

Pikovaya Dama  
(The Queen of Spades)

1987


Monday, November 23, 1987 8:00 PM  
Friday, November 27, 1987 8:00 PM  
Tuesday, December 1, 1987 8:00 PM  
Saturday, December 5, 1987 8:00 PM  
Wednesday, December 9, 1987 7:30 PM  
Sunday, December 13, 1987 2:00 PM

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1987 SEASON

The Queen of Spades

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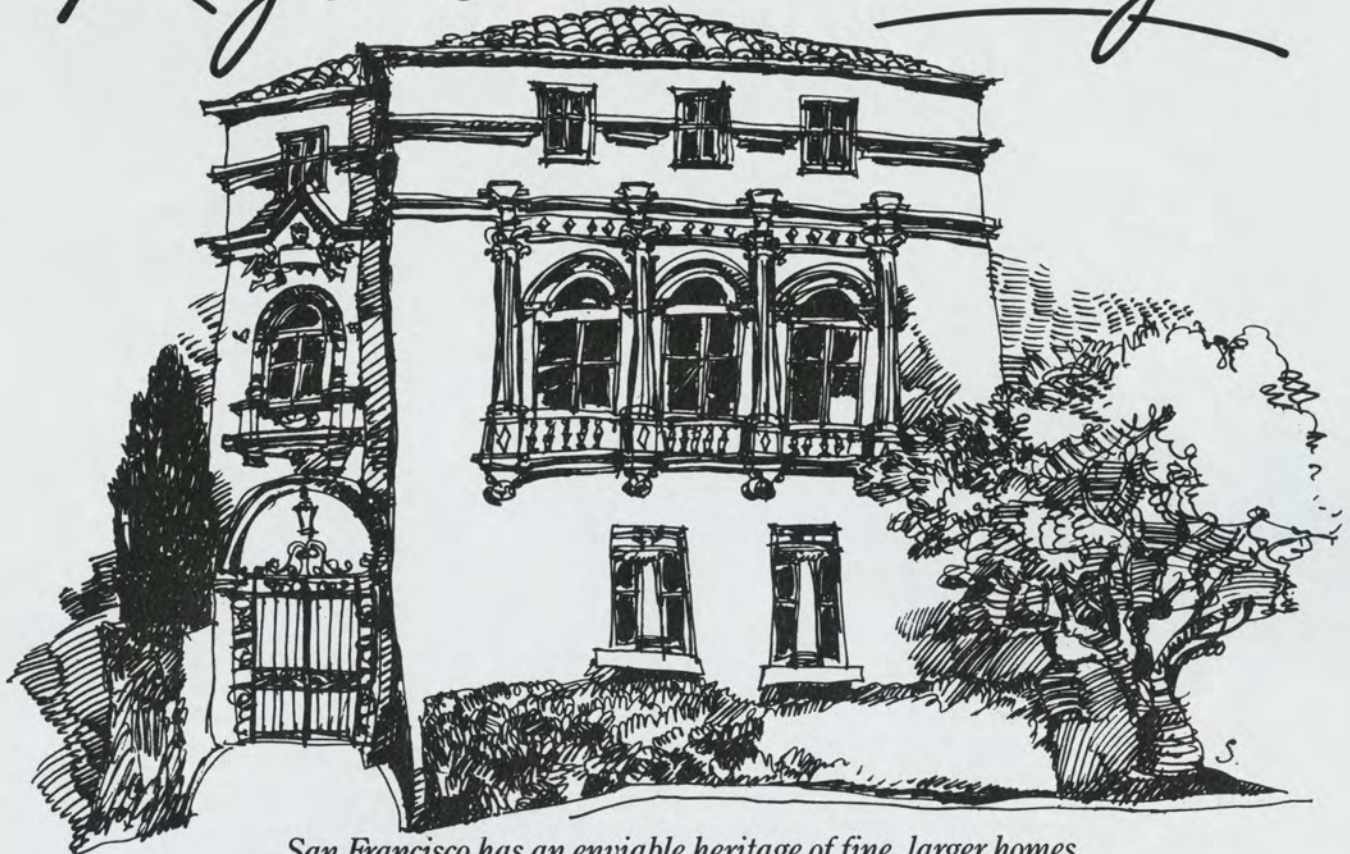
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# San Francisco Opera

Terence A. McEwen, *General Director*

Sir John Pritchard, *Music Director*

## Пиковая Дама The Queen of Spades

1987 SEASON

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Jarvis Hanks (attributed to), b. 1799-d.unknown  
*Death Scene*, (1840-42); detail  
Oil on canvas, 3 ft x 4 ft

Ohio Historical Society  
Campus Martius Museum, Marietta, 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.

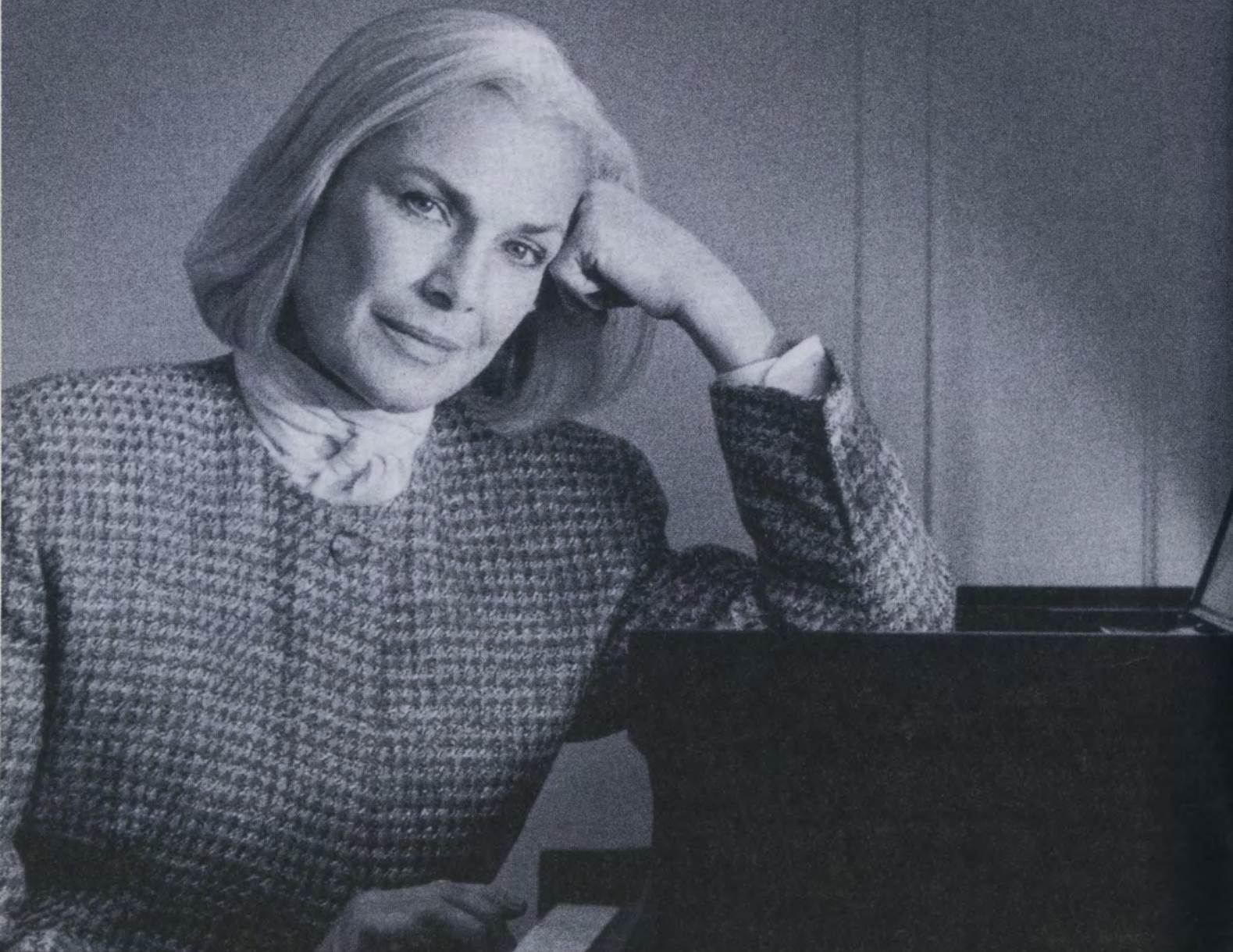
Our Company championed Supertitles ever since they were first conceived, so we are extremely pleased to note that they won such an overwhelming vote of confidence from our patrons, and are glad to be able to bring them back in all ten operas of the season.

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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# San Francisco Opera

Terence A. McEwen, *General Director*

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(Staff listing continues on page 67)





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# San Francisco Opera

Terence A. McEwen, *General Director*

Sir John Pritchard, *Music Director*

## 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/  
Munn

*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\*

Layer/Cox/Hockney/Munn

*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  
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*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

**Nabucco** Verdi



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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  
 Plasson/Mansouri/Schneider-Siemssen/  
 Munn

*This production is owned by Greater  
 Miami Opera Association.*

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

*This production is owned by the  
 Metropolitan Opera.*

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  
 from the people at Chevron.*

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

\*\*American opera debut  
 \*San Francisco Opera debut

All performances are in the original  
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 Wednesday, October 28, 1:00

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The Archives for the Performing Arts invites you to view its exhibition documenting the distinguished career of Bay Area tenor Jess Thomas—currently on display in the War Memorial Opera House Museum. Among the first winners of the San Francisco Opera Debut Auditions, Jess Thomas soon became one of the world's top-ranking singers—hailed as the outstanding Wagnerian tenor of his day. This exhibition, presented in celebration of Mr. Thomas's sixtieth birthday, traces the singer's career, from his early training here in the Bay Area, to his triumphs in the great opera houses and festivals around the world.

The War Memorial Opera House Museum is located on the south mezzanine (box) level, adjacent to the Opera Boutique.




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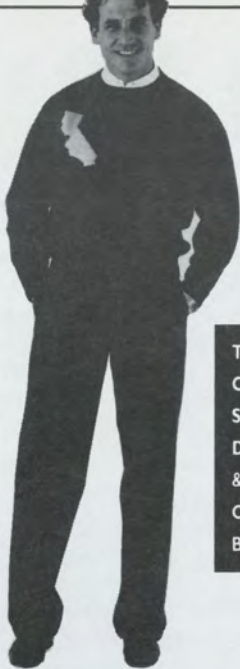
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After a hiatus of four years, San Francisco Opera will be back on the air with 10 operas selected from the more than 50 productions mounted since 1982. The broadcasts will be heard nationwide over the WFMT Fine Arts Network beginning Saturday, September 19, at 11:00 a.m. (Pacific Time). In San Francisco, the broadcasts will be carried by KKHI (1550 AM/95.7 FM). For times and stations outside the Bay Area, consult your local listings.

- 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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Adolf Bruk *Assistant Concertmaster*  
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William E. Pynchon *Assistant Principal*  
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Agnes Vadas  
Lev Rankov  
Barbara Riccardi  
Robert Galbraith  
Janice McIntosh  
Leonid Igudesman  
Julia Skiff

## 2nd VIOLIN

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Martha Simonds *Associate Principal*  
Eva Karasik  
Lani King  
Gerard Svazlian  
Tien Wen Tu  
James Dahlgren  
Stefan Hersh  
Joseph Edelberg

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Lucien Mitchell  
Sergei Rakitchenkov  
Jonna Hervig  
Natalia Igudesman  
Patricia Wells

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Gregory Dufford

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# Tchaikovskiana

By MICHAEL STEINBERG

Some months ago I picked up on my car radio something by Mozart that I could not at first identify. Before long, a couple of strange bass notes made me suspicious, and then I realized I was making a mistake I had made before: This was not Mozart at all, but the Mozartian pastiche in the masquerade scene of *The Queen of Spades*. I thought how delighted Tchaikovsky would have been at actually taking someone in at his own *ballo in maschera*, and found myself trying to imagine his joy in writing this substantial patch of "eighteenth-century music."

Artists find many kinds of joy in their work. Writing a consummate and original masterpiece like the *Pathétique* must have given Tchaikovsky the kind most easily

*Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky in a portrait made in 1893 by Nikolay Kuznetsov.*

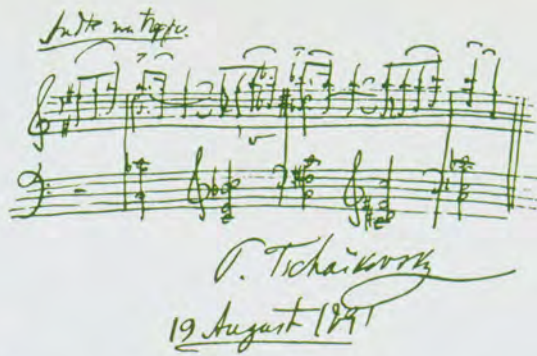
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*Opening scene of San Francisco Opera's 1982 production of The Queen of Spades.*





understood by the outsider. Another, more special, is that which comes from using all one's art in an act of homage to a great and beloved colleague, living or dead. (If I may be permitted an excursion into idealism—performers and critics, impotent to invent anything of our own, but spending our lives in service and homage, ought to have a particularly acute understanding of this feeling.)

Writing *Eugene Onegin* and *The Queen of Spades*, Tchaikovsky felt intense emotion because it was a way of communing with Pushkin. It was with equally intense devotion that, in the summer of 1887, he created *Mozartiana*—delicately crafted, apt orchestrations of two of Mozart's most idiosyncratic piano pieces, the Gigue, K.574, and the Minuet, K.355; the more centrist Variations on a Theme by Gluck (of whom Tchaikovsky said that he felt "sympathy for him in spite of his meager gift"); as well as, by an interesting Romantic detour, Liszt's organ transcription of the *Ave verum corpus*. In 1893, the last year of his life, he turned part of Mozart's C-minor Piano Fantasy into a vocal quartet! But how still more delicious it must have been for him, in *The Queen of Spades* masquerade, actually to slip into Mozart's clothes!

For Tchaikovsky adored Mozart. To his patroness, Nadezhda Filaretovna von Meck, whose taste in music—except insofar as it led her to support him for thirteen years—drove him to despair, he wrote in 1878: "I don't just like Mozart, I idolize him." *Don Giovanni*, he tells her, is for him "the most beautiful opera ever written" and Donna Anna "the most superb and wonderful human portrait ever achieved in music . . . I am so much in love with the music of *Don Giovanni* that even as I write to you I could shed tears of agitation and emotion." Whenever he has heard Ferdinand Laub's quartet play the Adagio of the G-minor Quintet he has had "to hide in the farthest corner of the room so that others might not see how deeply this music affects me . . . I could go

on into eternity, holding forth upon this sunny genius for whom I cherish such a passion." He concludes: "If I could do anything to make you change your mind, that would make me very happy. If ever you tell me that you have been touched by the Adagio of the G-minor Quintet I shall rejoice."

Of course, Mozart has always provoked reactions out of the ordinary: Sober Haydn telling Leopold Mozart, "I tell you before God and as an honest man that your son is the greatest composer I know, personally or by reputation"; Beethoven turning to his pupil Ries at a rehearsal of the C-minor Piano Concerto, "Ah, we shall never be able to do anything like that"; Rossini putting it in his own wry way, "Beethoven of course is the greatest of composers but Mozart is the only one"; and, to step outside the fraternity for a moment, Kierkegaard in *Either/Or*, "I have you to thank that I shall not die without having loved." To those who met him in his prodigious childhood, he seemed not just to be making magic but to be a magical, numinous personage himself. Once he was grown, no longer cute but wrapped in an unprepossessing physical package, that sense of *numen* was available to those who could hear it in his music, and there the Viennese, once they had tired of him as a sensation and were ready for the next marvel, certainly failed him.

In the letter just quoted, Tchaikovsky offers an explanation for his own "exclusive love": "The music of *Don Giovanni* was the first that stirred me profoundly . . . It is thanks to Mozart that I have devoted my life to music. He gave the first jog to my musical powers; he made me love music above all things in this world." Perhaps because it sounds a little homespun, he does not tell Nadezhda Filaretovna that this came about because the Tchaikovsky family owned an orchestra, a mechanical organ that imitated orchestral sounds and for which one acquired "records" in the form of perfo-

rated discs or pinned cylinders. Theirs had in its repertory excerpts from *Don Giovanni* as well as from operas by Rossini, Bellini, and Donizetti. (Later, when Peter Ilyich was twelve, his Aunt Ekaterina took him through all of *Don Giovanni* at the piano.)

But in another communication to Madame von Meck two weeks after this first, expansive outpouring, and obviously in response to her reaction, Tchaikovsky suggests a more interesting reason for his impassioned engagement with Mozart:

You say that my worship of [Mozart] is quite contrary to my musical nature. But perhaps it is just because—being a child of my time—I feel broken and spiritually out of joint that I find consolation and rest in the music of Mozart, music in which he gives expression to that joy in life that was part of his sane and wholesome temperament, not yet undermined by reflection. It seems to me that an artist's creative power is something quite apart from his sympathy with this or that great master.

To this last sentence one might add an aside: Interpreters of Tchaikovsky do well to remember Tchaikovsky's love of Mozart, just as Berlioz conductors should not forget Berlioz's adoration of Gluck (which Tchaikovsky cites as an instance of "glaring inconsistency"). What music a composer knew, admired, and loved is always a good question to ask.

On later occasions Tchaikovsky returns to this theme of innocence. In July 1880, for example, he writes to Madame von Meck: "Mozart is a genius whose

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*Michael Steinberg is Artistic Adviser to the San Francisco Symphony. Part of this essay first appeared in somewhat different form in the program book of the San Francisco Symphony © 1984 and is used by permission.*





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After the St. Petersburg premiere of *The Queen of Spades*, the above caricature appeared in a Moscow daily under the heading "Tchaikovsky's arrival to Moscow."

childlike innocence, gentleness of spirit, and virginal modesty are scarcely of this earth. He was devoid of self-satisfaction and boastfulness: He seems hardly to have been conscious of the greatness of his genius." And again three months later, when he had begun to study *The Magic Flute* (to him a wedding of a "senseless and idiotic" subject to "captivating" music):

You would not believe, dear friend, what wonderful feelings come over me when I surrender to [Mozart's] music. It is something altogether different from the stressful delights awakened in me by Beethoven, Schumann, or Chopin . . . My contemporaries had the spirit of modern music instilled in them from childhood, coming to know Mozart only in later years . . . but happily, fate decreed that I should grow up in an unmusical household, so that as a child I was not fed the poisonous food of post-Beethoven music . . . Do you know that when I play Mozart I feel brighter

and younger, almost like a young man again? [He had just turned forty.]

Under the spell of *Carmen* Tchaikovsky tells his brother Modest that Mendelssohn, Chopin, Schumann, and Glinka were "the last Mohicans of the Golden Age of Music" and that Bizet, in his innocent pursuit of *le joli*, has captured some of their spirit. Then, alas, it occurs to him that "in their music, too, you can see a move away from the great and the beautiful to the 'tasty.'"\*

Two hundred years after *Don Giovanni* and one hundred after *Mozartiana*, we cannot recognize Tchaikovsky's innocent, virginal, modest Mozart as the one we know. We didn't even need *Amadeus* to tell us that. But then what Tchaikovsky is offering is not primarily music criticism nor even declarations of love (not that these two categories need to be mutually

\*If Tchaikovsky's literary reference surprises you, remember that the *Leatherstocking Tales* enjoyed staggering popularity in Europe. Schubert's most urgent request on his deathbed was for more Cooper to read.

exclusive) but nostalgia. For one thing, like most 19th-century musicians, the odd antiquarian like Brahms providing the exception, Tchaikovsky did not really know much Mozart. When you track down the references in the correspondence and the diaries you find him returning over and over to the same few works—above all *Don Giovanni*, for which he shared a passion with most Romantic artists, the *Jupiter Symphony*, *The Magic Flute* (though, as we saw earlier, he rejected the *raison d'être* for the music), and parts of the Requiem. His offbeat choices in *Mozartiana* are as surprising as they are delightful. And in spite of his enthusiastic commendation of the string quartets to Madame von Meck, he tells her that he finds the one in D minor "rather watery."



Medea Figner as Lisa and Nikolay Figner as Gherman pose in their *Queen of Spades* costumes at the time of the opera's 1890 St. Petersburg premiere.





Tchaikovsky (top left) during an 1890 visit to the home of the Figner couple (right). The visit included a lot of work on *The Queen of Spades* with the two interpreters of the leading roles. Another visitor was the prominent music critic Nikolay Kashkin (bottom left), whose presence indicates that in 1890 the phrase "conflict of interest" was not yet in the vocabulary.

Another thing: Tchaikovsky draws no musical conclusions from his absorption with Mozart, neither in the shaping of his operas nor in the facture of his instrumental works. Haydn and Beethoven and Schubert all learned from Mozart, and so did Brahms and Richard Strauss, Schoenberg and Stravinsky, but Tchaikovsky's adoration of him—except in special situations like *The Queen of Spades* and *Mozartiana*—found its place outside his composing life.

What fascinates Tchaikovsky is not so much Mozart's music as the idea of Mozart, the idea of naive, spontaneous,

"sunny" genius, of "childlike innocence . . . not yet undermined by reflection," of "virginal modesty," the idea of a lost Golden Age. And, given the thicket of guilt and misery about himself in which Tchaikovsky lived, one is inclined to add Mozart's "sane" and "wholesome" heterosexuality.

Such yearning for lost innocence is obviously not peculiar to Tchaikovsky. Benjamin Britten was another composer on a similar melancholy pilgrimage in search of innocence. I know of no page in literature where the pain of this longing is put more poignantly than in Thomas

Hardy's "Before Life and After," the poem with which Britten ended his cycle, *Winter Words*:

A time there was—as one may guess  
And as, indeed, earth's testimonies  
tell—  
Before the birth of consciousness,  
When all went well . . .

We can find it as well in the work of a completely different sort of personality, Charles Ives, who made a career of nostalgia and one of whose most touching and characteristic songs, "The Things Our Fathers Loved," begins, "I think there must be a place in the soul all made of tunes, of tunes of long ago."

Tchaikovsky's Mozart is a pre-Freudian child, and his early death, in itself a denial of adulthood, is an essential component of the whole Mozart phenomenon. Tchaikovsky's worship of this child is a game of make-believe. Of course this make-believe image of Mozart still persists, offered for example with the most charming deceitfulness by Maurice Sendak in his *Magic Flute* designs for Houston. A related phenomenon, Mozart the plaster-cast, as we see him on the wrappers of Mozart-Kugeln and on tee-shirts and postage stamps, is with us yet. All this even has its musical correlative in an approach to performance I have heard musicians call the Mozart-Never-Had-an-Erection style.

Make-believe, nostalgia, quotation, allusion, affectionate forgery—these are all components of *The Queen of Spades*. As he did in *Eugene Onegin*, Tchaikovsky moved further away from Pushkin, whose irony was not in his vocabulary.\* In Pushkin, for example, we read of Gherman's first love letter to Lisa that it "was tender, respectful, and taken word for word from a German novel. But Lisaveta

\*It was Ivan Vsevolozhsky, Director of the Imperial Theaters, who first had the idea that Pushkin's novella should be turned into an opera, though his original choice of composer was Nikolay Semyonovich Klenovsky (1857-1915), who had studied with Tchaikovsky at the Moscow Conservatory in the late 1870s. After it was clear that Klenovsky was not getting on with it, Vsevolozhsky offered the project to an even more junior composer, A.A. Villanov, and Tchaikovsky was in fact the third choice. Tchaikovsky's brother Modest, who enjoyed dabbling in literary projects, had prepared the libretto for Klenovsky, but Peter Ilyich not only worked it over with him quite thoroughly but contributed a substantial number of verses of his own, including the text for Lisa's last aria.





Two views of Maria Slavina as the Countess in the 1890 St. Petersburg premiere of *The Queen of Spades*.

Ivanovna had no knowledge of German and was most pleased by it." And where Tchaikovsky's Gherman is a kind of urban Don José, a military man helplessly in the thrall of passion (a more complicated passion because money and sex get all mixed up), Pushkin's young officer always carried the tinge of something ridiculous, partly because he is in the Engineer Corps rather than in one of the glamorous fighting branches, but even more because he is of German descent, which makes him *ipso facto* heavy-footed and altogether a bit absurd.

In their "softened" *Queen of Spades*, the Tchaikovskys make brilliant use of evocation, allusion, and outright quotation. French becomes a kind of shield between us and the grim fantasies of the plot, and musical references to the past have the effect of respite, a certain false lulling, against which the impassioned outbursts of "real" Tchaikovsky stand out with more stunning power. For a partial list of literary and musical references and

sources I gratefully quote John Warrack's biography of the composer:

The duet between Lisa and Paulina is taken from [Vassily Andreyevich] Zhukovsky's "Evening." The Romance which Paulina sings to her own accompaniment is the "Inscription on a Shepherd's Coffin" by Zhukovsky's contemporary Konstantin Batyushkov (1787-1855), the poet of his generation most imbued with eighteenth-century feeling and a love of the classics. The Pastoral itself is taken from Pyotr Karabanov (1765-1829); while from Gavril Derzhavin (1743-1816), [Catherine the Great's] own favored poet and one universally admired and honored by Pushkin himself, come three pieces: the first chorus in the ball scene, Tomsy's *couplets*, and the final chorus in Act 2 in which the Empress is welcomed with music that is in fact a ceremonial polonaise by the Polish composer Józef Kozłowski (1757-1831), to words by Derzhavin, cele-

brating one of Potemkin's victories. A fourth Derzhavin poem was eventually dropped.

In the finale of his *Daphnis and Chloe Pastorale*, Tchaikovsky also uses the music of a chorus from the opera *Le Fils rival* by the Ukrainian composer Dimitry Stepanovich Bortnyansky (1751-1825).

The most famous of Tchaikovsky's quotations in *The Queen of Spades*, one openly acknowledged by its placement and dramatic function, is the air "Je crains de lui parler la nuit," which the old Countess sings as she falls asleep. Disgusted by the music she has heard at the ball and revolted by the dancing, the manners, the clothes, the company itself, she recalls the song as an example of the elegant music of her youth. It comes from *Richard Coeur-de-lion* by the liègeois composer André-Ernest-Modeste Grétry, and Tchaikovsky's choice of it is musically lovely and at the same time a fascinating anachronism. *The Queen of Spades* is set in the reign of Catherine the Great, who





The lively part of the final scene of *The Queen of Spades*, as seen at San Francisco Opera's first presentation of the work, in 1963.

died in 1796; Grétry's opéra comique, however, was produced in 1784, which is much too recent for a very old lady to think of as something from long ago, from another world. Why the anachronism? The first and obvious answer is that no one in Saint Petersburg in 1890 would have known the difference or cared. A more interesting answer is that what the Countess, who knew Marquise de Pompadour, mistress of Louis XV, and who had herself once sung in the presence of His Majesty, could have remembered from her young years in Paris might be one of the *opéra-ballets* of Rameau, but that, for Tchaikovsky's sentimental sense of the past, would be too old, sounding strange and forbidding rather than charming. Make-believe works better.

When he had finished *Eugene Onegin*, Tchaikovsky played it through at the piano and described the occasion to Modest: "The composer was the only listener [and] I must tell you in secret that the listener was moved to tears by the music

and paid a thousand compliments to the composer." When he composed the music for Gherman's death (Pushkin leaves him in room 17 of the Obukhov Mental Hospital, muttering "Three, seven, ace! Three, seven, queen!"), Tchaikovsky was again moved to tears, particularly when he imagined the coming performance by the tenor Nikolay Figner.

The Tchaikovskys did most of their work on *The Queen of Spades* in Florence, where they were looked after by Modest's servant, Nazar Litrov. Nazar decided to keep a journal of this period. He took a keen interest in the progress of the new opera and in the fate of its characters, and here is what he recorded on March 2, 1890:

At 7 o'clock P.T. finished their work. During their ablutions they told me that they had finished the opera. Lately they tell me everything they do. True, there is no one else. "Well, Nazar," they addressed me and started telling me how they finished Gher-

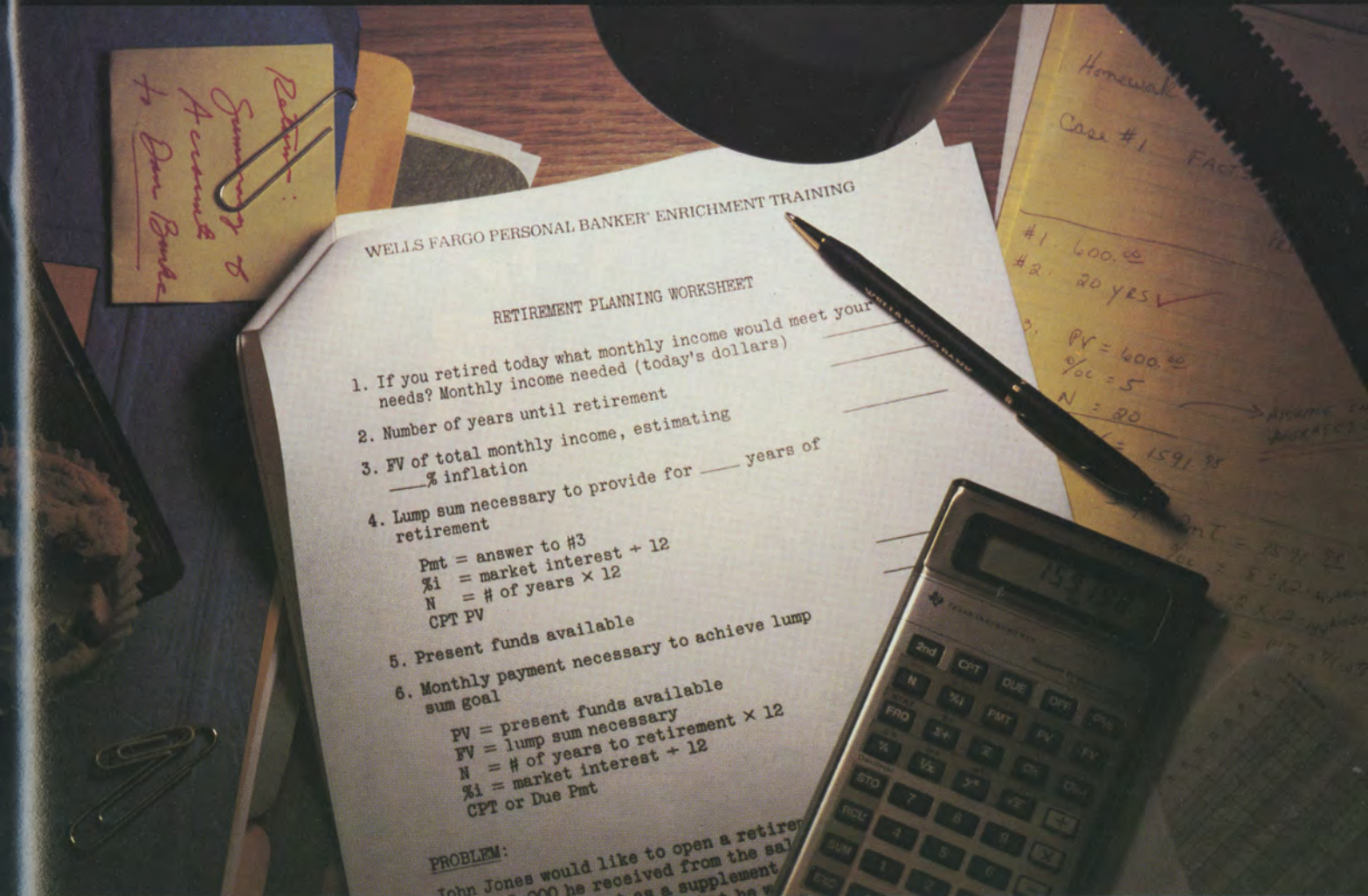
man's last words and how Gherman killed himself. P.I. said they cried all evening—their eyes were indeed quite red at that time—they themselves were quite exhausted, tired, and it seemed that in spite of this exhaustion they still wanted to cry . . .

I love these sorts of tears and I think so does everyone who has experienced them. It is the same with Pyotr Ilyich. They were sorry for poor Gherman, that made them rather sad. When P.I. played "the death of Gherman" composed by them, then all the tears which had filled their soul while composing flowed out . . . It was worthwhile to me to notice P.I.'s tears. God willing, P.I. will finish so well, and it will be possible to see and hear this opera on stage, and then, after P. Ilyich's example, many will shed tears.

As for P.I., when he recorded his own tears in his diary, he added: "Either I am very tired or it is really good." Perhaps he was tired too. ■



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STEFKA EVSTATIEVA

Bulgarian soprano **Stefka Evstatieva** returns to San Francisco Opera to sing Lisa in *The Queen of Spades*, the role that was also the vehicle for her American opera debut in 1983 with the Opera Company of Philadelphia. She made her S.F. Opera debut in the title role of the 1984 production of *Aida* and has gone on to make a number of important debuts in recent seasons. 1984 was also the year of Miss Evstatieva's Metropolitan Opera debut as Elisabetta in *Don Carlo* and her Dallas Opera debut as Leonora in *Il Trovatore*. She has been heard in many of Europe's major opera houses, including Milan's La Scala as Maddalena in *Andrea Chénier*; Paris Opera as Desdemona in *Otello*, which was also her debut role at Covent Garden; and the State Operas of Hamburg and Vienna as Leonora in *Il Trovatore*. The 1985-86 season saw Miss Evstatieva in Cologne as Amelia in *Un Ballo in Maschera*; at La Scala as Maddalena; at Trieste in *Simon Boccanegra*; at Nîmes as Medora in Verdi's rarely-performed *Il Corsaro*; and at Florence in *Don Carlo*. Her U.S. appearances that season included Leonora in *Il Trovatore* in New Orleans; the title role of *Suor Angelica* in Philadelphia; and Maddalena in Dallas. Earlier this year Miss Evstatieva appeared as Leonora in *Il Trovatore* in Boston and sang in a new production of *Eugene Onegin* in Bonn. She has also recently sung her first Leonora di Vargas in *La Forza del Destino* in Toronto. She was seen throughout Europe as Desdemona on a telecast of the Royal Opera production of *Otello* in 1982. In the same year, she was awarded the highly coveted Giovanni Zenatello Award for the best single performance given that summer at the Arena di Verona, where she likewise sang Desdemona.

Renowned French singer **Régine Crespin** is the Countess in *The Queen of Spades*, a role she has performed in Philadelphia and with the Opera du Rhin. Her most recent appearance with the Company was dur-



RÉGINE CRESPIN

ing the Summer of 1986 in her famous portrayal of Madame Flora in *The Medium*. Born in Marseilles, she studied at the Paris Conservatoire and made her professional debut as Elsa in *Lohengrin*, the vehicle of her 1951 Paris Opera debut. During the next few years she appeared with numerous French opera companies as Leonora in *Il Trovatore*, Desdemona in *Otello*, Sieglinde in *Die Walküre*, Salomé in *Hérodiade*, Leonore in *Fidelio*, and the Marschallin in *Der Rosenkavalier*. She sang the role of Mme. Lidoine in the 1957 French world premiere of *Dialogues of the Carmelites*, made her triumphant Italian debut at La Scala in Pizzetti's *Fedra* and bowed at the Vienna Staatsoper as Sieglinde. The next few years saw her as the Marschallin at Glyndebourne, the Berlin State Opera, at Buenos Aires and at Covent Garden. By 1961 she was widely regarded as the foremost French opera singer of her generation, and her embodiment of authentic French singing style has set the standard for our time. Between 1958 and 1962, she was Sieglinde and Kundry in *Parsifal* at the Bayreuth Festival, the second French soprano in the century to have appeared there. In 1962 she made her American opera debut as Tosca at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, and bowed at the Metropolitan Opera as the Marschallin. Her San Francisco Opera debut came in 1966 as Elisabeth in *Tannhäuser*, and San Francisco audiences have since been privileged to hear her in four of her most famous roles: The Marschallin (1967); Didon and Cassandre in *Les Troyens* (1966 and '68) and Sieglinde (1968 also in Los Angeles in '69). She also appeared here as Tosca (1970) and as Santuzza in *Cavalleria Rusticana* (1976). More recently, she was heard in the title role of *La Grande Duchesse de Gérolstein* in 1983, and in 1982 as Mme. de Croissy in Poulenc's *Dialogues of the Carmelites*. Her extensive discography includes complete recordings of Offenbach's *La Périchole*, *La Vie Parisienne* and *La Grande Duchesse de Gérolstein*, *Tosca*, *Damnation of Faust*,



KATHRYN COWDRICK

*Iphigénie en Tauride*, as well as a critically acclaimed *Rosenkavalier* with Sir Georg Solti, with whom she has also recorded Sieglinde; Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre* under Karajan, with whom she opened the first Easter Festival at Salzburg; *Dialogues of the Carmelites*; *Carmen*, Berlioz's *Les Nuits d'été*, Fauré's *Pénélope* and Ravel's *Shéhérazade*. Her numerous awards include the highest ones conferred by the French government: the Chevalier (1972) and Officier (1982) of the Legion of Honor. The San Francisco Opera Center was honored to have Mme. Crespin give Master Classes to its Adler Fellows and members of the Merola Opera Program in 1985, in addition to special coaching for the Merola production of *Faust* which was presented at Stern Grove.

Mezzo-soprano **Kathryn Cowdrick** returns to San Francisco Opera as the Second Lady in *The Magic Flute*, as Paulina in *The Queen of Spades*, as Flora in the family performances of *La Traviata*, and as Stephano in *Roméo et Juliette*. She made her 1985 Company debut as Mlle. Dangeville in *Adriana Lecouvreur* and has since been seen here as an Orphan in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Meg Page in the family performances of *Falstaff*, Lola in *Cavalleria Rusticana*, Mrs. Nolan in *The Medium*, Siebel in *Faust*, Karolka in *Jenůfa* and Rosette in *Manon*. As a participant in the 1984 Merola Opera Program, Miss Cowdrick received the Gropper Memorial Award at the program's Grand Finals and appeared as Meg Page at Stern Grove and as Tisbe in *La Cenerentola* at Villa Montalvo. She went on to perform the title role in Western Opera Theater's national touring production of *La Cenerentola*, and was named an Adler Fellow with the Opera Center for 1985-1986. Other Opera Center credits include Prince Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus* on tour with the San Francisco Opera Center Singers, and two roles in the Center's 1986 Showcase: Zaida in Rossini's *The Turk in Italy* and Genevieve in *The Long Christmas Dinner*. A professional speech





DONNA PETERSEN

therapist, Cowdrick received much of her musical training at Juilliard's American Opera Center. In 1983 she appeared in Barber's *Antony and Cleopatra* at the Spoleto Festival in Charleston (a production that was recorded and received the 1985 Grammy Award), and in *Madama Butterfly* at the Spoleto Festivals in Charleston and Italy. Other engagements include Marcellina in *The Marriage of Figaro* with the Carmel Bach Festival and the Vancouver Opera, as well as a recent appearance as Rosina in *The Barber of Seville* for the Netherlands Opera. Future engagements include her Carnegie Hall debut with the Opera Orchestra of New York in a concert presentation of *Jenůfa*.

In her 21st season with San Francisco Opera, mezzo-soprano **Donna Petersen** sings three roles this fall: Annina in *La Traviata*, Gertrude in *Roméo et Juliette*, and the Governess in *The Queen of Spades*. She most recently appeared here as Filipjevna in *Eugene Onegin* last fall, a role she previously sang with the Company in 1971. Among her more than 30 roles with the Company are the Innkeeper in *Boris Godunov*, Sister Mathilde in *Dialogues of the Carmelites*, Mother Goose in *The Rake's Progress*, Marcellina in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Mrs. Ill in *The Visit of the Old Lady*, Mrs. Sedley in *Peter Grimes*, Grimgerde in *Die Walküre* (a role she has performed in seven different San Francisco Opera stagings), Mary in *Der Fliegende Holländer* and Ada Hawkes in the 1976 world premiere of Andrew Imbrie's *Angle of Repose*. Miss Petersen has toured extensively with Western Opera Theater, has sung numerous seasons with Spring Opera Theater and appeared with the San Diego Opera and the Guild Opera of Los Angeles. In 1974 she made her highly successful debut as Mrs. Sedley in *Peter Grimes* at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, a role she repeated there in 1977. She also appeared in Chicago as Mrs. Benson in *Lakmé* in 1983. Concert engagements include performances with the San Francisco Symphony, Oakland Symphony, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Honolulu Symphony and the National Symphony



SUSAN PATTERSON

Orchestra of Mexico City, as well as 25 concerts in Australia, and additional concerts in England, Vienna, Venice, Winterthur and Ljubljana. Miss Petersen is a Knight of the Royal Order of Dannebrog, presented to her by Queen Margrethe II of Denmark in 1976.

Soprano **Susan Patterson** is Chloe in *The Queen of Spades*. The Alabama native made her Company debut in the Summer of 1986 as Inez in *Il Trovatore* and also appeared that same season as Mrs. Gobi-neau in *The Medium*. She returned last season to sing Thibault in *Don Carlos*, Javotte in *Manon* and Marguerite in the student matinee performances of *Faust*. Currently an Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, Miss Patterson performed two roles in this year's Opera Center Showcase series: Marie in Sanguet's *Le Plumet du Colonel* and Helen in *Three Sisters Who Are Not Sisters* by Ned Rorem. Additional Opera Center performances include Violetta in *La Traviata* with the Opera Center Singers in Palm Springs and under Kurt Herbert Adler at San Francisco's Stern Grove, and, for the Center's 1986 Showcase series, Helen in *There and Back* and Lucia I/Lucia II in *The Long Christmas Dinner*, both by Hindemith. She is a graduate of the universities of Samford and Florida State, and is currently working toward a doctorate at Indiana University. Her college performance credits include roles in *Tamerlane*, *La Fille du Régiment*, *Die Fledermaus* and *Così fan tutte*. As a member of the 1985 Merola Opera Program, she appeared as Marguerite in *Faust* at Stern Grove and for Western Opera Theater's 1985-86 national tour she portrayed Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni*. Miss Patterson is a frequent concert soloist and has performed Handel's *Jephtha* and *Messiah*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Poulenc's *Gloria* and Rossini's *Stabat Mater*. Recent appearances include Musetta in *La Bohème* with Atlanta Civic Opera, Rosalinda in *Die Fledermaus* with Marin Opera, as well as her debut with the San Francisco Symphony in the Beethoven Festival as the soprano soloist in *Egmont*, conducted by



SARA GANZ

Kurt Masur. Upcoming engagements include the soprano part in Handel's *Messiah* with the Honolulu Symphony, appearing as soloist in the San Francisco Symphony "Night in Old Vienna" concerts, and Violetta in *La Traviata* with the Welsh National Opera.

Soprano **Sara Ganz** appears as Annina in the family performances of *La Traviata* and as Masha in *The Queen of Spades*. She was first heard with San Francisco Opera as Jano in *Jenůfa* during the 1980 season, and has since appeared here in *Rigoletto*, *Manon*, *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* and *The Merry Widow*. As a member of the 1980 Merola Opera Program, she performed the roles of Lisette in *La Rondine* at Stern Grove and Emmie in *Albert Herring* at the Paul Masson Winery, and received a Merola Fund Award in the Grand Finals of the San Francisco Opera Auditions. She has toured with Western Opera Theater as Adina in *The Elixir of Love*, Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet*, and made her Spring Opera debut as Wanda in *The Grand Duchess of Gerolstein*. Miss Ganz has appeared as Norina in *Don Pasquale* with the Papiro Opera in Green Bay, Adina with California Coast Opera, Nella in *Gianni Schicchi* with San Antonio Opera, and Gretel in *Hansel and Gretel* with the Opera Guild of Southern California. With Donald Pippin's Pocket Opera, she has sung Susanna in *The Marriage of Figaro*, Zerline in *Fra Diavolo*, and has specialized in the operas of Handel and Offenbach operettas. During her first six seasons at the Carmel Bach Festival, she was heard as Marzelline in *Fidelio*, Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*, Despina in *Così fan tutte* and Papagena in *The Magic Flute*, as well as in oratorio and cantata assignments. A versatile concert artist, she has appeared with the Pasadena, Sacramento, Stockton and Marin symphony orchestras, the Pasadena Chamber Orchestra and the California Bach Society. She has been a winner in the Metropolitan Opera Auditions and the International Concours in Geneva, Switzerland. For the 1986-87 season, Miss Ganz served as Artist-in-Residence at the University of North Carolina.





WIESLAW OCHMAN

Polish tenor **Wieszlaw Ochman** is Gherman in *The Queen of Spades*. He made his Company debut in 1972 as Cavaradossi in *Tosca*, returned in 1973 as Alfredo in *La Traviata*, in 1983 as Dimitri in *Boris Godunov*, and in 1986 as Laca in *Jenůfa*. Since his professional debut in 1965 as Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor* in Poland, he has been applauded at the major opera houses of the world, including those in Vienna, Paris, Salzburg, Hamburg, Berlin, Frankfurt, Munich, Moscow, Buenos Aires, Orange, Geneva and Milan. Ochman made his American opera debut in 1972 as Alfredo at the Lyric Opera of Chicago and his Metropolitan Opera debut as Arrigo in Verdi's *I Vespri Siciliani*, returning there in 1976 for Turiddu in *Cavalleria Rusticana* and Lensky in *Eugene Onegin*, and in 1985 in Mussorgsky's *Khovanshchina*, a production which was broadcast nationwide. He was also heard as guest soloist with the National Symphony in Penderecki's *Mass*, with Mstislav Rostropovich conducting. Other concert engagements include performances with the orchestras of Berlin, Vienna, Paris, Munich, Hamburg, Rome and Torino, and he appears regularly at the major European festivals. A distinguished recording artist, Ochman's discography includes *Jenůfa*, Penderecki's *Dies Irae* and *Te Deum*, Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, Orff's *Catulli Carmina*, Strauss' *Salome*, Dvořák's *Rusalka* and *Stabat Mater*, and Mozart's *Idomeneo*, *Mass in C Minor* and *Requiem*, under such conductors as Herbert von Karajan, Karl Böhm, Eugen Jochum, Claudio Abbado and Václav Neumann. Ochman recently recorded the role of Count Bezukhov in Prokofiev's *War and Peace*, along with a disc of Slavic opera arias. The tenor has also appeared in feature film productions of *Eugene Onegin*, *Don Giovanni* and *Salome*.

Baritone **Timothy Noble** returns to San Francisco Opera to sing the role of Count Tomsky in *The Queen of Spades*. He was most recently seen here last fall in the title role of *Macbeth*. In 1985 he appeared as the Duke of Albany in *Lear*, a role he also performed in his 1981 Company debut.

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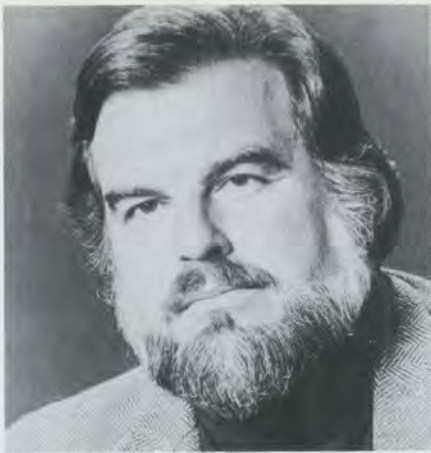
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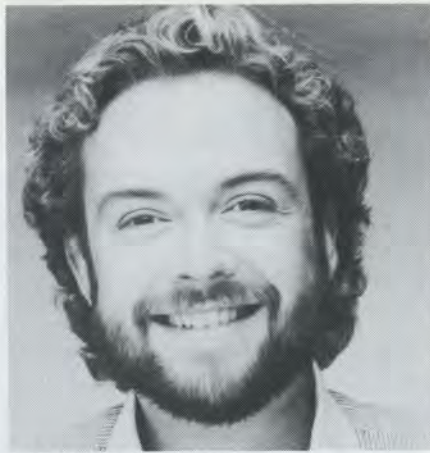




TIMOTHY NOBLE

Earlier that year, he made his Spring Opera Theater debut as Agamemnon in John Eaton's *The Cry of Clytaemnestra*, the role he created for the work's world premiere at Indiana University and repeated in the New York premiere with the Brooklyn Philharmonia. Noble returned to San Francisco Opera for the 1983 Summer Season, in which he sang Schauvard in *La Bohème* and Moralès in *Carmen*, while in 1984 he appeared as Shaklovity in the acclaimed Fall Season production of *Khovanshchina*. Other engagements have included the title role of *Falstaff* with the opera companies of Memphis, Syracuse, and Indianapolis, the title role of *Rigoletto* at the Colorado Springs Opera Festival, and the role of Tonio in *Pagliacci* at the Lake George Opera Festival. In 1982, he made his Houston Grand Opera debut as Ping in *Turandot*, and has since returned as Germont in *La Traviata*, Marcello in *La Bohème*, Leporello in *Don Giovanni*, Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly*, and the title role of *The Barber of Seville*. He sang Miller in *Luisa Miller* at the Grand Théâtre de Nancy in France for his European debut in the spring of 1982, and returned to Europe the following year for appearances with the Frankfurt Opera, the Vienna Festival and the Opéra-Comique in Paris. Recent engagements include the title role of *Falstaff* for Netherlands Opera, the title role of *Simon Boccanegra* for the Glyndebourne Festival, a return to Houston for *Falstaff* and *Turandot*, *Rigoletto* with Mobile and Tulsa Opera, in addition to a concert version of *Simon Boccanegra* in London's Albert Hall, and performances of Orff's *Carmina Burana* with Leonard Slatkin and the St. Louis Symphony. In February of 1988 he will make his Metropolitan Opera debut as Shaklovity in *Khovanshchina*, and his Italian debut in *Stiffelio* at Teatro La Fenice in Venice.

Baritone **J. Patrick Raftery** returns to San Francisco Opera to sing his first Prince Yeletsky in *The Queen of Spades*, having made his Company debut during the 1983 Summer Season as Marcello in *La Bohème*. He made his professional debut with the



J. PATRICK RAFTERY

San Diego Opera in Verdi's *I Lombardi* in 1979, then appeared as Figaro in *The Barber of Seville* at the Washington Opera in 1980. At the Chicago Lyric Opera, he bowed in *Boris Godunov* in 1980 and returned there for several productions through the 1986-87 season. The baritone's European debut took place in 1981 in Paris as Zurga in Bizet's *Les Pêcheurs de Perles* and he appeared at the Hamburg State Opera in 1983 in J.C. Bach's *Amadis de Gaule*. His Glyndebourne debut as Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte* in 1984 was followed by his Covent Garden debut in 1985 as Count Almaviva in *Le Nozze di Figaro*. Raftery made his Italian stage debut in 1986 at the Pesaro Rossini Festival in *Il Turco in Italia*, and appeared in Brussels in Mozart's *La Finta Giardiniera*, a production which was also seen in Salzburg and Vienna. He sang his first Onegin in Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* at the Washington Opera, where he also sang his first Escamillo in *Carmen*. Raftery has sung regularly at San Diego in works including Verdi's *Un Giorno di Regno* and *Il Corsaro*, Chabrier's *Gwendoline*, *Faust*, *Barbiere*, and also his first Germont in *La Traviata* and Figaro in *Le Nozze di Figaro*. Future engagements include Germont in *La Traviata* in Hamburg, as well as three roles new to his repertoire: Posa in *Don Carlos* in Hamburg, Ford in *Falstaff* in Nice, and Dr. Malatesta in *Don Pasquale* in Bonn. Raftery will make his Metropolitan Opera debut in 1988 in *Lucia di Lammermoor*. Also known for his appearances with orchestras, the baritone has sung with the Boston Symphony under Seiji Ozawa in *Boris Godunov*, and with the Cleveland Orchestra under Kurt Masur in the Brahms Requiem.

**Dennis Petersen** is the First Jew in *Salome*, Spoletta in *Tosca*, Tybalt in *Roméo et Juliette* and Chekalinsky in *The Queen of Spades*. The Iowa-born tenor made his Company debut during the 1985 Season, appearing in five productions—*Adriana Lecouvreur*, *Werther*, *Falstaff*, *Un Ballo in Maschera* and *Der Rosenkavalier*—and returned in the summer of 1986 for *Il Trovatore*. Last fall Petersen appeared as Don Basilio in *Le*



DENNIS PETERSEN

*Nozze di Figaro* and Kunz Vogelgesang in *Die Meistersinger*. In January, Petersen made his debut with the Vancouver Opera in *Le Nozze di Figaro* and in March sang the title role in Offenbach's *Christopher Columbus* in the work's New York premiere with the Opera Ensemble of New York. This past spring saw several debuts including Petersen's first Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte* with the Cedar Rapids Symphony in April; Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with the Fort Wayne Symphony and the Charlotte Symphony Orchestra; and Jacquino in *Fidelio* with the New Jersey Symphony and the Baltimore Symphony. This past summer, Petersen was an artist-in-residence at the University of Iowa, where he performed Alfredo in *La Traviata*. Later this year he will sing the Fox in *The Cunning Little Vixen* with Vancouver Opera.

Bass-baritone **Philip Skinner** will portray four roles this season: the First Nazarene in *Salome*, Baron Doupohl 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 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

continued on p.48



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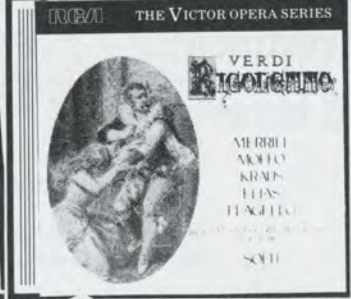
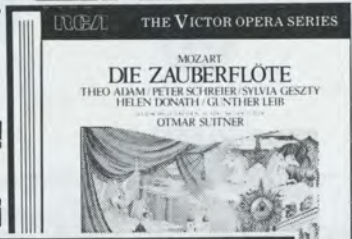
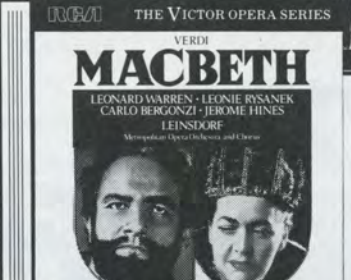
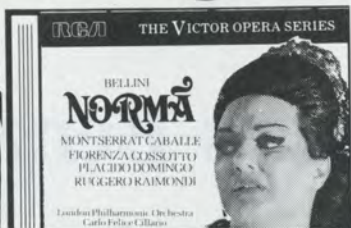


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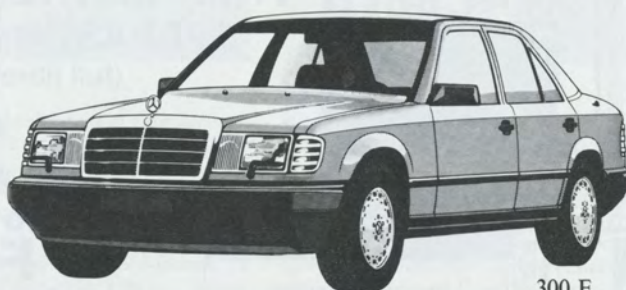




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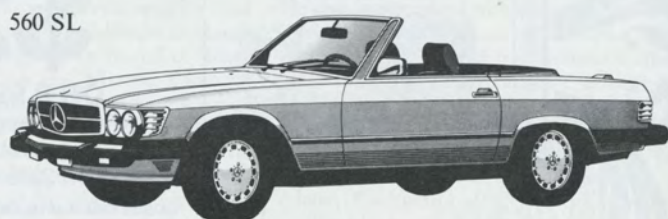
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Opera in three acts by PETER ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY

Text by MODEST TCHAIKOVSKY

Based on a story by ALEXANDER SERGEYEVICH PUSHKIN

# Пиковая Дама The Queen of Spades

(in Russian)

*Conductor*  
Emil Tchakarov\*

*Stage Director*  
Basil Coleman

*Designer*  
Robert O'Hearn

*Lighting Designer*  
Thomas J. Munn

*Lighting Supervisor*  
Joan Arhelger

*Sound Designer*  
Roger Gans

*Chorus Director*  
Ian Robertson

*Choreographer*  
Vassili Sulich

*Musical Preparation*  
Susanna Lemberskaya  
Robert Morrison  
Christopher Larkin  
Jonathan Khuner

*Prompter*  
Jonathan Khuner

*Assistant Stage Director*  
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Jerry Sherk

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Louis Magor, Director

San Francisco Girls Chorus  
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First performance:  
St. Petersburg, December 19, 1890

First San Francisco Opera performance:  
October 1, 1963

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 23 AT 8:00

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 27 AT 8:00

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 1 AT 8:00

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5 AT 8:00

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9 AT 7:30

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13 AT 2:00

## CAST

<i>Chekalinsky</i>	Dennis Petersen
<i>Surin</i>	Philip Skinner
<i>Gherman</i>	Wieslaw Ochman
<i>Count Tomsky</i>	Timothy Noble
<i>Prince Yeletsky</i>	J. Patrick Raftery
<i>Lisa</i>	Stefka Evstatieva
<i>The Countess</i>	Régine Crespin
<i>Paulina</i>	Kathryn Cowdrick
<i>Governess</i>	Donna Petersen
<i>Masha</i>	Sara Ganz
<i>Master of Ceremonies</i>	Douglas Wunsch
<i>Chloe</i>	Susan Patterson
<i>Daphnis</i>	} <i>Performers</i> <i>in the</i> <i>pastorale</i>
<i>Plutus</i>	
<i>Cupid</i>	
<i>Hymen</i>	
<i>Chaplitsky</i>	Michael Rees Davis
<i>Narumoff</i>	Monte Pederson

*Citizens, officers of the Imperial Army, Lisa's friends, attendants of the Countess*  
*Corps de ballet*

\*San Francisco Opera debut

TIME AND PLACE: Late 18th century; St. Petersburg

*ACT I* *Scene 1:* The summer garden  
*Scene 2:* Lisa's room

INTERMISSION

*ACT II* *Scene 1:* An aristocrat's ballroom  
*Scene 2:* The boudoir of the Countess

INTERMISSION

*ACT III* *Scene 1:* Gherman's quarters in the barracks  
*Scene 2:* The canal by the Winter Palace  
*Scene 3:* A private gambling salon

Supertitles by Christopher Bergen, San Francisco Opera.

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

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

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



# The Queen of Spades/Synopsis

## ACT I

**Scene 1**—The summer garden in St. Petersburg gradually fills with nursemaids and children who are enjoying the first warm days of spring. Gherman, a poor, young officer whose fascination with the gambling table is noted by his friends Surin and Chekalinsky, admits to Count Tomsky that he is in love with a beautiful young aristocrat but because of his humble origin he does not dare to approach her, even to ask her name. A group of promenading citizens stroll through the garden marveling at the welcome break from the dreary winter weather. Prince Yeletsky appears and is congratulated on his engagement to Lisa, granddaughter of the Countess. The two women then enter the garden and are startled at seeing the mysterious stranger whom they have noticed lingering by their house. Together, Lisa and her grandmother express their fear of Gherman's wild gaze while he broods over the Countess' portentous stare. Tomsky and the Prince at the same moment reflect on the startling effect this meeting has had on Gherman and Lisa. As Lisa and the Prince walk away arm-in-arm, Gherman mutters that unseen disaster will soon destroy the Prince's happiness.

Tomsky tells the story of the Countess, who had been a famous beauty, "the Venus of Moscow," at the court of Louis XV at Versailles and, infatuated with gambling, had lost her fortune. Taking advantage of her desperate circumstances, the Count St. Germain, thought by some to be the devil in disguise, had offered her, in exchange for one rendezvous, the secret of three winning cards. She later passed the secret to her husband and to a young lover. The ghost of St. Germain appeared to the Countess to warn her that she would die when approached a third time by "one burning with passion" who would force her to tell her secret.

Tomsky and the promenading citizens leave, and Gherman, alone in the gathering storm, gives way to anger and jealousy. Shouting to the elements, he repeats the devil's warning and swears he will have Lisa.

**Scene 2**—Lisa's room, in the evening. The melancholy Lisa does not respond to the efforts of her friends, including Paulina, to cheer her. The governess bustles in to scold the girls and to order them to bed. Lisa dismisses her maid Masha and, left alone, addresses to the night her love for the mysterious stranger. She is startled by Gherman, who appears on her balcony. He implores her to let him speak and passionately declares his love. Hearing a knock at the door, Lisa quickly hides Gherman as the Countess enters. She reprimands Lisa for not being asleep, then leaves the room. Gherman renews his entreaties to Lisa and threatens suicide if she will not return his love. Overcome by her emotions, she falls into his embrace.

## ACT II

**Scene 1**—At an engagement ball for Lisa and Prince Yeletsky, Gherman receives a note from Lisa asking him to meet her. Count Tomsky, Surin and Chekalinsky observe Gherman's obsessed behavior and decide to bait him. Fearing that he has heard the ghostly voice of fate, Gherman distractedly rushes away. As the ballroom is prepared for an entertainment, Yeletsky expresses his love to Lisa but also his realization that she will never return his feelings. Although he is tormented by

her remoteness, he vows to be her friend. As the guests again mingle, several officers, led by Surin and Chekalinsky, taunt Gherman with his obsession for the secret of the three cards. The Majordomo announces an intermezzo on the theme of Daphnis and Chloe entitled "The Faithful Shepherdess." Afterwards, Lisa slips Gherman a key to a secret door that leads through the Countess' apartment to her own room. Exulting over the fact that he will at last be able to confront the Countess for the secret of the three cards, he hurries away. The Majordomo announces the imminent arrival of the Tsarina.

**Scene 2**—In the Countess' dark boudoir, Gherman stares transfixed at a large portrait of the Countess as "the Venus of Moscow." He conceals himself when he hears the Countess returning from the ball with her entourage. After she is prepared for bed, her servants are dismissed. She gradually drifts off to sleep while reminiscing about her glamorous past. Gherman reappears and stands before her. She wakes with a start and stares at him in terror. He implores her to reveal her secret. She remains silent and, goaded to fury, he commands her at pistol point to speak. When she continues to be soundless, he gradually realizes with horror that she is dead. Lisa suddenly enters as Gherman cries out that the secret of the three cards is lost forever. Lisa reviles him, adding that it was not love but desire for the Countess' secret that brought him to her house. Sending him away, the girl falls weeping beside the body of her grandmother.

## ACT III

**Scene 1**—Gherman's quarters in the barracks. He reads a letter from Lisa in which she writes that she is certain he did not intentionally kill the Countess, begging forgiveness and asking that he meet her by the river canal at midnight. The hapless Gherman bemoans his misery and tries to sleep. In a half-dream he sees the funeral of the Countess. Suddenly the ghost of the Countess appears and identifies to Gherman the three cards: Three! Seven! Ace!

**Scene 2**—Lisa anxiously waits for Gherman on the river embankment. At last he appears clutching three cards and tells her about the visit by the ghost of the Countess. He raves that nothing matters now—he knows the three cards and destiny will have its way. Lisa tries to calm him but, completely out of his mind, Gherman no longer recognizes her. Roughly pushing her aside, he runs away like a madman. Crazed by anguish, Lisa hurls herself into the river and drowns.

**Scene 3**—A private gambling salon. Guests and officers are drinking and playing faro. Yeletsky tells Tomsky that his engagement has been broken off and that he is "unlucky in love but lucky at cards." Tomsky then sings a bawdy drinking song which leads into a drunken revel. Gherman enters and, betting on the three and seven, twice wins. The other gamblers withdraw from the game, leaving only Prince Yeletsky to challenge the winner. Gherman stakes all he has won on one card and, instead of an ace, turns up the queen of spades. The ghost of the Countess appears to remind Gherman of his date with destiny. Mad with fear and rage, he takes his own life.



# The Queen of Spades

Photos taken in rehearsal by Marty Sohl



*Régine Crespin*





*Régine Crespin*



*Stefka Evgstatieva, Kathryn Cowdrick*

*(below) Stefka Evgstatieva*



*J. Patrick Raftery*

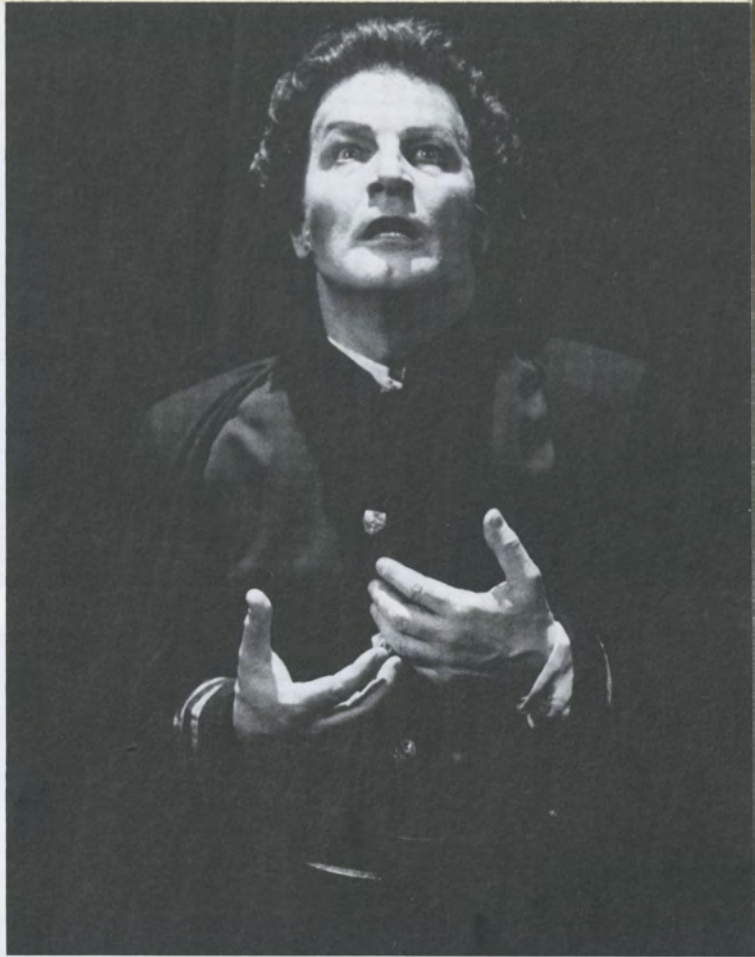
*Wieslaw Ochman, Stefka Evgstatieva*







*Timothy Noble, Wieslaw Ochman*

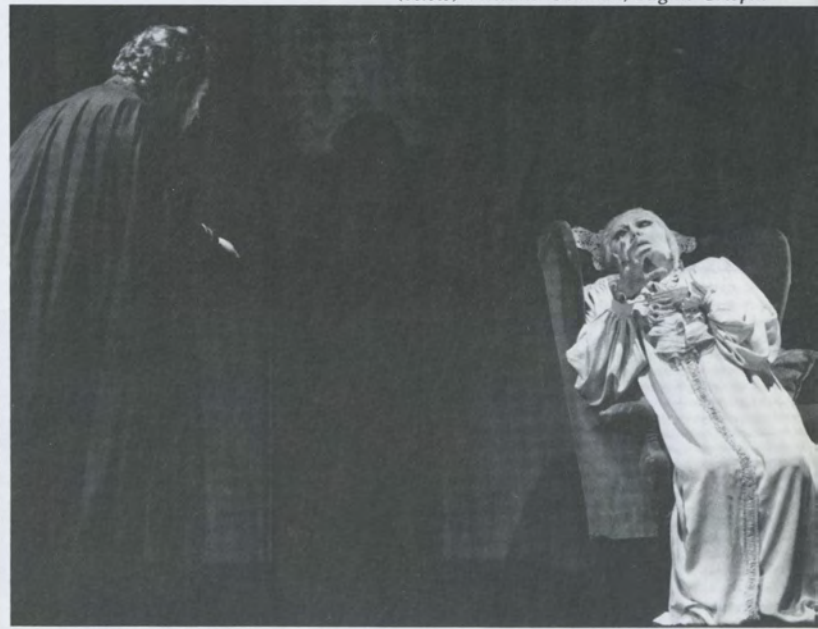


*Wieslaw Ochman*



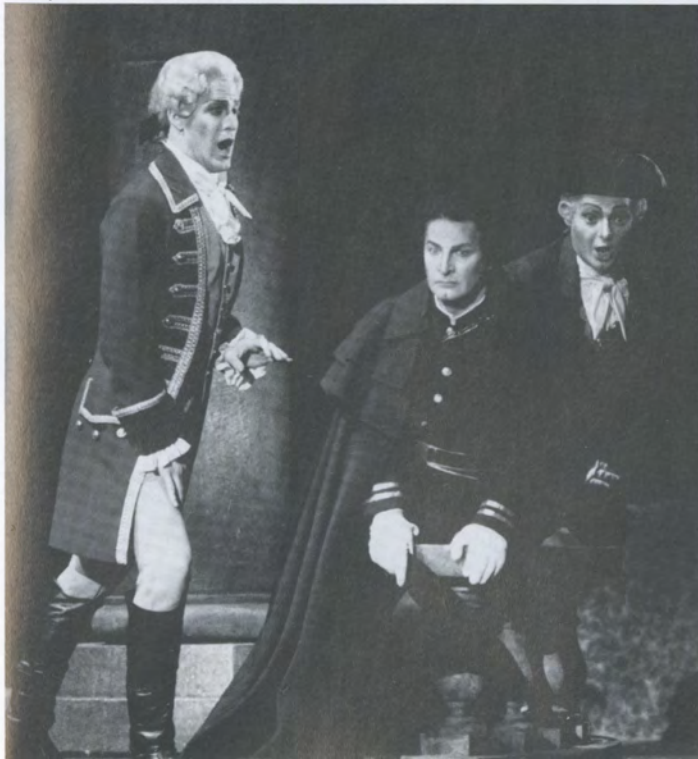
*Donna Petersen*

*(below) Wieslaw Ochman, Régine Crespin*



*(below) Régine Crespin*

*Philip Skinner, Wieslaw Ochman, Dennis Petersen*







*Susan Patterson, Kathryn Cowdrick, Shan-Yee Poon, Corps de Ballet*



*Mark Delavan*



*Shan-Yee Poon*



*Susan Patterson*



*Antonio Lopez*

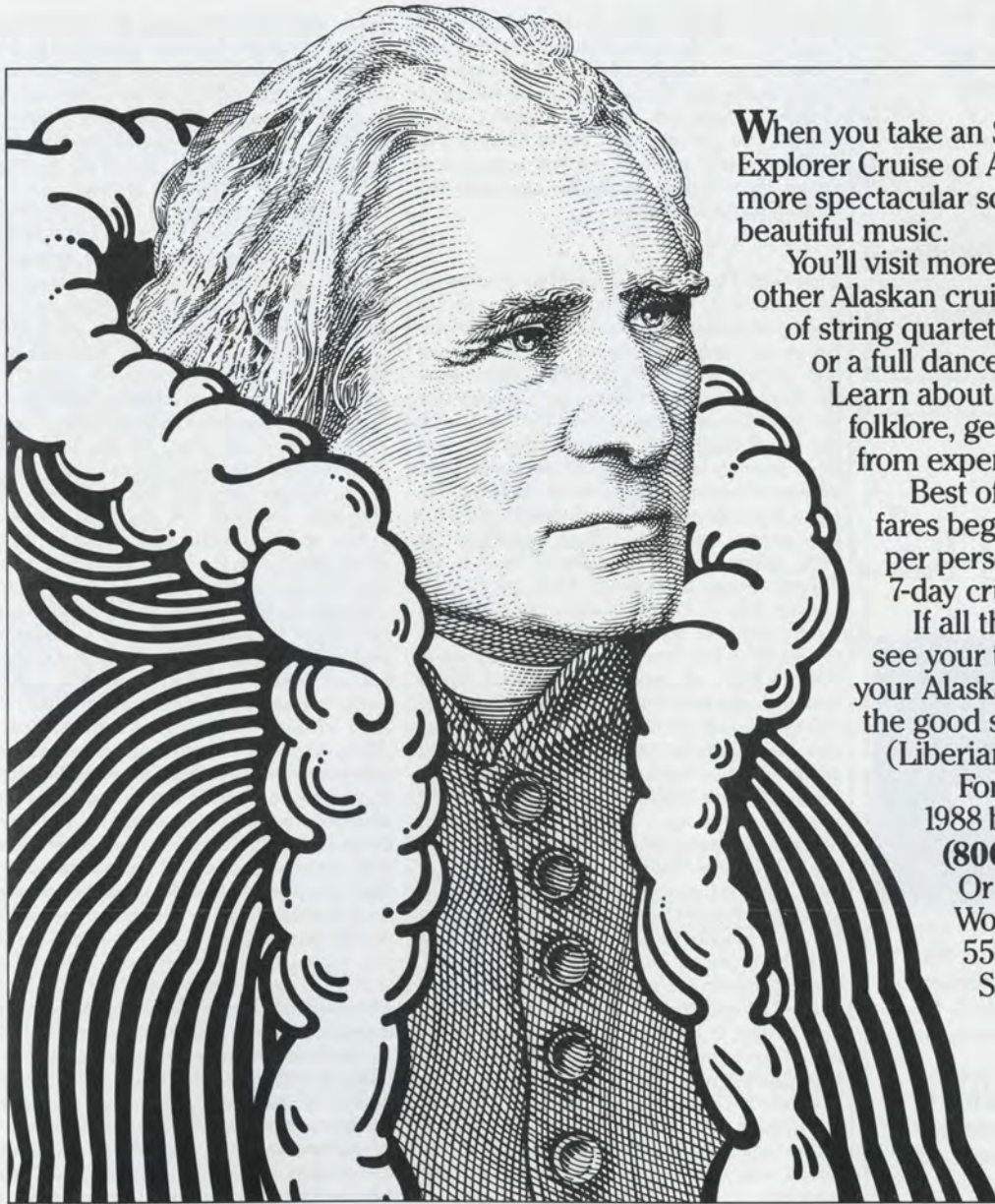


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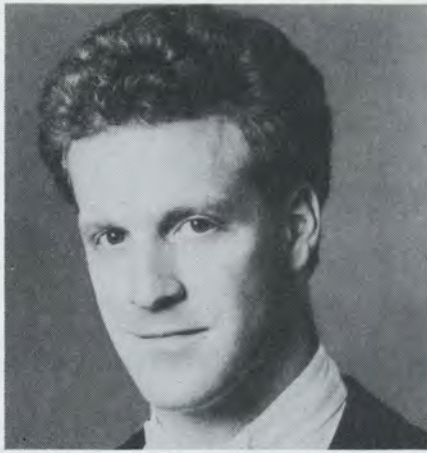


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PHILIP SKINNER

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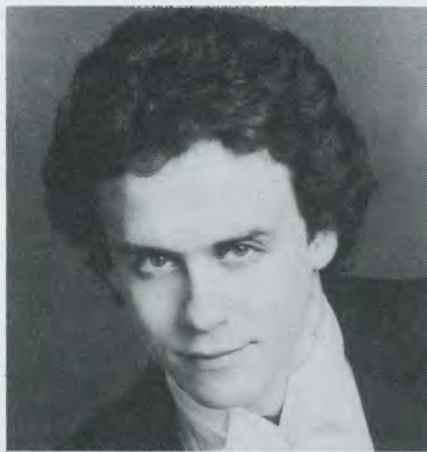
University, where he performed in several productions. His concert credits include Haydn's *The Seasons*, *The Creation* and *Lord Nelson Mass*. In July of this year Skinner appeared as the Colonel in the San Francisco Opera Center Showcase performances of *Le Plumet du Colonel*. His recent concert appearances include Mozart's Requiem at the Midsummer 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.



DOUGLAS WUNSCH

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*.

Tenor **Douglas Wunsch** makes his San Francisco Opera debut as a Priest in *The Magic Flute*, and also appears as the Master of Ceremonies in *The Queen of Spades* and as Alfredo in the family performances of *La Traviata*. Wunsch participated in the 1985 and '86 Merola Opera Programs and also toured both years with Western Opera Theater, singing Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni* in 1985 and Rodolfo in *La Bohème* in 1986. He also appeared in the 1986 Opera Center Showcase series as Robert in *There and Back*, and Charles in *The Long Christmas Dinner*, both by Hindemith, and as Albazar in Rossini's *The Turk in Italy*. A 1987 Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, he has performed with the San Francisco Opera Center Singers as Alfredo in *La Traviata* in Palm Springs, Honolulu, and at Stern Grove under Kurt Herbert Adler. Wunsch is a graduate of Northwestern University where he sang several roles including Anatol in Barber's *Vanessa* and Shemeikka in Merikanto's *Juha*. He has also sung Luigi in *Il Tabarro* with the Chamber Opera of Chicago and performed with the Northwestern Symphony Orchestra, the Spokane Symphony and with the San Francisco Symphony Pops.



MICHAEL REES DAVIS

Tenor **Michael Rees Davis** makes his San Francisco Opera debut as the First Prisoner in *Fidelio*, Giuseppe in both the regular season and family performances of *La Traviata*, Nathanael in *The Tales of Hoffmann*, and Chaplitsky in *The Queen of Spades*. 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





MONTE PEDERSON

Bass-baritone **Monte Pederson** sings four roles this fall: A Cappadocian in *Salome*, Cesare Angelotti in *Tosca*, the Second Prisoner in *Fidelio* and Narumoff in *The Queen of Spades*. He has appeared in 11 roles with San Francisco Opera since his 1985 debut, most recently during the 1986 Fall Season as Antonio in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, the Mayor in *Jenůfa*, the Night Watchman in *Die Meistersinger*, the Sergeant in *La Bohème* and the Hotelier in *Manon*. He participated in the 1983 and '84 Merola Opera Programs, during which he appeared in *Falstaff* and *The Tales of Hoffmann*, and went on to portray the Bonze in *Madame Butterfly* and Don Magnifico in *La Cenerentola* in Western Opera Theater's touring productions. A 1985-86 Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, Pederson was seen as Don Geronio in the 1986 Showcase production of Rossini's *The Turk in Italy*. His many other California credits include the title role of Wagner's *Der Fliegende Holländer* for West Bay Opera, leading roles in *La Cenerentola*, *Imeneo* and *Maria Stuarda* with Pocket Opera, and performances of *Lucrezia Borgia* and *La Vestale* with the Concert Opera Association of San Francisco. Audiences at last summer's Carmel Bach Festival saw him as Bartolo in *Le Nozze di Figaro*. Pederson's 1987 engagements include the Fifth Jew in *Salome* with the Las Vegas Opera, the Bonze in Vancouver Opera's production of *Madame Butterfly* and Fafner in *Siegfried* at Artpark. Upcoming engagements include *Die Fledermaus* in Vancouver, and his first Schwabacher Debut Recital in December. Among his most recent awards are the first prize in the 1987 Baltimore Competition and a 1987 Richard Tucker Music Foundation Study Grant.

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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 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.

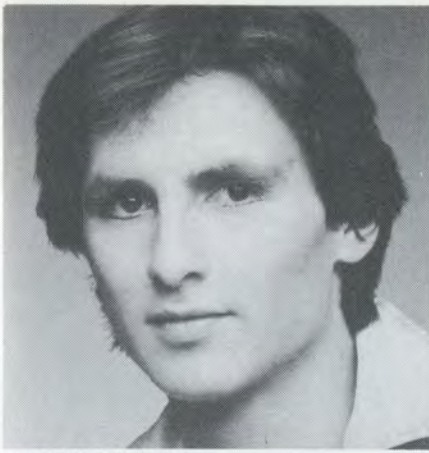


SHAN-YEE POON

**Shan-Yee Poon** makes her San Francisco Opera debut dancing the role of Cupid in *The Queen of Spades*. Born in Kobe, Japan of Chinese parents, she began studying ballet in Hong Kong when she was six years old. In 1974 she auditioned for and was accepted by the prestigious Royal Ballet School in London, where she spent six years in intensive study. After her graduation in 1980, she was accepted as soloist with the Musiktheater im Revier, the state theater in Gelsenkirchen, West Germany. She appeared there for four years in a repertoire that ranged from classical to post-modern, and made her solo debut in the title role of Schubert's *Die Winterreise*. Other solo performances include appearances in *Pulcinella*, *Cinderella*, Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder*, Strauss' *Salome*, Blake's *Lieder der Unschuld und Erfahrung*, and Satie's *Parade*. Since moving to the Bay Area in 1984, Miss Poon has appeared as soloist with Theatre Ballet of San Francisco, the Peninsula Ballet, and the Ruth Langridge Dance Company. She is founder of her own ballet school, the San Francisco Chinese-American Ballet Arts, and recently joined Pear Garden in the West, the San Francisco Chinese opera and performing arts organization.

After making his San Francisco Opera debut as a solo dancer in *Aida* during the 1984 Summer Season, **Antonio Lopez** returns to dance the role of Hymen in *The Queen of Spades*. Born in Albuquerque, New Mexico, he joined the San Francisco Ballet School in 1975, and was named a company apprentice in 1977. Since becoming a company member in 1979, he created the lead role of the protagonist in Michael Smuin's *Song for Dead Warriors*, and repeated his performance in Smuin's award-winning television special, "Dance in America—*Song for Dead Warriors*," in 1984. As a member of the San Francisco Ballet, Lopez has trained under some of the great ballet masters of our time, including Erik Bruhn, Tatiana Grantzeva and the late Terry Westmoreland. He has danced lead roles in most of the Lew Christensen repertoire, including the *Nutcracker*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Cinderella*





ANTONIO LOPEZ

and *Airs de Ballet*, while creating roles in many of the works of Smuin and San Francisco Ballet resident choreographers Val Caniparoli, Robert Gladstein and Kirk Peterson. Other lead roles in his repertoire include the First and Second Movement in Jerome Robbins's *In the Night*, Adam in Arthur Mitchell's *Manifestations*, and the Black Couple in Jiri Kylian's *Forgotten Land*.

Conductor **Emil Tchakarov** makes his San Francisco Opera debut leading *The Queen of Spades*. He made his first public appearance conducting a children's opera at the age of 10 and five years later founded a student orchestra at the Sofia Preparatory Music School and began formal conducting studies at the Sofia Conservatory. In 1966 he became director of the Bulgarian Youth Chamber Orchestra, and his work with that group led to his appointment as conductor of the Bulgarian Television Chamber Orchestra. In 1971 he won the Herbert von Karajan Conducting Competition, becoming a pupil and later assistant to the renowned maestro. He studied with Leonard Bernstein and Eugen Jochum at the Tanglewood Music Center in 1973, and was invited by Seiji Ozawa to the San Francisco Symphony, where he briefly served as assistant conductor. From 1974 to 1977 he served as chief conductor of the Plovdiv Philharmonic and shortly thereafter founded the Sofia Festival Sinfonietta, with which he made several recordings. In January of 1979 he made his debut at Covent Garden with Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* and bowed at the Metropolitan Opera during the 1979-80 season with the same work. He returned to the Met three years later to conduct *The Barber of Seville* and led *Tannhäuser* at the Maggio Musicale in Florence in 1983. During a 1985 tour of France, Tchakarov led the National Opera of Sofia in concert performances of *Khovanshchina* at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, and the following year was on the podium for *Boris Godunov* at the Teatro de la Zarzuela in Madrid. During the 1986-87 season he conducted *Carmen* in Naples and *La*


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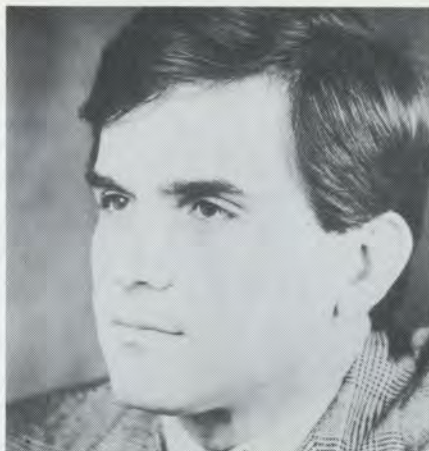
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EMIL TCHAKAROV

*Bohème* in Venice. He is currently in the process of recording a number of major Russian operas to be released in this country by CBS Masterworks, including *Boris Godunov*, *Khovanshchina*, *Prince Igor* and, in the near future, *The Queen of Spades*. Most recently he inaugurated Houston's new Wortham Theater Center with the Houston Grand Opera production of *Aida*, which was televised nationally on PBS. He was personally invited by Herbert von Karajan to serve as guest conductor of the Berlin Philharmonic at the 1988 Salzburg Easter Festival and during the 1988-89 season will make his debut at the Deutsche Oper Berlin with a production of *La Fanciulla del West* starring Plácido Domingo. His busy concert schedule has included performances with the Berlin, Leningrad, Czech, Dresden and Israel Philharmonics, the Zurich Tonhalle, Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, the national orchestras of Madrid and Mexico, and Orchestre National de Radio France. In North America he has conducted the Boston, Cincinnati, Denver, Milwaukee, Montreal, Pittsburgh, Toronto and National Symphonies, as well as the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Minnesota Orchestra.

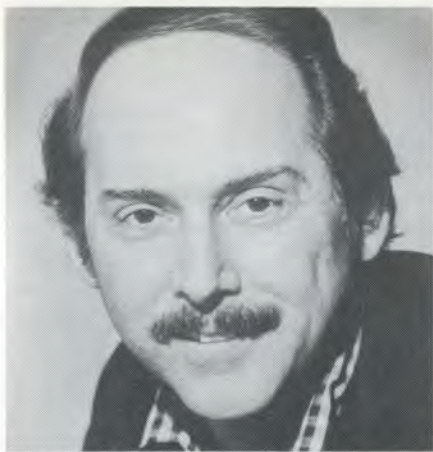
British director Basil Coleman returns to San Francisco Opera to direct *The Queen of Spades*. He made his American debut with San Francisco Opera in 1961, directing the United States premiere of Benjamin Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and in 1985 returned to direct another Britten production, *Billy Budd*. Originally an actor, Coleman trained at London's Central School of Speech and Drama and the Old Vic Theatre School. His first directing assignment was as an assistant to Tyrone Guthrie on his production of Britten's realization of *The Beggar's Opera* at Cambridge in 1948. He has since directed the world premiere productions of four Britten works: *Let's Make an Opera* for the Aldeburgh Festival (1949); *Billy Budd* conducted by the composer (1951) and *Gloriana* for the Queen's Coronation Gala Performance, both at Royal Opera,



BASIL COLEMAN

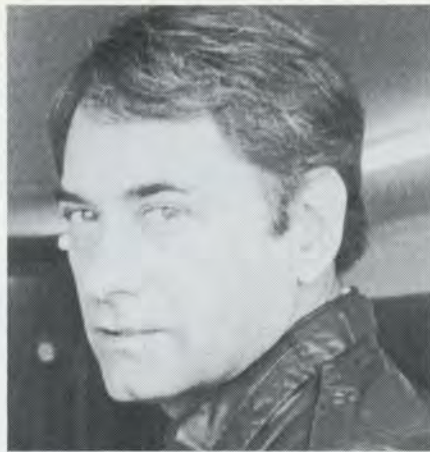
Covent Garden; and *The Turn of the Screw* for the English Opera Group at the Teatro La Fenice in Venice (1954). In 1952 he began a series of productions for Sadler's Wells Opera (later the English National Opera) including *Samson et Dalila*, *Luisa Miller*, *Don Pasquale*, *The Pearl Fishers*, *Fidelio*, *Peter Grimes* and *A Village Romeo and Juliet*. Since 1966 he has directed numerous television productions of operas, mostly for the BBC, including *Eugene Onegin*, *La Vida Breve*, *Otello*, *Falstaff*, *Don Pasquale*, *Billy Budd* (for which he received a BAFTA award), *Rigoletto*, *Faust*, *La Bohème*, and *The Marriage of Figaro*. He has directed many legitimate theater productions around the world and has numerous television drama credits to his name, including one in a series of Shakespeare plays and a 10-part adaptation of *Anna Karenina* that was televised in this country. Recent operatic projects include *The Flying Dutchman* for Opera North, *King Lear* and *The Three Sisters* for the Turkish National Theater, Ankara, *The Importance of Being Earnest* in Helsinki, *The Turn of the Screw*, *Owen Wingrave*, *The Rape of Lucretia*, Handel's *Rodelinda*, and *Albert Herring* for the Aldeburgh Festival, and *Così fan tutte* for The Britten-Pears School for Advanced Musical Studies at the Snape Maltings. He has just completed four hour-long documentary films for television about the Britten-Pears School, which will soon be shown in England.





ROBERT O'HEARN

The designs of **Robert O'Hearn** return to San Francisco in this year's revival of *The Queen of Spades*. He created his first designs for the Metropolitan Opera in 1960 for *L'Elisir d'Amore*, and his subsequent credits with that company include *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (1962), *Aida* ('63), *Samson et Dalila* ('64), *The Queen of Spades* ('65), *Die Frau ohne Schatten* ('66), *Hansel und Gretel* ('67), *Der Rosenkavalier* ('69), *Parsifal* ('71), *Le Nozze di Figaro* ('75), and *Porgy and Bess* (1985). An Indiana native, O'Hearn made his theater debut in 1948, during his four-year tenure as designer with the Brattle Theatre in Cambridge, Massachusetts. His first operatic project was to design the sets for the 1953 Boston University production of *The Rake's Progress*. Since then he has created designs for productions of *Otello* in Boston and Hamburg (1967); Rimsky-Korsakov's *The Legend of the Invisible City of Kitezh* for the Boston Opera; *Porgy and Bess* at the Vienna Volksoper (1965) and Bregenz (1971); *La Traviata* in Santa Fe (1968) and Dallas (1984); and *The Girl of the Golden West* for Houston Opera and the Vienna Staatsoper (1976). His credits at the Central City Opera, where he first worked in 1972, include *Falstaff*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Gianni Schicchi*, *The Barber of Seville* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. His work has been seen frequently with Miami Opera and his New York City Opera credits include *The Girl of the Golden West* (1977), *Andrea Chénier* (1978), and *The Pearl Fishers* (1980). O'Hearn's work has also been seen at American Ballet Theatre, Ballet West, the New York City Ballet, the Seattle Ballet and the Los Angeles Ballet. Many San Franciscans are also familiar with his sets and costumes for Lew Christensen's production of the *Nutcracker* for San Francisco Ballet.



VASSILI SULICH

After creating the dances for last fall's production of *Eugene Onegin*, choreographer **Vassili Sulich** returns to San Francisco Opera for *The Queen of Spades*, the opera with which he undertook his first Company assignment during the 1982 Fall Season. He has also worked on *La Gioconda* and *Boris Godunov* in 1983, and *Adriana Lecouvreur* in 1984. Born in Yugoslavia, he began his career with the National Ballet of Zagreb. He appeared as principal dancer with a number of European companies, among them Janine Charrat's Ballet de France, Miskovich's Ballets des Etoiles de Paris and Roland Petit's Ballets de Paris, with whom he danced the role of Christian in *Cyrano de Bergerac*. In his many film and television appearances, Sulich has performed with such stars as Rosalind Russell and Geraldine Chaplin. He was selected to choreograph the music of French composer Maurice Thiriet in Jean Cocteau's *Oedipus Rex* at the Lyons Opera. For the Geneva Opera, he has devised dances for Mozart's *Idomeneo*, Gounod's *Faust* and Saint-Saëns's *Samson et Dalila*, and choreographed the latter for the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires as well. Currently principal choreographer and artistic director of the Nevada Dance Theatre, which he founded in 1972, Sulich has created more than 50 new ballets for that company. In 1981, he received the Governor's Award for outstanding individual artistic achievement in the state of Nevada. In 1984 he staged the dramatic ballet *Mantodea* for the Royal New Zealand Ballet, Ballet Eddy Tousseint in Montreal, for Contemporary City Ballet in Hong Kong and for several companies in the U.S. Last year, his Nevada Dance Theatre gave the premiere of his new ballet, *Walls in the Horizons*, set to Bartók's Concerto for Orchestra. For Nevada Dance Theatre's current season, Sulich has created a new, full-length *Cinderella*, set to the music of Glazunov. Earlier this year the Board of Regents of the University of Nevada bestowed him with the Distinguished Nevadan Award.



THOMAS J. MUNN

**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.



# The Music in Pushkin

By WILLIAM HUCK



Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin, 1799-1837. The 150th anniversary of his death is the cause of observances and celebrations, particularly in the Soviet Union and other Slavic countries.

Two months after the first performance of the first Russian opera, Mikhail Glinka's *A Life for the Tsar*, there came a black day. On February 8, 1837, the 38-year old Alexander Pushkin was killed in a duel. The tragedy robbed Russian literature of its supreme talent.

Alexander Pushkin remains to this day the most beloved writer in the history of Russian letters. His successors have all considered themselves his debtors rather than his heirs. Ivan Turgenev, for example, wrote to a friend a few weeks before his own death, "You know, of course, my veneration for our great poet. I always considered myself his pupil and my greatest literary ambition has been that with time I may be acknowledged as his good pupil."

Leo Tolstoy was no less outspoken in his admiration of Pushkin as "a master of beauty." He described him as "my father." Pushkin's unfinished story beginning, "The guests arrived at the country house" gave the novelist the idea for *Anna Karenina*. It conjured up for him, he wrote, "character and events which grew into something so wonderful and palpable that it turned into a novel."

Fyodor Dostoevsky was 16 years old when Pushkin died and—ever the excessive symbolist—the young writer went into the traditional mourning reserved for members of one's own family. 43 years later, when Dostoevsky spoke at the unveiling of the Pushkin memorial in Moscow, he summed up Russia's debt to Pushkin when he pointed out that the poet made the Russian language move

with the grace and polish of the classical European tradition, while always containing the soul of the Russian people.

There are two classes of great poets. The universalists, like Homer and Dante and Shakespeare, who can move readers in any language, no doubt belong at the highest pinnacle of human achievement. But there is another class, and it includes writers who will always be most beloved, best understood and appreciated only in their own language—poets like Virgil and Petrarch and Wordsworth. And Pushkin, too, for he has never won the reputation outside of Russia that he maintains within it.

To read Pushkin in English, even so graceful an English as Vladimir Nabokov's, is to admire him for the acuteness of his observations, the vivacity of his characters, and the grace of his imagination. But it is to lose his music. Gone are the rhythm of his poetry and the fluidity of his rhymes. Absent is the lyricism that he mastered so completely. Igor Stravinsky called Pushkin's rhymes his "method for transmitting his depth" and it is exactly this entry into Pushkin's deepest thoughts that we are missing when we read him in

---

*William Huck is a San Francisco-based music critic and opera librettist. His writing appears in the San Francisco Sentinel, Opera Quarterly and the Los Angeles Times. He is editor and program annotator for San Francisco Ballet magazine.*



another language.

In order to leap over this problem of what vanishes in translation, perhaps, the best way for the foreigner to glimpse the intrinsic qualities of Pushkin's verse is to look at the effect that working with his poetry has had on the Russian composers who set his poems and stories to music. There is hardly a composer in the nation's history who has not been touched by Pushkin's lyric finesse.

The first, Mikhail Glinka, was Pushkin's contemporary and friend. The composer was five years the poet's junior and the older, more experienced artist had a decisive influence on his colleague in turning him toward Russia and the Russian people for his inspiration. Glinka, like Pushkin, learned first from Western tutors. Pushkin wrote French verses before he did Russian ones, and in the same way Glinka wrote German and Italian music before he composed Russian music. By the time the two artists met, however, Pushkin had already learned to domesticate his genius in the heart and soul of a Russian. Pushkin turned Glinka towards his country and his self. In a graphic instance of this, the poet urged the musician to learn the Russian language from the Moscow women who baked communion bread.

Glinka learned his lesson well, for without abandoning his European heritage, the composer introduced into his music many Russian idioms. When a group of aristocrats, for example, sarcastically referred to *A Life for the Tsar* as "coachman's music," Glinka's response would have delighted his poet-friend: "This is good and even correct, since in my opinion, coachmen are more capable of music than privileged people."

When Pushkin's duel robbed Glinka of his boon companion soon after the premiere of *A Life for the Tsar*, the composer took up in earnest a project he had been mulling over: he began work on an operatic adaptation of Pushkin's early nationalistic poem, *Ruslan and Ludmila*. The composer made out of it his monument not only to the dead poet but to Russia's great store of folklore as well.

The attractive Oriental conventions that make so much of Russian music from Mussorgsky to Rimsky-Korsakov sound Russian are entirely modeled on what Glinka did in *Ruslan*. When, on the other hand, later Russian composers adopt a heroic style, they make it broad and modal

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Fyodor Chaliapin as the Miller in Dargomyzhsky's *Rusalka*, performed at the Maryinski Theater in St. Petersburg in 1916.

partly because that is the way Glinka had imagined such music. *Ruslan and Ludmila* was full of other innovations as well: The descending whole-tone scale used as the leitmotif for the villain Chernomor was used for the first time by any composer in this opera. Glinka's harmonic experiments at a time when Wagner was still writing imitations of Auber brought a coloristic element into Russian music unheard of in the West. These characteristics were all part of Glinka's turn towards the music of the Russian people and in this he was Pushkin's conscientious student.

But Glinka did not profoundly encounter the poet's own text and he cannot thereby tell us much about the musical nature inherent in it. It was not until Alexander Dargomyzhsky began work on *Rusalka* and *The Stone Guest* that a Russian opera composer set large chunks of Pushkin's own words to music. Stylistically, Dargomyzhsky began in the

florid and witty tradition of Rossini and Auber, but through working on Pushkin's verse, the composer slowly became the first master of a much sturdier style. In this transition, Pushkin had a profound influence. Indeed, the development of Dargomyzhsky's music gives us one of the clearest images of what was deepest in Pushkin's poetic achievement.

Like Dargomyzhsky, Pushkin looked at the realistic detail in his scenes and he made them the touchstone of his imagery. This attention to detail pared down Pushkin's verse. Though one of the most mellifluous poets, whose verse could flow naturally through a rhyme scheme even more complicated than Edmund Spenser's in *The Faerie Queene*, Pushkin was always rubbing away the high-toned, poetic diction from his work. Where Spenser made his language more archaic in order to work within his rhyme scheme, Pushkin made it ruthlessly modern and everyday. The Russian poet distilled rather than inflated his images.

In *Rusalka* of 1856, Dargomyzhsky was not working with the fairy-tale that attracted Dvořák. Pushkin's *Rusalka* is a social and psychological drama of common people, whose life is seen in its quotidian aspects. Tchaikovsky in his review of the opera perceptively pinpointed the principle that would continue to guide the composer throughout his life. "It is well known," Tchaikovsky wrote, "that Dargomyzhsky's power is in his remarkably realistic and gracefully singing recitative, which gives this opera the charm of inimitable originality."

Dargomyzhsky's finest experiments in melodic recitative were the result of his encounter with Pushkin's distilled poetry. Work on *The Stone Guest*, which the composer set just as it stood in Pushkin's original blank-verse drama, brought the composer to a full statement of his revolutionary artistic credo. Dargomyzhsky sought, he said, nothing less than "truthfulness in music."

The method that the composer worked out in *The Stone Guest* treated "the note as the direct expression of the word" with the result that the music would become a "melodic recitative, . . . the vocal line being always controlled by the sense and natural inflection of the words, while at the same time retaining the rhythms and curves of melody," as Gerald Abraham summarized it in his study *100 Years of Music*.

Perhaps it would have taken a Wagner to be able to forge this new amalgam of music and words in one lifetime. Though enormously talented, Dargomyzhsky was no Wagner, but the revealing aspect of the Russian composer's new vision is that he saw it under Pushkin's guidance.

The drama that began with Dargomyzhsky unfolded in the hands of Mussorgsky. In 1868, the year *The Stone Guest* was completed, Mussorgsky tried setting Nikolai Gogol's comedy, *The Marriage* according to the method worked out by his older colleague, but the younger man finished only the first act before putting it away in frustration. Judged by the standards of his latter operas, *The Marriage* is more recitative than melody, and perhaps that is why he put it down, but the vividness of its word-setting and the infusion of its characters' personalities into their music are the work of genius. Though there is a flatness to this musical terrain, there is also a depth to the musical portraiture.

For all of its greatness, however, to contrast *The Marriage* to the composer's next major work is to understand the impact of Pushkin on Mussorgsky's musical soul. In Pushkin's Shakespearean verse drama, *Boris Godunov*, the composer found not only his sweeping national theme, but also his vision of a truly Russian music. By adapting Pushkin's words himself, Mussorgsky learned that he could invent a uniquely Russian melodic style.

In his next opera, *Khovanshchina*, Mussorgsky moved away from Pushkin, opening up his melodic style. For all of its grave passages, *Khovanshchina* is a more smiling work than *Boris*; it is more inviting, but in its more conventional appeal, it also lacks something of the remarkable musical power that *Boris Godunov* accomplished. There is in Mussorgsky's earlier work the same compression of gesture that Pushkin controlled so beautifully in his poetry. If Mussorgsky learned something about his own music from Pushkin, he returned the favor, for he transformed Pushkin's loosely connected and dramatically ineffective play into a magnificently stage-worthy opera. Mussorgsky gave Pushkin's work a life extending beyond the printed page.

Musically, Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky was a very different person from Mussorgsky. For one thing, like Pushkin, he



was much more influenced by Western Europe's artistic ideals. From his youth Tchaikovsky had loved the limpid melodies of the Italian bel canto.

When Tchaikovsky turned to Pushkin for *Eugene Onegin* it was as though to a soulmate. *Onegin*, which contained Pushkin's supplest verse and his most worldly observations, was exactly the work by the Russian poet most suited to Tchaikovsky's talent, for *Onegin* is Pushkin's most lyrical effusion. Here we see most clearly the poet's transparency and his joy. Once again, the composer worked directly with the poet's words, but Tchaikovsky's libretto is often verbally much closer to the original than Mussorgsky's had been. As far as possible Tchaikovsky used Pushkin's own stanzas, carving and trimming them where he deemed necessary. There is hardly anything in the Letter Scene, for example, that is not taken intact from the original. Most of the Duel Scene is likewise taken directly; the verses that Pushkin has Lensky write before the duel afford nearly all of his aria of farewell. In the final scene the composer-librettist interleaved Tatiana's bitterly reproachful farewell to Onegin with portions of a letter he had written to her, though Tatiana's opening soliloquy and the concluding lines were Tchaikovsky's own. Many other passages in the opera are also taken directly from Pushkin, but these instances are sufficient to give the idea of what happened to Tchaikovsky when he set Pushkin's words to music. In *Eugene Onegin* the melodies not only flow bountifully but they possess a variety and a sumptuous flow that is unusual even for this composer.

By the time Tchaikovsky returned to Pushkin for *The Queen of Spades*, he had already learned the poet's musical lessons. He now set about absorbing the writer's psychological insight as well. The libretto, drawn from a short story rather than a verse novel, strays farther from the original than *Eugene Onegin* had. Much of it was loosely written by the composer's brother, Modest, though some of it comes from the composer's pen. Tchaikovsky wrote not only Paulina's song in the first act, but Prince Yeletsky's aria, the final chorus of the Pastorale and a considerable part of Lisa's scene by the canal, which itself differs considerably from the denouement given her in Pushkin's original story. Many other passages were lifted directly from other poets; the duet

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between Lisa and Paulina, for example, was taken from Zhukovsky's poem "Evening."

Yet the heart of the story and the heart of the opera are almost pure Pushkin. Indeed, the composer decided to compose *The Queen of Spades* after much hesitation only when he realized the psychological and musical significance of the scene in the bedroom of the old Countess. This scene, representing the struggle of man and his fate, determines both the character of the hero and the subject of the opera. The French song from Grétry, of course, is the composer's



Mikhail Ivanovich Glinka, 1804-1857.

interpolation, but in the tense exchange between the Countess and her frantic visitor, the libretto follows the story almost word for word. In this opera, we hear for the first time in Russian music the tension and the obsessive quality with which Pushkin packed his crystalline prose.

After Tchaikovsky, the next important Russian composer to take up the works of Pushkin was Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov. Musically, he returned to the mixture of Western and Russian styles that Glinka had worked out. Once again, the composer colors his Western harmo-

nies with purely Russian idioms and Oriental scales. The luscious orchestration in which Rimsky-Korsakov clothed his operas was, like his plots and mythical settings, a return to folklore and the fairy tale that Pushkin had urged on Glinka.

Though this was Rimsky-Korsakov's procedure from the beginning, it was not until late in his career that the composer actually turned to Pushkin directly for his inspiration. The first collaboration in 1897 was for the composer a conscious imitation of Dargomyzhsky's principle whereby the vocal melodies came entirely from the words. In *My Musical Life*, Rimsky-Korsakov recounted how he came to compose a set of songs—some of them to Pushkin's texts—and noticed that "I was not composing in the same way as I used to . . . . By the time we removed to the country, I had well-nigh a score of songs ready. Beside this, I sketched in a scene from Pushkin's *Mozart and Salieri* (Mozart's entrance and part of his talk with Salieri), my recitative flowing freely, ahead of everything else . . . . I had the feeling that I was entering upon a new period and that I was gaining mastery of a method which heretofore had been quasi-accidental or exceptional with me."

Most commentators find that *Mozart and Salieri* always seems an experiment tried rather than a style mastered. Though this may be the case, the importance of the opera cannot be overemphasized, because through his work on setting Pushkin's blank verse to music, the composer had found a new melodic style, one that would further open up in Rimsky-Korsakov's last two operas, *The Legend of the Invisible City of Kitezh* and, especially, *The Golden Cockerel*.

This last was a return to Pushkin. Under the impact of this last encounter with Russia's greatest poet, Korsakov produced some of his greatest music, which impresses first for the aptness of its character delineation and second for the pure glory of its themes. In *The Golden Cockerel* the scenic elements, though they remain gorgeous evocations of the Oriental setting, no longer dwarf the human drama. Now the characters are fully integrated into the texture of the whole. To this change Pushkin was surely an accessory.

In the early 1830s, the poet, hampered by state censorship and closely watched by even the Tsar himself, wrote a group of fairy tales in verse. In them, he

adopted the classic ruse for exposing the autocracy that had repressed and tormented him: he ridiculed it under the guise of a fairy tale. Although Rimsky-Korsakov was himself hardly a revolutionary, in the years at the beginning of this century, he freely expressed his disgust at the bungling of the tsarist administration. Pushkin's irony thus caught the aging composer at just the right moment and infused his last work with added energy. Indeed, if anything, the composer pushed his satire even farther along than the poet had, revealing some of Pushkin's intent for the first time. As a result, when the opera returned from the censor, some of the poet's most famous lines were blotted out.

Sergei Rachmaninoff is not generally considered an opera composer, but two of his three efforts in this line were built upon the works of Pushkin. In *Aleko*, a student work based on Pushkin's narrative poem "The Gypsies," the composer was content to treat his material like a European opera, with richly lyrical arias à la Tchaikovsky, orchestral dances and even a unifying leitmotif for the hero. In the cavatina for Aleko with its long, yearning theme in an arch-like structure, Rachmaninoff came into his own as a composer. Yet, one suspects that Rachmaninoff knew this music by himself; he did not need Pushkin to help him find it.

*The Covetous Knight*, Rachmaninoff's second opera, was a more serious and more consequential work. Here Pushkin shows his true influence on the composer. With it, Rachmaninoff joins the distinguished list of Russian composers who worked out a new melodic freedom by setting one of Pushkin's three psychological dramas of 1830. Furthermore, like his predecessors, Dargomyzhsky in *The Stone Guest* and Rimsky-Korsakov in *Mozart and Salieri*, Rachmaninoff needed no librettist for this project, setting *The Covetous Knight* almost word for word from the original text.

Ironically enough, it was Rachmaninoff who first caught the humor in Pushkin's poetry. Tchaikovsky had tapped into Pushkin's optimism, his belief in love and romance, but Pushkin had a wit drier than Tchaikovsky's. It laced much of his verse as well as a lot of his prose. Once again he based it on his keen observation of people, their hidden motives and even their self-delusions. In *The Covetous Knight* it is the figure of the moneylender, with his high





Sergei Vassilyevich Rachmaninoff, 1873-1943.

tenor whine and sliding chromaticism, that embodies in music Pushkin's remarkable wit. Rachmaninoff's music for this schemer is like the simpleton's song in *Boris*, only now it has been sweetened and made cloying.

But the moneylender is only a minor character, though vividly realized in this drama. The central figure is the knight himself. "It was Chaliapin who inspired me to write this opera," Rachmaninoff later recalled. "One can easily understand how the character of the old Knight, who retires into the gloomy depths of the cellar to worship his hoard of gold, would appeal to Chaliapin's dramatic instinct." In the end, though the great Russian bass withdrew from the production, his lead took Rachmaninoff on the same trail that had been blazed first by Dargomyzhsky: he dispensed with individual numbers and wove his music out of a continuous arioso.

Once again it was the precision of Pushkin's language and the penetration of his psychology that inspired Rachmaninoff most in *The Covetous Knight*. In purely musical terms what this meant for Rachmaninoff was that he learned to state his melodic ideas boldly and that in working with Pushkin's text he brought more variety and vividness to his pacing of the music. Pushkin was constantly pushing the composer on from mood to mood. The result is that the central scene of *The*

*Covetous Knight* is one of Rachmaninoff's richest accomplishments—superbly paced with a dazzling array of piquant melodies.

The last flowering of Russia's musical love-affair with Pushkin came when Igor Stravinsky set *Mavra* in 1921. In his manifesto, "Pushkin: Poetry and Music," Stravinsky spoke of "a strong bond [that] connects me with Pushkin's creativeness. It was his dramatic poem that inspired my opera *Mavra*. A young poet, Boris Kochno, who was very loyal to Pushkin's style, transcribed the text of the opera, but it was Pushkin's original text that served me as a base, and especially it was the 'zephyr' of his lines that I tried to re-create in my music."

The tradition which *Mavra* continues is precisely told by its dedication: "To Pushkin, Glinka and Tchaikovsky." For Stravinsky, these were the greatest of the Russian artists, the ones who could incorporate Western influences while at the same time remaining faithful to their Russian core. It is not surprising therefore that Stravinsky found in Pushkin exactly what Tchaikovsky had in *Eugene Onegin*: "All of Pushkin's creations," the later composer wrote, "bear proof of a scrupulous commonsense and matchless lucidity."

Once again it was the hard, shining purity of Pushkin's poetry that moved the composer most. But also, like Rachmaninoff and Rimsky-Korsakov, Stravinsky fell under the spell of Pushkin's satire as well. The supple surface and the ironic impulse of Pushkin's verse thus combined in Stravinsky's *Mavra* create a work of profound lyricism and sly humor.

"The more closely the score is examined," remarked Eric Walter White, in his study of the composer, "the more one is astonished by the richness and flexibility of the melodic line—the 'zephyr' of Stravinsky's music, as it were."

The pacing and flow that Stravinsky achieved in *Mavra* can be looked at in another way. Ever since *The Rite of Spring*, Stravinsky had been a metrical wizard of the most outstanding abilities. In *Mavra*, however, the restless time changes that came to such prominence in *The Soldier's Tale* and the *Symphonies of Wind Instruments* now almost completely disappear, but what the work loses in metrical complexity, it gains in rhythmic subtlety. Once again, we can hear in the liquid flow of Stravinsky's music the supple hand of Pushkin. ■

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# Régine Crespin: An Appreciation

So much has been made of San Francisco's good fortune in hearing the early American debuts of singers who went on to become the superstars of opera that there is a tendency to overlook the singers who arrived here in the fullness of their careers and *then* went on to give generously, singing for San Francisco a representative sampling of their greatest roles. Preeminent among those singers is the French soprano Régine Crespin, who has left such an indelible impression on all who have heard her here not only for the singular haunting beauty of her voice and the high individuality and completeness of

her characterizations—but also for having created ten roles that cover the enormous range of her art, from Offenbach to Wagner. Her eleventh, this season's Countess in *The Queen of Spades*, extends it further.

Mme. Crespin's San Francisco Opera debut in 1966, as Elisabeth in *Tannhäuser*, came a full 16 years after her professional debut in 1950, as Elsa in *Lohengrin*, first at Mulhouse and, later that same year, at the Paris Opera. But it's fair to say that even before her stage debut, the opera world saw this one coming.

Early in 1948 tenor Riccardo Martin

told *Opera News* of auditions he had just witnessed at the Paris Conservatory. According to his account, the jury heaved a sigh of relief only at the end of the long, arduous process, the French soprano Yvonne Gall exclaiming, "Elle a toutes les qualités." Martin wrote: "I felt as if I had witnessed the revelation of a star of the first magnitude . . . It was worth hearing 59 young men and 82 young women just to encounter the overwhelming talent of Mademoiselle Crespin."

After her Paris debut, Crespin went on to sing both the expected and a few unusual French soprano parts; three roles



San Francisco Opera's 1966 presentation of Wagner's *Tannhäuser* featured the debut of Régine Crespin in the role of Elisabeth. Jess Thomas appeared in the title role.

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Régine Crespin as Didon in *Les Troyens* at the San Francisco Opera in 1966.

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The wistful Marschallin in *Der Rosenkavalier* as portrayed by Régine Crespin at the San Francisco Opera in 1967. NORTON



Having posed for a formal photo as Siegmund and Sieglinde in *Die Walküre* (S.F. Opera, 1968), Régine Crespin turns kittenish on a somewhat bemused Jess Thomas. NORTON



she would later sing in San Francisco—Sieglinde, Tosca, and the Marschallin—in French; and what the French call “les Wagnériennes blondes,” Elsa and Elisabeth—even turning her own lustrous dark hair blond in the process.

What would by any estimation have been an important, fine career became a great one in 1957, the year in which she was summoned to Bayreuth to audition for Wieland Wagner. (She had been recommended to composer Wagner’s grandson by the conductor André Cluytens and Germaine Lubin, the last great French dramatic soprano before her.) Expecting to be engaged as Sieglinde, Crespin was startled when Wieland offered her Kundry, explaining that he wanted a new kind of Kundry, a Kundry “méditerranéenne.”

In an interview with Stephen Wadsworth, Crespin recalled that after seeing Bayreuth’s marvelous *Parsifal* production, she nonetheless protested, offering to sing any of the “blondes,” or “jugendlich” soprano parts, instead. “Oh, those dummies, I don’t like them,” she remembers Wieland saying to her. “Look, you are not born for that, you have a better job to do.” She did, and she did it. Bayreuth hailed her as the “lioness.”

As it was for nearly every great singer invited there, the combination of Bayreuth and Wieland Wagner was one of the great artistic watersheds in Crespin’s career. Deeper and infinitely detailed

realizations of all the characters she sang became the rule and the norm. Although she turned Wieland down on Isolde, she went on to sing Sieglinde at Bayreuth in 1961 and for Wieland at one time or other all the “dummies” except Eva. Her Sieglindes for him in Paris resulted in her being named by her countrymen “la Régine nationale.”

In 1959-60 Crespin made her debut at Glyndebourne, as the Marschallin, in a *Rosenkavalier* directed by Carl Ebert—a supreme opportunity to refine and deepen (and learn in German) the role that was to become probably her single most famous. On the basis of the Glyndebourne performances, the press hailed her as the true successor to Lotte Lehmann in the role. When she made her Metropolitan Opera debut (November 19, 1962) in the role, Lehmann was the director—and refused to take a single ovation at which Crespin was not also present. It was also at the Met premiere of *Der Rosenkavalier* that she met in person a young record company executive, who had been involved with her career for a couple of years: Terence A. McEwen. The occasion developed through the years into an extremely close friendship. (She also made her Covent Garden debut, in 1960, as the Marschallin, in part prompting the London critic Max Loppert to comment, in *The New Grove*, “In this role, an aristocratic, rather melancholy elegance of style and a delicate mastery of nuance, both vocal and dramatic, won her high praise . . .”)

The early sixties also brought her under the influence of Herbert von Karajan, for whom she first sang Sieglinde at the Vienna September Festival. Although she also turned Karajan down on a role, Elisabeth in *Don Carlo*, she did allow him to persuade her to sing the *Walküre* Brünnhilde, a role she sang only nine times (including three at the Metropolitan) and, gratefully, recorded with Karajan. Karajan, too, wanted Crespin in order to find new dimensions in the role. She recalls him saying, “I have had enough with all those big voices shouting. With you the balance will be fantastic.”

Among a number of other experiences that preceded her San Francisco debut and that warrant comment, the assumption of the role of Didon in *Les Troyens* demands a few words, in this case André Tubeuf’s, from a 1963 issue of *Opera*: “Her Dido . . . is already well known; this flood of dark golden tone seems to pour out from Berlioz’s very heart. There is a breadth of phrasing, a classical grandeur, a command of shades and colors, a vocal palette to match any operatic demand, by any standards. Dido’s agony and lament in the hands of Crespin became one of the truly great operatic moments of our time, and should be seen on every important stage.”

Writing in *Opera News* the year of her San Francisco debut, *Opera* editor Harold Rosenthal wrote: “The warmth of [Crespin’s] personality can partly be accounted for by her mixed Italian and French



parentage (she was born in Marseilles of an Italian mother and French father) and by the fact that she grew up in that magical, Mediterranean part of France, Provence. Her taste, elegance and charm are essentially French, but her intense, expressive acting stems from her Italian blood."

And: "She is certainly the greatest French dramatic soprano since Germaine Lubin, and one of the few contemporary artists who possess that elusive quality 'the grand manner.' She is an artist who entirely dominates the stage when she is on it, compelling the eye to follow her whether she is singing or not. And she possesses the capacity to move the listener by the warmth and sincerity of her performance. It is this femininity that gives us the key to Crespin's art."

That was all *before* Crespin's company debut, 21 years ago.

The debut itself, on October 18, 1966, could hardly have been more poignantly timed. Wieland Wagner had died in Munich the previous day. In addition to Crespin, the protagonist, Jess Thomas, the production's Wolfram, Thomas Ste-

wart, its conductor, Horst Stein, and its director, Paul Hager, all were Bayreuth stalwarts. And the death of Wieland amounted to a particular sadness for San Francisco, which otherwise would have seen either his *Tristan* or his *Salome* the following season.

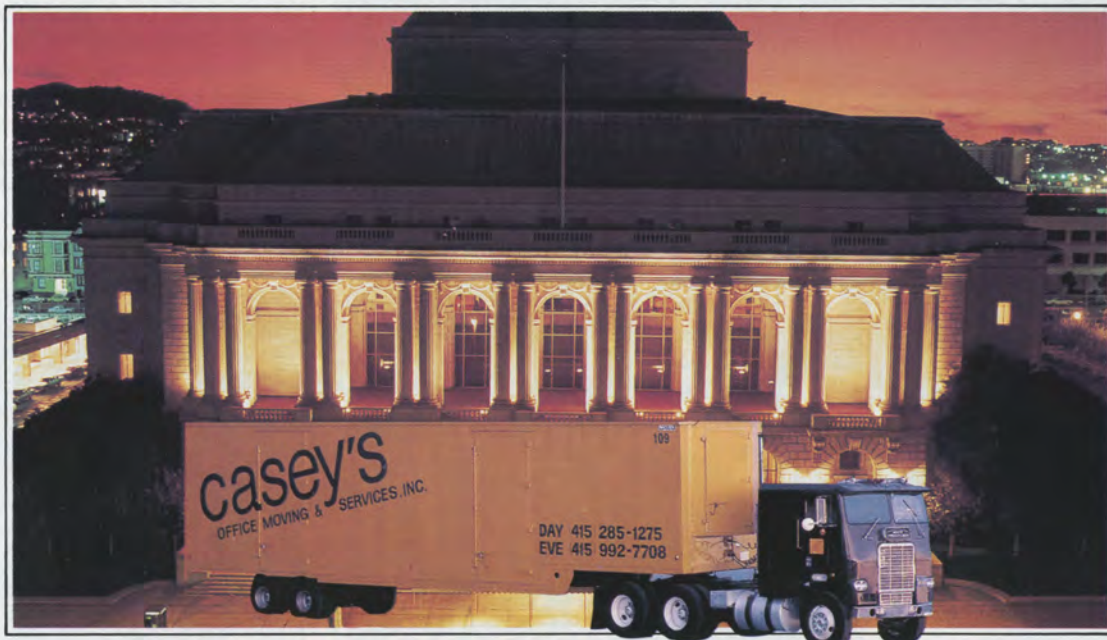
But if those with Bayreuth histories suffered, the production itself did not. Writing for the *San Francisco Chronicle* about Crespin's debut, Robert Commanday noted: "Her voice has highly individual qualities—a tone like alabaster sometimes edged with silver or charged with an electric current . . . . When the power she holds in reserve is released, her voice is thrilling." Martin Bernheimer, in the *Los Angeles Times*, called Crespin's Elisabeth "radiant."

Her debut came during the time when then-General Director Kurt Herbert Adler made a practice of engaging major singers for three roles in a season if possible. Crespin, too, was hired for three roles—in only two operas. One of the focal points of the 1966 season was a new production of *Les Troyens*, in its "American professional stage premiere." San Fran-



Régine Crespin as Mme. de Croissy in S.F. Opera's 1982 staging of *Dialogues of the Carmelites*.

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cisco Opera historian Arthur Bloomfield commented that the opera, trimmed to three hours, "was essentially a vehicle for Madame Crespin" who, he added, "found the dual assignment of Dido and Cassandra immensely congenial."

With Jean Périsson in the pit and Jon Vickers sharing the stage as her Aeneas, Crespin poured forth grand, authoritative readings of both great roles, imbued with that nobility of utterance that was hers alone to command. The production was repeated, with Crespin again in both roles, in the 1968 season and during the company's 1969 season in Los Angeles.

Crespin's second season in San Francisco, in 1967, brought the War Memorial her *Rosenkavalier* Marschallin, an operatic impersonation cherished throughout the opera world.

The following season brought her Sieglinde, the opening performance dedicated to her great predecessor in the role, Lotte Lehmann, who was in the audience. The critical and audience response was predictably overwhelming, as was her reprise of the role for the 1969 Los Angeles season, opposite Vickers as Siegmund.

Physical indisposition and the crisis of her breakup with her mentor-husband, a matter Crespin has always discussed with the utmost candor, resulted in the cancellation of her first two scheduled Toscas in 1970. But on her return to the stage she was credited with a highly distinctive way with the famous role.

Crespin confronted a subsequent vocal crisis with characteristic courage and, on the suggestion of her Paris agent, sought the counsel of a highly regarded voice coach named Bautz, in Cologne. In addition to helping her get back in touch with one of her greatest artistic assets, her singular intelligence, Bautz called her attention to another of the unique features of her voice—that, in her own words, "I am a soprano with a facility for low notes." Introducing her to some roles usually associated with mezzos, he taught her to sing them "as a soprano."

Kundry was the best possible background for preparing roles that bridge soprano and mezzo-soprano territory. And shortly before her return to the War Memorial stage, in 1976, Crespin scored a major triumph at the Met in the role that virtually defines that bridge: Bizet's *Carmen*. Some of New York's top critics cited her *Carmen* as one of the very



The Grand Duchess of Gérolstein herself, in the effervescent person of Régine Crespin. San Francisco Opera, 1983.

greatest in the Met's history (high praise indeed), marveling in particular at her deft balancing of the character's sexiness and cunning intelligence.

When she returned to San Francisco to sing Santuzza in the Ponnelle production of *Cavalleria Rusticana*, she virtually redefined the role. The *San Francisco Examiner's* Alexander Fried found her Santuzza "... nightmarishly haunted ... Revenge as well as distress poured out of



Régine Crespin as Madame Flora in Menotti's *Medium*; San Francisco Opera, Summer 1986.



her misery both in her visible emotions and . . . voice."

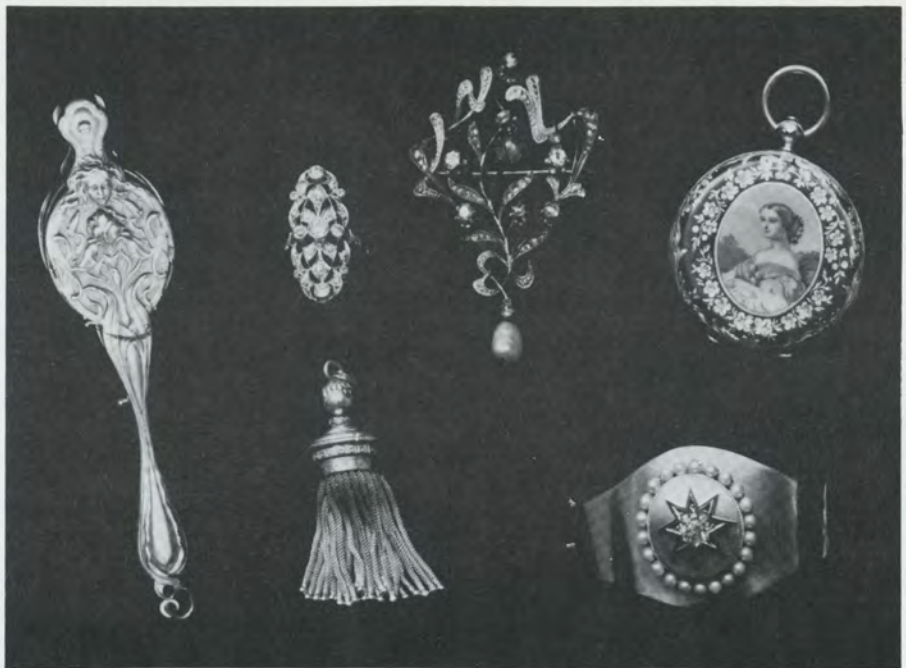
Crespin next returned to San Francisco in 1982, the first year of the McEwen regime, for a production of Poulenc's *Dialogues of the Carmelites* (in English) whose cast also included singers who performed in the opera's premieres at La Scala (Virginia Zeani) and in the U.S. (Leontyne Price, in San Francisco). Having sung the role of the New Prioress at the work's Paris premiere, Crespin this time sang the First Prioress, Mme. de Croissy—unforgettably.

The *Tribune's* Charles Shere called her death scene "stupendous—one of the most compelling single performances the opera house has seen in 20 years." In it, Crespin, as the nun in a delirium of pain and fear, vented all manner of unladylike, to say nothing of unnunlike, feelings, capping her outburst with the tearing off of her wimple and casting it across the stage. It was operatic acting of the very highest order—winning Crespin raves for delivering the most trenchant, pointed, and easily understood English of all the performers.

Her reappearance the following year, as the title character of Offenbach's *La Grande Duchesse de Gérolstein*, showed Crespin's lighter side, a fun-loving dimension of her own character well known to her friends and colleagues.

Her next assignment was in the Summer 1986 season, as the title character in Menotti's *The Medium*, in which Crespin offered a portrayal of Madame Flora quite different from the one usually seen. The soprano herself told a *New York Times* writer that she had come to perceive Flora "as a former artist. She has a kind of flair . . . and she makes people believe in her powers . . . It's a fabulous part: very human, very grandiose, very feminine. She is very much three-dimensional for me. If you believe in that mystery, in the connection we might have with people in other energies, another dimension, then who knows?"

Her audience, that's who knows. Crespin herself is that kind of artist, with an unmistakable flair—and an unforgettable way of making one believe in her powers. For more than 20 years she has drawn San Francisco audiences into the very souls of characters from other energies and dimensions. And now the Countess in *The Queen of Spades* looms ahead! You faint of heart, beware. ■



*J. M. Lang*

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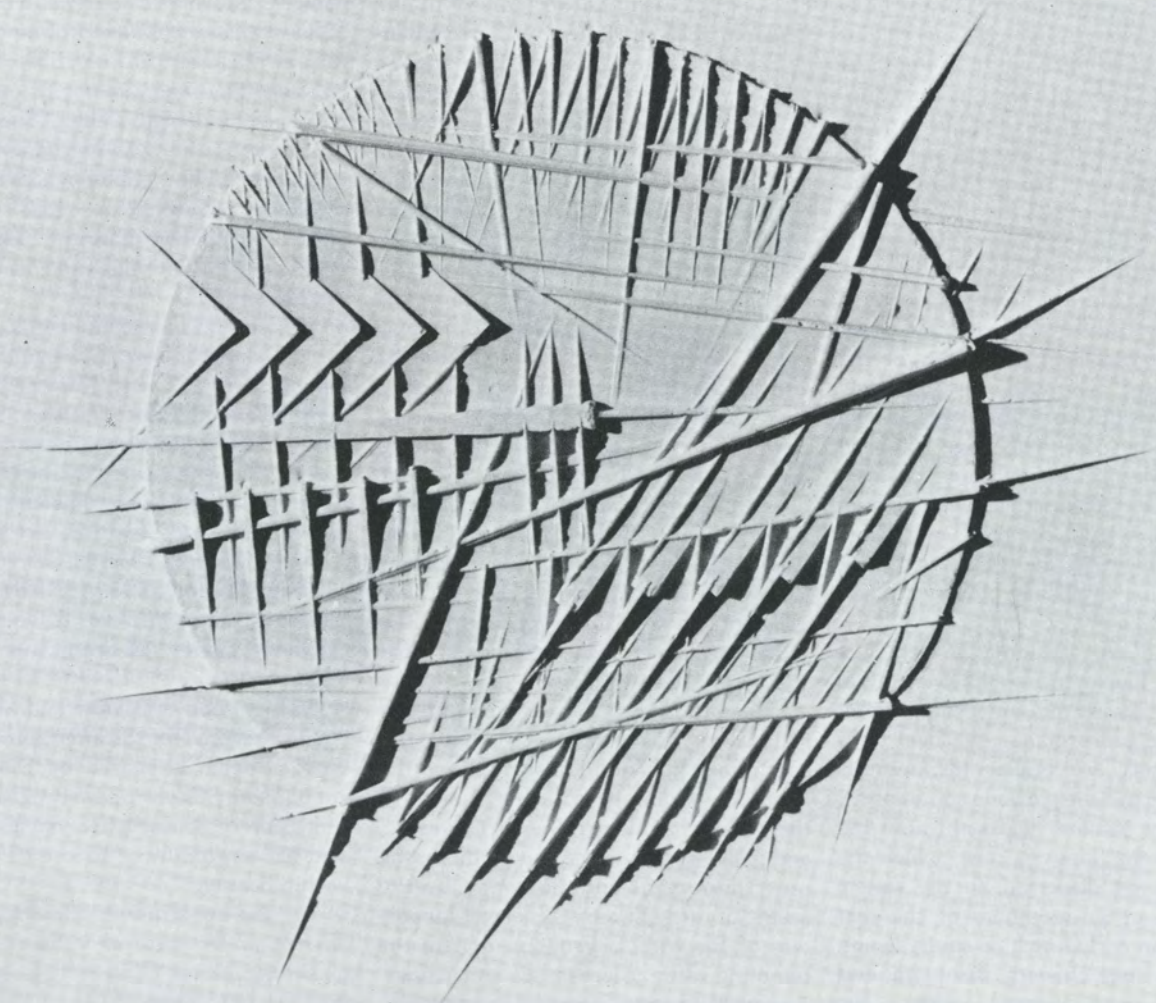
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# 1987 San Francisco Opera Company (Continued)

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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*Hmmm. Did Mrs. Higgins say Golden Wedding or Baby Birth?*

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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

The cost is \$2 for Guild members (limit 4 tickets per member); non-members \$5. Advance reservations required. For further information, please call (415) 565-6432.



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

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

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

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

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

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

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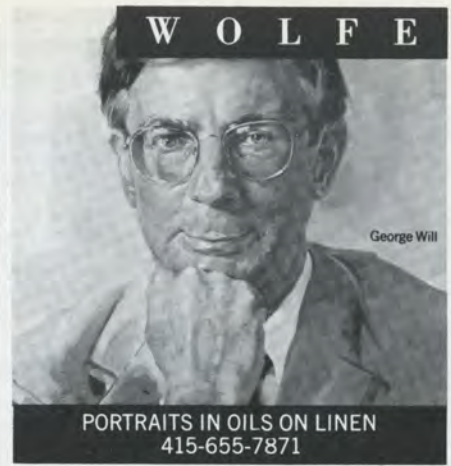
Children of any age attending a performance must have a ticket.

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

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



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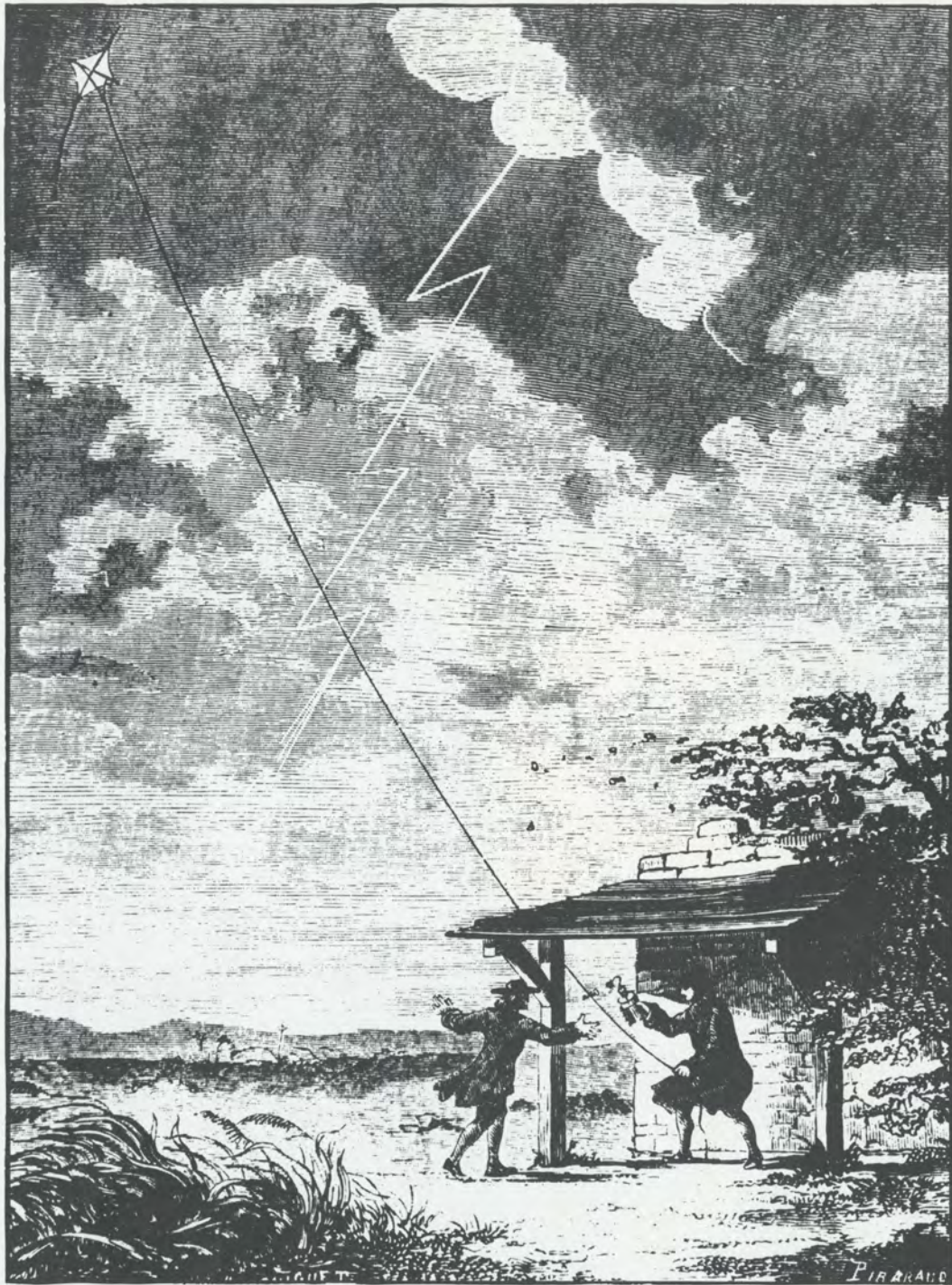
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Mezzo-soprano

with the

San Francisco Opera Orchestra

**BRUCE FERDEN**

Conductor

PROGRAM

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Ottone (1723)—Overture	GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL (1685-1759)
Agrippina (1709)— <i>Bel piacere</i>	
Semele (1744)— <i>Iris, hence away</i>	
Concerto alla rustica in G major Presto—Andante—allegro	ANTONIO VIVALDI (1678-1741)
Orlando Furioso (1727)— <i>Sorge l'irato nembo</i>	
Orfeo ed Euridice (1762)—Overture <i>Addio o miei sospiri</i> Dance of the Furies and the Blessed Spirits <i>Che puro ciel</i> Reprise, Dance of the Blessed Spirits Recitative: <i>Ahimè! Dove trascorsi?</i> Aria: <i>Che farò senza Euridice?</i>	CHRISTOPH WILLIBALD GLUCK (1714-1787)
La Donna del Lago (1819)— <i>Mura felici</i>	GIOACCHINO ROSSINI (1792-1868)
Mignon (1866)—Overture <i>Connais-tu le pays?</i>	AMBROISE THOMAS (1811-1896)
Les Huguenots (1836)— <i>Non, non, non!</i>	GIACOMO MEYERBEER (1791-1864)
Samson et Dalila (1877)—Bacchanale <i>Mon coeur s'ouvre à ta voix</i>	CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS (1835-1921)

War Memorial Opera House, San Francisco  
Sunday, December 6, 1987, at 8:30 p.m.



