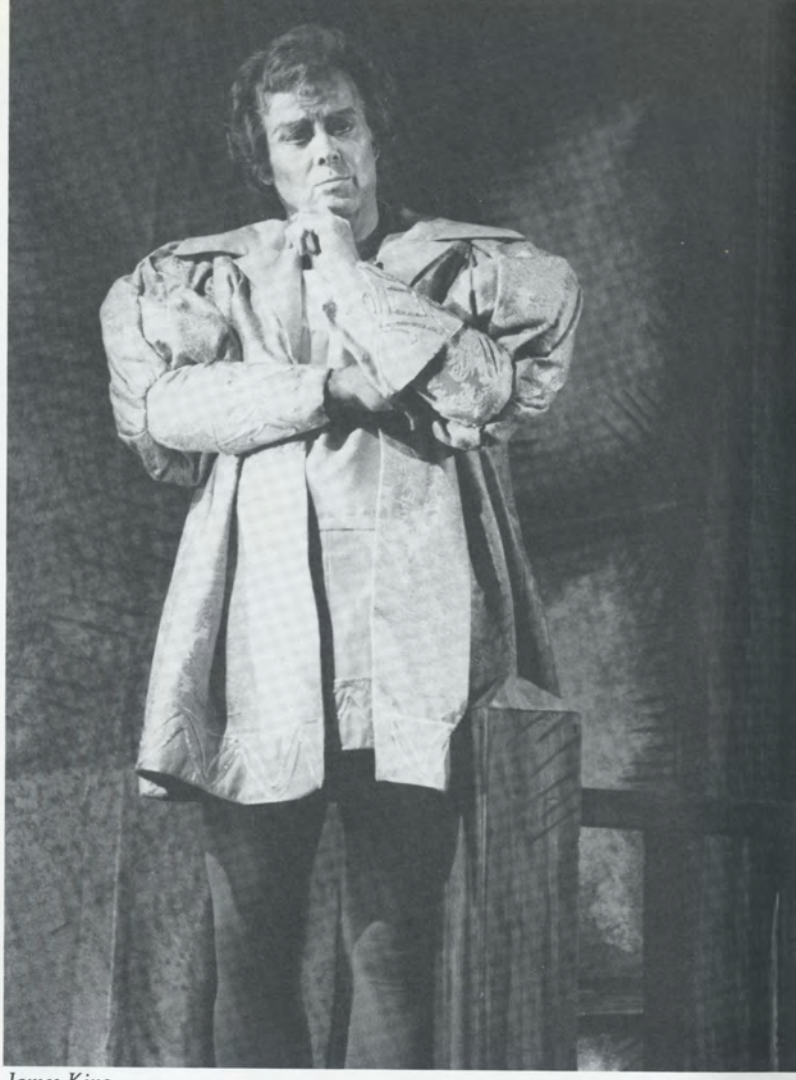
Scene 2—The apprentices and guild members are assembling for the contest. Apprentices dance with some girls and are interrupted by the entrance of the masters, who take their places on the stand. Sachs is lovingly greeted by the people, and he thanks them. The contest begins and Beckmesser tries to fit Walther's poetry to his own melody with disastrous results. Upon hearing the crowd's laughter, he accuses Sachs of having written the song. Sachs disclaims authorship, but invites Walther to show how it should be sung. Walther sings his Prize Song beautifully, wins the prize and Eva's hand, but when Pogner proposes to invest him with the insignia of the Mastersingers Guild, he refuses the honor. Sachs comes forward and persuades him to accept it, explaining that the purpose of the mastersingers is to preserve culture. Eva places Walther's wreath on the head of Hans Sachs while the people of Nürnberg acclaim him.

Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg

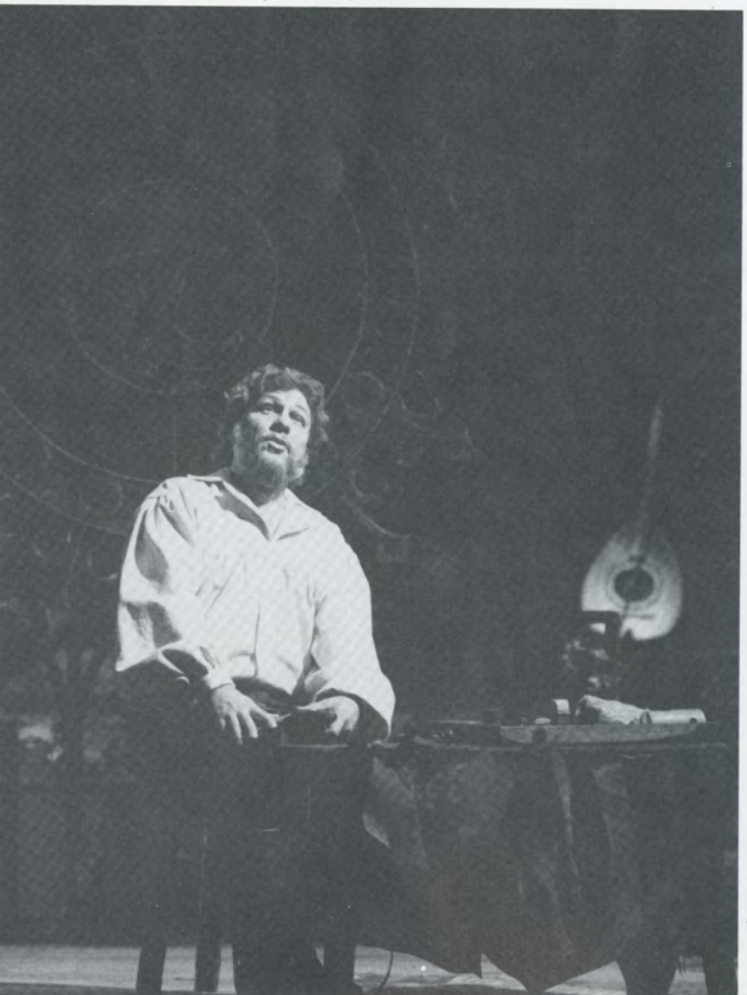
Photos taken in rehearsal by Marty Sohl

Hans Tschammer

Sandra Walker, David Gordon



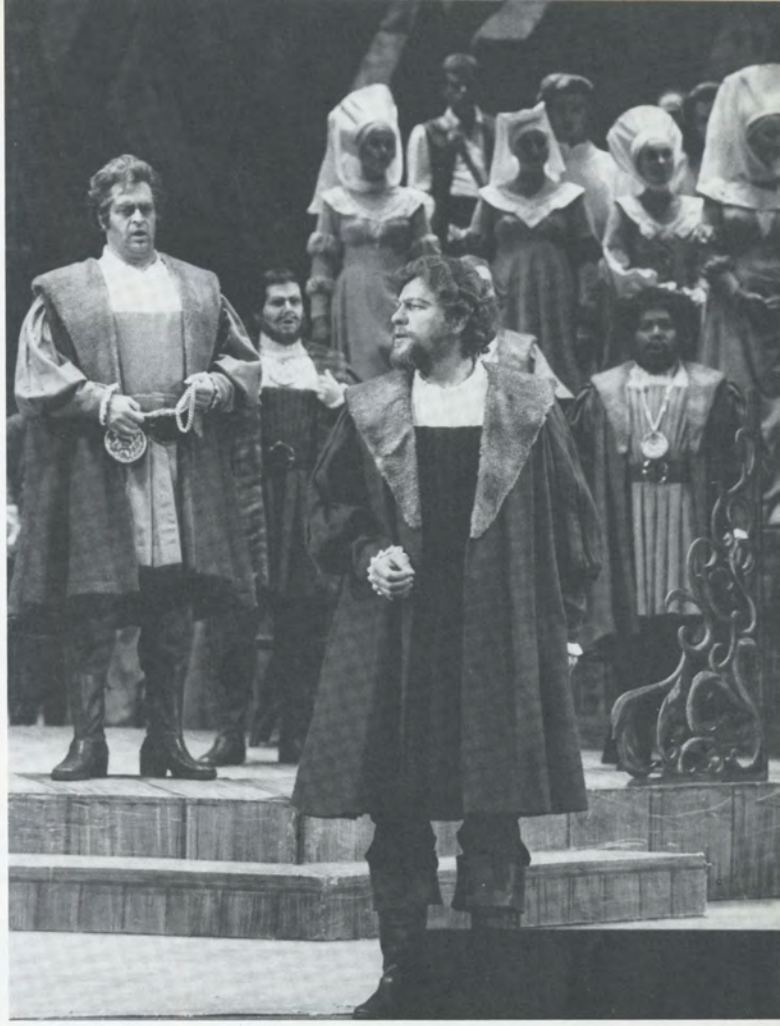
James King



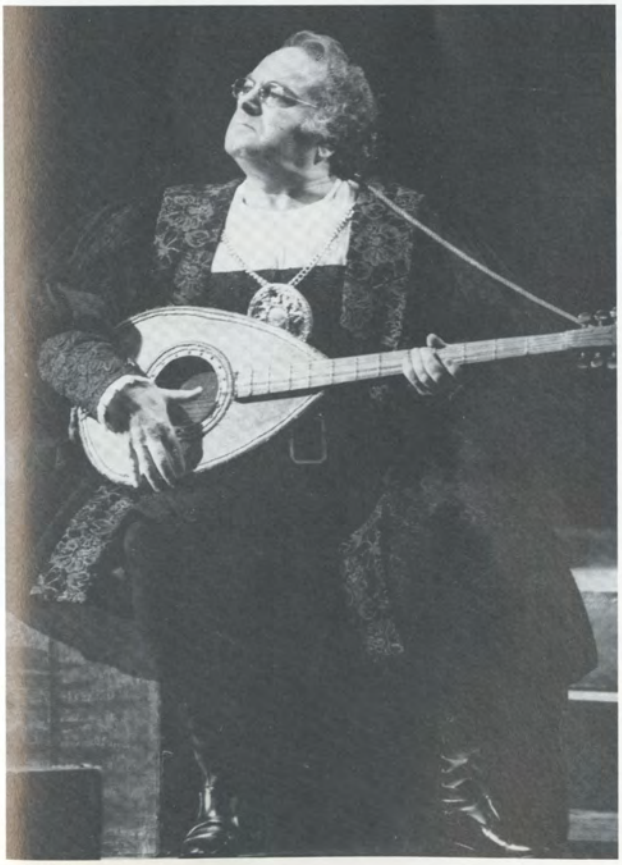
Hans Tschammer

Monte Pederson

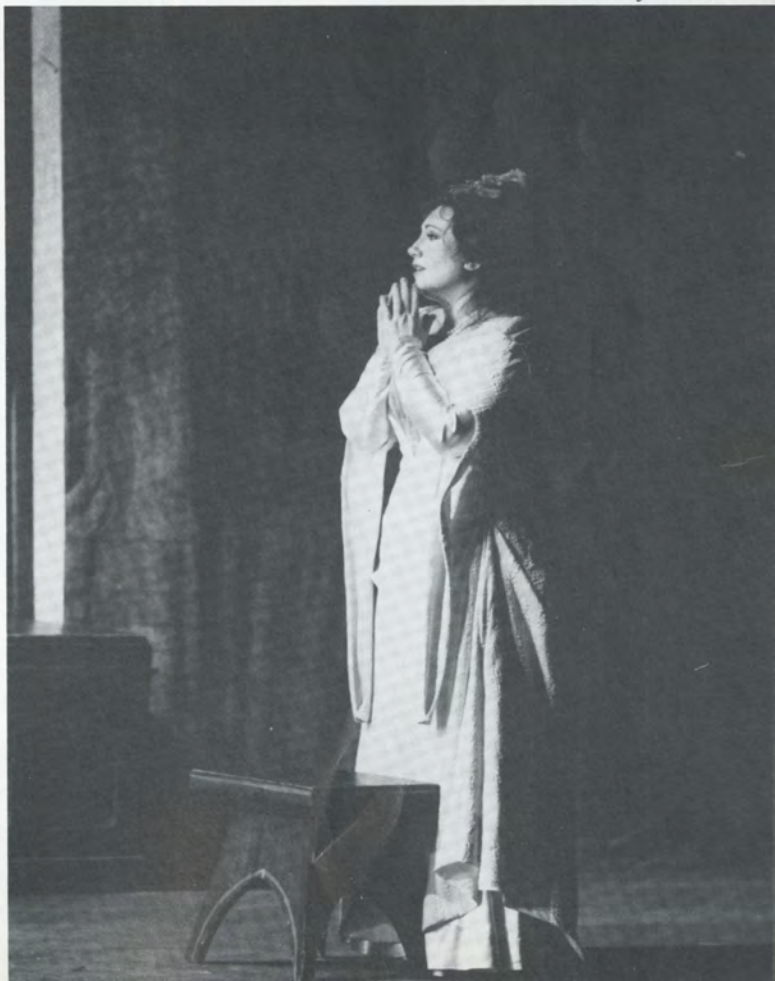
Cheryl Studer



Kurt Rydl, Hans Tschammer



Michel Trempont



Cheryl Studer

Soloists, San Francisco Opera Chorus, Corps de Ballet and Supernumeraries during the "Wach' auf" chorus of Act III.

Michel Trempont

James King

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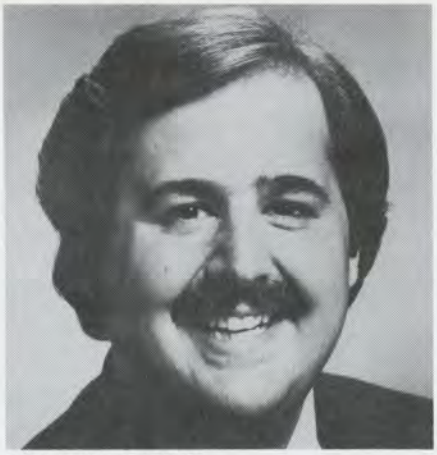
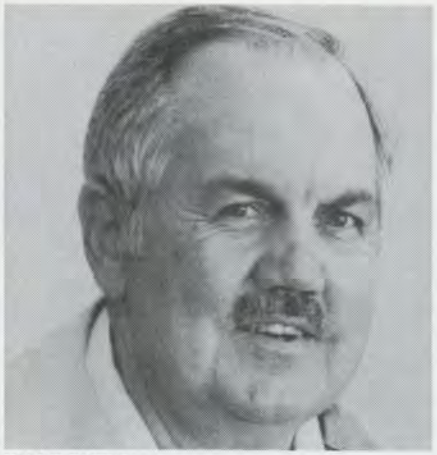


JOHN DEL CARLO

continued from p.37

Rheingold, a role which he also portrayed here in 1983. His other recent appearances here have been Dr. Dulcamara in *L'Elisir d'Amore*, Abimélech in *Samson et Dalila* and Rangoni in *Boris Godunov*. A native San Franciscan and a graduate of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, he was a member of the San Francisco Opera Chorus from 1973 to 1976 and participated in the 1977 Merola Opera Program, during which he was co-winner of first place in the San Francisco Opera Auditions. He bowed with Spring Opera Theater in 1978 as Achillas in *Julius Caesar*, returning for SPOT productions of *La Périchole* (1979), *Good Soldier Schweik* (1980) and *The Grand Duchess of Gerolstein* (1981). During the 1982 Fall Season he scored a personal triumph as Alidoro in *La Cenerentola*, and that same year he was a winner in the Pavarotti International Voice Competition, subsequently appearing with Pavarotti in the Philadelphia Opera productions of *L'Elisir d'Amore* and *La Bohème*, the latter being televised nationally on PBS. Del Carlo made his European debut during the 1981-82 season, singing the role of Olivo in Donizetti's *Olivo e Pasquale* in Barga, Italy and the following fall bowed with Lyric Opera of Chicago in *Fidelio* and a new production of *Madama Butterfly*. Last season he appeared in *Madama Butterfly* and *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* with Lyric Opera of Chicago, *The Merry Widow* with Edmonton Opera and in *Das Rheingold* and *Götterdämmerung* with Seattle Opera. Del Carlo's future engagements include *Die Fledermaus* with the Canadian Opera Company, *La Cenerentola* at the Los Angeles Music Center and *L'Elisir d'Amore* with San Diego Opera.

Tenor **Dale Emde** is Augustin Moser in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. The California native has been a member of the San Francisco Opera Chorus and Extra Chorus since 1954, and has also sung with the San Francisco Symphony Chorus. He has made many appearances with the Company, including solo roles in *La Traviata* (1980) and *La Gioconda* (1983). He has performed as soloist with many Bay



DALE EMDE

Area music ensembles, and has appeared in and directed, among other operas, Copland's *The Tender Land*, Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, and Arthur Benjamin's *Prima Donna*. He has recorded Brahms's song cycle *Die Schöne Magelone*. A graduate of the University of California at Santa Barbara, Emde owns a custom framing business in Pacifica.

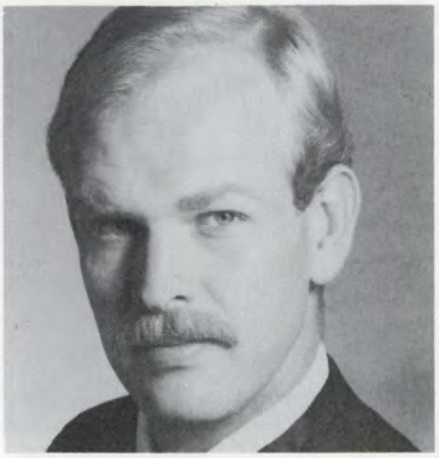
JAMES PATTERSON

Bass **James Patterson** sings the Marchese di Calatrava in *La Forza del Destino* and Hans Schwarz in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. He sang four roles for San Francisco Opera's 1985 Fall Season: the King of France in *Lear*, Johann in *Werther*, Tommaso in *Un Ballo in Maschera* and the Police Commissioner in *Der Rosenkavalier*. A graduate of the 1982 Merola Opera Program, he appeared in productions of *Rigoletto* and *The Magic Flute*, and went on to portray Sparafucile in Western Opera Theater's 1982 touring production of *Rigoletto*. He was heard in Opera Center Showcase productions of *L'Ormindo* and *The Rape of Lucretia* in 1983, and for the 1984 Showcase was Osmin in *The Abduction from the Seraglio*. Since his Company debut as a Customhouse Guard in the 1983 Summer Season production of *La Bohème*, he has sung nearly a dozen roles here, including Dr. Grenvil in *La Traviata*, the King of Egypt in *Aida*, Zuniga in *Carmen*, Alessio in *La Sonnambula*, Sparafucile in *Rigoletto*, Orest's Guardian in *Elektra*, a Border Guard and Chernia-

DENNIS PETERSEN

kovsky in *Boris Godunov*, and a Monk in *La Gioconda*. He also appeared with the Company during the 1985 *Ring* Festival as Fafner in *Das Rheingold* and *Siegfried*. In 1984 he sang both Fafners for the Pacific Northwest Wagner Festival in Seattle. His concert credits include Herod in Berlioz's *L'Enfance du Christ* with the Marin Symphony, and for the 1983 Festival of Masses he was bass soloist in the *St. Matthew Passion* and the Verdi Requiem under the baton of Robert Shaw. Patterson's recent appearances include Don Basilio in *The Barber of Seville* and Sarastro in *The Magic Flute* with the Vancouver Opera, Prince Gremin in *Eugene Onegin* with the Seattle Opera, and Fafner in Seattle's new production of the *Ring*.

Tenor **Dennis Petersen** is Don Basilio in *Le Nozze di Figaro* and Kunz Vogelgesang in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. The Iowa-born tenor made his Company debut during the 1985 Fall Season, appearing in five productions—*Adriana Lecouvreur*, *Werther*, *Falstaff*, *Un Ballo in Maschera* and *Der Rosenkavalier*—and returned last summer as Ruiz in *Il Trovatore*. He 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 perform the same part in a tour by Texas Opera Theater. After appearing in a concert production of Wagner's *Rienzi* with the Opera Orchestra of New York, Petersen has returned for that organization's subsequent performances of *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 New York concert series of works by Mozart, Salieri and Haydn; and operetta performances for the New York City Opera Education Department. He scored a personal triumph as a last-minute replacement for the tenor soloist



MONTE PEDERSON

in Britten's *War Requiem* with the Philadelphia Orchestra.

Currently an Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, bass-baritone **Monte Pederson** sings five roles this fall: Antonio in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, the Mayor in *Jenůfa*, a Night Watchman in *Die Meistersinger*, a Sergeant in *La Bohème* and the Hotelier in *Manon*. He made his Company debut during the 1985 Fall Season, when he sang four roles: A Mandarin in *Turandot*, the Jailer in *Tosca*, the First Mate in *Billy Budd*, and Pistola in the family performances of *Falstaff*. A participant in the 1983 and '84 Merola Opera Programs, he appeared in productions of *Falstaff*, *La Cenerentola* and *The Tales of Hoffmann*, and also toured with Western Opera Theater in *Madame Butterfly* and *Cenerentola*. For the Opera Center's 1986 Showcase series he portrayed Don Geronio in Rossini's *The Turk in Italy*, and this past summer sang the roles of a Gypsy in *Il Trovatore* and Mr. Gobineau in *The Medium*. He has performed with the North Bay Opera, the Marin Opera and Midsummer Mozart Festival. His Pocket Opera credits include the title role of Handel's *Imeneo*, Talbot in Donizetti's *Maria Stuarda* and Don Magnifico in *La Cenerentola*. With the Concert Opera Association of San Francisco, Pederson was heard in Donizetti's *Lucrezia Borgia* at Davies Symphony Hall and Spontini's *La Vestale* in Herbst Theatre. He undertook the title role of Wagner's *Der Fliegende Holländer* for the first time for West Bay Opera and was bass soloist in Shostakovich's Fourteenth Symphony with the Chamber Symphony of San Francisco. Most recently he appeared as Dr. Bartolo in *Le Nozze di Figaro* at the 1986 Carmel Bach Festival.

Tenor **John Duykers** portrays Balthazar Zorn in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. He appeared here last fall as the Duke of Cornwall in *Lear*, repeating the role from the 1981 American premiere production. A graduate of the 1968 Merola Opera Program, Duykers was heard in several Spring Opera Theater productions and made his Company debut in 1972 as Normanno in *Lucia di Lammermoor* and Ill's

JOHN DUYKERS

son in *The Visit of the Old Lady*. He has since appeared in 10 additional San Francisco Opera productions. During the 1981-82 season, he sang his first Cavaradossi with the Las Vegas Symphony, returning there the following season as Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly*. He appeared at Seattle Opera as Don José in *Carmen* in the fall of 1982, and in the 1983-84 season returned there as Alvaro in *La Forza del Destino* and sang the role of Cavaradossi with Sacramento Opera. Other companies with which he has performed include the Santa Fe Opera, Vancouver Opera, Tulsa Opera, the Grand Theatre of Geneva, and the Städtische Bühnen of Frankfurt. In *Duykers the First*, a one-man work created for him by George Coates, he was seen in San Francisco and at several European festivals. He continued his association with Coates and composer Paul Dresher in the trilogy comprising *The Way of How, Are/Are*, and *SeeHear*. Last year, he performed Malatestino in *Francesca da Rimini* for the Concert Opera Association of San Francisco. His schedule for the next two years includes the 1987 creation of the role of Mao Tse-Tung in John Adams's opera *Nixon in China* at the Houston Grand Opera, followed by performances at the Brooklyn Academy of Music and in Brussels. He will also create the role of the Heldentenor in Charles Shere's *The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors, Even* this December.

Bass-baritone **Mark Coles** makes his San Francisco Opera debut this season, during which he appears in five roles: the Foreman in *Jenůfa*, a Surgeon in *La Forza del Destino*, Hans Foltz in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, the Guard in *La Bohème* and the Herald in *Macbeth*. A national finalist in the 1985 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, he joined the 1985 Merola Opera Program after two seasons with the San Francisco Opera Chorus and appeared as Leporello in Western Opera Theater's 1985-86 national touring production of *Don Giovanni*. During the San Francisco Opera Center's 1986 Showcase series, Coles portrayed the Doctor in Hindemith's *There and Back*. He has also appeared as soloist with the Midsummer Mozart Festival Orchestra and in Berlioz's

MARK COLES

L'Enfance du Christ with the Master Sinfonia Chamber Orchestra. A graduate of Kent State University, Coles received first-place awards from the Ohio chapter of the National Association of Teachers of Singing, and the Tuesday Music Club of Akron. He also appeared as soloist with the Kent State Chorale at the 1981 Spoleto Festival.

DANIEL HARPER

Tenor **Daniel Harper** sings four roles this fall: Don Curzio in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Ulrich Eisslinger in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Parpignol in *La Bohème*, and Malcolm in *Macbeth*. He made his Company debut in *Aida* during the 1984 Summer Season and returned that fall as Don Riccardo in *Ernani* and Borsa in *Rigoletto*. His 1985 Company credits included Altoum in *Turandot*, Dr. Caius in the family performances of *Falstaff*, Maintop in *Billy Budd* and the Innkeeper in *Der Rosenkavalier*. This past summer he appeared as Normanno in *Lucia di Lammermoor*. A member of the 1983 Merola Opera Program, he sang the title role in the Stern Grove performance of *The Tales of Hoffmann* and Pinkerton in *Madame Butterfly*, a role he also performed on Western Opera Theater's 1983 nationwide tour. As an Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center for two years, Harper sang the role of Grimoaldo in Handel's *Rodelinda* for the 1985 Showcase series, and that same year made an unscheduled debut with the San Francisco Symphony when he was called upon to replace an ailing colleague as tenor soloist

THOMAS POTTER

in the Verdi Requiem conducted by Edo de Waart. A graduate of North Park College in Illinois, he has extensive concert credits in the Chicago area, including performances of Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Handel's *Messiah*, the Mozart Requiem, Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle*, and a recording of Schönberg's *Moses und Aron* with the Chicago Symphony under Sir Georg Solti. He recently sang his first Don José in *Carmen* with the Stockton Symphony.

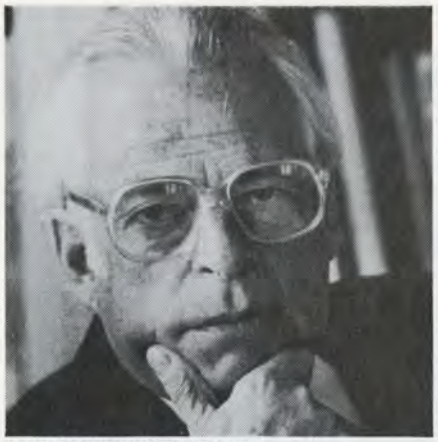
Baritone **Thomas Potter** made his San Francisco Opera debut last fall as Leopold in *Der Rosenkavalier*, and returns to the Company as Konrad Nachtigall in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* and as the Servant in *Macbeth*. A participant in the Merola Opera Program for the past two seasons, he portrayed Valentin in the 1985 Stern Grove production of *Faust* and Masetto in *Don Giovanni* at Villa Montalvo, appearing this past summer as Marcello in *La Bohème* at Montalvo. He sang Germont in *La Traviata* with the San Francisco Opera Center Singers in Palm Springs and in a concert version conducted by Kurt Herbert Adler at Stern Grove. During Western Opera Theater's 1985-86 national tour, Potter performed Masetto and will soon join this year's WOT tour as Marcello in *La Bohème*. He recently portrayed Silvano in the Lyric Opera of Philadelphia's production of *Un Ballo in Maschera* featuring Luciano Pavarotti. His professional experience includes performances with the Indiana Opera Theater, Indianapolis Opera, Michiana Opera, Central City Opera, Texas Opera Theater and the Inspiration Point Fine Arts Colony. A recipient of a master's degree in voice from Indiana University, Potter was a winner of the 1985 Pavarotti Vocal Competition held in Philadelphia, and was the recipient of the 1986 Kent Family Award given at the Merola Opera Program's Grand Finals.

In his eighth season with San Francisco Opera, bass **John MacAllister** is Hermann Ortel in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. He appeared here last fall as Lieutenant Ratcliff in *Billy Budd*, the role he sang in the Company's 1978 production of the work. A graduate of the 1971 Merola

JOHN MACALLISTER

Opera Program, he made his Company debut during the 1973 Fall Season, and has since been seen in over 20 roles in the War Memorial Opera House. He also appeared in Spring Opera Theater productions of Cavalli's *L'Ormindo* and Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, and participated in the American Opera Project's world premiere of Harbison's *Winter's Tale*. His many engagements with the San Jose Symphony include roles in *Madama Butterfly*, *La Traviata* and *Carmen*, and he has been heard at the Bear Valley Music Festival in *The Barber of Seville*, *Gianni Schicchi* and *The Marriage of Figaro*. Among his numerous concert credits are Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with the San Francisco Symphony; Mahler's Eighth Symphony and Handel's *Messiah* with the Oakland Symphony; and Mozart's *Solemn Vespers* with the Midsummer Mozart Festival. MacAllister was recently seen as Kecal in *The Bartered Bride* with Oakland Opera, and as Zuniga in *Carmen* with the Sacramento Opera.

Kurt Herbert Adler, general director emeritus of the San Francisco Opera, returns to the War Memorial podium for *Die Meistersinger*, a work he led to great acclaim during the 1981 Summer Season. Adler, who retired as Company general director in 1981, began his long musical career in 1925 in Vienna, coming to America in 1938 and spending five years with the Chicago Opera before joining the San Francisco Opera in 1943 as chorus director and conductor. He made his podium debut that year with *Cavalleria Rusticana* and was made assistant to Gaetano Merola in 1949. He was named Company artistic director in 1953, becoming general director in 1957. During his tenure as general director, Adler established numerous affiliate programs of San Francisco Opera, including the Merola Opera Program (1957), Spring Opera Theater (1961), Western Opera Theater (1967) and Brown Bag Opera (1974). He has led such memorable productions here as *Aida* with Renata Tebaldi and Mario del Monaco in 1950; *Madama Butterfly* with Licia Albanese in 1953 and with Renata Scotto in 1974; *Le Nozze di Figaro* in 1958 and *Così fan tutte* in 1960 both with



KURT HERBERT ADLER

PETER BRENNER

ROBERTO OSWALD

Elisabeth Schwarzkopf; *La Traviata* with Beverly Sills in 1973; *Il Trovatore* with Miss Scotto in 1975; *La Forza del Destino* with Leontyne Price in 1979; the Jean-Pierre Ponnelle production of *Carmen* with Teresa Berganza and Plácido Domingo; and *Un Ballo in Maschera* with Montserrat Caballé and Luciano Pavarotti in 1982. He has also inaugurated and has been conducting the popular "Opera in the Park" concerts in Golden Gate Park since 1973. Other organizations he has conducted include the Vienna Staatsoper, the San Diego Symphony, the Tulsa Opera, Central City Opera, the Philadelphia Opera, the Oakland Symphony, the San Francisco Symphony, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, London's Royal Philharmonic, the Australian Opera and the opera company of Marseilles, as well as the opera and symphony in the People's Republic of China. On records, Adler has collaborated with such artists as Luciano Pavarotti, Maria Chiara, Renata Scotto, Plácido Domingo and Leona Mitchell, with the National Philharmonic Orchestra of London. A recipient of numerous academic honors and foreign government titles, Adler has also been active as an arts advocate and has served on a number of government panels, including the National Council on the Arts. He was recently named artistic adviser to the Creative Arts Department of San Francisco State University, where he is also a Professor of Inter Arts and teaches a course called "Arts Management?"

Austrian director and translator **Peter Brenner** returns to San Francisco Opera to stage *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, the vehicle of his Company debut during the 1981 Summer Season. As a child he studied the violin and also sang in the boys' choir of the Deutsche Oper Berlin. After receiving a law degree at the Vienna University he began legal work and also studied acting and singing at the State Academy of Music. An engagement as Günther Rennert's assistant at the Salzburg Festival made him decide to become an opera director. In 1965 he was engaged as an assistant director at the Deutsche Oper am Rhein in Düsseldorf. Dr. Brenner made his operatic debut with *Die Fledermaus* in Johannesburg in 1966. In 1969 he became principal director at Freiburg and in 1973 went to Bremen in the same capacity, a position he held until 1984. He has worked as guest director at the Bavarian State Opera in Munich, the Hamburg State Opera and in the opera houses of Mannheim, Hannover, Wiesbaden and various other German cities. In 1973, he made his American debut in Portland with *Tristan und Isolde*, an opera he also directed for the Welsh National Opera in 1979. Other recent credits include Lortzing's *Der Wildschütz* and *La Cenerentola* in Hamburg, Pergolesi's *Lo Frate Innamorato* and *Idomeneo* in Munich, *Madama Butterfly* in Hannover and Janáček's *Cunning Little Vixen*, Henze's *The Young Lord*, *Der Fliegende Holländer*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Capriccio* and Cimarosa's rarely-heard *L'Italiana in Londra* in Bremen. Currently the director of the Darmstadt State Theater, Brenner has also taught opera production at Hamburg University, the Folkwang Hochschule in Essen and at the opera school in Freiburg. He recently discovered, translated and directed Paisiello's *Socrate Immaginario* for the Schwetzingen Festival.

Argentine-born director and designer **Roberto Oswald** created the sets and costumes for the San Francisco Opera production of *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, originally seen here in 1971 in his U.S. debut and repeated during the 1981 Summer Season. After studies in his native Buenos Aires, he was commissioned by the Teatro Colón to design the sets for *Pelléas et Mélisande* in 1961. Shortly thereafter he was appointed technical director of that theater, a position he held from 1964 to 1972 and from 1977 to 1980. There he was responsible for the sets and costumes in over 60 operas from all periods of the repertoire. He began work in the dual capacity of designer and director in 1977, when he mounted a production of *Tristan und Isolde* in Buenos Aires, which led to other directing assignments including *Die Walküre* in Santiago (Chile), *Lohengrin* at the Teatro Colón and the Lyric Opera of Chicago, and *Salome* in Caracas. Recent highlights of his career as director/designer include *Il Trovatore* and *La Traviata* in Montreal; *Der Fliegende Holländer* in Santiago; *Benvenuto Cellini*, *Traviata*, *Otello* as well as the complete *Ring* in Buenos Aires and Dallas. Over the years he has garnered a variety of awards for his productions: the National Award of Fine Arts for *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, *Aida* and *Die Meistersinger*; three Verdi Association prizes for *Macbeth*, *Frau* and *Benvenuto Cellini*; and the Silver Laurel for *Turandot*. Oswald has also designed extensively for the legitimate theater.

MARIKA SAKELLARIOU

Marika Sakellariou is choreographer for *Jenůfa* and *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. As ballet mistress since 1981, she has been involved in over 15 San Francisco Opera productions. In 1981 she made her Company debut with *Don Giovanni*, *Die Meistersinger* and *Rigoletto*, in addition to choreographing *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Marriage of Figaro* and *Dance of the Heartless Ladies* for Spring Opera Theater that same year. For the San Francisco Opera Center Showcase, she was responsible for the dances in *The Triumph of Honor*, *The Women in the Garden*, *Emperor Norton* and *Full Moon in March*. In the fall of 1982 she scored a major success with her choreography of *Manon* and *Salome* as well as appearing as a solo dancer in *The Queen of Spades*. In 1983 she devised the movement of the Rhinemaidens in *Das Rheingold* and choreographed *La Grande Duchesse de Gérolstein*. Her work was also seen here in the 1984 production of *L'Elisir d'Amore* and in the 1985 production of *Turandot*.

Miss Sakellariou studied at Connecticut College and the Juilliard School and continued her training with Martha Graham and Merce Cunningham. She has also performed with the José Limón Dance Company of New York, the Xoregos performing company of San Francisco, the San Francisco Opera Ballet and her own company, the Marika Sakellariou Dance Company. The 1986 Fol-de-Rol will mark the sixth time she has choreographed the popular San Francisco Opera Guild event.

THOMAS J. MUNN

Thomas J. Munn is the lighting designer for San Francisco Opera's 1986 Fall Season productions of *Don Carlos, Jenůfa, La Forza del Destino, Faust, Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg, La Bohème, Eugene Onegin, Manon* and *Macbeth*. This past summer he was responsible for lighting *Lucia di Lammermoor, Cavalleria Rusticana/Pagliacci* and *La Voix humaine*. In his eleventh year with the Company, he has been responsible for lighting over 80 productions for San Francisco Opera, including the lighting and special effects for all four of the operas of the 1985 *Ring* Festival. He has also designed the scenery as well as the lighting for *Nabucco* and *Salome* in 1982, *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* in 1981, *Roberto Devereux* and *Pelléas et Mélisande* in 1979, and *Billy Budd* in 1978. In addition to his numerous design credits for the War Memorial stage, Munn has designed scenery and lighting for Broadway, Off-Broadway, regional theater, ballet and film. His television credits include San Francisco Opera productions of *La Gioconda* (for which he received a 1979 Emmy Award), *Samson et Dalila* in 1980, *Aida* in 1981 and the Pavarotti concert of 1983, in addition to Copland's *The Tender Land* for Michigan Opera Theatre, and the world premiere of Robert Ward's *Abelard and Heloise* for the Charlotte Opera. Recent projects include productions for the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Houston Grand Opera and the Netherlands Opera, in addition to the scenery and lighting designs of *Coppélia* for the Hartford Ballet. Munn is consultant for the Muziektheater in the Netherlands, a new opera house scheduled to open at the end of September this year.

Story Retold
continued from p.39

the guild. An audition is to be held here in the church almost at once and Magdalene tells her sweetheart David to coach Walther for the examination. David is apprenticed to the cobbler and Mastersinger Hans Sachs, and is preparing this part of the church for the meeting of the guild. When Eva and her nurse leave the church, David orders his disrespectful fellow-apprentices to finish the preparation while he instructs the knight in the procedure of mastersinging trials. Discovering that Walther is totally unversed in the art of mastersinging, David explains at great length all the rules and names of the approved modes which can be got by memory but are so difficult to apply successfully. David warns Walther of the Marker who chalks every mistake on a slate: contestants who make more than seven mistakes are disqualified. The apprentices wish Walther success, then retire discreetly to one side as the Masters assemble. First comes Eva's father, the rich goldsmith Master Pogner, discussing his marriage plans for Eva; with him is the town clerk and guild Marker, Sixtus Beckmesser, a strong candidate if Eva will accept him. Pogner turns to greet Walther who asks to be admitted to the guild. Gradually the other Mastersingers arrive and their junior member Fritz Kothner calls the roll and declares the meeting open. A new Marker is due for election, but first Pogner begs a hearing and, in an extended solo, tells the masters of the prize he will award for the Midsummer's Day public singing contest. Rich men are reputed to prize wealth above all things: to redress this notoriety, Pogner will proclaim the superiority of art by handing over to the winner all his worldly goods and with them the hand of his only child Eva.

In the ensuing ensemble of congratulation and discussion, Pogner establishes that the lucky man must be a Mastersinger, acclaimed winner by his fellow guildsmen, and that Eva has the final choice; but if she rejects the champion, she will die a spinster. Sachs would like the public to choose the winner—their taste is closer to that of a young girl, and Mastersingers would gain the approval of the populace as well as their own closed circle. Pogner's conditions are accepted and he now presents his young friend Walther as a candidate for the guild. The other Mastersingers doubt the wisdom of admitting a nobleman, especially Beckmesser, who senses danger to his chances. But Walther is ready to be auditioned. He is questioned first about his musical education and he

answers, in three solo stanzas, that his teachers were the famous but long-dead German poet Walther von der Vogelweide, the songs of birds in springtime, and the various sounds of life about him. Beckmesser goes into the Marker's box with sarcastic words of advice to the new candidate. Kothner reads the principal rules of mastersong, and instructs Walther to sit in the official singer's chair. Beckmesser, from behind the curtains, calls on him to begin singing. Walther takes the Marker's words "Now begin" (*Fanget an*) as the start of his Trial Song which is about Springtime's command that all creation should "now begin" to blossom and feel the ardor of love. A mastersong has to consist of three stanzas, such as Walther offered in his response to Kothner's first questions. After two verses of his Trial Song, he is stopped by Beckmesser who has been noisily chalking on his slate and now declares that the tally of mistakes has far surpassed the limit. Most of the Masters agree that Walther's song is senseless and unintelligible but Pogner accuses Beckmesser of excessive zeal and Sachs openly charges him with prejudice against a rival for Eva's hand. Sachs tells Walther to finish his song if only to annoy the Marker, and the act ends with an ensemble in which Walther sings his third verse while Beckmesser and the hostile masters unite in condemnation; Pogner regrets Walther's lack of success, Sachs openly approves the ardor of the music, and the apprentices ironically repeat their earliest cries of good luck. The meeting breaks up after Walther hurries contemptuously from the church. Sachs is left behind, meditating alone on the strange impressiveness of Walther's song and its unceremonious rejection by his fellow-Nurembergers.

Act II takes place on the same Sunday evening, the evening before Midsummer's Day. The orchestral introduction suggests excitement in the air, specifying its cause with the phrase to which Pogner in Act One sang of the beautiful festival of St. John. When the curtain rises we find the young apprentices and David looking forward to the next day's holiday. They are in the street outside Hans Sachs's shop which faces Pogner's more opulent house. Magdalene, carrying a basket of cakes for David, comes to learn the outcome of the audition, but withdraws the bribe when she hears of Walther's failure. A scuffle among the apprentices is stopped by the return home of Hans Sachs, who takes David indoors. The street is empty as Eva and her father walk towards their house, and sit a moment on a bench outside, he reminding her of the great fortune which will be hers the next day, she peering everywhere for a sign of Walther, disappointed to learn that he will not be dining with them that night. Pogner guesses the secret. They go indoors to have supper; Magdalene slips the sad news to her mistress who decides to discover more from Sachs. The cobbler has decided to work outside; David brings a bench, stool, light and tools before going to bed. Sachs sits down to work, meditates, in a famous soliloquy, on the gentle, pungent, inspiring scent of the lilac tree outside his shop, and is led to think once more of Walther's curiously impressive song, music that is surely, spontaneously dictated by Nature and communicated by a natural eloquence, even though the other Mastersingers scorned it. As Sachs settles to work, Eva strolls timidly over to him. They talk about her new shoes, about the ones he is making for Beckmesser (a suitor she does *not* fancy), about Sachs, a widower she could truly cherish, and of his worries about the young knight

COGAN

The 1959 San Francisco Opera cast of Die Meistersinger *included the Eva of Sena Jurinac, then in her American debut season with the Company.*

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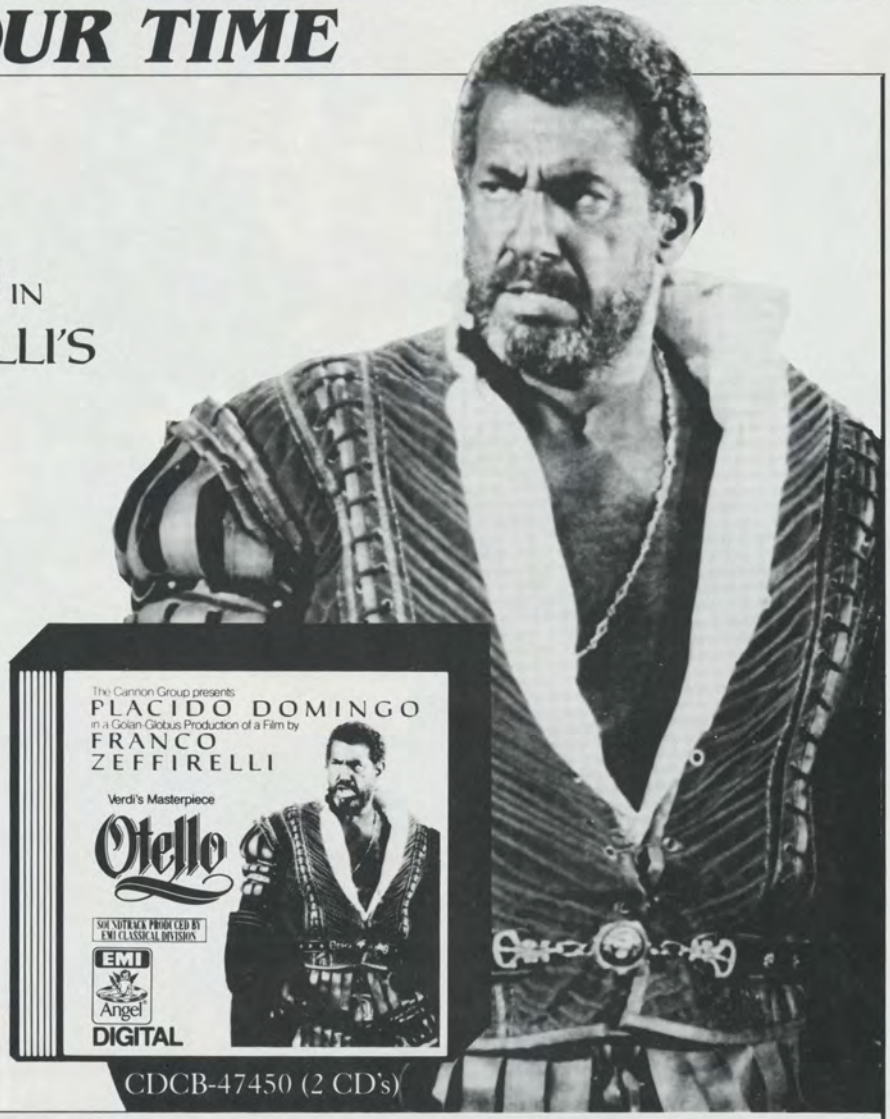

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who failed his audition. Eva presses him further on the subject nearest to her heart. Sachs hints at Walther's superior talent, guesses Eva's special interest, and turns his laudatory words into condemnation, sending Eva in tears back home to Magdalene who warns her that Beckmesser is due to appear and serenade her. Pogner is also calling for her. But Eva orders the nurse to hear the serenade in her stead. She will not go indoors until she has seen her lover. Walther arrives. For the first time they meet alone, aware of their reciprocated love and able to express it in passionate song which even Walther's fury against the doggerel-devoted pedantry of the Mastersingers cannot dispel. He urges Eva to elope with him. This outburst is interrupted by the booming horncall of the Night Watchman who patrols the streets, announcing the time, and bidding the residents to keep peace and douse all fires. Eva has run inside, Walther concealed himself. But Sachs has overheard the talk of elopement and brings his work outside again. Eva, dressed in Magdalene's clothes, returns to Walther, now eager to escape with him. But Sachs shines a bright light across their path, and when Eva suggests another route they find it blocked by the arrival of Beckmesser with his lute, intent on his serenade. Eva and Walther hide in an arbor. Beckmesser prepares to sing, but Sachs forestalls him with a noisy worksong, in three verses like all good Mastersingers. Beckmesser is willing to forego his new shoes for some peace and quiet while he serenades the supposed Eva (Magdalene has appeared at an upper window). Sachs offers, as compromise, to act as Marker while Beckmesser sings, not chalking but hammering the new shoes when a Mastersinger's rule is broken. Beckmesser ruefully accepts and sings his serenade, while the lovers murmur to one another, and Sachs points the frequent errors of word-setting and melodic clumsiness with a thwack on the cobbler's last. Beckmesser, after several furious protests, loses his nervous anxiety in the enthusiasm of his song which becomes positively exuberant, especially when Sachs announces that the shoes are finished. But neighbors have been roused from their sleep by the noise, among them several Mastersingers, and they come outside to complain. David too has observed someone serenading the woman he recognizes as Magdalene, jumps out of his bedroom window and belabors Beckmesser mercilessly. This provokes a general brawl. Eva and Walther huddle more closely together. Sachs withdraws to observe them. An uproarious, elaborate vocal ensemble, based on the melody of Beckmesser's serenade, moves to a climax at which Walther and Eva try to escape. Sachs seizes Walther and pushes him into the cobbler's shop, Pogner emerges and seizes the young lady dressed in Magdalene's clothes, the Night Watchman's horn is heard again, the crowd disperses, Sachs pulls David away from Beckmesser and pushes him inside, and Beckmesser limps hurriedly away. The street is empty and magically peaceful when the Night Watchman arrives, sings his warning and moves on as the curtain falls.

The prelude to Act III is a musical portrait of Hans Sachs who has by now been established as the real hero of the opera, the aging philanthropist and philosopher with whom Wagner now felt much more affinity than with the madcap revolutionary Walther who was his *alter ego* when he first conceived *Meistersinger*. The music of this prelude evokes the sad resignation of the elderly cobbler, his soaring thoughts, and the genius that inspired the Morning Hymn which the crowd will sing at the Midsummer's Day festival of song. The curtain rises to show him early on the Monday morning in his little shop, deeply absorbed in these thoughts as he reads a huge history book. David returns from an early stint of deliveries, gets no answer from his master, even to apologies and entreaties, until the book is closed and a few absent-minded remarks addressed to him. Slowly, Sachs remembers that today is St. John's Day. David is ordered to sing the topical ditty he has learned for the occasion. It identifies the name of St. John the Baptist with the German pet-name Hans. David realizes that today is Hans Sachs's name-day; his master dismisses him with unaccustomed gentleness. His mind is on weightier matters as a monologue indicates: the foolishness of the human race, as exemplified in the uproar of the previous night, and then Sachs's love of Nuremberg, and care for its well-being which, with a little careful diplomacy, he will try to promote now. Walther comes out from the bedroom where he has slept the previous night. He has awakened from a marvelous dream. Sachs urges him

to relate it in the form of a mastersong and is able, through creative knowledge, to give Walther positive and helpful advice about composition, where David's Act I parallel lesson, concentrated on lists of meaningless academic details, had been useless to Walther in his audition with the Mastersingers. Walther responds intelligently to Sachs's instruction and, with Sachs as friendly amanuensis, formulates his dream in two well-shaped stanzas of solo song, the initial version of his famous Prize Song. He confesses that he is not yet ready to attempt the third, clinching verse of this song. Sachs leads him upstairs to dress for the Midsummer Festival, Walther's servant having discovered his whereabouts and brought clean clothes around.

The shop is empty. The orchestra, in tones of ghostly plaintive satire, depicts the entry of Beckmesser, still suffering agonies from David's beating. Wherever he moves he feels searing pain until, collapsed on Sachs's table, he finds the text of Walther's Dream-song in Sachs's handwriting. Swiftly, Beckmesser pockets this evident proof of Sachs's candidature for Eva's hand. When the cobbler returns he is not a bit put out by Beckmesser's accusations, but gladly makes him a present of the manuscript promising never to claim authorship of it. Beckmesser, completely bewildered by this sudden show of kindness from an old enemy, showers embarrassed gratitude on Sachs and limps hysterically away.

Now Eva, dressed in her best, enters—ostensibly with uncertain complaints about her shoes—but forgets them completely when Walther reappears, looking his finest and singing the third and final verse of his Prize Song about Eva, the Bible's Eve in the garden of Eden. Eva Pogner's emotion stirs Sachs to an outburst of angry frustration, but when she turns in loving gratitude to him, recognizing his claims upon her heart, he reminds her of Isolde who loved Tristan but was wrongly married to King Mark, old enough to be her father. Wagner here quotes phrases from his *Tristan und Isolde.* Sachs has no wish to play King Mark to Eva's Isolde, least of all with a Tristan in the same room. Magdalene arrives and David comes to meet her. Sachs solemnly proclaims the birth of a new Mastersong for which all present must stand witness. David is promoted from apprentice to journeyman. Eva as godmother must call heaven's blessing on the new song. She

JEANETTE

Paul Schoeffler, San Francisco Opera's 1959 and 1961 Hans Sachs.

leads the five of them in an ecstatic vocal quintet. They all leave the shop to attend the festivities.

The orchestra, in an interlude, marks the change of scene to a meadow on the banks of the river Pegnitz just outside old Nuremberg. The apprentices of the various guilds assemble, each singing their own professional song. Girls from a neighboring village arrive by boat and dance a slow waltz with the apprentices, now joined by David. The dance is broken up by the solemn entry of the Mastersingers, among them Pogner with Eva, last of all the populace's great favorite Sachs, who is greeted with his own Morning Hymn, a salute to Luther's Reformation. Sachs responds with eloquent, humble gratitude. As official spokesman, he introduces the contest and the unique prize offered by Pogner to the glory of musical art; a flight of eloquence designed to contrast formidably with the effort of the first competitor, Beckmesser, whose anxiety grows increasingly worse. He is mystified by the song he has appropriated. When, after demonstrations of dissatisfaction with the arrangements, he finally mounts the platform, he proves to have misread Sachs's handwriting, and makes ludicrous nonsense of Walther's poetry. The crowd, and the Mastersingers, burst out laughing. Beckmesser, deeply embarrassed, protests that the song he has sung is not by him, but by the crowd's darling Sachs. Beckmesser hurries away, totally

JEANETTE

In 1959, Geraint Evans (later, Sir Geraint) made his U.S. opera debut with the San Francisco Opera in the role of Beckmesser, a role to which he returned here in 1961 and 1971.

distraught. Sachs insists that the song is good, though not his work and calls for another to show how it should really sound. Walther steps forward, sings the authentic version and is applauded by the Masters and populace as well as by Eva, of course, who crowns him acknowledged winner of the contest. Pogner hastens to award Walther the Mastersingers' chain of office. Walther, still angered by the hostility of the guild a day earlier, refuses membership and, by this tactless gesture, alienates the entire assembly. But Sachs steps forward and convinces him that the chain is a testimonial to artistic worth beyond any other claim to respect. When a country is downtrodden, its artistic greatness is its only self-respect. Walther accepts the chain of office. Eva and Walther agree that the champion's wreath should rightly be placed on Sachs's head, and the opera ends jubilantly with general acclaim of Nuremberg's favorite, Hans Sachs.

The premise of Wagner's story does not bear serious consideration: a rank amateur from the sticks comes into town and wins a composition contest over the heads of experienced professionals who themselves grant him artistic superiority. Wagner was getting at the academic professors and music critics who had railed at *Tristan* while the audiences loved it. He omits to tell us, in the final version of *Meistersinger*, that Walther was actually a poet before he came to Nuremberg. In one of Wagner's preparatory drafts, Walther shows his portfolio of verses to Sachs who is amazed at their skill; poets of those days were usually singers and instrumentalists as well—Stolzing's ability to learn the Nuremberg Rules in a few minutes begins to seem less incredible, especially if we allow for Wagner's observation of the Aristotelian Unities. By the time Walther sings his Prize Song in the Festival Meadow, he has had time to revise what he sang that morning and improve it. Sachs's text has been passed to other Masters so that they can "follow the score," so to speak. Wagner's stage directions carefully show that Kothner, who has been holding it, lets it drop out of reach in his concentration, and nobody notices that the text and music are quite different from what Sachs wrote down. Wagner was expert enough to know that even the Prize Song won't sound so well to the audience the second time round.

As a poet, Wagner himself had come a long way since *Die Feen* in 1834. The libretto of *Die Meistersinger* is remarkably expert, and in the handling of rhyme, quite brilliant. There is none of the constriction of the *Stabreim* verse which puzzles our understanding in the *Ring*, none of the passionate incoherence which makes *Tristan* so wonderful and so incomprehensible. *Meistersinger* characters express themselves quite directly, and with vigor and wit as well. The romantic platitudes of *Tannhäuser* are centuries behind. Lucky indeed that Wagner let his Nuremberg opera simmer a while. In 1845, his lyrical invention could never have risen to the scene for Sachs and Eva in the second act, or the marvelously easy flow of invention, virtually all thematic development, in Pogner's Address. The deployment of themes is masterly, as well as the skill with which they are related to one another, and their capacity for variety of significance or of insinuating themselves into long lyrical melodies. It was work on the *Ring* which had taught Wagner this expertise (the music of Mime and Beckmesser for instance, is not unrelated), this poise, this ability to relax and spin out the magic in cloudless C major, which he was accused of killing stone dead in the score of *Tristan*. The euphoria of the music in Wagner's *Meistersinger* is unparalleled, but every note is typical of its composer. ■

The Well-documented Maestro

By CAROLINE CRAWFORD

"Remember, young man, in the theater nothing is impossible."

Kurt Herbert Adler had been engaged only a short time in the Josefstädter Theater in Vienna when Max Reinhardt spoke these words to him. The year was 1925, and Adler had been asked to produce some music on short notice for one of Reinhardt's productions at his principal theater. If Adler thought the time too short for the assignment, he was persuaded otherwise by the stern and demanding director. His tasks during the three years with the Reinhardt theaters included everything from conducting the music for productions of plays by George Bernard Shaw and Carl Sternheim (the latter featuring a very young Marlene Dietrich) to composing music for Somerset Maugham's *Rain*, and when he left for opera posts in Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Italy he was convinced of the truth that in the theater everything was possible. He carried the Reinhardt injunction with him from Vienna to Chicago to San Francisco: it was a guiding principle during his twenty-seven years as administrator of San Francisco Opera.

The San Francisco Opera and the man who ran it from 1953 to 1981 are the subjects of an oral history being documented by the Oral History Office of the University of California's Bancroft Library. During the Adler regime, the company re-confirmed its position as a top-ranking international opera stage. In 1953 San Francisco offered a six-week Fall Season with twenty-five performances of fourteen operas. By 1981, the Fall Season had doubled in length and nearly tripled in performances, and was only part of the roster of a much-expanded company that had added an international summer season, a summer training program, a full-fledged touring company, an innovative spring season for young American artists, and several additional performing affiliates. Opera was enjoying a heyday in this country—with regional companies proliferating and television bringing the art into millions of American homes—and San Francisco had become a kind of opera center. It was a prime training and nurturing ground for young American singers, and the Bay Area could claim more opera per capita than any other region in the country.

In all this booming opera activity, Kurt Herbert Adler was the undisputed czar. By his own admission, he did not believe in delegating responsibility to his hard-working staff: he oversaw every minute detail of the operations and in the last analysis he made every decision. "I don't believe too much in democracy in the theater," he said, and he clearly meant it. But the buck really did stop there, in the spacious white office on the fourth floor of the War Memorial Opera House.

Adler also said: "I think that the people who sit in offices only and don't participate in the practical operations of an opera company cannot be entirely familiar with the needs of the company." Anyone who worked on Adler's staff would recognize this as a colossal understatement. Adler was everywhere, talking shop with the carpenters or fabric with the costumers, looking in on the stagehands. He was omnipresent at rehearsals, scrutinizing every detail from the last chorister's shoes to the conductor's tempi. Says director/designer Jean-Pierre Ponnelle: "Where is the really fully professional theater director in the world today? ... You have very competent people for music, and in the theater you have competent people for staging, for administration, for fundraising, for publicity—but there is no complete personality, one who knows the problem from the last contrabass, from the last chorus part to the stage carpenter to the wig department; how to invite Mrs. X, and *not to invite* Mr. X. I think Kurt was the last product and the last representative of a really great era...."

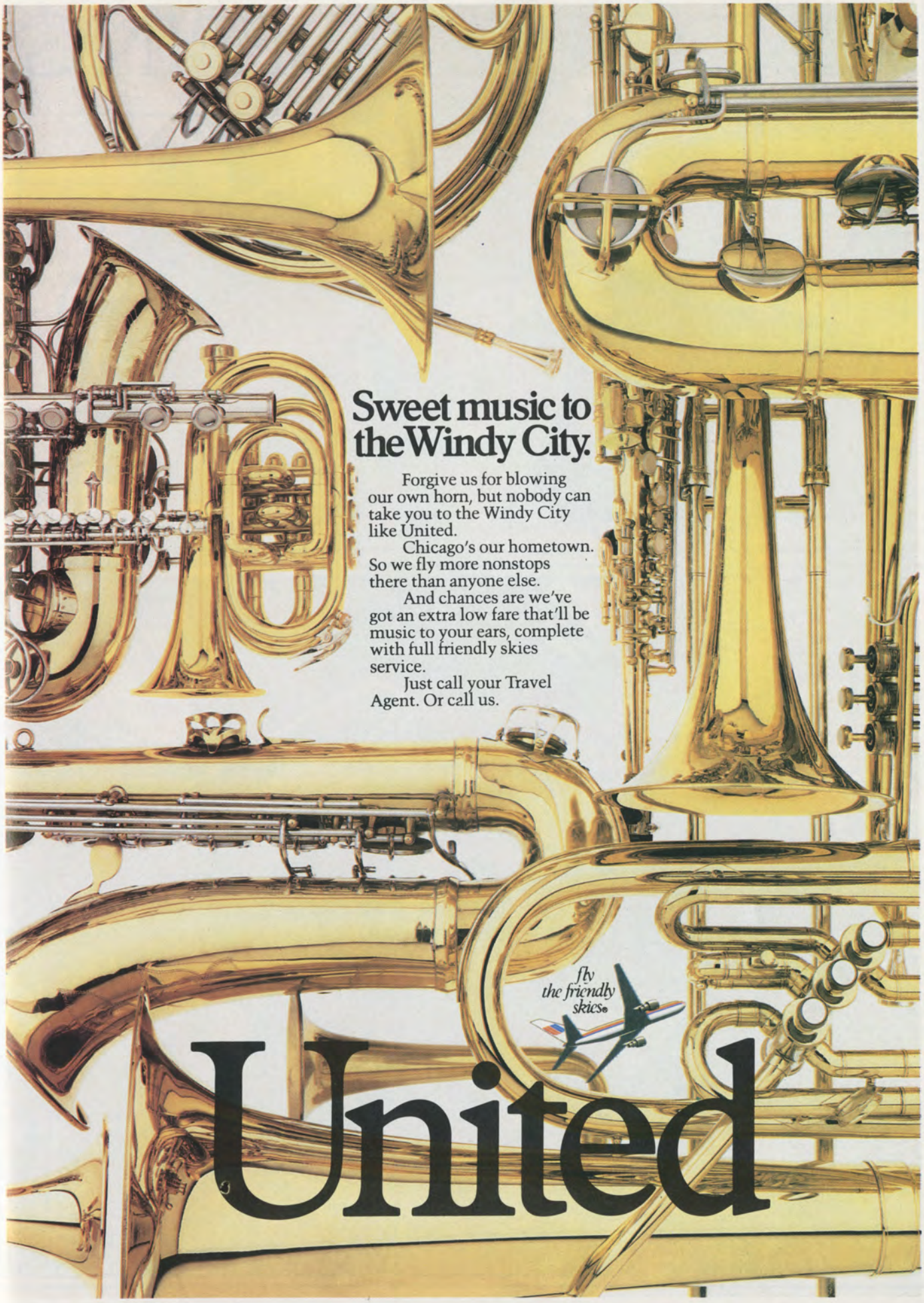
Kurt Herbert Adler is central to the history, but he is not the only character. The history of San Francisco Opera begins with Gaetano Merola, who considered the city "my other Italy" and believed in its ability to support an opera company of its own. His first season took place in 1922 at the Stanford Stadium, where audiences of more than 10,000 came to hear the likes of Giovanni Martinelli, Bianca Saroya, and Léon Rothier at five dollars top; he ran San Francisco Opera

continued on p.65

Caroline Crawford is project director of the Kurt Adler/San Francisco Opera oral history.

STROHMEYER

San Francisco Opera Chorus 1948 group photo. Kurt Herbert Adler, at that time chorus director and conductor, is seated in the center of the second row.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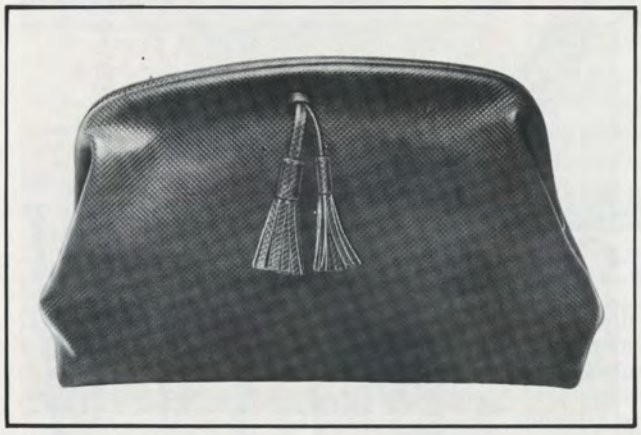

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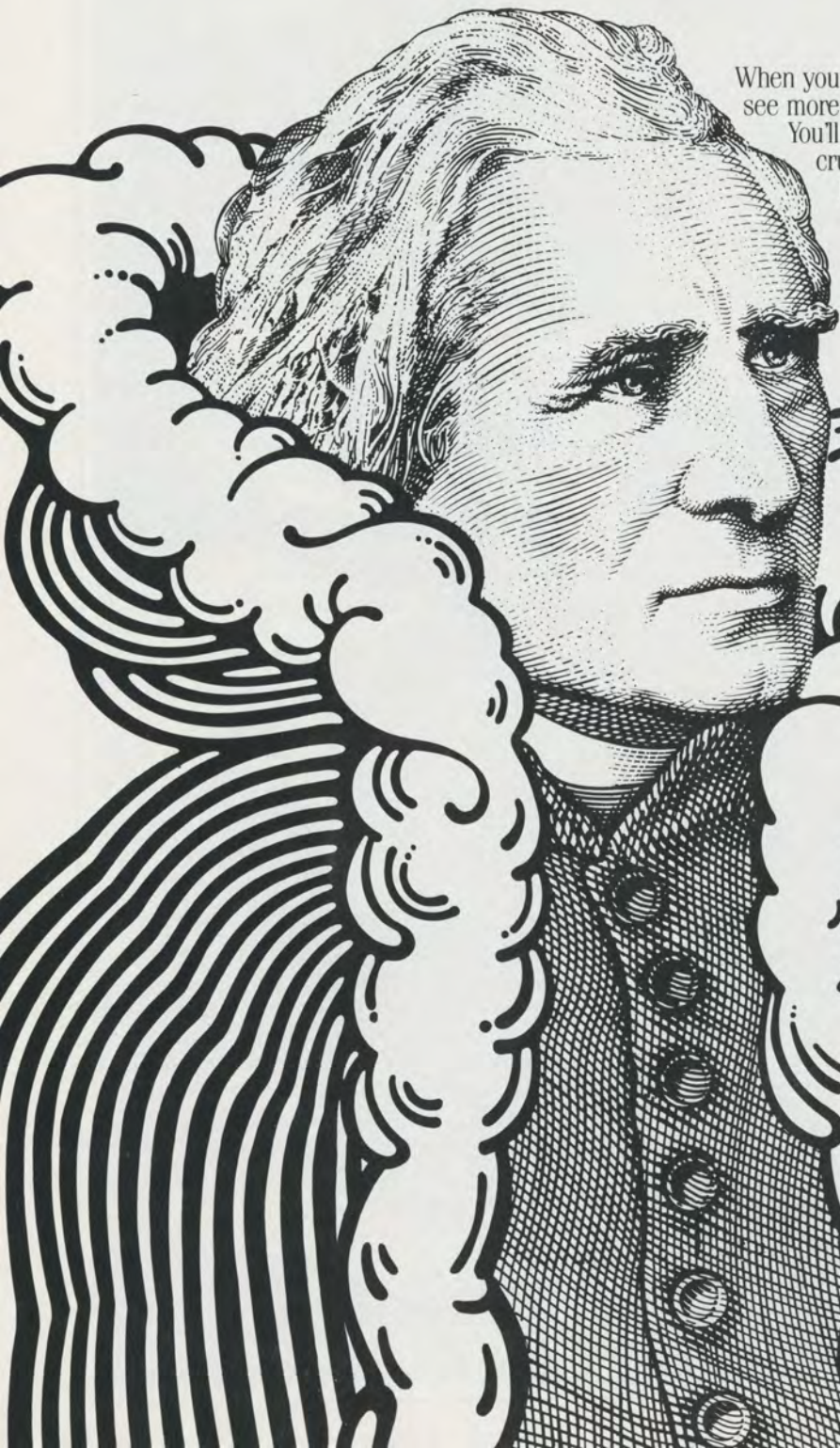

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Documented Maestro
continued from p.60

MASON JONES

Kurt Herbert Adler (extreme left) presents a commemorative scroll to Robert Watt Miller (extreme right) after a 1962 opening night performance of La Bohème. *Gathered around them are (l. to r.) Dorothy Kirsten, conductor Francesco Molinari-Pradelli, Mary Costa, chorus director Vincenzo Giannini, Renato Cioni, Russell Christopher and Giorgio Tozzi.*

until his death in 1953, and nearly all of the world's best-known singers graced his stage.

Also prominent in the cast of characters is Robert Watt Miller, long-time president of the Opera Board who fairly single-handedly provided the financial base on which the company was run and gave it the requisite social luster needed to sustain it; the staff who maintained company operations, the audiences that filled the Opera House and welcomed back the artists season after season, and not least the artists who created in San Francisco some of the most exciting hours of lyric theater anywhere in the world.

The Bancroft Library story is to be told by means of extensive tape-recorded conversations with those who made it: Adler, community leaders, labor leaders, opera staff, artists. Adler has already given nearly sixty hours of interviews (Timothy Pfaff, associate editor of *California Monthly*, has conducted most of these). Some sessions focus narrowly on such subjects as Adler's childhood and remembrances of his Viennese past, of Strauss and Mahler and the years spent observing and studying at the Vienna Opera. Other subjects include casting and the selection of repertoire, lighting, color in design and music, and specific personalities who were, in Adler's estimation, "right for their times": Paul Hager, Wolfram Skalicki, Jean-Pierre Ponnelle, and an Adler protégé whose tragic death brought to a close a remarkable life and career—Calvin Simmons.

Other sessions are more rambling reminiscences about the great and near-great, the phenomenon of the operatic superstar, reflections on American musical theater and the state of opera in general.

Adler had the distinction of being called tyrannical, dictatorial, autocratic, but he was never boring, and his tape-recorded story is also never boring. He is as candid about his personal dislikes as he is about the things he did that were less than successful, about what frustrated and hurt and taxed him. He is less willing to philosophize about the famous Adler temper, except to say that it showed "artistic tension, which is good for success." He adds: "I was working so hard, I didn't have time to be sweet and nice. Maybe not the personality, but certainly not the time." Others who may have been subject to his temper have viewed it differently, but there is a kind of consensus that whatever it was, it produced exciting opera in the long run because it was coupled with a unique energy that translated into an extraordinary command of the business and a demand for perfection met by the man himself.

Not surprisingly, a treasury of opera

MASON JONES

Kurt Herbert Adler at home in 1961.

anecdotes has accumulated on tape: stories of Adler's summer apprenticeship with Arturo Toscanini in 1936, of conducting a broadcast performance of Bruckner's Fourth Symphony in Chicago in competition with President Roosevelt's Fireside Chats (Adler got better ratings); of auditioning Marilyn Horne on her wedding day; of Luciano Pavarotti singing lustily on the Bay Bridge at the request of a female taxi driver, and on and on.

Woven in with the Adler story are the oral histories of others: Jean-Pierre Ponnelle reflects on the Adler personality and theatrical vision and the very special relationship shared by the two men (Ponnelle is godfather to Adler's young son); Leonie Rysanek chronicles the changing company; Jess Thomas describes his early San Francisco training and meteoric launch from the Merola Program into the operatic stratosphere. Leontyne Price talks of what San Francisco has meant to her career, and of the man she calls "The President" (she carries with her three pictures: of Herbert von Karajan, "The Emperor," of Rudolf Bing, "The King," and of "The President"—Kurt Adler).

Miss Price's interview is a kind of a catalogue aria describing the qualities of the Company, of which she says: "You can't ask for a better operatic environment to perform in—it is artistically superior in every way." Of Adler, she says: "I think what Kurt brought to San Francisco from an artistic and cultural point of view is historical...His approach to being an opera director and administrator is very much the way I approach my own life and career. I admire the strength that his priorities were ever constant; I respect it more than I can ever say ... There's *nobody* like him, in my book."

Production Supervisor Matthew Farruggio and former Company Administrator Ruth Felt, veterans of the Opera staff, explore the Adler inner sanctum and go into some detail about the outfitting of an opera company on a shoestring—as it was done in the old days. James Schwabacher and Philip Eisenberg discuss the musical side of opera production and members of Adler's family supplement his interviews. Adding to their stories will be others whose memories go back to the 1930s and 1940s.

The profound and long-lasting involvement of Robert Watt Miller has been documented by a number of interviewees, including his widow, Mrs. Sheldon Cooper, and R. Gwin Follis, close friend and Board Chairman from 1971 to 1984. Stagehands to this day remember Mr. Miller scrutinizing the operation from backstage in top hat and tails: elegant, powerful, and knowledgeable about all things operatic. Colin Harvey, a veteran of forty-six years with the Company (chorister, comprimario and chorus librarian; he last performed on stage in 1982) has been a window into the Merola years.

Later decades have been covered by Board presidents Prentis Cobb Hale and Walter Baird, who direct their attention to

the realities of the 1960s and 70s and the expansion of the Board to meet those realities—a fairly comprehensive look at the Bay Area social history.

There are many interviews to come: Invitees include Opera General Director Terry McEwen, Birgit Nilsson, Licia Albanese, and former staffers Richard Rodzinski and Ann Farris Darling; among those who have written indicating their interest in taking part in the history are Dorothy Kirsten, Sir Geraint Evans, Jon Vickers, and Elisabeth Schwarzkopf.

The Oral History process is uncomplicated. The interview is structured in that questions are presented to the interviewee, but the tenor of the discussion is informal and the informal tone is maintained throughout. A transcript is made of the tape recordings, sent to the interviewee for editing, and from the edited version the final version, with chapter headings and indexes, is compiled and bound into book form for distribution to requesting reference libraries. Interviewees may request that any or all of their materials be sealed for an indefinite period of time. The methodology of producing oral histories is recent: Allan Nevins, Civil War historian, began putting together oral histories at Columbia University in the late 1940s. Willa Baum pioneered the first histories on the West Coast in the early 1950s with a history of the University of California. Since that time the technique has been used and popularized by Studs Terkel (*Working, Hard Times*), Merle Miller (*Plain Speaking*), Oscar Lewis (*The Children of Sanchez, La Vida*), and Vivian Perlis's histories of American composers produced through the Yale University Department of Oral History. Considered a poor relation by some historians, Oral History is coming into its own as an accessible and first-hand accounting given by those closest to the subjects, as well as the subjects themselves. History from the horse's mouth.

If the accounts of various interviewees involved with the oral history of San Francisco Opera differ in detail, they are nonetheless a colorful account of the Company as it grew and developed. For those who may see a paradox in this fact, a note: history as written by an orthodox historian is subject to the bias of one person, usually far removed from the history itself. History as told in the words of the subjects is beholden to the biases of many, but is essentially formed by first-

hand impressions, and the reader has a wide margin for interpretation.

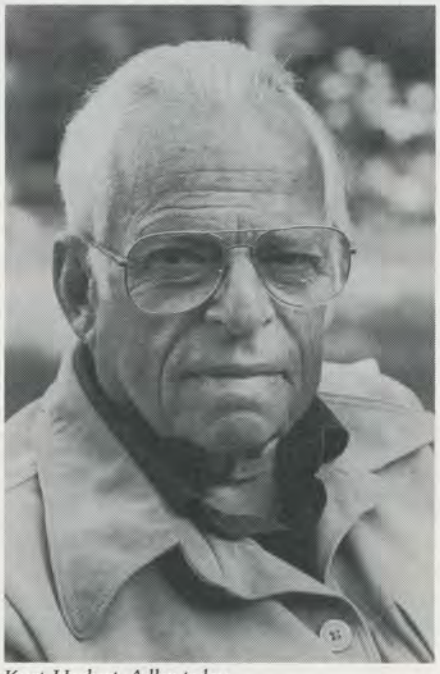
To date, the Bancroft Library's Oral History office has produced nearly 800 histories, including those of California governors Warren, Brown, and Reagan; of photographer Dorothea Lange and sculptor Ruth Asawa. The Adler/Opera history represents a rare foray into the world of music, but one which Willa Baum hopes will lead to new projects. "We're trying to outguess the future," says Baum. "We ask questions broadly; we want a great deal of material. If you're setting out to write a book, you have in mind certain aspects and want to interview your subject on certain themes. But we assume that there will be many books, many articles, so we try to get from each person we interview all the riches they have that may feed into projects as yet unimagined."

A portion of the history deals with Adler's childhood in Vienna:

> I was born in Vienna, in 1905, on the second of April. I was a premature child—I think I was a seven-month baby—and I was born on a Sunday night at 11:30 p.m. There is a saying in Austria...that a child born on a Sunday would be a lucky person. So my mother absolutely wanted a Sunday child, and she made every effort that I would be born still on Sunday, the second, and not on Monday, the third. I was born at home. During those years it was customary in Europe that children were born in the home of parents who had an adequate apartment and not in hospitals. And so it was.

Vienna was then the capital of the Austro-Hungarian Empire under the next-to-last of the Hapsburgs. Music was king in the crown capital, and Ernst and Ida Adler were closely involved with both theater and music. They also had very strong ambitions for their son and only child. At home they spoke only French for several years when Adler was very young, and then English; later they supported his desire to study simultaneously at the prestigious Musikakademie, the Conservatory, and the University. (It was at the Musikakademie that he met Herbert von Karajan, who in the early 1960s was to invite him to be his administrator at Vienna Opera.) And so on, through the maestro's basic training, most important teachers and assorted experiences between the two wars. The text is rich with stories of the famous musical and theatrical families in Vienna and of Adler's work with Reinhardt and Toscanini, and Adler tells them with a keen eye for detail and humor, just as he relates stories of his years in Chicago and in San Francisco.

Once on the subject of the San Francisco Opera, the other voices join his, and the story of the Company's development is expanded upon. There are views of the Bay Area community and its financial resources and great giving families; the "angels" who long supported opera in San Francisco, and the development of corporate giving is scrutinized. The repertoire of the growing company is considered in some depth: the world, American, and local premieres of works by Cherubini, Orff, Walton, Poulenc, Janáček, Britten, Massenet, and Strauss, among others; the starry list of artists who made American debuts in San Francisco over the years (Tebaldi, Borkh, Jurinac, Nilsson, Rysanek, Schwarzkopf, Simionato, Burrows, Christoff, Evans, Ponnelle, Wixell, just to skim off the top).



Kurt Herbert Adler today.

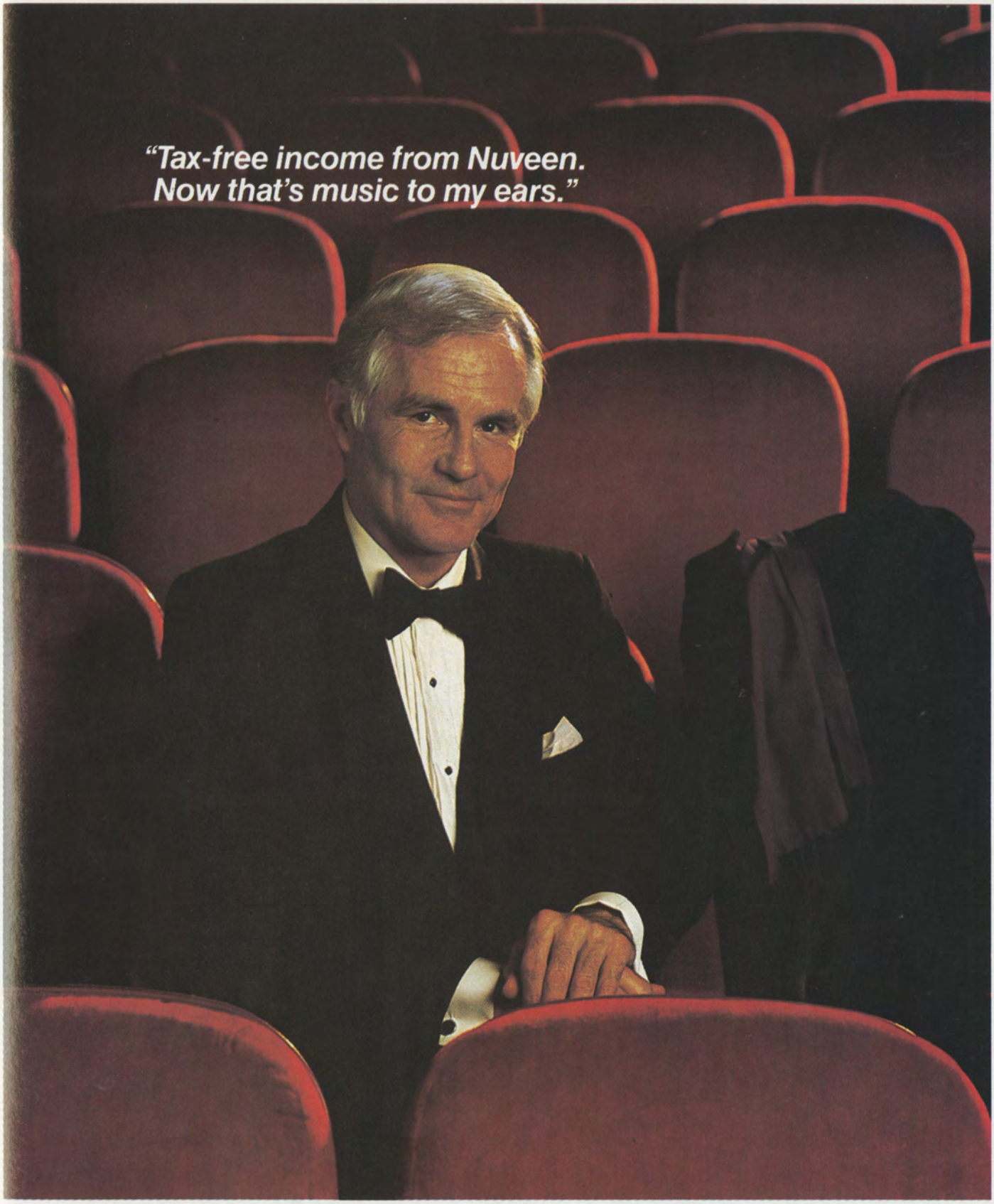
The stages that Adler built are also discussed: The Merola Opera Program, Western Opera Theater, and Spring Opera Theater, which must go into opera annals as being at the forefront of what was genuinely new in the lyric theater in the 1960s and 1970s. A number of young singers who first tried their wings here and then soared (and some who didn't) will be interviewed, as well as the critics who were the closest observers of the Company through the years.

Artists, of whom several are yet to be interviewed on the East Coast and in Europe, are routinely asked what made San Francisco welcoming—why did they journey so far afield from the Covent Garden—La Scala—Munich—Vienna—Metropolitan Opera circuit to accept assignments in San Francisco; why did they agree to sing roles for the first time in San Francisco, what distinguished the Company administratively and artistically from other houses.

For the Adler/Opera project, as is the rule with major oral histories, an advisory committee made up of University personnel and music faculty, community leaders, and members from opera officialdom and the press has been chosen to help with shaping the project and funding it. Each oral history must raise its own funding; to date, a $40,000 budget has been met more than halfway with a $10,000 grant from the L.J. and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation, $5,000 from the University Chancellor's Fund, and $10,000 from individual sponsors. Otto Meyer, adviser, interviewee, and longtime friend of the Company, is Chairman of the fundraising efforts.

The Kurt Herbert Adler/San Francisco Opera oral history will deal with both positive and negative sides of the ledger, but it will be the more colorful for that. It will help lay out the accounting of opera production in the 20th century for scholars, researchers, and general readers, and it will explore the story of a remarkable man among remarkable men, and the company they built together.

If Kurt Herbert Adler appropriated the role of the last of the great nineteenth century impresarios to himself, he was very nearly typecast for the role. His thick Viennese accent, frowning mien and charm, the energy that exuded from his every gesture, the piercing eyes and wings of white hair presented the perfect picture of what he was: the absolute, all-seeing general director. And it is fair to say that of all the opera performances Adler supervised in his years at San Francisco Opera, his own performance as its artistic and administrative head was perhaps the best performance of all, because while he admittedly made mistakes, his standards and his concept of what lyric theater should be were unerring. ■



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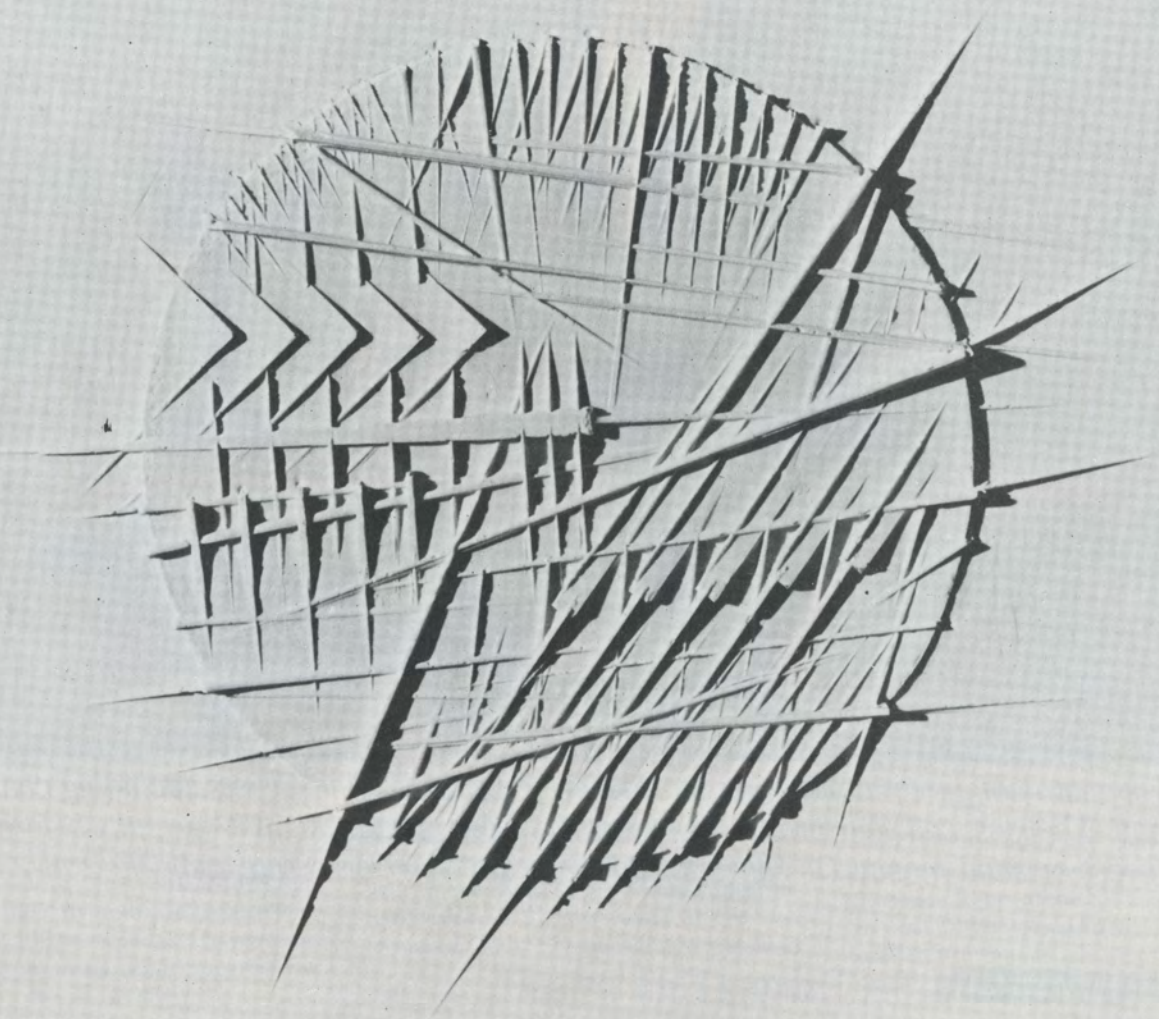

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Sennheiser Listening Devices

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

Opera House Tours

Sponsored by the San Francisco Opera Guild, tours of the War Memorial Opera House will be conducted every half hour from 10 a.m. to 12 noon on the following dates:
Sunday, November 9
Wednesday, November 19
Sunday, November 23
Thursday, December 4
Saturday, December 6
The cost is $2 for Guild members (limit 2 tickets per member); nonmembers $5. For further information, please call (415) 565-6432.

If You Drive To The Opera . . .

. . . and park in the Performing Arts Garage, remember that you can avoid some of the traffic congestion by using the Gough Street entrance to the facility (between Fulton and Grove).

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 two 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.

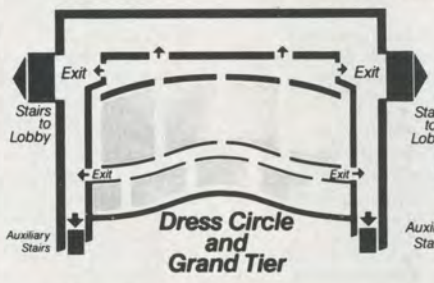
Unused Tickets Patrons who are unable to attend a performance may make a worthwhile contribution to the San Francisco Opera Association by returning their tickets to the Box Office or telephoning (415) 864-3330. Donors will receive a receipt for the full value, but the amount is not considered a contribution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

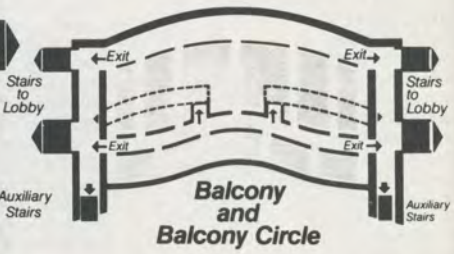
Opera glasses are available for rent in the lobby. Please note that no cameras or tape recorders are permitted in the Opera House.
Children of any age attending a performance must have a ticket.
Management reserves the right to remove any patron creating a disturbance.
For lost and found information, 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.

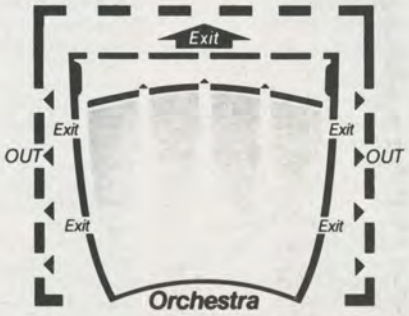
Taxi Service Patrons needing a cab at the end of the performance should reserve one with the doorman at the Taxi Entrance before the end of the final intermission.

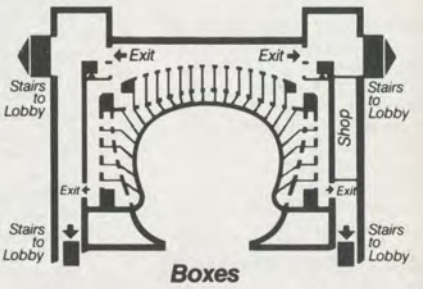
Performing Arts Center Tours Tours of the San Francisco Performing Arts Center, which include the War Memorial Opera House, the Louise M. Davies Symphony Hall and the Herbst Theatre take place as follows: Mondays, 10:00-2:30 on the hour and half hour. Davies Hall only: Wednesday 1:30/2:30—Saturday 12:30/1:30. 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.

San Francisco War Memorial and Performing Arts Center
War Memorial Opera House









Patrons, Attention Please! Fire Notice: There are sufficient exits in this building to accommodate the entire audience. The exit indicated by the lighted **"EXIT"** sign nearest your seat is the shortest route to the street. In case of fire please do not run—**walk** through that exit. (Refer to diagrams.)

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