

Les Contes d'Hoffmann
(The Tales of Hoffmann)

1987

Wednesday, November 11, 1987 8:00 PM

Sunday, November 15, 1987 2:00 PM

Wednesday, November 18, 1987 8:00 PM

Saturday, November 21, 1987 8:00 PM

Wednesday, November 25, 1987 7:30 PM

Saturday, November 28, 1987 8:00 PM

Tuesday, December 8, 1987 8:00 PM

Friday, December 11, 1987 8:00 PM

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Publications Collection

San Francisco Opera Archives



San
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Opera
1987 SEASON

The Tales
of Hoffmann

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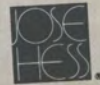
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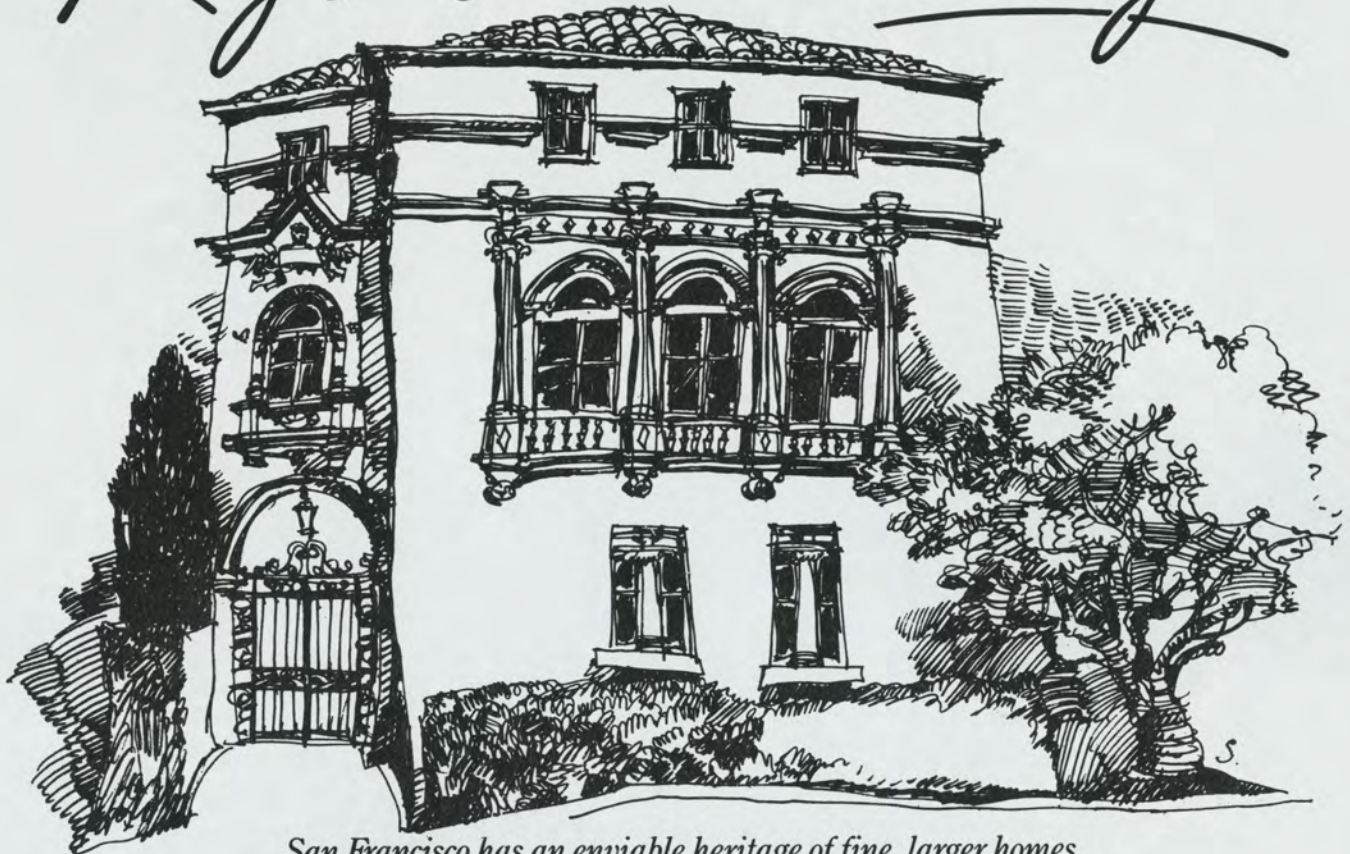


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The Tales of Hoffmann

1987 SEASON

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COVER:

Jim Dine, b.1935
Twenty Hearts, 1970
Watercolor, 44 x 34 in.

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Akron, Ohio

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POWERS

Tully M. Friedman and Reid W. Dennis

From the Chairman of the Board and the President

We are pleased to welcome you to the 65th annual season of the San Francisco Opera and this year's selection of 10 masterworks from the international operatic repertoire. This fall, the curtain will rise on six productions totally new to our audiences, which will provide us with opportunities to experience familiar works through a new perspective.

The generosity of many donors has brought the 1987 operas to our stage, and members of the San Francisco Opera Board of Directors have contributed in a major way: *The Magic Flute* will be presented thanks to a gift from Bernard and Barbro Osher; *Fidelio*, through a much-appreciated grant from the L.J. Skaggs and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation as well as Mr. and Mrs. Reid W. Dennis; *La Traviata*, thanks to a generous gift from Louise M. Davies.

Several of the year's revivals are likewise brought to us by an illustrious group of sponsors: *Salome*, through a generous gift from Mrs. George Quist; *Nabucco* was made possible in part by a grant from the Koret Foundation; *The Queen of Spades* is being presented, in part, through a sponsorship from the people at

Chevron. Our opening night opera, *The Barber of Seville*, is given in honor of Mary Rosenblatt Powell.

Special recognition is also due the Pacific Telesis Foundation for underwriting our Royal Family of Opera series, as well as Mr. and Mrs. William Rollnick for contributing the cost of Supertitles for six of our productions.

We are deeply grateful to all our donors, since their generosity furthers and enriches everyone's operatic experience.

It is always a special pleasure to recognize our governmental funding sources, and this year we again salute the National Endowment for the Arts and the California Arts Council for their unwavering support. We would also like to extend our long-standing appreciation to the Hotel Tax Fund, Mayor Dianne Feinstein and Chief Administrative Officer Rudy Nothenberg, whose support and encouragement have once again been demonstrated to an important extent.

As in previous years, we extend our deepest gratitude to the San Francisco Opera Guild, the Merola Opera Program, and the War Memorial Board of Trustees

for their ongoing support.

The Board of Directors of the San Francisco Opera Association is happy to announce the addition of nine new members to its roster: Mr. J. Dennis Bonney, Mr. David M. Chamberlain, Mr. James F. Crafts, Jr., Mrs. Mark Hornberger, Miss Sylvia R. Lindsey, Mr. John C. McGuire, Mr. Alfred S. Wilsey, Mrs. Alfred S. Wilsey, and Mr. Osamu Yamada. Our ranks have also been honored by the designation of two new Directors Emeriti: Mr. Cyril Magnin and Mrs. Nion R. Tucker.

This year's increased subscriber response is indeed a reason for rejoicing. However, as we always hasten to point out, ticket sales cover only slightly over half of our expenses. We appreciate the support all of you have given us in the past, and we encourage you to continue supporting us and increase your contributions whenever possible, thus enabling us to continue in bringing you this fascinating, enlightening, uplifting—but highly costly—art form that is opera.

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

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General Director's Message

At the beginning of the 65th annual season of the San Francisco Opera, I am pleased to note that so many of you have responded in such a positive way to our season announcement: by subscribing. In fact, the audience response has been far stronger than in many previous years. In welcoming new and renewing subscribers, I find it gratifying to know that our patrons have found the 1987 selection of operas, as well as the roster of artists, to their liking.

This year's repertoire includes six productions which will be seen for the first time on our stage. Of these, three are brand new additions to our production inventory: *The Magic Flute*, *Fidelio*, and *La Traviata*. These new productions represent further accomplishments in the quest I embarked on in 1982, that of rebuilding our operas from the standard repertoire. Three more operas will be seen in productions that are new to us: *Tosca*, from the Lyric Opera of Chicago; *The Tales of Hoffmann*, from the Greater Miami

Opera; and *Romeo and Juliet*, from the Metropolitan Opera. A group of some of today's most outstanding designers have created these productions, among them David Hockney, who will add his own special magic to that of Mozart's *Magic Flute*; John Conklin (1985 *Ring*) with a beautiful new *Traviata*; and John Gunter, one of Britain's most brilliant designers, with a dramatic new *Fidelio*. Two major figures from the international world of opera will be introduced to our audiences: Michael Hampe, of Salzburg Festival and Cologne Opera fame, who directs *Fidelio*; and Rossini authority Alberto Zedda, who conducts his own acclaimed critical edition of *The Barber of Seville*. I would also like to note in passing that two operas are returning to our fall schedule after a prolonged absence: *Romeo and Juliet* after 36 years, and *The Tales of Hoffmann* after 38.

During our 65th season, we will continue to present to our audiences new artists in exciting debuts, and will also bring back some of the most beloved

personalities from seasons past. Our own young singers from the San Francisco Opera Center will again be significantly represented, several of them in key roles.

Our Company championed Supertitles ever since they were first conceived, so we are extremely pleased to note that they won such an overwhelming vote of confidence from our patrons, and are glad to be able to bring them back in all ten operas of the season.

Our "live" opera performances on the Opera House stage will be complemented this year by the Company's return to the airwaves, with a selection of 10 exciting broadcasts from recent years.

Welcome to our 1987 season!

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(Staff listing continues on page 67)



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1987 Season

Opening Night

Friday, September 11, 7:00

The Barber of Seville Rossini
Mentzer*, Neves; Power**, Capecchi,
Ghiaurov, Nucci, Anderson, Gudas,
Delavan
Zedda*/de Tomasi/Siercke/Arhelger

This revival of The Barber of Seville is given in honor of Mary Rosenblatt Powell.

Saturday, September 12, 8:00

Salome Strauss
Jones, Dernesch, Manhart*; King,
Devlin, Bender*, Skinner, Potter,
Pittsinger*, Volpe*, Pederson, Dennis
Petersen, Harper, Anderson,
De Haan, Coles
Pritchard/Lehnhoff/Munn/Hoheisel/
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The 1987 revival of Salome is sponsored by a generous gift from Mrs. George Quist.

Tuesday, September 15, 8:00

Salome Strauss

Wednesday, September 16, 7:30

The Barber of Seville Rossini

Friday, September 18, 8:00

Salome Strauss

Saturday, September 19, 8:00

New Production

The Magic Flute Mozart
Csavlek**, Serra, Parrish, Voigt,
Cowdrick, Christian; Araiza, Malis,
Langan, Kelley, King (September 19,
22, 25), Harper (September 30;
October 6, 8, 11), Pittsinger, Stewart,
Wunsch*

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San Francisco Opera gratefully acknowledges the generous gift from Bernard and Barbro Osher to underwrite this new production.

Sunday, September 20, 2:00

The Barber of Seville Rossini

Tuesday, September 22, 8:00

The Magic Flute Mozart

Wednesday, September 23, 7:30

Salome Strauss

Thursday, September 24, 8:00

The Barber of Seville Rossini

Friday, September 25, 8:00

The Magic Flute Mozart

Saturday, September 26, 8:00

The Barber of Seville Rossini

Sunday, September 27, 2:00

Salome Strauss

Tuesday, September 29, 8:00

The Barber of Seville Rossini

Wednesday, September 30, 7:30

The Magic Flute Mozart

Friday, October 2, 8:00

The Barber of Seville Rossini

Saturday, October 3, 8:00

Salome Strauss

Sunday, October 4, 2:00

Tosca Puccini

Stapp; Mauro, Fondary** (October 4, 7,
10, 16, 22), Pons (October 25), Garrett,
Pederson, Dennis Petersen, Delavan,
Volpe
Bradshaw/Farruggio/Pizzi/Schlumpf/
Arhelger

This production is owned by the Lyric Opera of Chicago.

Tuesday, October 6, 8:00

The Magic Flute Mozart

Wednesday, October 7, 8:00

Tosca Puccini

Thursday, October 8, 8:00

The Magic Flute Mozart

Saturday, October 10, 8:00

Tosca Puccini

Sunday, October 11, 2:00

The Magic Flute Mozart

Tuesday, October 13, 8:00

New Production

Fidelio Beethoven
Connell*, Parrish; McCracken, Bender,
Nentwig, Plishka, Stewart, Davis*,
Pederson
Pritchard/Hampe*/Gunter*/Arhelger

San Francisco Opera gratefully acknowledges the generous grants from the L.J. Skaggs and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation and Mr. and Mrs. Reid W. Dennis to underwrite this new production.

Friday, October 16, 8:00

Tosca Puccini

Saturday, October 17, 8:00

New Production

La Traviata Verdi
Miricioiu, Begg*, Donna Petersen;
Araiza, Pons, Skinner, Garrett,
Pittsinger, Davis

Meltzer/Copley/Conklin/Walker*/
Munn/Clara*

This new production of La Traviata is a gift from Louise M. Davies.

Sunday, October 18, 2:00

Fidelio Beethoven

Tuesday, October 20, 8:00

La Traviata Verdi

Wednesday, October 21, 8:00

Fidelio Beethoven

Thursday, October 22, 7:30

Tosca Puccini

Friday, October 23, 8:00

La Traviata Verdi

Saturday, October 24, 8:00

Fidelio Beethoven

Sunday, October 25, 2:00

Tosca Puccini

Tuesday, October 27, 8:00

Fidelio Beethoven

Wednesday, October 28, 7:30

La Traviata Verdi

Friday, October 30, 8:00

Fidelio Beethoven

Saturday, October 31, 8:00

Nabucco Verdi
Zampieri**, Richards, Voigt;
Cappuccilli, Plishka, Winter, Volpe,
Harper
Arena/Freedman/Munn/Montresor/
Munn

The 1987 presentation of Nabucco is sponsored, in part, by a grant from the Koret Foundation.

Sunday, November 1, 2:00

La Traviata Verdi

Tuesday, November 3, 8:00

Nabucco Verdi

Wednesday, November 4, 8:00

La Traviata Verdi

Thursday, November 5, 7:30

Fidelio Beethoven

Saturday, November 7, 1:00

La Traviata Verdi

Saturday, November 7, 8:00

Nabucco Verdi

Tuesday, November 10, 8:00

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Wednesday, November 11, 8:00
The Tales of Hoffmann Offenbach
 Dahl*, Gustafson, Johnson,
 Quittmeyer (November 11, 15, 18, 21,
 25, 28), Bruno (December 8, 11),
 Young; Domingo (November 11, 15,
 18, 21, 25, 28), TBA (December 8, 11),
 Morris (November 11, 15, 18, 21, 25,
 28), Krause (December 8, 11), Howell,
 Egerton, Harper, Skinner, Pittsinger,
 Delavan, Davis
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Friday, November 13, 8:00
Nabucco Verdi
 Bumbry, Richards, Voigt; Cappuccilli,
 Plishka, Winter, Volpe, Harper
 Arena/Freedman/Munn/Montresor/
 Munn

Saturday, November 14, 8:00
Roméo et Juliette Gounod
 Swenson, Renée*, Donna Petersen;
 Kraus, Dickson, Howell, Rouleau,
 Dennis Petersen, Munday, Anderson,
 Ledbetter*, Volpe
 Plasson/Uzan/Deiber/Gérard*/Munn

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Sunday, November 15, 2:00
The Tales of Hoffmann Offenbach

Tuesday, November 17, 8:00
Roméo et Juliette Gounod

Wednesday, November 18, 8:00
The Tales of Hoffmann Offenbach

Thursday, November 19, 7:30
Nabucco Verdi

Friday, November 20, 8:00
Roméo et Juliette Gounod

Saturday, November 21, 8:00
The Tales of Hoffmann Offenbach

Sunday, November 22, 2:00
Nabucco Verdi

Monday, November 23, 8:00
The Queen of Spades Tchaikovsky
 Crespin, Evstatieva, Cowdrick, Donna
 Petersen, Patterson, Ganz; Ochman,
 Noble, Raftery, Dennis Petersen,
 Skinner, De Haan, Pederson, Wunsch,
 Delavan
 Tchararov*/Coleman/O'Hearn/Munn-
 Arhelger/Sulich

*The 1987 presentation of The Queen of
 Spades is sponsored, in part, by a grant
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Tuesday, November 24, 8:00
Roméo et Juliette Gounod
 Swenson, Renée, Donna Petersen;
 Shicoff, Dickson, Howell, Rouleau,
 Dennis Petersen, Munday, Anderson,
 Ledbetter, Volpe
 Plasson/Uzan/Deiber/Gérard/Munn

Wednesday, November 25, 7:30
The Tales of Hoffmann Offenbach

Friday, November 27, 8:00
The Queen of Spades Tchaikovsky

Saturday, November 28, 8:00
The Tales of Hoffmann Offenbach

Sunday, November 29, 2:00
Roméo et Juliette Gounod

Tuesday, December 1, 8:00
The Queen of Spades Tchaikovsky

Wednesday, December 2, 7:30
Roméo et Juliette Gounod

Friday, December 4, 8:00
Roméo et Juliette Gounod

Saturday, December 5, 8:00
The Queen of Spades Tchaikovsky

Tuesday, December 8, 8:00
The Tales of Hoffmann Offenbach

Wednesday, December 9, 7:30
The Queen of Spades Tchaikovsky

Thursday, December 10, 8:00
Family Performance
La Traviata Verdi
 Renée, Cowdrick, Ganz; Wunsch,
 Potter, Ledbetter, Munday*, Pittsinger,
 Davis
 Fiore/Copley/Conklin/Walker/Munn/
 Clara

Friday, December 11, 8:00
The Tales of Hoffmann Offenbach

Saturday, December 12, 2:00
Family Performance
La Traviata Verdi

Sunday, December 13, 2:00
The Queen of Spades Tchaikovsky

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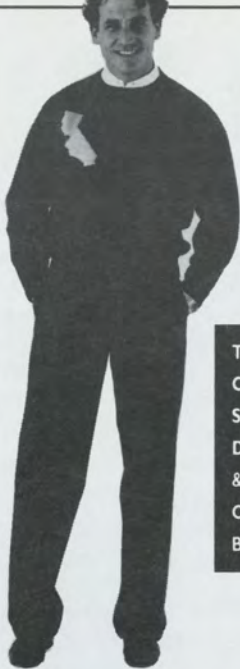
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- Sep. 19 OTELLO (1983)
M. Price; Domingo, Carroli; Janowski
- Sep. 26 KHOVANSCHINA (1984)
Dernesch; Noble, Bailey, Lewis, Howell, Salminen; Albrecht
- Oct. 3 MANON LESCAUT (1983)
Freni; Mauro, Sardinero, Capecchi, MacNeil; Arena
- Oct. 10 JENŮFA (1986)
Beňáčková, Rysanek; Ochman, Rosenshein; Mackerras
- Oct. 17 DON CARLOS (1986)
Lorengar, Toczyska; Shicoff, Titus, Lloyd, Rouleau; Pritchard
- Oct. 24 LE NOZZE DI FIGARO (1986)
Te Kanawa, Rolandi, Quittmeyer; Ramey, Devlin; Tate
- Oct. 31 EUGENE ONEGIN (1986)
Freni, Walker; Allen, Gulyás, Ghiaurov; Bradshaw
- Nov. 7 MACBETH (1986)
Verrett; Noble, Tomlinson, Popov; Kord
- Nov. 14 LA GIOCONDA (1983)
Slatinaru, Paunova, Nadler; Bonisolli, Manuguerra, Kavrakos; Meltzer
- Nov. 21 FALSTAFF (1985)
Lorengar, Quittmeyer, Horne, Swenson; Wixell, Titus, MacNeil; Arena


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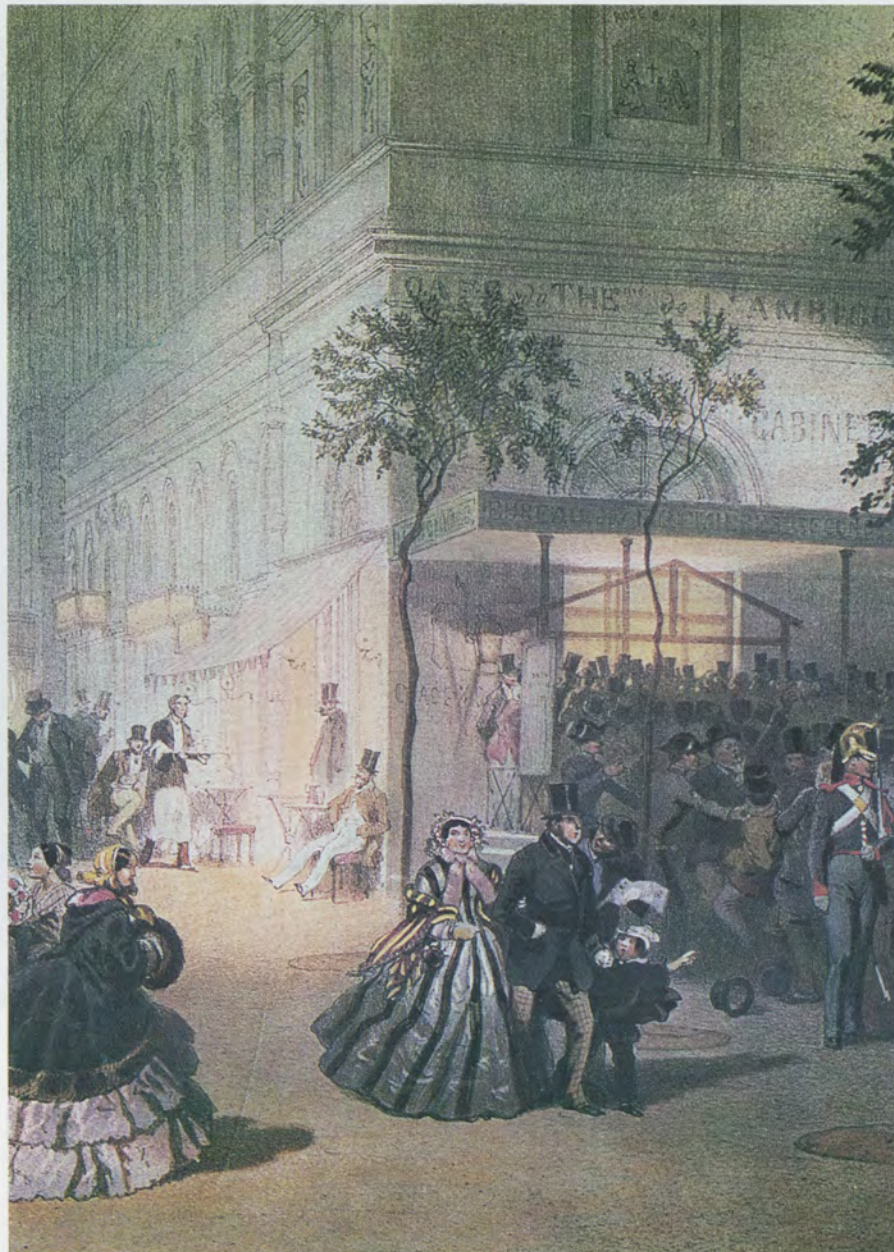
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Front of the Ambigu-Comique theater in the mid-1800s. Colored lithograph by Eugène Guérard (detail).

There are a number of worthy and still popular operas by composers who wrote only one (such as Beethoven's *Fidelio*); or at least only one that survives in the repertory. What makes Offenbach's *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* (*The Tales of Hoffmann*) unique is that it's the one enduring serious opera composed by a man who earned his reputation and his lasting place in social and musical history by writing 105 decidedly non-serious works, works usually identified by diminutives: operetta, *opéra comique*, or *opéra bouffe*.

Sir Arthur Sullivan—who learned a great deal from Offenbach—tried to make a similar leap into the ranks of serious composers with his romantic opera *Ivanhoe*, which he wrote after eleven successful comic-opera collaborations with W.S. Gilbert.

But *Ivanhoe* has disappeared, whereas Offenbach's serious, symbolist, death- and devil-haunted work is still regularly revived, with all-star casts and lavish new productions, at major opera houses in Europe and the United States. It's as if the world's most popular comedian had a try at playing Hamlet just before he died and pulled it off successfully.

Or almost successfully. Even favorable critics still tend to describe *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* as Offenbach's "problematic" or "potential" or "unresolved" masterpiece. Scholars, conductors, and producers keep rewriting its text and score, rearranging its scenes, and making new cuts and additions, which doesn't always make the opera more clear. (Offenbach died before he finished it, so the game is fair.) No two commentators can even agree on what the opera *means*— which is rarely the case with Offenbach's lighter-hearted hits.

The three bass/baritone villains of the *Tales*, plus Lindorf, are usually sung by the same actor, to make a dramatic and metaphysical point, and to save on singers' fees. The parts of Hoffmann's three loves (four, if you count Stella, who usually has two words to say) are written for radically different vocal types, and are traditionally assigned to three sopranos. But oc-

David Littlejohn is a writer, critic, and professor of journalism at U.C. Berkeley, who also reviews the San Francisco Opera for the *London Times*.

OFFENBACH AND HOFFMANN: THE ODD COUPLE

By DAVID LITTLEJOHN



Jacques Offenbach, 1819-1880.

asionally one singer, a Joan Sutherland or Beverly Sills, will accept the challenge of playing all of these roles. This may either clarify or muddy the plot. Sometimes a dancer is hired to mime the part of the *automate* Olympia—as Moira Shearer did on film—while an unseen soprano trills her lines offstage. The four character-tenor servants may be thriftily combined in one singer as well.

Hoffmann's friend and protector Nicklassse may or may not also be his Muse. Her (or his) role may be minimal or substantial, depending on whose version of the text you use. The character of Hoffmann may be played as if staggering drunk or sober, in his 20s or his 40s, or as if visibly aging through the three tales. Plácido Domingo (who, at 46, has been singing the role for 22 years) has said that he sees the poet as about 20 with Olympia, 34 with Antonia, 45 with Giulietta, and nearing 50 with Stella.

But then, sometimes Giulietta's scene is played before Antonia's, which complicates that approach. Since the recitatives were not composed by Offen-

1987 Season

bach, some producers scrap them altogether, and substitute spoken dialogue borrowed from the original play. The prologue and epilogue may be expanded in order to explain and unify the opera, or they may be dropped altogether. Two of the most popular musical numbers in the opera—Dappertutto's "Scintille, diamant," which he sings to the diamond he is about to offer Giulietta, and the "septet" (for six solo voices plus chorus) which is the climax of this scene—although set to music by Offenbach, were inserted after his death. In recent years, some purist conductors have elected to excise them, and to turn Coppélius's evil "eye-selling" aria into a trio.

For many years, producers were content to take the libretto and stage directions literally. They recreated the three central scenes as exotic, twisted love stories "evoked" by the poet Hoffmann out of his own past. He appeared onstage introducing these tales to his companions in Luther's Tavern in Berlin, while Mozart's *Don Giovanni* (starring his current lady-love) was in progress at the opera house next door. Some producers even left the tavern and its inhabitants visible as a frame set throughout, to make this tale-telling concept more explicit.

Lately, the three love stories have been depicted in more "psychodramatic" ways as the bad dreams of a drunkard, or the distorted and fantastic products of Hoffmann's sick imagination. In such versions, Hoffmann's double may lie asleep at his desk, or on his bed, all through the opera. The characters in his dreams or fantasies may wear masks, or dress all in black, or *all* move like hellish puppets about a barren, claustrophobic space. Stage directors such as Walter Felsenstein and Patrice Chéreau have endeavored to render their versions of the opera more "Hoffmannesque" and less "Offenbachian." In his austere Paris



Ernst Theodor Amadeus Hoffmann, 1776-1822.
Self-portrait.

Opera production of 1974-78, Chéreau claimed he had tried "to suppress all the wretched 19th-century theatrical naïveté," and "to eliminate anything that smacked of Paris 1880."

* * *

The confused and problematic nature of *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* is partly the result of Jacques Offenbach's untimely death, which left producers with a text that cries out for reconstructive surgery. But it is even more the result of his uncharacteristic choice of a source.

In 1851, Jules Barbier and Michel Carré (who also reduced Goethe's *Faust* and Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* to texts for Gounod) wrote a play entitled *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, which opened at the Théâtre de l'Odéon in Paris on March 21. For this play, the two authors very loosely combined bits of three fantastic stories by the German writer E.T.A. Hoffmann (1796-1822), plus references to four or five others. They then concocted the ingenious stage-conceit that these stories were episodes from Hoffmann's own past, which he was relating to his tavern



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Since 1810

companions on a single evening shortly before his death.

Hoffmann *did* hang out at Lutter and Wegner's wine cellar in Berlin after 1814, where he traded stories with his friends, and probably drank too much. But his own life—at least his documented life—was far less exotic and adventurous than were his weird romantic tales.

As far as we know, the real Hoffmann was never in love (a) with a mechanical doll who went all to pieces; (b) with a great singer doomed to die if she sang; or (c) with a Venetian prostitute who stole his reflection—although he did write stories about unfortunate lovers in each of these situations. He dreamed all his life of traveling to Italy, but never escaped the King of Prussia's domains. He developed a passionate infatuation for a 15-year old singing pupil when he was 35, the memory of which seems to have haunted him for years. But he appears to have remained faithful to the Polish woman who had married him in 1812, and supported him through a life of considerable poverty and pain.

Ernst Theodor Amadeus Hoffmann (he changed his third name from Wilhelm in honor of Mozart) is still taken quite seriously by scholars of German literature, and by cultural historians examining that phase of European art and thought we call "Romanticism." Almost all studies of Hoffmann's writing are in German, and a great part of his literary work—which includes 49 tales, two novels, several semifictional essays on music, and a great deal of music criticism—has never been translated into English. Most of his life was divided between music (which he adored) and the law (which paid the bills). Only in the last years of his life did he begin to write the strange, supernatural stories that earned him a brief but extraordinary international vogue. His tales were widely translated during the 1830s and '40s (especially in France), and had a marked influence on authors such as Gogol and Dostoevsky; Gautier, Nerval, and Baudelaire; Thomas Carlyle and Hans Christian Andersen; and on two American authors of "tales of mystery and imagination" very much like his, Nathaniel Hawthorne and Edgar Allan Poe.

Although Hoffmann's own musical compositions (including eight operas) have been judged as tame and uninspired, his music criticism was prescient and occasionally profound. He wrote passionate defenses of Bach, Gluck, Mozart, and especially Beethoven, whom he worshipped, and of the spiritual nature of music in general. Robert Schumann named two of his piano cycles ("Fanta-



Engraving based on a painting by F. de Haenen, made shortly after the 1881 premiere of *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*.

siestücke" and "Kreisleriana") after Hoffmann's creations. Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker* ballet is based on a few of the healthier episodes in one of Hoffmann's bizarre children's stories. Delibes's ballet *Coppélia* makes use of the same story as Act I of Offenbach's opera. Wagner and Weber have both acknowledged the influence of his musical ideas. Busoni and Hindemith have used his plots for operas.

But virtually no one (except scholars) reads Hoffmann any more. For reasons of cultural change, he comes as near as any significant 19th-century author can come to being "unreadable" today, unless one is dutifully studying his puzzling time. The force that has, almost singlehandedly,

kept his name alive outside of German Departments is an odd opera written by a fabulously popular German-Jewish Parisian best known for his satiric and sexy operettas. Professional Hoffmannites profess to be dismayed that the public reputation of their idol has been sustained almost solely by *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, this confusing musical *mélange* of his life and work put together by a composer they regard as hopelessly frivolous, and (even worse), French.

Jacques (originally Jakob) Offenbach was born near Cologne in 1819. His father, an itinerant cantor and music teacher named Isaac Eberst, had adopted



San Francisco Opera's premiere of *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* took place in 1944. The cast included (l. to r.) Raoul Jobin as Hoffmann, Hertha Glaz as Nicklausse, Alessio de Paolis as Spalanzani, and Virginia MacWatters as Olympia. Maestro Merola conducted.

the name of his native town, Offenbach-am-Main. He brought Jacques to Paris at age 14. There, he was first a music student, then an orchestra cellist, then successively a salon performer, conductor, composer, theater manager, entrepreneur, ultimately an international celebrity and *bon vivant*. In the process, he became (despite a German accent and a Jewish nose his detractors loved to mock) more Parisian than the Parisians—and decidedly more so than the second emperor himself, Napoleon III, son of a Corsican, who was married to a Spaniard. Naturalized a French citizen in 1860, Offenbach was awarded the Order of the Legion d'Honneur in 1861.

The French Second Empire (1852-1870) is a period that gossipy amateur historians adore, and serious moralizing historians despise. In all of their accounts of Paris during these hectic, high-colored 18 years, Jacques Offenbach—Orpheus in Paris, the King of the Second Empire, The Mozart of the Champs-Élysées—looms so large that he has become (along with Charles Garnier's new Paris Opéra) an overly facile symbol for *all* of Second Empire Paris.

His career as the favorite entertainer of Le Tout Paris (i.e., the 5,600 well-to-do Parisians who "mattered," out of one and a half to two million) began at the International Exhibition of 1855, when he leased a 50-seat theater on the Champs-Élysées and began grinding out one-act, three-

character musical farces that were livelier and funnier than anything onstage at the Opéra-Comique. Visitors to the fair, pleasure-seeking Parisians, and a young soprano he discovered named Hortense Schneider, helped fill the little *bonbonnière* every night. When the fair ended, he moved to slightly larger and more comfortable quarters in the Passage Choiseul (the theater is still there), for which he wrote a silly *Mikado*-like chinoiserie called *Ba-Ta-Clan*. In doing this, Offenbach invented what we now think of as the comic light opera. Gilbert and Sullivan, Franz Lehár, and Johann Strauss Jr. all followed in his path.

In the next 14 years, Offenbach wrote 64 more operas *bouffes* or *comiques*, which divides out to an average of 4.6 a year. He also attempted his first *opera seria*, *Rheinnixen*, for Vienna in 1862. It ran for eight performances, and survives today only as a footnote to *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, because Offenbach had the wit to transfer its hypnotic, waving Barcarolle from the Rhine to the Grand Canal.

Among Offenbach's full-length, full-cast effusions during these years (he wrote music like a man possessed, scribbling scores on a lapboard in jolting conversations at his Friday night soirées) were *Orphée aux Enfers* (*Orpheus in the Underworld*), of 1858; *La Belle Hélène*, of 1864; *La Vie Parisienne*, of 1866; *La Grande Duchesse de Gérolstein*, of 1867; and *La*

Périchole, of 1868.

Today, all five of these witty, establishment-mocking, melodically captivating shows are still regularly performed, either as light relief by the world's "grand" opera companies, or as regular fare at today's equivalent of the boulevard musical theaters of the Second Empire.

* * *

Nathanael rushed in, impelled by some nameless dread. The Professor was grasping a female figure by the shoulders, the Italian Coppola held her by the feet; and they were pulling and dragging each other backwards and forwards, fighting furiously to get possession of her.

Nathanael recoiled with horror on recognizing that the figure was Olimpia. Boiling with rage, he was about to tear his beloved from the grasp of the madmen, when Coppola by an extraordinary exertion of strength twisted the figure out of the Professor's hands and gave him such a terrible blow with her, that Spalanzani reeled backwards and fell over the table among the phials and retorts, the bottles and glass cylinders, which covered it: all these things were smashed into a thousand pieces. But Coppola threw the figure across his shoulder, and, laughing shrilly and horribly, ran hastily down the stairs, the figure's ugly feet hanging down and banging and rattling like wood against the steps.

Nathanael was stupefied—he had seen only too distinctly that in Olimpia's pallid waxed face there were no eyes, merely black holes in their stead; she was an inanimate puppet . . . And now Nathanael saw a pair of bloody eyes lying on the floor staring at him; Spalanzani seized them with his uninjured hand and threw them at him, so that they hit his breast.

Then madness dug her burning talons into Nathanael and swept down into his heart, rending his mind and thoughts to shreds . . . His cries passed into a brutish bellow that was awful to hear; and thus raging with the harrowing violence of madness, he was taken away to the madhouse.

This passage from "The Sandman," the tale on which Offenbach's Olympian episode is based, is not untypical of the breathless, anti-rational, willfully romantic and supernatural works of E.T.A. Hoffmann. The original "tales of Hoffmann" are populated by monstrous dwarfs, magic potions, bizarre transformations, cabalistic lore, various succubi and diabolic powers, as well as ordinary European

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gentlemen (usually artists), driven mad by fiery (though never consummated) sexual passions. In their time, these stories were treasured (like early romantic music) as a liberating "escape" from the strict rationalism of the 18th-century Enlightenment. Today, they are analyzed microscopically by Freudian psychologists and literary critics.

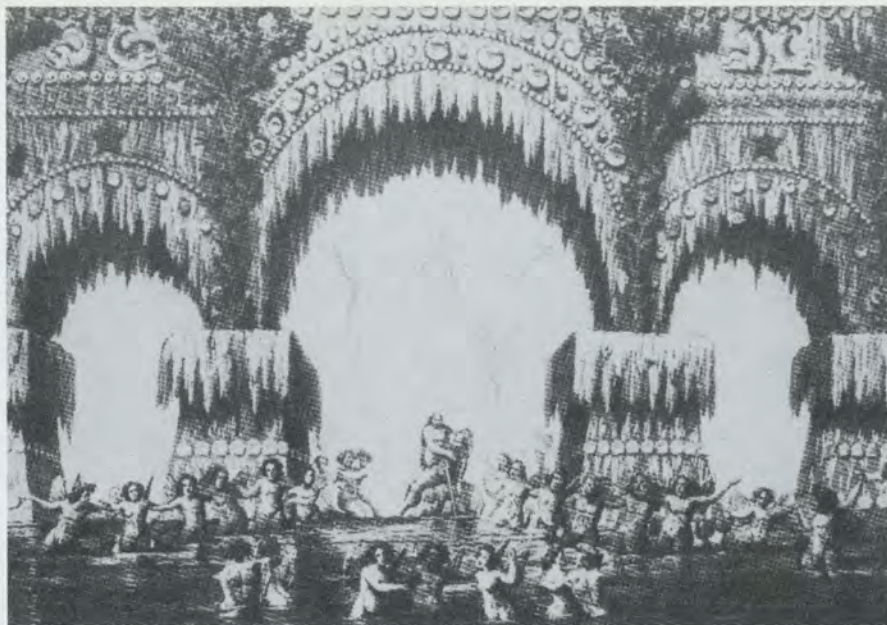
* * *

The real source, I believe, of the nagging puzzlement many people still feel at Offenbach's *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, for all its musical and vocal felicity, derives not from its incompleteness, or its internal inconsistencies, but from the uncomfortable union of composer and subject.

Why did Jacques Offenbach, the original gay boulevardier, choose for his ultimate text, the one most dedicated effort of his life, a play based on the life and works of so alien an artist? Or to put it more simply, what does Offenbach have in common with Hoffmann? It is as if a Parisian prince of light collaborated with a Prussian prince of darkness, resulting in the opera we know.



A Paris boulevard around 1860, in a contemporary photograph.



Karl Schinkel's design for E.T.A. Hoffmann's opera *Undine*, 1816.

Hoffmann's biographers and critics tend to be offended by Offenbach's shallow, tuneful redaction and reduction of their dark hero and his works. Offenbach's biographers and critics acknowledge that he achieved a greater musical sophistication and range of vocal expressiveness in *Hoffmann*; but on the whole they prefer his earlier operettas to this strange Teutonic swan song.

Les Contes D'Hoffmann will always be an interesting but unequal achievement . . . His most truly rounded genius should be discovered in *Orphée*, *La Belle Hélène*, *La Vie Parisienne*, *La Grande Duchesse*, *La Périochole* . . .

(James Harding)

Trying to fit the opera to the man, biographers strain to find or force connections between *Hoffmann* and Hoffmann. Offenbach *was*, after all, Legion d'Honneur or no, German-born as well. After the ignominious French defeat by Prussia in 1870, a number of popular papers dragged out his German origins as a sign of subversion (he had fled his adopted country during the war), and denounced him as "Herr Offenbach," a "tool of Bismarck," *le grand responsable*. They pointed at the cynical "decadence" of his popular works as one of the reasons for France's defeat. "The brilliant theatrical year that opened with *La Belle Hélène*," argued one critic in 1871, "contributed, by its spirit of satire and disrespect, to the woeful work done by unbounded skepticism, triumphant materialism, and social decadence." "Our unfortunate country will plunge into ruin if she does not quickly recover her good sense and good

taste by throwing out once and for all these impudent corrodors of the theater," wrote another in 1873. The mockery of German militarism in *La Grande Duchesse de Gérolstein* no longer amused the authorities; productions of the work in France were banned in 1875.

Since the Franco-Prussian War and the Commune, the tide of Parisian taste had turned (at least temporarily) against the larking, mocking "Offenbachiades." The composer had not had a genuine hit since *La Périochole* in '68, and even that represented an effort on his part to write something more lyrical and sweet than was his norm, in tune with a public that was growing tired of the cynical amorality of *La Vie Parisienne*. His health had been in painful decay since the early '60s. By 1875, he was nearly paralyzed with rheumatism and gout, and sometimes had to be carried from chair to carriage, from carriage to chair. He was reduced to putting on pumped-up revue (or English pantomime) versions of his old hits, to pay his bills. In 1875, one of his more grandiose ventures as a theater manager went bankrupt. He had to rent out his beloved seaside villa (the "Villa Orphée," named for the operetta that financed it), and agree to a money-making tour of the U.S. centennial celebrations in 1876. On his way back across the Atlantic, he was overheard making fun of the new French Republic by a French republican senator, who passed on an exaggerated version of his remarks to the sensitive, left-leaning Paris press; a minor scandal ensued.

All this, his biographers claim, plus a sense that his end was near, disposed Jacques Offenbach to see in the darkly



(L. to r.) Pamela Brown as Nicklausse, Robert Helpmann as Coppélius, Moira Shearer as Olympia and Leonide Massine as Spalanzani in the Pressburger-Powell 1951 film, *The Tales of Hoffmann*.

visionary, deeply German, death-obsessed Hoffmann a kindred spirit during his own declining years.

The reason why he coveted it so ardently [the Barbier and Carré libretto] was that he was now actually living in Hoffmann's ghost world . . . As an old man doomed to die he resembled Hoffmann himself; like the latter, he, too, was now wrestling with evil spirits . . .

He discovered that he shared the fate of Hoffmann, the hero of the drama—nay, more, that he was Hoffmann's double. Like Hoffmann, who had never achieved any of his three loves, Olympia, Antonia, or Giulietta, he had never attained the object of his love, grand opera. Like Hoffmann, he had been fooled by an evil spirit, who had estranged him from his true vocation . . .

This opera was the judgment that Offenbach passed on himself; and the music, which is full of the panic of a child lost in the dark, betrays how many demons stormed in upon him during the process, in which his whole artistic existence was at stake.

(Siegfried Kracauer)

I've tried hard, but I just can't buy this

romantic notion of an identification *in extremis*. The very score of Offenbach's last opera seems to give it the lie.

The music of *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* is richer, more varied and expressive than that of his operettas. But it's still Offenbach: still full of joy and spirit, still far more French than German, still wholly at odds with the fundamental spirit of its source. Everything Offenbach ever wrote, it seems to me, leads up to it—given, for once, that he had real time to write, and a serious artistic purpose. The party scenes of the Prologue, at Spalanzani's, and in Venice, the mechanical doll's coloratura, the comic-character turns are all precisely the sort of thing he had been dealing with for years. Comparing modulations, rhythms, melodic structures, and orchestrations, song for song and scene for scene (which would take another essay), I believe one could demonstrate that the best of Offenbach's operettas are very close musical cousins of *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*.

This runs counter to the kind of "autobiographical" explanations of works of art many people enjoy. But I honestly believe that Jacques Offenbach had virtually *nothing* in common with Ernst Theodor Amadeus Hoffmann—or no more, let

us say, than Charles Gounod had in common with Goethe or Shakespeare. Given all one can honestly learn about the composer from letters, memoirs, and his music, the romantic fantasy that in his dying years he felt compulsively drawn to his native German roots just doesn't hold up, let alone the idea that he felt some occult kind of kinship with E.T.A. Hoffmann, this concocter of infernal, neurotically over-imagined fairy tales out of another world.

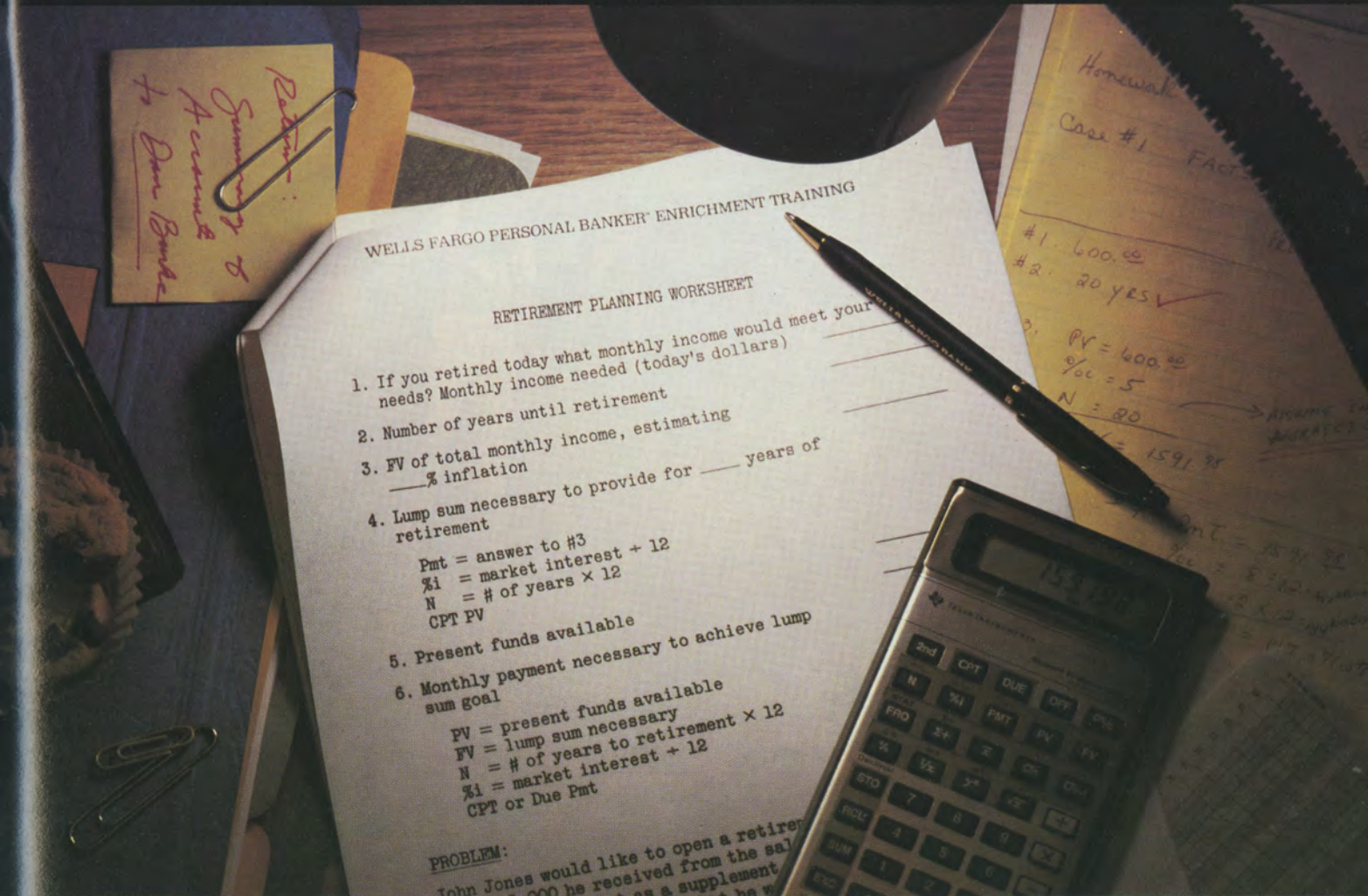
I think that Jacques Offenbach simply wanted a good story for his legacy-opera: one that would allow him to indulge all his known compositional skills; still be popular enough to be taken on by the Opéra-Comique (as it was); ensure his artistic immortality; and—as he promised his wife it would do, just before he died—make their grandchildren rich.

From the time it was first produced in 1851, people had talked of Barbier and Carré's play, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, as a natural for musical setting. Olympia, after all, had to waltz wildly and sing brilliantly. (Originally, her voice was an offstage English horn.) Antonia was a star soprano by definition—and a dying consumptive soprano at that, in the manner of Violetta or Mimì, who hears her dead mother singing Schubert's "Marguerite." In her scene in the play, Hoffmann is a composer as well as a poet, and Dr. Miracle accompanies her dying air on his magic violin. Stella, too, is an opera star, based on a character in Hoffmann's essay-story on Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. Barbier and Carré wrote drinking songs for the two outer scenes, and for Giulietta's Venetian orgy. Much of the play was written in verse; the text lent itself to musical setting with remarkably little revision.

Offenbach had been tempted by the play in 1851. By the time he declared his interest to Barbier a second time, in 1878 (Carré was by then dead), the author had already completed an opera-libretto version for another composer—who generously gave up his prior claim when he learned that Offenbach was interested. Barbier then rewrote his libretto to fit Offenbach's musical ideas—but not, from the evidence, all that much.

All of this leads me to believe that Offenbach felt no special attraction to Hoffmann; rather, that he liked Barbier and Carré's cleverly condensed, largely demystified theatrical-exotic Parisian stage version; and felt that, given his own musical skills, he could do something very special with it. Taking great pains, for once in his life—he spent the better part of two years on his unfinished score—he managed, before he died, to do precisely that. ■

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ARTIST PROFILES



TRACY DAHL

Soprano **Tracy Dahl** makes her San Francisco Opera debut as Olympia in *The Tales of Hoffmann*. A native of Canada, she received her training at the Banff School of Fine Arts and is a graduate of the 1985 Merola Opera Program, following which she toured with Western Opera Theater as Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*. Miss Dahl has appeared frequently with the Manitoba Opera Association in various productions including *Norma*, *L'Elisir d'Amore*, *Hansel und Gretel*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *HMS Pinafore* and *Die Fledermaus*. In 1986, she made important debuts at the Houston Grand Opera as Eurydice in Offenbach's *Orpheus in the Underworld*, a role she also sang with Michigan Opera Theatre; Cincinnati Opera as Olympia in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*; at Wolf Trap singing Olympia and her first performances of Susanna in *Le Nozze di Figaro*; as well as her first performances of Oscar in *Un Ballo in Maschera* with Opera Hamilton. Miss Dahl also made her Carnegie Hall debut in May of 1986 with the American Symphony Orchestra in the world premiere of David Del Tredici's *Child Alice* and she also appeared there in Strauss' *Daphne* with the Toronto Symphony under Andrew Davis as part of the Carnegie Hall Strauss Festival. Recent engagements include her European debut this past summer as Blondchen in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* at the Aix-en-Provence Festival. She has return engagements with the Canadian Opera Company in her first assumption of the role of Zerbinetta in *Ariadne auf Naxos* and a return to Houston as Oscar. Future assignments include the Fairy Godmother in Massenet's *Cendrillon* and Despina in *Così fan tutte* with Washington Opera, Adele in *Die Fledermaus* with the Minnesota Opera, Serpette in *La Finta Giardiniera* with the Opera Theatre of St. Louis, and Marie in *The Daughter of the Regiment* with Calgary Opera.

Soprano **Nancy Gustafson** returns to San Francisco Opera to sing Antonia in *The Tales of Hoffmann*. She most recently appeared here as Musetta in *La Bohème* last year following her performances as Mlle Jouvencot in *Adriana Lecouvreur* in 1985 and as Freia in *Das Rheingold* for the San Francisco Opera's 1985 Ring Festival. The Illinois native made her local



NANCY GUSTAFSON

debut during the 1983 Summer Season as Woglinge in *Das Rheingold*, appearing also as Helmwige in *Die Walküre* (a role she repeated during the 1985 Summer Season), and returning during the 1983 Fall Season as Flora in *La Traviata*. She was seen during the 1984 Fall Season in *Madama Butterfly*, *Elektra* and *Khovanshchina*. As a participant in the 1982 Merola Opera Program, she was heard in the San Francisco Opera Center's 1983 and '84 Showcase series as Sicle in Cavalli's *L'Ormino* and in the '84 Seasons' Preview. As a 1984 Adler Fellow, she created the role of the Mother in the world premiere of Conrad Susa's *The Love of Don Perlimplin*. In 1984 she made her debut with the San Francisco Symphony in Mahler's Eighth Symphony, and that December made her European debut at the Théâtre Musical de Paris/Châtelet as Rosalinde in *Die Fledermaus* in a production that was also seen at Nancy. In 1983, she sang her first Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte* for the Carmel Bach Festival, where she also appeared in Bach's *St. John Passion*, and took part in the special concert for Queen Elizabeth II during the royal visit to California. Miss Gustafson's recent appearances include a new production of *Fledermaus* with the Santa Fe Opera, and her first Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni*, in which she was heard for the first time with the Glyndebourne Festival ensemble on tour to Hong Kong. Donna Elvira was also the role of her recent Opera Colorado debut. Other debuts include Leila in Bizet's *The Pearl Fishers* with the Minnesota Opera and Marguerite in *Faust* at the Seattle Opera. In September of this year she sang Violetta in *La Traviata* at the Edmonton Opera and in October was heard as Marguerite in *Faust* with the Lyric Opera of Chicago.

Soprano **Mary Jane Johnson** returns to San Francisco Opera as Giulietta in *The Tales of Hoffmann*. She made her Company debut as Freia in Wagner's *Das Rheingold* during the 1983 Summer Season, when she also performed one of her signature roles, Musetta in *La Bohème*. The Texas native returned in the fall of 1983 to create the role of Jenifer in the American premiere of Tippett's *The Midsummer Marriage*. In 1984 she performed Elvira in *Ernani*

THE TALES OF HOFFMANN



MARY JANE JOHNSON

and was most recently seen here during the 1986 Fall Season singing her first Marguerite in *Faust*. A winner of the first Luciano Pavarotti International Voice Competition, she appeared with the Opera Company of Philadelphia in 1982 as Musetta opposite Pavarotti in a production of *La Bohème* that was telecast nationally by PBS, and also sang Adina in *L'Elisir d'Amore*. She made her Chicago Symphony debut under Sir Georg Solti during the 1982-83 season, singing Freia in concert performances of *Das Rheingold* both in Chicago and at Carnegie Hall. She made her Santa Fe Opera debut during the summer of 1982 as Rosalinda in a new production of *Die Fledermaus* and also sang Xanthe in Strauss' *Die Liebe der Danae*. She returned to Santa Fe in 1983 as Miss Jessel in *The Turn of the Screw*, in 1984 for the title role of Korngold's *Violanta* and in 1985 she performed her first Countess in Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* with that company. In the spring of 1984 she bowed at the Spoleto Festival U.S.A. in the title role of *The Merry Widow*, a role that also served as the vehicle of her debut with the Washington Opera in 1985. Miss Johnson recently made her European debut as Minnie in *La Fanciulla del West* with Opera North in Leeds, England, and with the Puccini Festival at Torre del Lago. She also made her Netherlands Opera debut as the Duchess of Parma in Busoni's *Doktor Faustus*. The soprano's engagements for the 1986-87 season have included performances of *La Traviata* in Fort Worth, *Il Trovatore* in Cincinnati, and *Falstaff* in Houston. A highlight of Miss Johnson's past season was a concert of opera excerpts with Luciano Pavarotti entitled "Pavarotti Plus," telecast live from Avery Fisher Hall in January 1986. Future engagements include *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* with the Canadian Opera, her first *Tosca* with Opera North in Leeds, and a new production of *Fanciulla* at the Baths of Caracalla in Rome.

Mezzo-soprano **Susan Quittmeyer** returns to San Francisco Opera to sing Nicklausse in *The Tales of Hoffmann*. Most recently seen here last year as Cherubino in the acclaimed production of *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Miss Quittmeyer began her association with San Francisco Opera in



SUSAN QUITTMAYER

1979 when she was invited to participate in the Affiliate Artists program, during which she was seen as La Ciesca in *Gianni Schicchi* and Dorabella in the family matinees of *Così fan tutte*. Her roles with the Company have included a highly praised Composer in the 1983 *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Paulina in *The Queen of Spades*, Mercédès in *Carmen* and Mistress Page in *Falstaff*. She was also heard during the 1985 Summer Ring Festival in *Die Walküre*. With Los Angeles Opera Theater she has appeared as the Composer, as Dorabella in *Così fan tutte* and as Octavian in *Der Rosenkavalier*. Miss Quittmeyer bowed with Baltimore Opera in *Faust*, with Mobile Opera as *Carmen*, and as Cherubino with Hawaii Opera Theatre, Montréal Opera, and the Munich Opera. Other credits include the Composer with the Strasbourg Opera and Cherubino at Santa Fe Opera, where she has appeared in a number of productions, including the American premiere of Henze's *We Come to the River* and the world premiere of John Eaton's *Tempest*. Most recently she appeared in Geneva as Sesto in *La Clemenza di Tito*, as Octavian in *Der Rosenkavalier* in Cincinnati, Portland and in the Netherlands, and as Sesto in *Julius Caesar* in Paris. As a concert artist, Miss Quittmeyer has appeared with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Sacramento Symphony and the Oakland Symphony and in recital at New York's Carnegie Recital Hall. Her engagements with the San Francisco Symphony include her debut in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, a performance of pieces for mezzo-soprano by Harbison and Dallapiccola, and Stravinsky's *Pulcinella*.

Mezzo-soprano **Donna Bruno** returns to San Francisco Opera to portray Nicklausse in *The Tales of Hoffmann*. Long associated with the Company, she made her debut as Siegrune in *Die Walküre* during the summer of 1983, a role she repeated for the 1985 Ring Festival. A 1984-85 Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, she portrayed Edvige in the production of Handel's *Rodelinda* and toured with the SFOC Singers as Prince Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus*. She also portrayed Mirinda in the 1983 Showcase production of *L'Ormino*. A Chicago native, Miss Bruno appeared as Mercédès in *Carmen* in the 1984 Fall Season, and as Suzuki in the family performances of



DONNA BRUNO

Madama Butterfly. As a member of the Merola Opera Program in 1982, she sang Maddalena in *Rigoletto* and toured in that role with Western Opera Theater, and in 1983 appeared as Nicklausse in the Stern Grove performances of *The Tales of Hoffmann*. She has also been heard as Hansel in *Hansel and Gretel* for Marin Opera, and Alcina in Haydn's *Orlando Palladino* with the Carmel Bach Festival. A busy concert artist, she has appeared with the San Francisco Symphony several times, most recently in Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass*. Miss Bruno was also a Schwabacher Debut Recitalist in 1986. Her recent engagements include the title role of *Carmen* with the Stockton Symphony, Ceres in the premiere of Hoiby's *The Tempest* with the Des Moines Metro Opera, Stephano in *Romeo and Juliet* and Meg Page in *Falstaff*, also in Des Moines. Other recent assignments include Hermia in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with the Glimmerglass Opera; Valencienne in *The Merry Widow* with Sacramento Opera, where she will return to sing Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* this season; and the title role of Gluck's *Orfeo ed Eurydice* with Opera de Medellín in Colombia, South America. A native of Chicago, Miss Bruno holds a Master of Music Degree from the University of Illinois.

In her second year as an Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, mezzo-soprano **Cristiane Young** is the Voice of Antonia's Mother in *The Tales of Hoffmann*. She made her Company debut during the 1986 Summer Season as Mamma Lucia in *Cavalleria Rusticana*. During the 1986 Fall Season she sang the role of Grandmother Buryja in *Jenůfa* and Marthe in the student matinee performances of *Faust*, the latter role being one she performed at Stern Grove as a participant in the 1985 Merola Opera Program. Miss Young was seen in six roles in the San Francisco Opera Center's 1986 and 1987 Showcase seasons. In 1986's Hindemith double-bill she performed Mother Bayard and Ermengarde in *The Long Christmas Dinner* and Aunt Emma in *There and Back*, and in the 1987 productions she sang Ellen in Rorem's *Three Sisters Who Are Not Sisters* as well as Ortarix and La Creole in Sauguet's *Le Plumet du Colonel*. Recent engagements include Katisha in *The Mikado* with Skylight Opera, where she will return in 1988



CRISTIANE YOUNG

for their spring season. She has also sung for two seasons in the chorus of the Paris Opera. Miss Young is a theater graduate of Occidental College and has pursued graduate vocal studies at Indiana University with Margaret Harshaw. Her university performance credits include such roles as Erda in *Das Rheingold*, Public Opinion in *Orpheus in the Underworld* and the title role of Handel's *Tamerlane*. Recently, Miss Young won first place in the Metropolitan Opera Pacific Region Finals. As winner, she received the Vocal Arts Foundation Award and will represent the region in the national finals in New York next March.

Internationally renowned tenor **Plácido Domingo** returns to San Francisco Opera, introducing Bay Area audiences to his celebrated portrayal of the title role in *The Tales of Hoffmann*. His first appearance at the San Francisco Opera was as Rodolfo in the 1969 production of *La Bohème* and he has since returned to San Francisco as Don José in *Carmen* and Cavaradossi in *Tosca* (1970), Manrico in *Il Trovatore* (1971), Vasco da Gama in *L'Africaine* and Cavaradossi (1972), the title role of *Andrea Chénier* (1975), Turiddu and Canio in the *Cavalleria Rusticana/Pagliacci* double bill (1976), *Otello* (1978), Dick Johnson in *La Fanciulla del West* in 1979 (also Cavaradossi in the Company's performance of *Tosca* in Manila), Samson in *Samson et Dalila* (1980), a performance which was televised; Don José in *Carmen* (1981), and the never-to-be-forgotten Opening Night substitution performance in the title role of the 1983 *Otello*. Born in Madrid to parents who were zarzuela performers, Domingo moved to Mexico at the age of eight. His early career took him to Israel for two and a half years, where he sang 280 performances of 12 roles, and then to New York City Opera where he proceeded to appear in works from the standard and contemporary repertoire. His Metropolitan Opera debut took place in 1968 as Maurizio in *Adriana Lecouvreur*. In the fall of 1986, Domingo sang the title role in the Los Angeles Music Center Opera's inaugural production of *Otello*, while also serving as the artistic consultant for the company. Last year, he starred in Gian Carlo Menotti's new opera *Goya*, which was commissioned for him by the Washington Opera. His recent triumphs



PLÁCIDO DOMINGO

include Calaf in the Met's new production of *Turandot* and Radames in *Aida* which opened Houston Grand Opera's new home this October. On television, he has been seen in a number of "Live from the Met" telecasts, in the aforementioned Houston *Aida*, and in documentaries and shows such as "Domingo in Seville" and "Burnett Discovers Domingo." In addition to regular appearances in the world's major opera houses and festivals, he has recorded more than 50 complete opera albums, as well as solo and duet discs. In 1973, the tenor started pursuing a conducting career and bowed at the podium of the New York City Opera's *La Traviata*. Since then, he has led opera orchestras in several leading European opera centers, as well as San Francisco Opera's 1976 student cast of *The Barber of Seville*. Domingo can be seen as Alfredo in Zeffirelli's movie version of *La Traviata*, as Don José in the film version of *Carmen*, directed by Francesco Rosi and, in one of his most celebrated portrayals, the title role of *Otello* in the Franco Zeffirelli film. Among the many awards and honors Domingo has received are the Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres, Kammersänger of Hamburg, Munich and Vienna, and the French Order of the Legion of Honor.

Distinguished American tenor **John Alexander** returns to San Francisco Opera in the title role of *The Tales of Hoffmann*, a work he has performed in Portland, with the Opera Company of Boston and at the Metropolitan Opera. After studying medicine for three years, he realized his true vocation was in music, and after studying at the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music he made his debut with New York City Opera in 1957 as Alfredo in *La Traviata*. He sang his first role with the Metropolitan Opera, Ferrando in *Così fan tutte*, in 1961, and during that season took over the title role of *The Tales of Hoffmann* on short notice, winning critical accolades. In 1965 he enjoyed great success on a tour of Australia with Joan Sutherland, and in 1967 he made his San Francisco Opera debut as Julien in *Louise*. That same year marked his European debut at the Vienna Volksoper in Korngold's *Die Tote Stadt*, returning to Vienna the following year to sing Rodolfo in *La Bohème* at the Staatsoper. He repeated that role for San Francisco Opera

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JOHN ALEXANDER

during the 1969 season, and in 1970 bowed at Covent Garden as Pollione opposite Joan Sutherland in the title role of *Norma*, a work he recorded and has sung opposite Beverly Sills and Montserrat Caballé, and in which he opened San Francisco Opera's 50th anniversary season in 1972. Firmly established as one of America's leading tenors, Alexander sings roles ranging from Italian bel canto works by Bellini and Donizetti to heavier dramatic roles and the German repertoire. Last season he celebrated the 25th anniversary of his Metropolitan Opera debut, appearing in *Manon Lescaut*, *La Clemenza di Tito* and *Der Rosenkavalier*. His television credits include Mozart's *Idomeneo* from the Met, the Met's Centennial Gala Concert and *Roberto Devereux* with Beverly Sills from Wolf Trap.



TOM KRAUSE

male singer on the Metropolitan Opera roster at the age of 23. Four years later, a last-minute cancellation put him on the Met stage as Don Giovanni, a role he has sung in numerous Met seasons since, as well as those of the four villains in *The Tales of Hoffmann*, Claggart in *Billy Budd*, and leading roles in *Macbeth*, *La Forza del Destino*, *Don Carlo*, *Otello*, *Carmen*, *Peter Grimes*, and *The Barber of Seville*, among others. In recent seasons Morris sang his first Dutchman in *Der Fliegende Holländer* at Houston Grand Opera, and was heard in other leading roles at Chicago, Miami, Toronto, Detroit and Philadelphia. He has appeared several times at the Salzburg and Edinburgh Festivals, as well as at Glyndebourne, where he sang Banquo in *Macbeth*. Elsewhere in Europe, he has been heard at Strasbourg's Opéra du Rhin in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, at Florence's Teatro Comunale in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, in Madrid in *Norma*, in Barcelona in *La Favorita* and *Carmen*, and recently has taken part in two complete new German *Ring* cycles: at Munich and Berlin. In great demand as a concert singer, he has performed with a number of prominent orchestras including the San Francisco Symphony where he was soloist in the Verdi Requiem with Edo de Waart conducting. He is currently recording the complete *Ring* cycle for both Deutsche Grammophon and EMI labels.

Finnish baritone Tom Krause returns to San Francisco Opera as the four villains in *The Tales of Hoffmann*. He made his Company debut during the 1982 Fall Season, when he appeared as Count Almaviva in *Le Nozze di Figaro* and sang Count Tomsky in *The Queen of Spades*, returning in 1983 as Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte*. He was seen here again in the 1984 *Madama Butterfly*, and in 1986 as Marcello in *La Bohème*. Krause made his American debut in Britten's *War Requiem* with the Boston Symphony at Tanglewood in 1963, and has performed with the orchestras of New York, Chicago, Cleveland, Philadelphia, Boston, Los Angeles, Pittsburgh and San Francisco. As a member of the Hamburg Staatsoper for many years, he was heard in many leading roles there and he made his U.S. opera debut with that company on a tour to the United States in 1967. He made his Metropolitan Opera debut that same year as Mozart's Count Almaviva. Since then, Krause has appeared frequently at the Met, as well as



GWYNNE HOWELL

with the Chicago Lyric Opera and Houston Grand Opera. In Europe, he performs with the Vienna Staatsoper, the Paris Opera, La Scala in Milan and has also sung at the festivals of Salzburg, Bayreuth, Glyndebourne, Edinburgh and Prague. An acclaimed concert artist, Krause has most recently been heard in performances of Haydn's *Creation* with the Orchestre Nationale de France conducted by Seiji Ozawa. He also participated in a special tri-centennial celebration performance of Handel's *Messiah* which was recorded at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. Krause's extensive discography includes recordings of *Così fan tutte*, *Elektra*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Tristan und Isolde*, Tchaikovsky's *Yolanta*, the Berlioz *Roméo et Juliette*, Mozart's Requiem, Rossini's *Stabat Mater*, Rachmaninoff's *The Bells*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah* and Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*. His recording of the complete Sibelius songs was awarded four international prizes.

British bass Gwynne Howell sings Crespel in *The Tales of Hoffmann* and Friar Laurence in *Roméo et Juliette*. He made his Company debut in 1978 as King Henry in *Lohengrin* and the Commendatore in *Don Giovanni* and returned in 1984 as Dosifei in *Khovanshchina*. Born in Wales, he made his professional operatic debut as Monterone in *Rigoletto* with the Sadler's Wells (now English National Opera) in 1968. He made his Covent Garden debut during the 1970-71 season, appearing in *Salome* under Sir Georg Solti and made his first appearance at Milan's La Scala during a visit by London's Royal Opera, with whom he performed in *Peter Grimes*. A regular member of the Royal Opera, Howell has appeared at Covent Garden in such productions as *Luisa Miller*, *Rigoletto*, *Don Carlos*, *Un Ballo in Maschera*, *La Bohème*, *Die Meistersinger*, *Aida*, *Samson et Dalila*, *Tannhäuser* and *Don Giovanni*, among others. His first American engagement was the part of Jesus in Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* in 1974 with the Chicago Symphony under Solti. In 1977 Howell made his American opera debut with the Chicago Lyric Opera as Pogner in *Die Meistersinger*, a role he repeated along with that of Lodovico in *Otello* for his Metropolitan Opera debut in 1985. Other engagements that season included *Lucia di Lammermoor* and *La Donna del Lago* at Covent Garden, *Samson et*

continued on p.48



JAMES MORRIS

Bass James Morris returns to San Francisco Opera to sing the four villains (Lindorf, Coppélius, Dappertutto and Dr. Miracle) in *The Tales of Hoffmann*. The Baltimore native made his 1981 Company debut as Assur in *Semiramide* and during the 1985 *Ring* Festival won international acclaim as Wotan in *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*, the first time he had ever sung the *Rheingold* role. He returned here in 1985 for another career first: Scarpia in *Tosca*, as well as his well-known Claggart in *Billy Budd*. Last May he performed a recital at the War Memorial Opera House with pianist Richard Foster. Morris became the youngest

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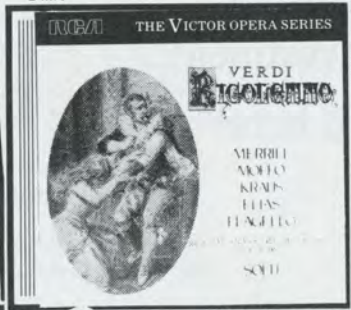
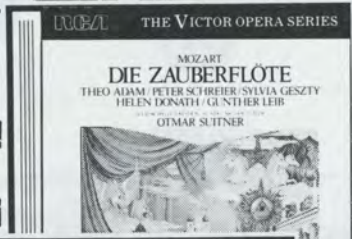
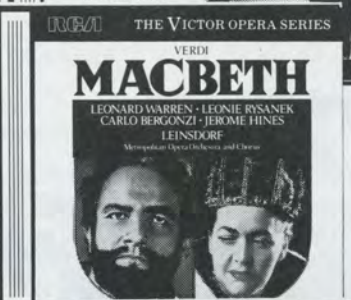
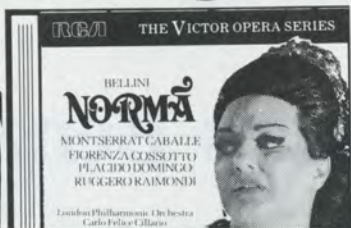


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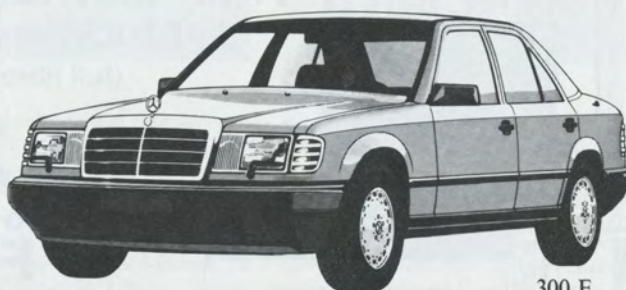




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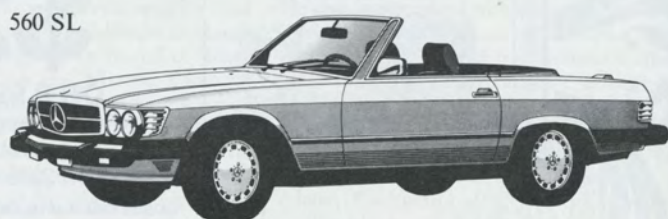
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Libretto by JULES BARBIER and MICHEL CARRÉ

Based on their drama derived from stories by ERNST THEODOR AMADEUS HOFFMANN

(Nicklausse's romanza "Vois sous l'archet frémissant" edited by Fritz Oeser. Used by arrangement with Foreign Music Distributors for Alkor-Edition, publisher and copyright owner.)

Les Contes d'Hoffmann

(in French)

Conductor

Michel Plasson

Stage Director

Lotfi Mansouri

Designer

Günther Schneider-Siemssen

Lighting Designer

Thomas J. Munn

Sound Designer

Roger Gans

Chorus Director

Ian Robertson

Musical Preparation

Mark Haffner

John Fiore

Kathryn Cathcart

Robert Morrison

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SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15 AT 2:00

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 18 AT 8:00

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21 AT 8:00

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 25 AT 7:30

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 28 AT 8:00

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8 AT 8:00

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11 AT 8:00

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CAST

Hoffmann Plácido Domingo
(Nov. 11, 15, 18, 21, 25, 28)
John Alexander
(Dec. 8, 11)

Olympia Tracy Dahl*

Antonia Nancy Gustafson

Giulietta, Stella Mary Jane Johnson

The Muse of Poetry, Nicklausse Susan Quittmeyer
(Nov. 11, 15, 18, 21, 25, 28)
Donna Bruno
(December 8, 11)

Voice of Antonia's Mother Cristiane Young

Lindorf James Morris

Coppélius (Nov. 11, 15, 18, 21, 25, 28)

Dappertutto Tom Krause

Dr. Miracle (Dec. 8, 11)

*Andrès, Cochenille,
Frantz, Pittichinaccio* Francis Egerton

Crespel Gwynne Howell

Nathanael Michael Rees Davis

Hermann Mark Delavan

Spalanzani Daniel Harper

Luther David Pittsinger

Schlemil Philip Skinner

*Waiters; students and friends of Hoffmann; guests and servants of Spalanzani;
Venetian noblemen and ladies; lackeys*

*San Francisco Opera debut

TIME AND PLACE: Early 19th century; Nuremberg, Munich and Venice

PROLOGUE Luther's tavern in Nuremberg

ACT I Spalanzani's house

INTERMISSION

ACT II Crespel's house in Munich

INTERMISSION

ACT III Giulietta's palace in Venice

EPILOGUE Luther's tavern

Supertitles for *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* provided by a generous and
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The performance will last approximately three and one-half hours.

Les Contes d'Hoffmann/Synopsis

PROLOGUE

In Luther's tavern, a chorus of spirits of wine and beer is heard, while inside the adjoining opera house there is a performance of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. The Muse of Poetry appears, professing her love for the poet Hoffmann. To protect him in his adventures, the Muse transforms herself into his faithful friend Nicklausse with help from the spirits. Councillor Lindorf bribes Andrès, a servant of the singer Stella, to intercept a note she has written inviting Hoffmann to meet her after the performance. Lindorf himself will keep that appointment. As offstage applause signals the end of the opera's first act, students fill the tavern, among them Hoffmann, accompanied by his friend Nicklausse. Students urge him to drink and sing, and he tells them the ballad of a dwarf named Kleinzach, then calls for the punch bowl. Noting the devilish Lindorf, he senses bad luck. When the students tease him about Stella, he begins the stories of three past loves . . .

ACT I

The inventor Spalanzani is aided by his servant, Cochenille, in assembling a mechanical doll, Olympia. With her, he hopes to recoup the fortune he lost in the collapse of the banking house of Elias. Hoffmann enters and, discovering the doll, falls in love with her. Nicklausse hints that he is making a fool of himself. Coppélius, Spalanzani's partner, sells the poet a pair of glasses which make Olympia appear human. Spalanzani and Coppélius haggle over the doll, and Spalanzani agrees to pay 500 ducats by way of a draft on the house of Elias. Guests arrive, and Olympia captivates them with a charming song. Oblivious to the periodic mechanical difficulties of the doll, Hoffmann is enchanted. When the guests leave for dinner, Spalanzani leaves the two alone, and Hoffmann declares his love. When he grabs her hand, she whirls out of the room. Coppélius returns, bent on revenge for having been given a worthless bank draft. The guests start to dance, joined by Hoffmann and Olympia. Cochenille takes the doll to her room as Hoffmann, his glasses broken, comes to his senses. Coppélius tears Olympia apart.

ACT II

The musician Crespel has fled to Munich with his daughter, Antonia, hoping she will forget her love affair with Hoffmann there. She sings and becomes exhausted; her father demands that she never sing again, since it will endanger her life, and orders his deaf servant Frantz to allow no one into the house.

Alone, Frantz tries to sing and dance. Hoffmann arrives. His voice attracts Antonia, and they swear eternal love. Breaking her promise, she sings for Hoffmann and then runs out as her father reappears, followed by the sinister Dr. Miracle, whom Crespel considers an omen of doom, because Miracle treated Crespel's wife the day she died. The evil doctor inquires after Antonia, while the hidden Hoffmann watches. The charlatan begins to "examine" the absent girl, then commands her to sing—and her voice is heard. Miracle offers medicines to save her. The father, knowing this means death, throws Miracle out. Hoffmann begs her not to sing and leaves. The doctor reappears, taunting Antonia with prospects of glory as a singer. Antonia invokes the memory of her mother, a famous singer, to aid against temptation. Miracle makes the mother's portrait come to life, and she implores Antonia to sing. As Miracle plays his violin, Antonia sings until she collapses, and Hoffmann arrives to find her lifeless form.

ACT III

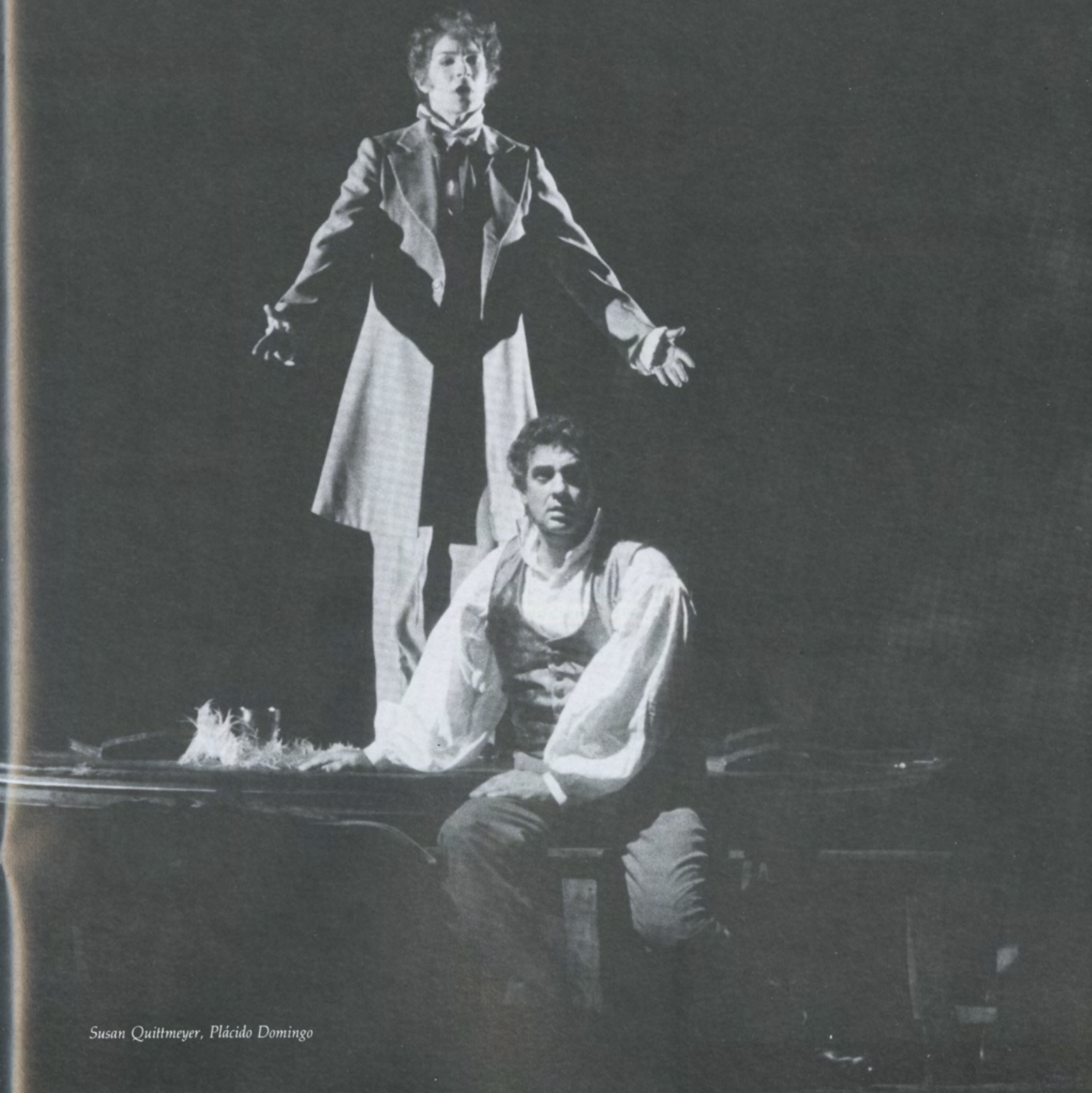
At night in Venice, a gondola brings the courtesan Giulietta and her admirer Pittichinaccio to her palace on the Grand Canal, where guests gather. Nicklausse and Giulietta join in a Barcarolle. Giulietta toasts Hoffmann, to the annoyance of her lover Schlemil. Hoffmann drinks to pleasure, and Giulietta takes her guests to the gambling tables. Nicklausse warns his friend, who declares that should he fall in love, the devil may take his soul. The magician Dappertutto declares he will bribe the courtesan by means of a glittering diamond; she has already obtained Schlemil's shadow (or soul) for Dappertutto, who now insists on possessing Hoffmann's reflection. The poet capitulates to her, and Dappertutto, Schlemil, Nicklausse, Pittichinaccio and the chorus view the obsession of love. Schlemil, who refuses to give Hoffmann the key to Giulietta's apartment, is killed by the poet in a duel. Hoffmann takes the key and rushes to Giulietta's room, only to find it empty. Returning, he finds her with Pittichinaccio, whom she embraces. As Nicklausse drags Hoffmann away, Dappertutto gloats in triumph.

EPILOGUE

As Hoffmann finishes his tales, the crowd goes to supper. When the students hail Stella, she finds the poet drunk and leaves on Lindorf's arm. The Muse of Poetry claims Hoffmann, who remains behind to create new works.

Les Contes d'Hoffmann

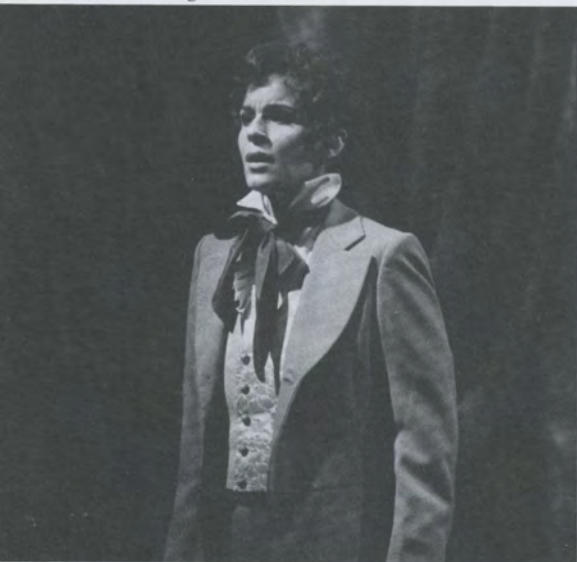
Photos taken in rehearsal by Marty Sohl



Susan Quittmeyer, Plácido Domingo



Plácido Domingo



Susan Quittmeyer



Michael Rees Davis, David Pittsinger, Mark Delavan



Tracy Dahl, Daniel Harper



*James Morris, Nancy Gustafson
(below) Plácido Domingo, Mary Jane Johnson*



James Morris



James Morris, Daniel Harper



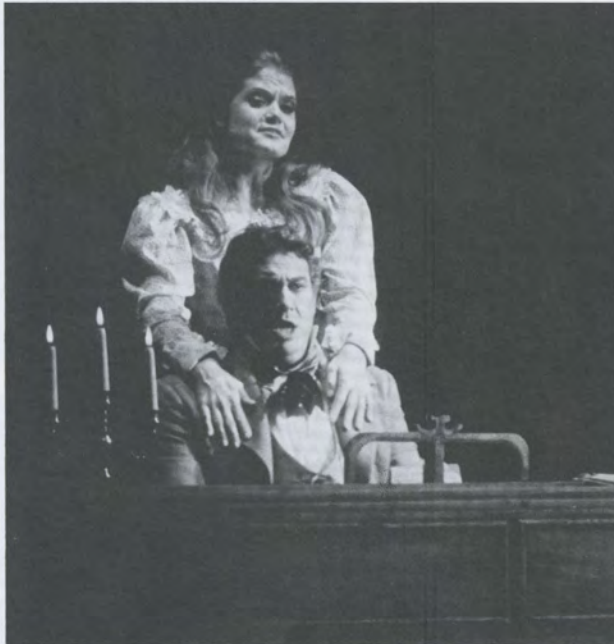
James Morris



Tracy Dahl, Plácido Domingo



Plácido Domingo



Nancy Gustafson, Plácido Domingo (below) Mary Jane Johnson



Plácido Domingo, Women of the San Francisco Opera Chorus



Plácido Domingo



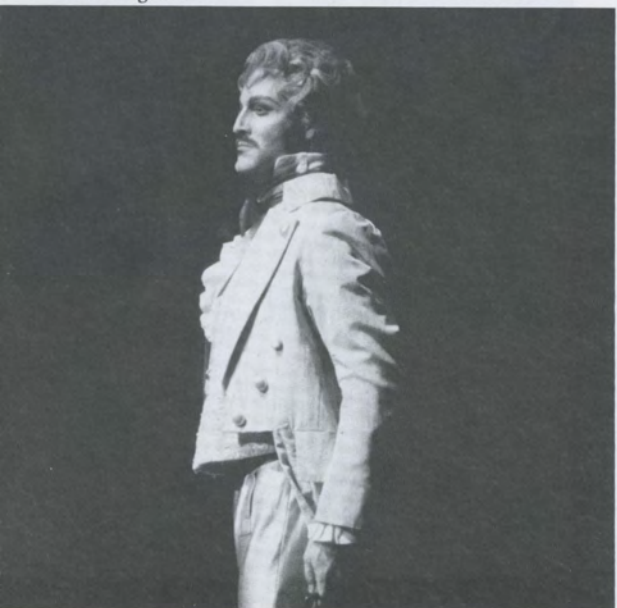
Susan Quittmeyer



Francis Egerton



Gwynne Howell



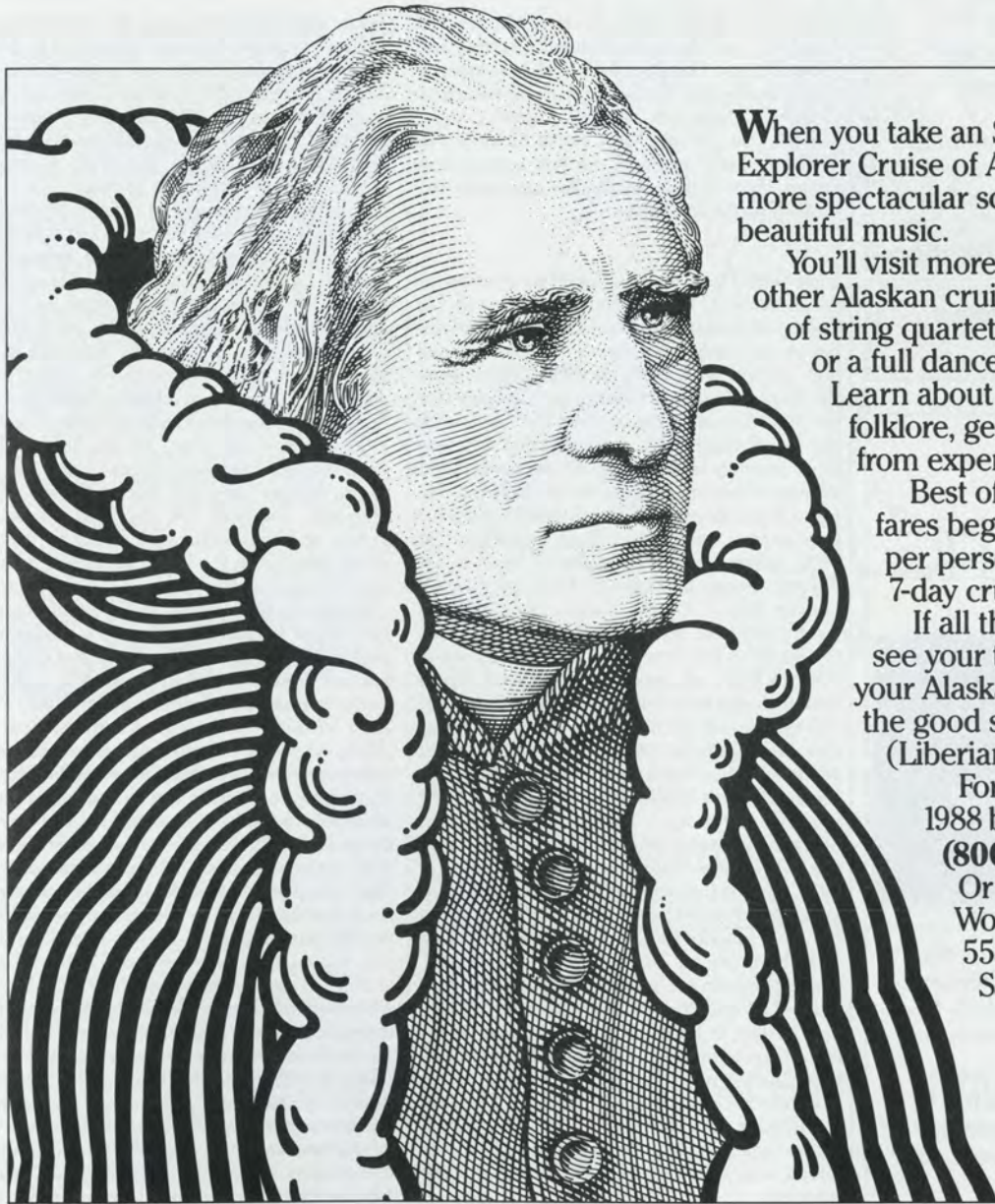
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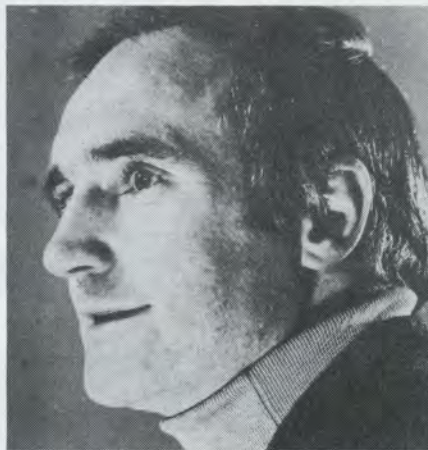
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continued from p.38



FRANCIS EGERTON

Dalila in Chicago and concerts in Munich and London. Last season included *Parsifal* and Howell's first Hans Sachs in *Die Meistersinger* with the English National Opera, a return to Covent Garden for *Parsifal*, *Eugene Onegin*, *Fidelio* and *Salome*; and *Boris Godunov* in Toronto. Most recently, he has appeared in *Simon Boccanegra* in Marseilles and with the English National Opera.

Irish-born tenor **Francis Egerton** returns to San Francisco Opera as four characters in *The Tales of Hoffmann*: *Andrès*, *Cochénille*, *Pittichinaccio* and *Frantz*, portrayals that have earned him acclaim with Sadler's Wells Opera (now the English National Opera), in Winnipeg (for his 1982 Canadian debut) and, last year, with the Royal Opera at Covent Garden. He was most recently seen here as Mime in the 1984 Summer Season production of *Siegfried*. He was a member of the Sadler's Wells Opera for five seasons, and joined the Royal Opera in 1972, where he has appeared as *Iopas* in *Les Troyens*, *Beppe* in *Pagliacci*, *Flute* in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Basilio* in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Bardolfo* in *Falstaff*, *Pong* in *Turandot*, the *Scribe* in *Khovanshchina* and the *Captain* in *Wozzeck*. His assignments with Scottish Opera have included *Mime*, *Flute*, the *Witch* in *Hansel and Gretel*, and *Dema* in a new production of *Cavalli's L'Ecisto*. In 1978 he made his American debut with San Francisco Opera, appearing in seven different roles during the 1978 and '79 seasons. After his Canadian debut in Winnipeg, he appeared as *Bardolfo* in *Falstaff* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic under *Giulini* in 1982, and the following year made his Scandinavian debut as *Il Conte* in a televised production of *Il Fanatico Burlato* at Drottningholm. In 1984 he made his Italian and French debuts, singing *Pedrillo* in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* in Palermo and *Prince Guidon* in *Le Coq d'Or* at Le Châtelet in Paris. With an extensive list of recordings to his credit, he has just completed a new *Marriage of Figaro* for Decca (London Records). He can be seen on videos of *The Tales of Hoffmann*, *La Fanciulla del West*, *Falstaff*, and Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Gondoliers*, the last of which was also televised nationally in this country.



DANIEL HARPER

Tenor **Daniel Harper** sings the Second Jew in *Salome*, the First Armored Man in *The Magic Flute*, *Abdallo* in *Nabucco* and *Spalanzani* in *The Tales of Hoffmann*. 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 include *Altoum* in *Turandot*, *Dr. Caius* in family performances of *Falstaff*, *Maintop* in *Billy Budd* and the *Innkeeper* in *Der Rosenkavalier*. In the summer of 1986, he appeared in *Lucia di Lammermoor* and returned last fall for *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Die Meistersinger*, *La Bohème* and *Macbeth*. 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 nation-wide 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 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 *Schoenberg's Moses und Aron* with the Chicago Symphony under *Sir Georg Solti*. In May of this year he was the soloist in the *Berlioz Requiem* with the Marin Symphony and in May he portrayed *Radames* in *Aida* with the Stockton Symphony. Next year he will appear with the San Francisco Symphony as soloist in the *Berlioz Requiem*.

Bass-baritone **Philip Skinner** will portray four roles this season: the *First Nazarene* in *Salome*, *Baron Douphol* in *La Traviata*, *Schlemil* in *The Tales of Hoffmann* and *Surin* in *The Queen of Spades*. He made his San Francisco Opera debut as *Quinault* in the 1985 Fall Season production of *Adriana Lecouvreur*, appeared as *Ferrando* in *Il Trovatore* during the 1986 Summer Season and returned in the fall for *Don Carlos*, *La Forza del Destino*, *Faust*, *Eugene Onegin* and *Macbeth*. Currently an Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, he appeared in the



PHILIP SKINNER

1986 Showcase performances of Hindemith's *There and Back* and *The Long Christmas Dinner*. As a participant in the 1985 Merola Opera Program, he portrayed Mephistopheles in *Faust* and the title role in *Don Giovanni*, going on to tour with Western Opera Theater in the latter role. He has sung with Kentucky Opera, the Columbus Symphony, the Savannah Symphony, and at the San Antonio Festival in such roles as Timur and the Mandarin in *Turandot*, Escamillo in *Carmen*, Don Fernando in *Fidelio*, and the King of Egypt in *Aida*. A graduate of Northwestern University, Skinner received his master's degree from Indiana University, where he performed in several productions. His concert credits include Haydn's *The Seasons*, *The Creation* and *Lord Nelson Mass*. In July of this year Skinner appeared as the Colonel in the San Francisco Opera Center Showcase performances of *Le Plumet du Colonel*. His recent concert appearances include Mozart's Requiem at the Mid-summer Mozart Festival, Verdi's Requiem with the Masterworks Chorale, and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with the Vallejo Symphony. Future engagements include Basilio in *The Barber of Seville* with the New York City Opera National Company, and Ferrando in *Il Trovatore* with Kentucky Opera.

American bass **David Pittsinger** makes his Company debut as the First Soldier in *Salome*, and will also appear as the Second Armored Man in *The Magic Flute*, Dr. Grenvil in *La Traviata* and Luther in *The Tales of Hoffmann*. He made his operatic debut as Tom in *Un Ballo in Maschera* with the Connecticut Opera, where he will return to sing Sparafucile in *Rigoletto*. He has also performed with the Pittsburgh Opera, most recently as the Ghost and Polonius in *Hamlet*. A graduate of the University of Connecticut, Pittsinger went on to receive his master of music degree from Yale University, where he was awarded the Jepson Prize for most promising young artist. He sang the role of Colline in *La Bohème* as a participant of the 1986 Merola Opera Program, and on the 1986-87 Western Opera Theater tour of the U.S. and China. He was presented with the Da Vinci Society Award at the Merola Opera Program Grand Finals last summer and is also a winner of the Riggio Award in the 1985

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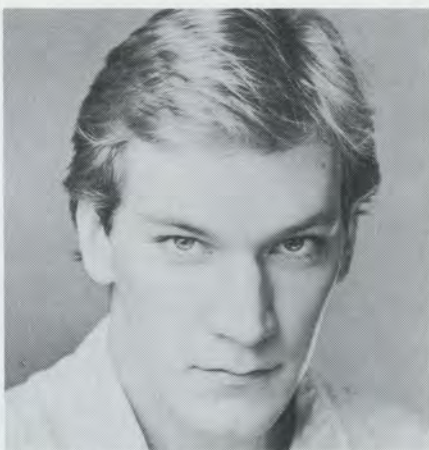
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DAVID PITTSINGER

Metropolitan Opera Competition. Most recently Pittsinger portrayed Basilio in *The Barber of Seville* and Theseus in Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with the Wolf Trap Opera Company. Other credits include Handel's *Messiah*, Beethoven's *Mass in C*, Puccini's *Messa di Gloria*, public broadcast performances of Mozart's *Requiem* with Orchestra New England, and a concert version of *Aida* (as the King of Egypt) with the Stockton Symphony. Next spring he will be heard as Sparafucile in Connecticut Opera's *Rigoletto*, and will return to the Pittsburgh Opera as Zuniga in *Carmen*.



MICHAEL REES DAVIS

Canyon College and Oral Roberts University, and performed in *The Mikado* and *The Daughter of the Regiment* for the Charlotte Opera Association. For the North Carolina Opera Company, his credits include Papageno, Méphistophélès and Don Magnifico. Recent engagements include the Count in *The Marriage of Figaro* for the 1986 Carmel Bach Festival, Escamillo and Amonasro in concert performances of *Carmen* and *Aida* with the Stockton Symphony, Dr. Falke in *Die Fledermaus* for Marin Opera, and the elder Germont in *La Traviata* for Sacramento Opera. This summer he was a guest artist with the Merola Opera Program in the title role of *Gianni Schicchi* at Stern Grove. Delavan is the 1986 winner of the Pacific Region of the Metropolitan Opera Auditions and the winner of the Institute for International Education's travel grant.



MARK DELAVAN

Baritone Mark Delavan portrays Fiorello in *The Barber of Seville*, Sciarrone in *Tosca*, Hermann in *The Tales of Hoffmann* and Plutus in *The Queen of Spades*. He made his Company debut last season in *Don Carlos* and also appeared in *Faust*, *Eugene Onegin*, and *Manon* and as Valentin in student performances of *Faust*. Currently an Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, Delavan was a participant in the 1985 Merola Opera Program and performed the title role of *Don Giovanni* on Western Opera Theater's 1985-86 national tour. In the Center's 1986 Showcase series, he appeared as Roderick/Sam in the American professional premiere of Hindemith's *The Long Christmas Dinner* and as the Poet in Rossini's *The Turk in Italy*. In this year's Showcase series he sang the Baron in Sauguet's *Le Plumet du Colonel*. He received his training at Grand

Tenor Michael Rees Davis makes his San Francisco Opera debut as the First Prisoner in *Fidelio* and will also portray Giuseppe in both the regular season and family performances of *La Traviata*, and Nathanael in *The Tales of Hoffmann*. The Oklahoma native participated in the 1986 Merola Opera Program and went on to sing Rodolfo in *La Bohème* on the Western Opera Theater tour across the U.S. and China. Davis also participated in the 1985-86 Houston Opera Studio and Houston Grand Opera's productions of *Ariadne auf Naxos* and *The Count Ory*. Other engagements include Nanki-Poo in *The Mikado* and Sam Kaplan in *Street Scene* with the Chautauqua Opera, and Beppe in *Pagliacci* with Opera Omaha. This past summer Davis sang several roles with the New York City Opera including Alfredo in *La Traviata*, Detlef in *The Student Prince* and Anthony in *Sweeney Todd*. He has also recently appeared as Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor* with the Anchorage Opera, where he plans to return next year to sing Tamino in *The Magic Flute*.

Conductor Michel Plasson returns to San Francisco Opera to lead *The Tales of Hoffmann* and *Roméo et Juliette*. He was last here to conduct the 1985 production of *Werther*, a work he has also recorded. Born in Paris, he was a piano pupil of Lazare Lévy, and studied



MICHEL PLASSON

percussion and conducting at the National Conservatory of Music in Paris. In 1962 he won first prize at the Besançon International Conducting Competition. On the advice of Charles Munch, he came to the United States and worked with Erich Leinsdorf, Pierre Monteux and Leopold Stokowski. Upon his return to France, he became music director for the city of Metz and in 1968 assumed directorship of the orchestra and opera house of Toulouse. Plasson was instrumental in the 1974 conversion of the old wheat market building into the 3,000-seat concert hall that is today the home of L'Orchestre du Capitole de Toulouse. In 1977 he led performances of *Fidelio* that inaugurated the building, where he has also conducted *Salome*, *Aida*, *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, *Faust*, *Carmen*, and the 1985 world premiere of Marcel Landowski's *Montségur*. In 1983, Plasson relinquished his duties with the Toulouse Opera to concentrate on concert activity with the Toulouse Orchestra, whose programs were expanding under Plasson's leadership. A champion of French music, he has led the commissioning of numerous works which he has led in their premiere performances both in France and abroad. He has also made significant contributions to the preservation of French musical heritage through his numerous recordings of works both famous and less well known, for which he has received various awards. In addition to his busy schedule in Toulouse, Plasson appears as a guest conductor for such ensembles as the Berlin Philharmonic, the London Philharmonic, L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande and the Gewandhaus Orchestra of Leipzig. His operatic activities have taken him to the podiums of opera companies in Paris, Geneva, Vienna, Munich, Hamburg and Zurich, in addition to Covent Garden, the Metropolitan Opera and Lyric Opera of Chicago. Recordings of his that are available in the United States include complete versions of Offenbach's *La Pêruchole* and *Orphée aux Enfers*, Massenet's *Manon* with Alfredo Kraus, the complete Saint-Saëns piano concertos with Philippe Entremont, the second and third piano concertos of Rachmaninoff with Jean-Philippe Collard, and Chausson's Symphony in B flat.

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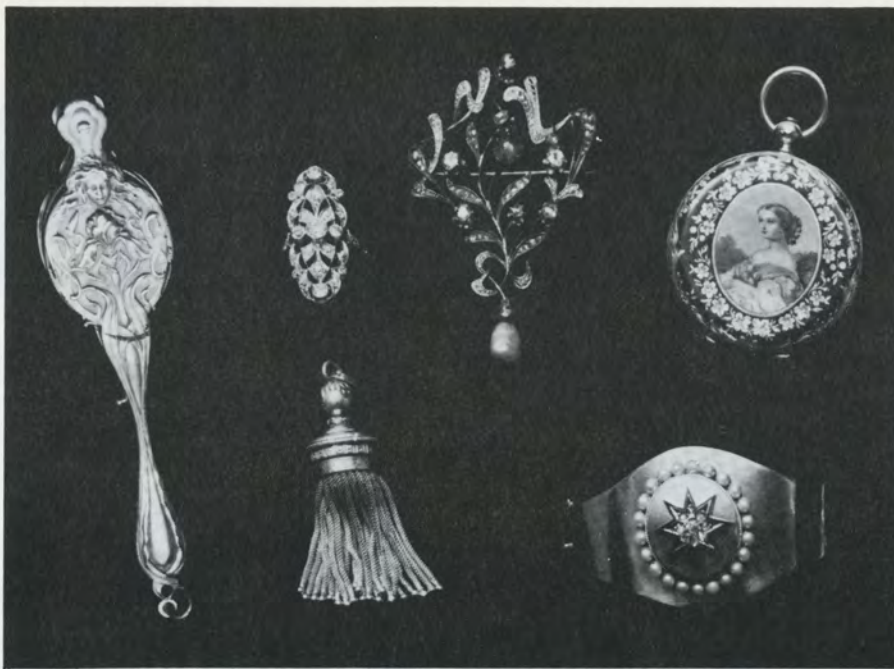
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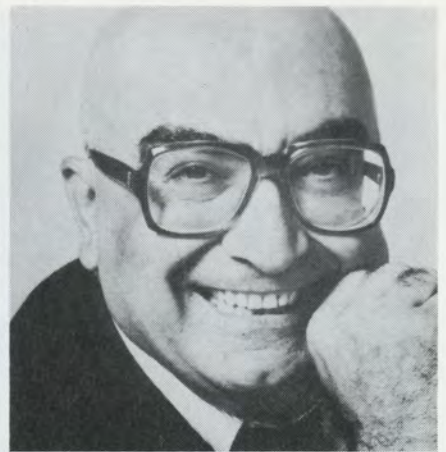
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LOTFI MANSOURI

Acclaimed director **Lotfi Mansouri** returns for his 20th season with San Francisco Opera to stage *Tales of Hoffmann*. The Iranian-born director has mounted over 31 different works for the Company, including *La Sonnambula* (1963), *Esclarmonde* (1974), *The Merry Widow* (1981), *Norma* (1982), and *Anna Bolena* (1984), all with Joan Sutherland; *The Daughter of the Regiment* (1974) with Beverly Sills; *Auber's Fra Diavolo* (1969) and Meyerbeer's *L'Africaine* (1972); and *La Gioconda*, first produced for the 1979 Fall Season and telecast live throughout the United States and to Europe via satellite, and revived for the 1983 Fall Season. Most recently, he directed a production of *Manon* for San Francisco Opera's 1986 Fall Season, an opera he also directed for French television. From 1960-1965, he served as resident stage director at the Grand Théâtre in Geneva. In 1976 he made his Metropolitan Opera debut with *Esclarmonde* and his Vienna Staatsoper debut with *La Fanciulla del West*. General director for the Canadian Opera Company since 1978, Mansouri has staged for that company the original French version of *Don Carlos*, *Wozzeck*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Don Giovanni*, *The Maid of Orleans*, *Carmen*, *Tristan und Isolde*, *Simon Boccanegra*, *Peter Grimes*, *Otello*, *Lulu*, *Norma*, *Death in Venice*, and COC's first production of *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. He was operatic consultant and staged the opera sequences for the MGM film *Yes, Giorgio* with Luciano Pavarotti, and in November 1983 directed *Esclarmonde* for his Covent Garden debut. In 1984 he won high praise for his direction of *The Mikado* and *La Rondine* for New York City Opera, as well as *La Belle Hélène* for the Netherlands Opera, where he also staged *Arabella* with Edo de Waart conducting. Other assignments include the Canadian Opera premiere of *Dialogues of the Carmelites*, *Salome* and Thomas's *Hamlet*, in addition to *Anna Bolena* for the Lyric Opera of Chicago and for Houston Grand Opera. His autobiography, "Lotfi Mansouri: An Operatic Life," was published in 1982. Recent credits include Massenet's *Hérodiade* for the Nice Opera and the Orange Festival, and the New York City Opera production of *The Magic Flute*, which was telecast "Live from Lincoln Center." He also staged the opera sequence in Norman Jewison's soon-to-be-released new movie, *Moonstruck*, starring Cher.



GÜNTHER SCHNEIDER-SIEMSEN



THOMAS J. MUNN

German-born **Günther Schneider-Siemssen** returns to San Francisco Opera as the designer of *The Tales of Hoffmann*. He made his Company debut in 1977 with the production of *Katya Kabanova* that was revived for the Company's 1983 Fall Season. He has designed extensively for television, films and theater, as well as opera. Trained in Munich, he made his debut as scenic designer for Menotti's *The Consul* in Salzburg and as costume designer for Handel's *Ariodante* in Bremen in 1956. His initial collaboration with conductor-director Herbert von Karajan on *Pelléas et Mélisande* in Vienna in 1962 marked a turning point in his career. The two were instrumental in founding the Salzburg Easter Festival. They have worked together on *Boris Godunov* (1965), a complete *Ring* cycle (1967) and, more recently, *Der Fliegende Holländer*. Schneider-Siemssen has been the designer of several complete *Ring* productions. The first was in Bremen in 1956; the second at Covent Garden with Georg Solti conducting in 1959; the Salzburg *Ring* followed, and the fourth was at the Metropolitan Opera. During the 1981-82 season he completed a *Ring* at the Teatro San Carlo in Naples as well. That same season he designed a new production of *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* at the Met, *Falstaff* in Salzburg and *Der Freischütz* at Covent Garden. For the 1982 New World Festival of the Arts in Miami, he designed the world premiere of Robert Ward's *Minutes Till Midnight*. Schneider-Siemssen's design credits include world premieres of Orff's *De Temporum Fine Comoedia* (1973) at the Salzburg Festival, Von Einem's *Besuch der alten Dame* (1972) in Vienna and, in 1977, Hochhuth's play *Death of a Hunter* in Salzburg. His current major assignment is a new *Ring* production at the Met.

Thomas J. Munn is lighting designer for *Salome*, *Die Zauberflöte*, *La Traviata*, *Nabucco*, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, *Roméo et Juliette* and *The Queen of Spades*. He also designed sets for *Nabucco* and co-designed those for *Salome*, both seen for the first time in 1982. In his 12th year with the Company, he has been responsible for lighting over 100 productions for San Francisco Opera, including the lighting and special effects for all four operas of the 1985 *Ring* Festival. He has also designed the scenery as well as the lighting for *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. Recent projects include lighting and projection designs for *Madama Butterfly* for the Netherlands Opera; scenery and lighting for Hartford Ballet's productions of *Coppélia* and *The Nutcracker*; and lighting designs for Connecticut Opera's *Hansel and Gretel*. He also served as lighting director for last May's "Aid and Comfort" benefit and telecast. In 1986 Munn formed "Munn/Janus Associates," through which he handles his architectural lighting and consulting projects. He is currently on the board of directors for the Waterfront Theatre Project in San Francisco, and a consultant for the new Muziektheater opera house in the Netherlands.

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The Hoffmann Jumble

By QUAINANCE EATON

Versionitis is a disease that afflicts many an opera, none more so than Jacques Offenbach's *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* (although perhaps Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov* runs it a close second). Ever since its premiere at the Paris Opéra-Comique in 1881, *Hoffmann* has been at the mercy of producers and directors, most of whom have taken liberties with the book and music, chopping off bits here, inserting bits there, until there are as many *Hoffmanns* as there are opera companies.

As Peter G. Davis wrote in *New York Magazine*, "*Hoffmann's* fascination lies in its tantalizing ambiguities." But he didn't explain. I want to, or at least try, considering the many outrages perpetrated upon this helpless work of art.

Even though you may think you know the ins and outs of this complicated affair, I believe it will be helpful to review the circumstances briefly. So, here goes.

Offenbach was a perfectionist, noted for last-minute tailoring of his works—he would mercilessly chop off a number here, switch this one for that one, and do a thorough job on his creation as late as at dress rehearsal. He undoubtedly would have left us a definitive "version" had he lived to monkey with the premiere production. But he died on October 5, 1880, four months before the opening, leaving the opera raggedly incomplete. An Opéra-Comique fire in 1887 destroyed what must have been "authentic" material.

At Offenbach's death, the capable tinkerer Ernest Guiraud was called in to ready his friend's incomplete work for performance. (He had already done some service for Bizet's *Carmen* and was considered a capable repair man.) The result was a first performance with one act missing—the Venetian scene starring the courtesan Giulietta. (But the Barcarolle, slated for that act, was considered too crowd-pleasing to discard, so it was inserted into the Antonia act and the

locale changed from Munich to Venice.) The first *Hoffmann* score, published by Choudens, is *sans* Giulietta.

A single performance in Vienna on December 1, 1881, restored Giulietta, and Berlin in 1884 placed the lady second of three. This placement of acts has persisted until recently.

Let us glance at the twists of plot. The poet Hoffmann is shown seeking an ideal heroine who takes several shapes: Olympia, the vivacious doll; Giulietta, the seductive vamp; and Antonia, the wistful maiden. Now consider the position of the acts. It was always puzzling why Hoffmann burst into the strains of the Giulietta music in the Postlude, with all of

Antonia's anguish in between. (Incidentally, the three heroines are listed in the Prologue with Antonia second and Giulietta third.)

These three episodes are bracketed by a Prologue and an Epilogue, essential to the story. Hoffmann, waiting with his companion in Luther's Tavern for the end of a *Don Giovanni* performance in which his lady-love Stella is starring, is persuaded to tell the stories of three previous adventures. At the end, he has drunk so much wine that he is insensible to Stella's departure with Lindorf, the poet's evil genius who has appeared in each of the episodes to thwart him. (The absence of one or both of these "brackets" is fatal to



STROHMEYER

Quaintance Eaton is the author of several books, including two well-known volumes on Opera Production. Her biography of Joan Sutherland and Richard Bonynge is currently awaiting publication.

Before the current series of performances, San Francisco Opera presented Les Contes d'Hoffmann three times in the Opera House: in 1944, '45 and '49. Raoul Jobin sang the title role on each of these occasions; our only Hoffmann up to now. In this photo taken from the wings on opening night in 1949, Monsieur Jobin is on the left; across the stage from him are George Cehanovsky as Schlemil, Jarmila Novotná as Giulietta, and Lawrence Tibbett as Dappertutto.

the story lines. Perhaps Gustav Mahler was the worst, possibly the first offender in this respect, dropping both in Vienna.) The presence of a Muse of Poetry who watched over Hoffmann and "saved" him from his disastrous love affairs was ignored for a long time (and still is in some ventures). This character appears in the original Choudens score, pronouncing a little *melodrame* that reveals her interest in the poet, as well as a similar apotheosis in the Epilogue. In the Prologue, she throws off her robe and is discovered to be Nicklausse. This, incidentally, solves the puzzle of the use of a trouser role for this character, for which no justification can be found if the Muse does not appear. (Brussels, I think it was, cast Nicklausse as a male, thus throwing the whole plot out of whack.)

By the way, here are the Muse's *melodramas*-as gleaned from the Choudens score and translated by John Gutman:

The Prologue

I am the Muse, the poet's inspiration,
Descended from Parnassus and its slopes,
A friend of noble souls: I grant them
exultation;

I hold a helping hand to him who gropes.
Though I have dwelled with gods
And shared their higher station,
My passion is for one who bears a human
form—

A poet who in desperation
Will need my soothing love to still his
inner storm.

His name is Hoffmann, poor misguided
human,
A foolish heart that knows no guile or
ruse,

An easy victim to the wiles of woman—
He needs a friend:

That friend am I, the Muse.

(Throws off robe and is seen to be Nicklausse)

The Epilogue

(Again as the Muse)

And I, your faithful friend,
Whose hand dried the tears in your eye
And thanks to whom your pain has van-
ished

Naught but a cloud in the sky,

Am I nothing to you?

May the vale of passion abate for you.

The man is no more!

Arise my poet, I love you.

I love you Hoffmann

You must belong to me!

Let us backtrack for a little more history. The first *Hoffmann* in America was the effort of the indefatigable impresario, Maurice Grau (who later became the Metropolitan's chief). It played at the Fifth Avenue Theater in

1987 Season

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New York, beginning October 16, 1882. Although the composer was still considered nothing but a frivolous musical comedy fellow, the music struck the *Times* critic as like Meyerbeer and Gounod combined!

Then Oscar Hammerstein mounted the work at his Manhattan Opera House in New York in 1907, using dialogue, I'm told. The Metropolitan ventured on its first *Hoffmann* on January 11, 1913, with three heroines (no Muse, no Stella), and four villains. But Boston beat New York to it, intervening on November 25, opening its 1912-13 season with a vivid production designed by Josef Urban in his American debut. Urban provided color clues to the characters, such as the dull red wigs of the villains, all assumed by that marvelous singing actor, Vanni Marcoux. There were three heroines (no Stella, no Muse) and a hero of ideal proportions in Edmond Clément, whom I described in my book about the Boston Opera Company as "slim, romantic in manner and contour, graceful and elegant, a masculinity yet a dreaminess." André Caplet, the conductor (a friend of Debussy and rumored to be more than a friend of Boston impresario Russell's wife—ah, the delicious scandals of those days!) chopped bits and pieces off the torso of the opera and "recomposed" the Prologue's paean in praise of wine, transferring it to make a bridge before the first act.

Now let us come forward a bit. From my storehouse of programs and clippings, I figure that I have witnessed a dozen versions of *Hoffmann* and had knowledge of a half-dozen more.

An early actual experience with this delightful French tangle of poetry and music goes back to the 1949 performance at the New York City Opera, without the Muse. In 1950 there was a remarkable *Hoffmann* in the person of Frans Vroons. And in 1953, Frances Yeend sang all four heroines. Next, in 1955, I flew home from Chicago just for the Met opening, a *Hoffmann* that boasted Pierre Monteux as conductor, Cyril Ritchard as director, and the ineffable Martial Singher as the four villains. Stella was a walk-on. I can spot no Muse in the program, and remember none. But in 1958, the horizon broadened. Elemer Nagy, the inventive gentleman who controlled the destinies of the Hartford School of Music's lively opera troupe, decided to make use of some new information. He discussed it with me, and I dug up an article in *Musical America* (where I had been associate editor) that described Hans Busch's production at Indiana University. Hans had gone to the original play by Barbier and Carré, and



In 1944, Ezio Pinza portrayed the four villains in San Francisco Opera's *Hoffmann*. He is seen here addressing the *Hoffmann* of Raoul Jobin, while Hertha Glaz's Nicklausse ponders the situation.

consulted the Swiss musicologist, Otto Maag. He looked up the original Choudens score, which introduces the Muse immediately after the spirits of Wine and Beer, and gives her the little *melodrame* we have already seen. I brought this to John Gutman (then assistant to Rudolf Bing at the Met), and he translated it. It was declaimed by Margaret Schelin, the pretty Muse-Nicklausse. Nagy wanted to reverse the second and third acts, but the production was too far under way. He asked me to give a talk to the Opera Guild to explain all these excitements. From then on, I was a *Hoffmann* aficionada.

The Met kept its 1955 version in 1962, with Nicolai Gedda as the hero and Anna Moffo assuming all four feminine roles. The New York City Opera revived the opera in 1965 in a new production by the capricious Tito Capobianco in his company debut, a production notable for its villain, the imposing Norman Treigle, and its three-in-one heroine, Beverly Sills.

A Paris fandango in 1966 showed the audience in the Opéra-Comique, me among them, some really delightful automatons in a fantastic staging, with no Muse, the last two acts reversed, and Jacques Mars as all four villains. There were three heroines, none of whom sang the Barcarolle, which was warbled by two chorus ladies. All very imaginative and insubstantial.

And now, before getting down to the

one serious version which claims to be closer than any to Offenbach's original intentions, let's look at a few of the oddities perpetrated by producers. A Paris production in 1975 was directed by the young Patrice Chéreau, who cut the score quite liberally and had the Barcarolle played by the orchestra before it was sung. Giulietta came first, and Olympia was forced to sing her ditty from a basement studio while her antics were enacted by an automaton. A Wuppertal example presented the singer Siegfried Schmidt made up to look like the original E.T.A. Hoffmann, heaven save us! This is how he actually looked: "Hair worn à la weeping willow, mischievous mien, crooked nose, mocking—at times sneering—twist of mouth, corkscrew whiskers, hands crippled by rheumatism, aspect of a skeleton lost in flowing apparel. . . suggestive of a nightmare rather than reality." It is hard to imagine even a rapacious Giulietta snuggling up to *that!*

The director of this extravagance, according to *Opera News*, "molded the four villains into various disguises of bourgeois capitalism." And the designer fancied "a surrealistic country with greenish landscapes growing in and out of rooms, basilica-shaped halls suspended in midair, and the marble statue of Antonia's mother placed in a fenced-in mausoleum opposite the grand piano of Crespel's *salon de musique*. . . a dance of death in a poet's haunted imagination." Whew! We have at

least been spared that. Still, Chicago once boasted a huge locomotive steaming away at one side of the stage.

Walter Felsenstein of East Berlin often fooled around with *Hoffmann*, piously, to be sure. Closer to home, the Felsenstein "revision" came to the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia in 1975, with Dino Yannopoulos's staging. Here are the salient points I observed (assisted by considerable explanation from Felsenstein in the program): Omission of the "Ghost" chorus, but a spoken Prologue by the Muse; omission of Lindorf's couplet in Luther's tavern, and certain other arias cut, and the transformation of the Venice act Septet to a trio (it had been proved suspect before this). Also, Giulietta died of poison.

Almost unrivalled, however, in its total weirdness was Maurice Béjart's production for the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie in Brussels, which injected electronic music in various veins (including a mixture with the Barcarolle) and presented such startling stage features as a bejewelled ostrich in high heels, a huge eye that opened and closed, an expanding and contracting lung, a beating red heart, women's feet that walked around, a gigantic ear and a machine that accomplished nothing but ran all the time. These attractions were designed by Francis André in sets by Germinal Casado.

Still, perhaps nothing can compare to the sheer brass of the Max Reinhardt production of 1932, which boasted not only an expanded score by the conductor Leo Blech but an entirely new libretto! At least the stories were based on original Hoffmann tales.

How could such a fabulous phantasmagoria escape the attention of ballet, films and television? Perhaps the most famous film was that colorful hokum dished up by Sir Thomas Beecham, when Giulietta's villa dripped with jewels that melted, and Antonia's modest home became a Greek island. A recent ballet (1972-73) was Peter Darrell's for the American Ballet Theatre. According to the *New York Times*, it missed its mark, a conventional ballet with a mish-mash score concocted from various Offenbach sources.

Now let me pass on a real little horror. Fantasy ran riot in "Laterna Magica," devised in Prague, seen at the Brussels World's Fair in 1958, in Russia in 1963, and in a mangled affair at Carnegie Hall, New York, in 1968. The process attempted to involve both screen and live actors, with pre-taped music. The result, as I remember, was a technical mishap and an artistic mess, the latter, no doubt,

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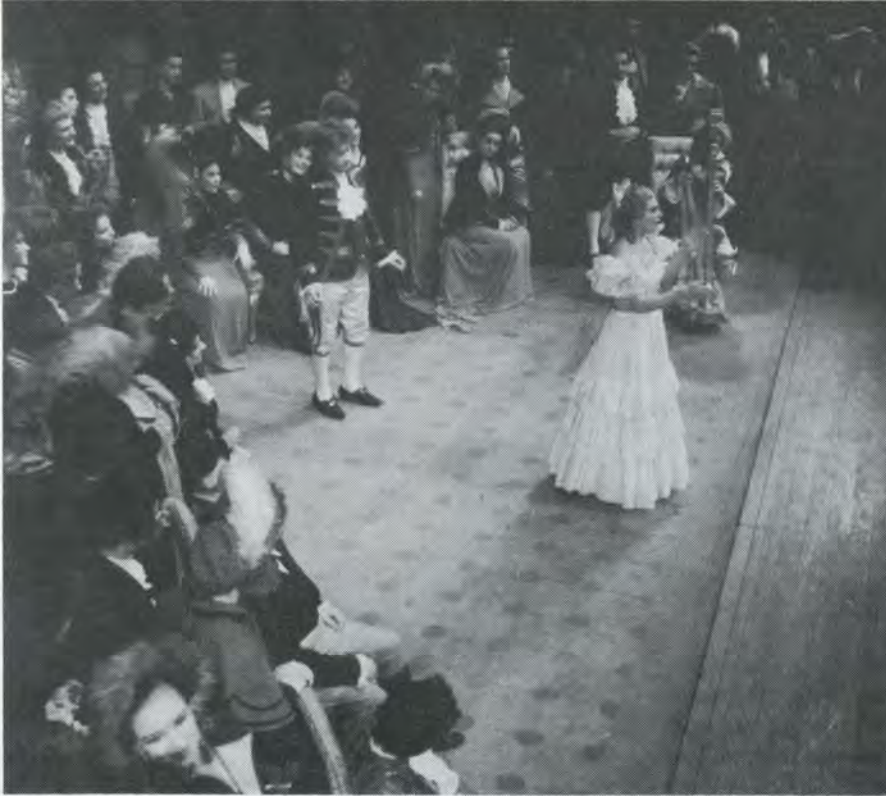
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San Francisco Opera's 1949 *Olympia* was Uta Graf, seen here with Leslie Chabay's *Cochemille* and Alessio De Paolis's *Spalanzani* at the harp.

owing to the former.

The TV "dazzler" as a newspaper headline put it, was America's introduction in 1981 to the previous season's Covent Garden production, which marked Plácido Domingo's third Hoffmann that year. It was staged by a film director, John Schlesinger. Though "ravishing" in production, the version disturbed many critics. It chose to ignore new discoveries and kept to "tradition."

"Zany gadgets, witty tricks and sight gags" sometimes obscured musical or dramatic values. I remember being disturbed by these, as well as by the splitting up of the main characters (villains and heroines) into separate roles.

But my total immersion in *Hoffmann* came with the 1973-74 performances at the Metropolitan, when *Opera News* commissioned me to do a blow-by-blow account of rehearsals and performances. This was Richard Bonyngé's version (previously seen in Seattle), tailored for Joan Sutherland, similar in some ways to recent English National Opera performances, but with some frills of its own. The salient points were the use of dialogue, which had become fashionable (but was later to be discredited), the presence of the Muse in Prologue and Epilogue, Giulietta taking poison before Antonia appeared on the scene, some revision of the Venice act, and the Septet transformed into a quartet in the Epilogue, which brought some gleaming high notes for Dame Joan. The duel between Hoff-

mann and Schlemil took place in a greenish light, accompanied by some music Bonyngé lifted from *Le Roi Carotte*. The Bonyngés repeated this version in Australia, when Tito Capobianco took over, injecting a questionable bit or two. Antonia was required to rise from her deathbed and join her mother's portrait, which left Hoffmann and Crespel shouting their grief at the audience. Bonyngé objected, but Tito only smiled and did it his way. One charming note in the setting was the gilded cage in which *Olympia* first appeared. The dialogue still obtained, causing Sutherland some distress. These episodes are covered in more detail in my book about Sutherland and Bonyngé, possibly in print by the time you read this.

All such irregularities seem inconsequential when we get to the discoveries made by Antonio de Almeida and incorporated into the score by Dr. Fritz Oeser, which is now considered to be as near authentic as any version can be. Almeida, a conductor of international reputation, told me the saga of his discoveries. "A friend of mine came to me with the news that he was going to write a new biography of Offenbach in English, because the existing ones were really inadequate," he began. "He asked for my help and I began to collect Offenbach material wherever I went—really for a catalogue to be as complete as possible. I became fascinated, and the discoveries mounted up until I had a practically complete catalogue. But—the biography was never written, and I

wound up editing the scores of the Offenbach operas."

At one point, Almeida visited the home of a great-great-nephew of Offenbach's, and discovered in a cabinet a large stack of manuscripts. It had lain there for years, untouched except for an occasional page which was given away as a souvenir—a sacrilege that horrified Almeida. But there were about a thousand pages in the composer's tiny scrawl remaining. They turned out to be the material that had been used in the private audition given in 1879 for the French and Viennese impresarios. Offenbach's daughters sang the various parts and the composer presided at the piano. Both impresarios accepted the work for performance. But as we know, Offenbach died before the premiere in Paris and the incomplete score was given over to Ernest Guiraud. We know the result: the *Giulietta* act missing, the *Barcarolle* switched to the *Antonia* act, which was set in Venice, dialogue inserted instead of recitatives, no doubt because the *Opéra-Comique* was used to having it that way. "All this material was certainly in Offenbach's almost unreadable handwriting," resumed Almeida. And there was the recitative. But most surprising: the *Giulietta* act was divided into three scenes. "Somehow a Septet (six singers and the chorus) had been inserted, but no one has traced its origin to this day. After all these discoveries, I got very busy conducting here and there and neglected to do anything about them until Dr. Oeser notified me that his score was nearly ready to publish. 'Publish at your peril!' I wired him, and hastily sent him the missing pages. He orchestrated some of the incidents and prepared the score."

The "new" *Hoffmann* was given first in Vienna. Almeida presided over the American premiere in Miami on January 14, 1980. Before the performance, Nathaniel Merrill, the stage director familiar to Metropolitan Opera audiences, gave me the new pages from Oeser, which I painstakingly inserted into the Schirmer vocal score, cutting and pasting like mad. Then I attended rehearsals and performances, which boasted a fine cast—Nicolai Gedda as the hero, Judith Forst as the Muse and Nicklausse, José Van Dam as the villains, Ruth Welting as *Olympia*, Ashley Putnam as *Antonia*, Rosalind Elias as *Giulietta* and James Atherton as the four servants. The press responded with tributes such as "miraculous," "great musical history," a "revelation."

So what was all the hullabaloo about? Although the changes were apparent mostly in the *Giulietta* act, which had

been split into three scenes, other dislocations showed up. Most hurtful to "traditionalists" was the absence of Dappertutto's "Scintille diamant" (which always gave bass-baritones trouble with its high G, but baritones gloried in it). This, Almeida discovered, had been inserted in Monte Carlo at the request of a precocious baritone who didn't care for his original solo, and really belonged to the composer's *La Voyage dans la Lune*.

Other important changes (aside from the Giulietta act) were the addition of two arias for Nicklausse, causing him/her to be only less important than the hero, and the switching of Coppélius's air ("J'ai des Yeux") to Dappertutto, which should have consoled that intriguer for the loss of the Diamond aria. Now to the reconstituted "third" act. After the business with the diamond, now a ring which Dappertutto places on Giulietta's finger, the two discuss Schlemil and decide that he is dispensable. A little music leads to a gambling scene, where Schlemil keeps himself surrounded by courtiers to hide the loss of his shadow (the price for Giulietta's favors). He goads Hoffmann into gambling, and Hoffmann loses heavily. The scene changes to Giulietta's boudoir, with Nicklausse once again urging his friend to escape. But Hoffmann is now under the courtesan's spell, and she incites him to kill Schlemil. Here the music reverts to the Schirmer score for "O Dieu de quelle ivresse," and Hoffmann loses his reflection in Giulietta's mirror. He notices this before the duel that follows, and Schlemil taunts him with "You are now one of us." Dappertutto offers his weapon, and Hoffmann scores his victory over some eerie music. As Hoffmann retrieves the key to Giulietta's room off the corpse, Dappertutto offers him a glass of wine. But our hero puts it on a table and hides as Giulietta, accompanied by Pitichinaccio (and a chorus offstage) enters. She comments on "stupid geniuses," looks at her mirror in which Hoffmann's reflection appears, sings again to Barcarolle strains, drinks and dies. Hoffmann catches her in his arms as Dappertutto gloats and Pitichinaccio erupts in gales of laughter.

In the Epilogue, Nicklausse emphasizes the "three-women-in one" aspect of Hoffmann's fancies, and the hero confronts Stella with this idea when she appears. He holds her back from departure with Lindorf and drunkenly sings a verse of the Kleinzach ditty remembered from the Prologue. Everyone exits but Nicklausse, who now appears in her true guise and sings to the drunken hero: "The flame within your heart will burn again," and the invisible Stella, Lindorf and the

chorus join in a final "quartet."

Thus twenty minutes or so were added to the "regular" version, and, frankly, it caused some feelings of *longueur*. And there have been critics of the "new" Hoffmann just as of the old. According to the publishers, Alkor, the Oeser treatment has been seen in Toronto, Hartford, Tulsa, Denver, San Diego, Greensboro (NC), Long Beach and St. Louis (Sorry for the laundry list, but I thought you'd like to know what you've been missing).

Just as the "old" version came in for slings and arrows, the "new" has occasioned some displeasure about the veritable scraping up of material without the discriminating hand of Offenbach to trim it down.

A Salzburg Festival production of 1980 brought a couple of new "fixers" to the Offenbach score: Jean-Pierre Ponnelle, a notable meddler with established entities, and James Levine, the always forward-looking conductor-impresario of the Metropolitan. Neither the old nor the new satisfied this pair, so "we combined them," Mr. Ponnelle explained. This combination accepted the Muse and Nicklausse as one character. Also, the Giulietta and Antonia acts were reversed. Then, recitatives were "restored." One element is interesting: the maintaining of the tavern as "brackets" to the three acts, but then this had already been done in Hartford and other places. Ponnelle's setting had its bizarre elements: Rube Goldberg contraptions, graveyards beckoning to the dying Antonia, life-size roulette wheels. A constant prop was a jewelled walking stick, carried by the four villains, that did service as a magic wand that lit up, a violin bow, and a sword. Plácido Domingo was the hero, Edda Moser the heroines, and José Van Dam the villains.

It is easy to see why, even with the new revelations, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* remains ever fresh as a mystery for musicologists—and even laymen—and a treasure-house for experimental directors. We shall probably never see a Hoffmann exactly as the composer would have wanted it—at least, not until we can consult Offenbach himself. Who knows what he would have done with Almeida's discoveries and Oeser's elaborations?

P.S. And what about San Francisco? No doubt you already know the history of your Hoffmanns, but here is a brief recap. My records show 1944, 1945, and 1949, with a Spring Opera production in 1963 and 1967, when Acts 2 and 3 were exchanged and the time of the action shifted to 1870 by Vincent Porcaro, the director. ■

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By SUE SOMMER LOOS

A little more than an hour's drive from San Francisco can take you to Italy. Well, perhaps not directly to Italy, but at Villa Montalvo, the sensation is that of visiting a palazzo in Tuscany, or perhaps Taormina.

The 19-room Villa is located at the foot of the Santa Cruz mountains. With

its long green lawns gradually sloping downward, it was built as the summer retreat of James Duval Phelan, San Francisco's Mayor for three terms and a United States Senator from 1914 to 1920. Phelan was also a patron of the arts who incorporated in the design for his 175-acre haven an outdoor amphitheater to host performances specifically by promising young artists, as well as by the more

famous—Ethel Barrymore, Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks, and for visitors such as Jack London and Franklin Roosevelt.

For San Francisco Opera, the lure of Villa Montalvo comes in midsummer when its promising young artists, those of the Merola Opera Program, grace the Garden Theater with a full production each year. Guests from throughout the Bay Area converge at the Villa, clad in cool clothing, to be part of this favorite "Glyndebourne-style" event. Most years the Sunday offering is completely sold out.

The performance is the apex of the ten weeks of study undergone by the 20 (some years there are more singers, some, fewer) singers and four apprentice coaches. These artists, most of them in their early twenties, are selected by written application and audition. They are, to use an athletic reference, the "farm team of the opera"—already very talented and gifted young artists, who need just a little more hands-on training before "coming to bat in big-league opera." They arrive in early summer and are housed in private residences, which proves to be a plus because of the familial relationships that often develop between host and



Donizetti *al fresco*: The Don Pasquale story unfolds at the Villa Montalvo outdoor theater, assisted by the dappled sun of an August afternoon.

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artist. They are given a living stipend, and appear at the War Memorial Opera House daily for "opera school," or "musical boot camp," as some of them have dubbed it. The massive amount of detail surrounding the four Regional Auditions in Chicago, New York, San Francisco, and Los Angeles, with District Auditions in Denver, Seattle, Phoenix/Tucson—as well as all the details of getting the participants here and settled—are managed by the Merola Opera Program, with Alice Cunningham as Executive Director.

While here, the artists enter into intensive instruction in vocal and repertory coachings, stage deportment and technique, Italian, German, and French diction, breathing and movement, make-up, and—very important to their futures—they receive support and advice about their careers. They also attend social gatherings to meet their sponsors and supporters, which is an important and pleasant part of their training.

The artists also prepare for three full performances that will take place during their 10-week sojourn—a full opera production at Stern Grove, the Grand Finals, which are presented on the stage of the War Memorial Opera House on the last night of their stay, and, of course, the major performance at Villa Montalvo. For this production two casts are selected, one for Saturday and one for Sunday. Weeks later, these two casts will travel with Western Opera Theater, performing the same opera many more times during the following fall and winter throughout the country and, at times, internationally (several articles about the W.O.T. trip to China have appeared in this season's magazines).

Throughout their training, the singers participate in Master Classes given by well-known artists including Régine Crespin, Leontyne Price, Kurt Herbert Adler, Paolo Montarsolo. Financing for the program is generated by the Board of Directors of the Merola Opera Program through various fundraising events, and by special individual and corporate sponsorship (see page 64). The artistic portion of the singers' education and the selection of participants is managed by the San Francisco Opera Center under the direction of Christine Bullin.

Names of singers listed on the Montalvo programs soon become familiar to local opera patrons because many of them reappear on the programs of San Francisco Opera, such as the currently scheduled appearances in *Tales of Hoffmann* by Nancy Gustafson and Donna Bruno (Montalvo's *Rigoletto*, 1982), Daniel Harper (*Madama Butterfly* at Montalvo,



Intermission: Villa Montalvo audiences enjoyed assorted libations in the shade, some of which is provided by the wisteria vine.

1983), Tracy Dahl, Mark Delavan, Philip Skinner, and Cristiane Young (*Don Giovanni* performers, 1985), and David Pitsinger and Michael Rees Davis (in the Montalvo production of *La Bohème*, 1986).

Other young opera performers who have played Villa Montalvo are becoming familiar personalities on "the big stage" at San Francisco: David Malis, Ruth Ann Swenson, Frank Kelley, Cheryl Parrish, Dolora Zajic, Kathryn Cowdrick, Kevin Anderson, John David De Haan, Deborah Voigt, Monte Pederson, Jacob Will, Peter Volpe, Douglas Wunsch, Thomas Potter, Nikki Li Hartlieb, Mark E. Coles, Emily Manhart, Rita Mazurowski, James Busterud, Barbara Kilduff, and Richard Pendergraph. The adapting that these performers have had to do to complete a production in an outdoor amphitheater, in the country, away from the major opera house, prepares them well for their careers on the operatic stage.

But because Montalvo's Garden Theater is an outdoor amphitheater, no amount of rehearsing can prepare the musicians and production staff for the quirks of nature that might arise, and there are stories behind the stories for many of the productions. During the Zerlina (Tracy Dahl) and Giovanni (Mark Delavan) seduction duet in the Sunday performance of *Don Giovanni* in 1985, a blue jay opted to make his operatic debut and, sitting just above the orchestra, chimed in during each musical pause for nearly twenty measures. He was on key, in time, and only the finely-tuned techniques of the young performers on stage could divert audience attention from the winged warbler.

A man-made disruption was the background noise that interrupted the somber, tear-filled finale of Mimi's deathbed scene in *La Bohème* one year. Precisely as she lay dying and patrons were reaching for handkerchiefs, an ambulance siren was heard from a distant highway. So caught up in the setting and the scene was the audience that whispers of "Oh, thank God!" ran throughout the "house."

One of the most famous "false readings" from Villa Montalvo is often related by Merola president James Schwabacher, a former singer himself. Long before Merola's current liaison with Montalvo, he was performing "Un aura amorosa" there, conducted by Jan Popper. It was hot on stage, and, as the aria is quite difficult for a tenor, Jimmy wasn't surprised that a drop of perspiration appeared on his brow. Just then the audience gasped. Jimmy thought he was doing a brilliant job, and continued to sing, with the audience in rapt attention. At precisely the end of the aria, a look of contentment crossed the collective face of the crowd; Jimmy was certain he had been stupendous. Only afterward did he learn that during the aria, what he thought was perspiration was a bee that had landed on his head, in full view of the patrons, and as he finished the aria the bee flew away, to the relief of the entire gathering.

But perhaps the most humorous bee incident happened during the first summer that Merola performed at Villa Montalvo. The event was to be a particularly festive celebration. And to mark that celebration, hundreds of balloons were floated from every possible tree, archway, bench and hook. However, from the moment the celebration began, the resident bee population rebelled at the intrusion of the colored spheres, or attempted to pollinate the oddities, and, as a result, popped each balloon, one by one—during the performance, during intermission, and during the formal dinner afterwards—until there wasn't one single bright-hued decoration remaining.

One more vignette about insects. In 1986 the Montalvo Committee installed a new device to curb the insect community on the grounds of the mansion. During a particularly poignant portion of the dress rehearsal for *La Bohème*, visiting French director Bernard Uzan could hear a constant and inconsistent, very distracting "zzzt," "zzzt," "zzzt," but couldn't tell from which direction the noise was coming. Finally, he stood up, drew to his full dramatic height, took a large breath, and said, "What the @!#!# IS that?" The elec-

tronic bug zapper was cut from the trees immediately!

Things are not always that easily amended, however, and pre-planning for the two long-distance productions is essential. Having gone away to enjoy a day in the country, the patrons arrive for the performance: in their broad-brimmed hats they view the opera, sip a glass of wine or lemonade at intermission, perhaps savor dinner on the patio while watching deer search for tufts of new grass on the emerald lawn at twilight—and it is nearly impossible for these guests to realize what must first happen in order to produce this weekend's worth of opera. Of course, that's exactly the way it's supposed to be. "The logistics of creating an opera nearly 50 miles from home base are unfathomable," says Steve Mitchell, who, as production manager, is responsible for everything. "But to the audience it should look effortless."

It is far from that. Because the Villa Montalvo theater is short on technical requirements for a full-stage production, everything that could possibly be needed to create the magic of the performance must be hauled down Highway 17 and Route 9 in a large truck and the Brown Bag Opera van, to set up for rehearsals

and the two performances.

On Monday before the opening, the curtain, all the scenery, props, paints, furniture, plus hardware—tools, nails, hammers, drills, gloves, and glue, are loaded onto the fully-packed truck. In addition, the experienced stage crew also packs what they call their "Montalvo Survival Kit": hats, shorts, sunglasses, sunblock, insect repellent—and WATER, for, while the weather is pleasant for guests who are relaxing, the heat can be brutal to those wielding hammers and moving scenery. By week's end the backstage area is literally awash with empty water bottles.

"The discomfort is diminished, however," says Mitchell, "when, once in a while, we stop and look up to see what we're surrounded by. In our careers, we are used to working in dark, dank, windowless theaters with artificial lighting. At Montalvo the setting is wonderful; it is bright and sunny and the grounds are absolutely beautiful—even if there is an occasional gust of wind that sends us scurrying to keep the sets from toppling over. Oh, there's one more thing we have to adjust to, and this includes the singers: there is always the threat of an insect getting sucked into someone's mouth as

she or he takes a big breath. That doesn't happen indoors!"

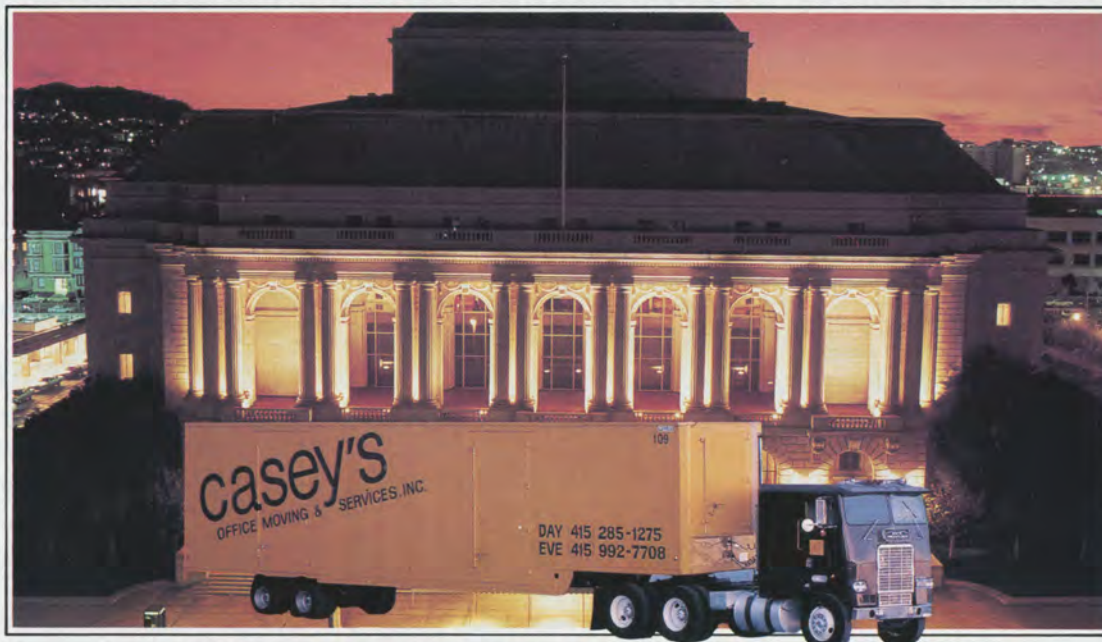
Early the next day the truck has made its way back to the City and is ready for a return run carrying make-up, wigs, costumes, mirrors, brushes, safety pins, a piano and other musical instruments, chairs, and music stands.

While the shortness of time makes it seem impossible to get everything done, by week's end the set has begun to take shape. In a few days' time the bare stage will have been transformed into Don Giovanni's luscious garden or the chilly candlelit Parisian tenement in *La Bohème* or to Don Pasquale's opulent art deco living room.

"There's one thing we don't have to concern ourselves with in this theater, however, and that's the lighting. It seems that God provides all the natural light we need, and he does a pretty good job," smiles Mitchell.

After the Sunday performance, the crew scuttles around breaking down the entire production set to get it ready for the trip back to San Francisco. Light is a factor in this case, because all this must be done before sundown, since the staging and backdrop areas are not equipped with enough lighting to work after dark. So,

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while patrons are sitting on the hydrangea-laced verandah eating grilled veal and baby vegetables, the production crew has one more project to complete. The final phase will come on Monday when the last wig goes into the last truck, and the production heads northward.

Even to the singers, the daily journey southward during the week before the performances can be stressful. These performers travel to Saratoga by van; no limousines for them—yet. On the way, they debate whether the window should be open or closed, and where they should stop to pick up rations of Sucrets, snacks, and of course, mineral water. This is, after all, nearly the end of “boot camp”; rehearsals have run late into the night, and, while the weather isn’t unbearably hot, wearing full costumes (many of which are made of wool) and make-up make the day uncomfortable—so nerves can be on edge.

“There is one really special thing about performing at Montalvo, though,” says David Pittsinger, who made his debut on the San Francisco stage this fall in *Salome*, “and it’s that when you have a break, you can choose one of the hidden trails and go be by yourself with only the squirrels and deer, or flake out on the lawn and soak in some sun. That’s terrific!”

Recognizing the stress that the singers and production crew struggle with during “prep week,” supporters come to their aid with special benefits. The Amici di Merola, a group of volunteers whose purpose is to support the Merola staff and the artists, prepares lunch for the performers and the technical staff who are, literally, stuck at the Villa for the day. There are no restaurants nearby, and if it’s a dress rehearsal, it’s very difficult for the performers to change their clothes, remove their make-up, find transportation, get lunch and come back in time to dress again for rehearsal, so they find not having to worry about lunch a great help.

The troupe is also given a much-appreciated cast party each year after the Sunday performance by Merola friends Robert and Julie Rinehart at their spacious home near the Montalvo property. All who participated in the production and the staff who worked with the artists during the summer’s program are invited. They are offered plenty of food and the opportunity to swim and relax, all of which the guests partake of with great relish after a tense but exhilarating, sun-filled day of being “on.”

That Saratoga sun was a definite factor in the placement of the Garden Theater in 1915 when James Phelan was designing his weekend retreat. He wanted

to make use of the sun to light the stage, but he also wanted to ensure enough shade for his guests to be comfortable. To accomplish that, he ordered special linden trees to encircle the area around the seats. The branches of these trees, now grown, are high enough from the ground not to interfere with the view to the stage, yet are nearly full enough to form an arbor, providing a sun-sheltered area for the viewers.

The linden trees fit perfectly around the seating area; however, things have not always fit into place so easily. “The first year, 1982, presented a large problem,” according to Mary Riley, a member of the Merola Board who did all the initial liaison work between Montalvo and Merola. She recalls, “Fifty seats had to be added to the audience area in order to accommodate 700 guests. My committee

and I diligently set out fifty folding chairs adjacent to the existing bench seating, spacing them perfectly, making sure each chair was anchored properly and placed just right. After finishing the job, our little group sat down for a minute on the seats we’d just arranged—in time to see the sets being delivered and put into place on the stage. . . . completely blocking out the view of the newly created seats!” Abashed, but only momentarily, Mary and her committee procured trowels, shovels and picks, and hacked out a large, flat area *by hand*, behind the existing seats—braving dust, heat, and poison oak—to supply the seating area for the additional guests.

The following year’s planning dictated that Montalvo patrons be given specified seating by row and number. So the same industrious committee, tape and paint in hand, headed for the benches to

Angels in the Wings

The Merola Opera Program functions successfully because of the benevolent support of donors who combine a love of opera with the joy of assisting young artists in their careers. Benefactors have the opportunity to nurture “their kids” while en route to becoming tomorrow’s opera stars, and they garner pride in helping the singer or apprentice coach along the way. Sponsors often travel to other cities—or countries—to be part of the audience for their singer’s debut, and their reward comes with the thrill of seeing their young protégés perform on a grand stage, or receive a good review.

That pride is exhibited through the stories told about the artists. A week after the Western Opera Theater tour to China, Drs. Jess and Ben Shenson were in Shanghai on business. Casually, they turned on the television set in their hotel room, and had a pleasant shock in seeing that on the screen were Ann Panagoulas and Michael Rees Davis singing *La Bohème*. These two singers had been sponsored by the Shensons the previous summer, and their performance in China had been filmed by Shanghai TV. “We were absolutely amazed and thrilled,” said an excited Jess Shenson, “to see our young singers on television—and so far away from home!”

Beautifully bedecked in her trademark turban, a stunning visitor to Montalvo watched the performance with particular attention. A

stipend in her name had been given to one of the singers, and she wanted to see the results of the young soprano’s training. Leontyne Price was indeed pleased.

There are regular categories ranging from \$25 to \$1000 which enable patrons to join Merola. Beyond that, there are many other sponsors: “Patrons” donate a living stipend of \$1500. “Maestros” supply private coachings for \$1000. “Guardians” give \$600 to house the young artists. Others provide airfare to get to San Francisco and home; they are “Angels” at \$300+. Nearly 20 foundations have been set up in these categories in memory and in honor of friends and relatives; the gift continues.

A new category is the Merola Advanced Training Program, which will be used to assist certain artists who have been connected with Merola and the San Francisco Opera Center. This program will give to specific artists opportunities for specialized technical and artistic training, to help them in the final phase of their preparation for major careers. Besides an enormous amount of personal satisfaction, benefits for donating to this category include various informal recitals and receptions to meet the artists. Donation categories are \$25, \$50, \$100, \$250, \$500, and \$1000.

If sharing the destiny of a young artist is something you would like to do, call the Merola office at (415) 864-1377.

S.S.L.



Dinner: As the sun begins to set, the evening meal is enjoyed by deer grazing on the lawn and the Villa Montalvo patrons feasting on the terrace.

mark off which seats were which. Arguments broke out, however, when they tried to decide how wide to make the seats. In an attempt to settle the debate, these friends agreed to measure each other at the appropriate area of the body to get an average—which worked out well. They're still referred to as the "Seat Committee," for more reasons than one!

This past year, the amphitheater of Villa Montalvo has undergone some spectacular changes. An orchestra pit was installed—prior to that the orchestra sat on folding chairs off to the side of the stage, and tandem conductors were used. The pre-measured benches have been replaced by comfortable stadium seats, obtained at cost by Chris Lirely of the Merola Board, who also worked closely with the Montalvo Committee in the design of the space. The stage has been enlarged (Merola used to bring a portable stage from San Francisco and place it atop the existing Montalvo stage). Long-range future plans are in the works, including more parking availability for visitors to the Villa.

Images are particularly rich in a setting as luscious as Villa Montalvo. Early in the day, as the singers are preparing for the performance, Michael Rees Davis (Merola, '86) vocalizes his sonorous tenor voice and the glorious sound of his "Che gelida manina" wafts through the trees amid the Saratoga mist, which the sun hasn't yet dispersed. In the stately courtyard, other members of the cast nibble on an early lunch or squirt lemon juice into their throats, drink mineral water and chew lozenges, while in the

rear of the courtyard in what has been turned into the backstage make-up area, others pin wigs to their own hair. Kurt Streit, a tenor with a chorus part in this production, has time for a quick run at Hacky Sack near an ancient fountain. Under a trellis of clinging wisteria, other cast members greet relatives and friends who have come to see the performance.

To the Merola Board of Directors, this is a big weekend. They book a year in advance and "take over" the Hacienda Inn about a mile from Villa Montalvo, then spend the entire weekend in the area. A casual evening barbecue beside the pool provides a time during which they can become reacquainted with each other and get to know new Board members, to discuss ideas for the coming year, and also to relax after their diligent year-long efforts to raise funds for the young singers and coaches. "This is the best function we have all year," beams Board Vice-President Phyllis Blair. "I really look forward to this weekend!" It's important for Merola that she can say that, because as Montalvo Chairman, aside from the actual performance, she is responsible for every aspect of the event.

And there is a lot of work to do at Montalvo. Board members, with the continuous help of Grace Parker and the Montalvo Committee, usher guests to their seats, handle parking, direct traffic, and give out programs. But to them, the most important function may be the selling of raffle tickets. Generous supporters of the Merola Program donate the tempting raffle prizes on a regular basis. Among them are Gump's, Laurel Burch,

Bryan International Travel, The Sandpiper and Alta Mira in Sausalito, Max's at Opera Plaza, the San Francisco Ballet, Modesto Lanzone, Trader Vic's, the San Francisco Symphony, Editions Limited Galleries, and gifts of "weekends away" donated by Mr. and Mrs. James McWilliams, the Fairmont Hotel, Dr. and Mrs. Patrick Riley, St. Orres in Gualala, La Hacienda Inn, and the Mendocino Village Inn. The raffle brings in money to support facets of the Merola Program, and provides some very special prizes as well. One other small fundraiser takes place during the weekend: beautiful wine glasses commemorating each year's specific opera are available for purchase. These are sold by the Amici di Merola for their funding efforts on behalf of the young artists. Since the wine is free at intermission—it is donated annually by Paul Masson Winery—drinking out of a special glass whose purchase helps run Merola makes it taste even better.

There also is a store in the Villa itself which sells gifts, books, and items germane to the region and the history of the mansion. The name Montalvo, for instance, was chosen by Senator Phelan to honor a Spanish novelist, García Ordóñez de Montalvo, who originally coined the name "California." Phelan had a deep love of his state and believed profoundly in its future. The California described by Montalvo was an island, laden with gold, ruled by a queen named Califia. She rode a griffin whose job was to guard the vast treasures. Opera guests who visit Villa Montalvo have only to watch for huge griffins atop commanding pillars off Highway 9 to note the entrance to their destination.

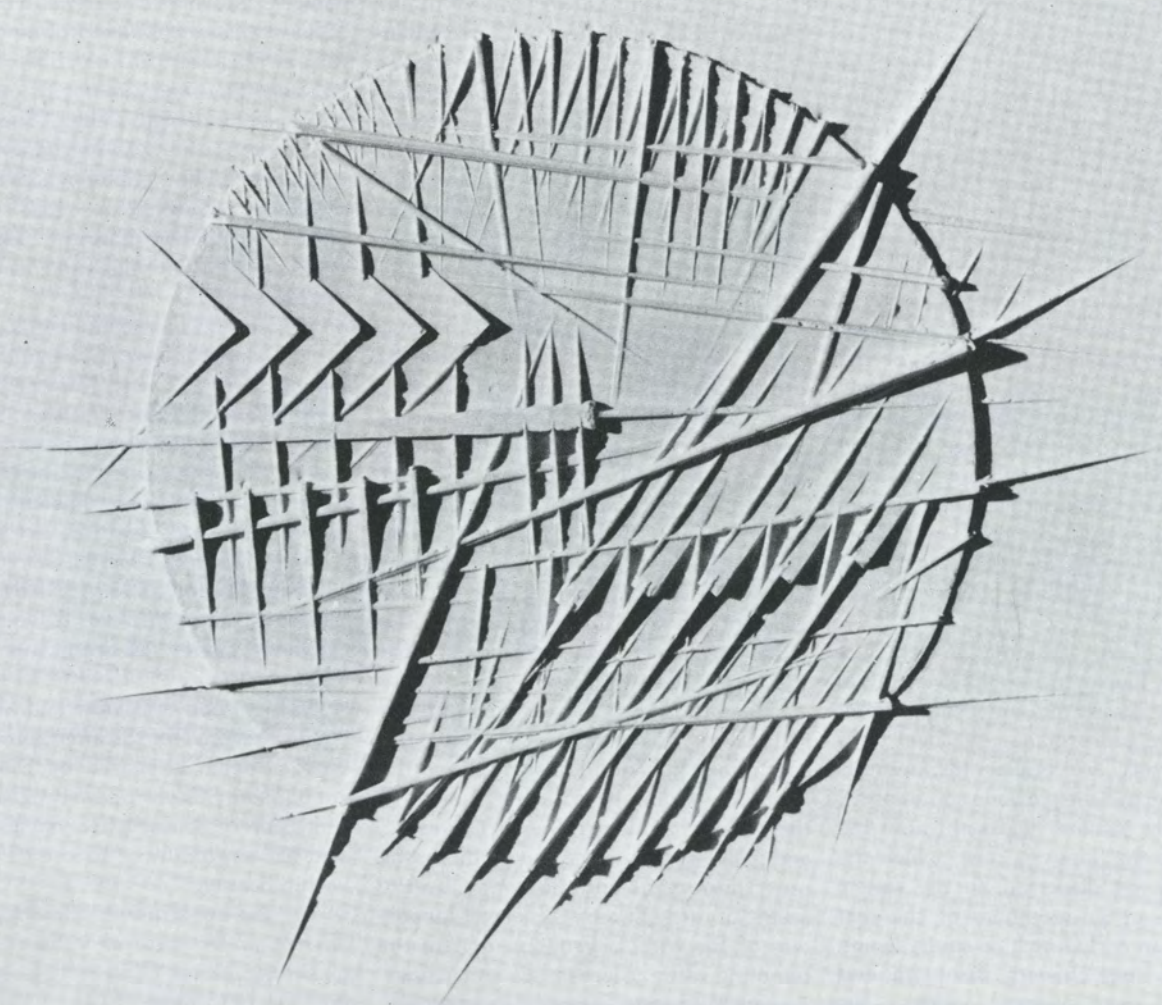
Upon Phelan's death in 1930, his will stipulated that the estate be maintained as a public park and used "for the development of art, literature, music, and architecture by promising students." This request is now executed by the Montalvo Association. Following Phelan's dream, the ground floor features art galleries with showings by local artists, including artists in Montalvo's 45-year-old artist-in-residence program. And, of course, the Garden Theater celebrates his love of music.

The liaison of Merola and Montalvo is a natural one, for the intention of James Duval Phelan is shared by those who support the Merola Opera Program—it is the vision of young artists having a place and an opportunity to create beauty within beauty.

If you would like to attend an annual Merola performance at Villa Montalvo, contact the Merola Office early in June for a brochure: (415) 864-1377. ■

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1987 San Francisco Opera Company (Continued)

Although our program magazines regularly list members of the Administration and Company (please see pages 10 and 17), we know that those lists are by necessity incomplete. In order to give recognition to the many skilled professionals whose work has contributed so greatly to the quality of San Francisco Opera productions, we provide, once a year, a list of everyone involved in our season. In this issue, department heads are listed in front of the magazine, as usual; the many others, upon whom so much depends, are listed below.

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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, October 11
Sunday, October 18
Sunday, November 1
Thursday, November 19
Sunday, November 22
Tuesday, December 1
Saturday, December 5

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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.

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

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

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

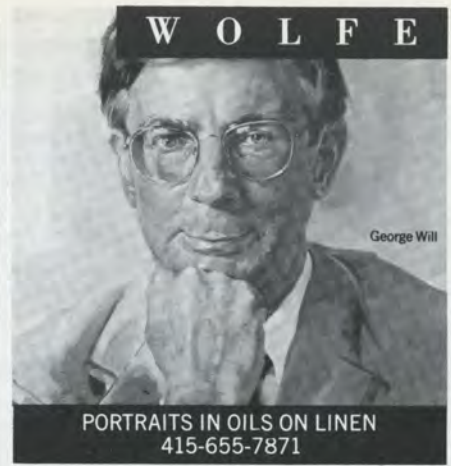
Children of any age attending a performance must have a ticket.

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

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

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

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



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San Francisco Opera Center

The following Corporations, Foundations and Individuals contributed major support to one or more of the San Francisco Opera Center programs during the last year. On behalf of the San Francisco Opera Center's National Auditions Program, Merola Opera Program, Western Opera Theater National Tours, San Francisco Opera Center Singers National and International Tours, Brown Bag Opera, Showcase, Schwaabacher Debut Recitals, Technical Apprentice Program, Adler Fellowship Program and Advanced Training Institute we offer our sincere appreciation for their generous support.

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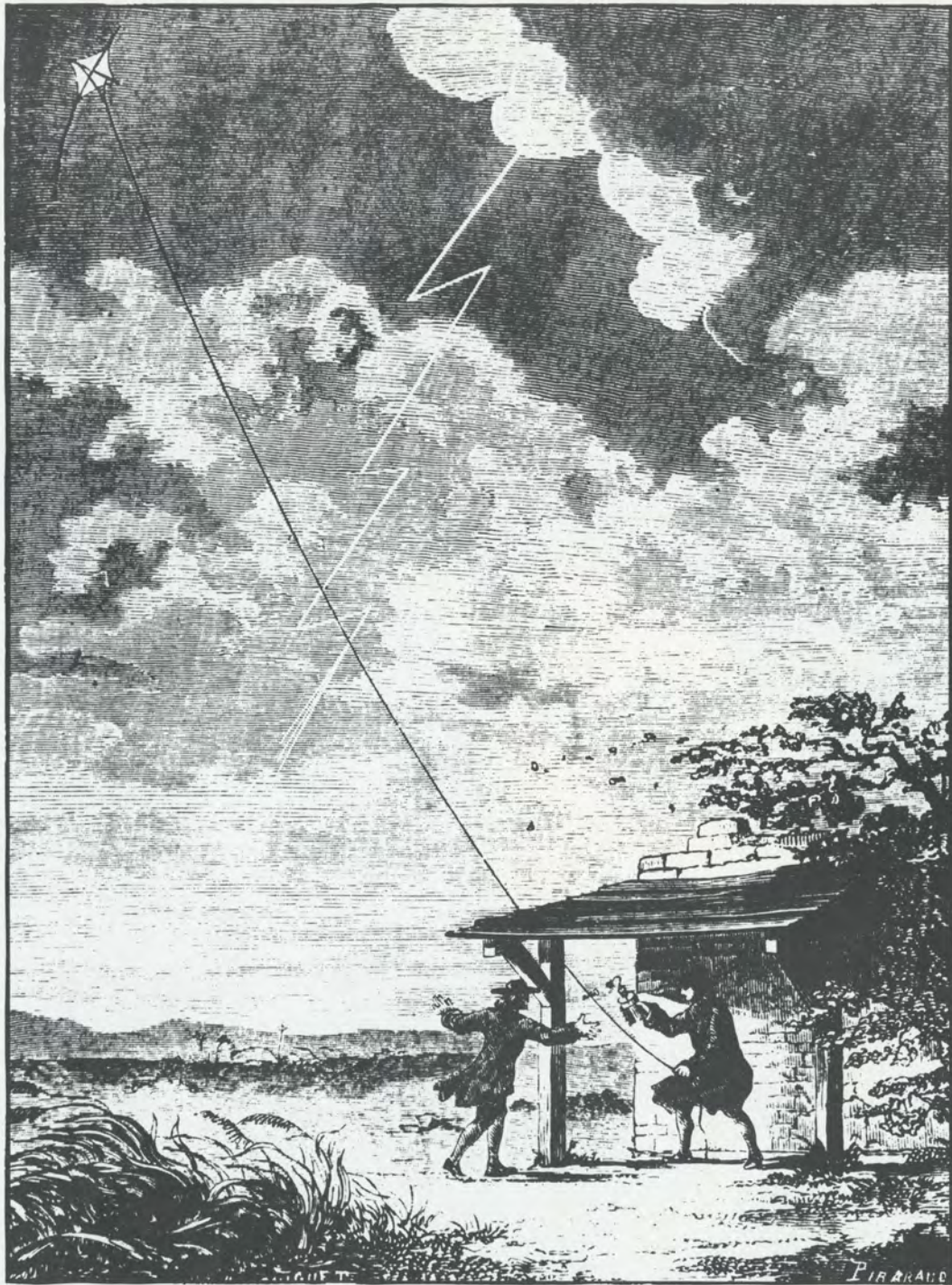
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