

Tosca

1987

Sunday, October 4, 1987 2:00 PM  
Wednesday, October 7, 1987 8:00 PM  
Saturday, October 10, 1987 8:00 PM  
Friday, October 16, 1987 8:00 PM  
Thursday, October 22, 1987 7:30 PM  
Sunday, October 25, 1987 2:00 PM

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San Francisco Opera Archives



# San Francisco Opera

1987 SEASON

## Tosca

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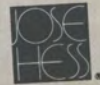
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# San Francisco Opera

Terence A. McEwen, *General Director*

Sir John Pritchard, *Music Director*

## Tosca

1987 SEASON

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### COVER:

Irvine Sinclair

**Claudia Muzio as Tosca**

Oil on canvas, painted in the 1930s in San Francisco.

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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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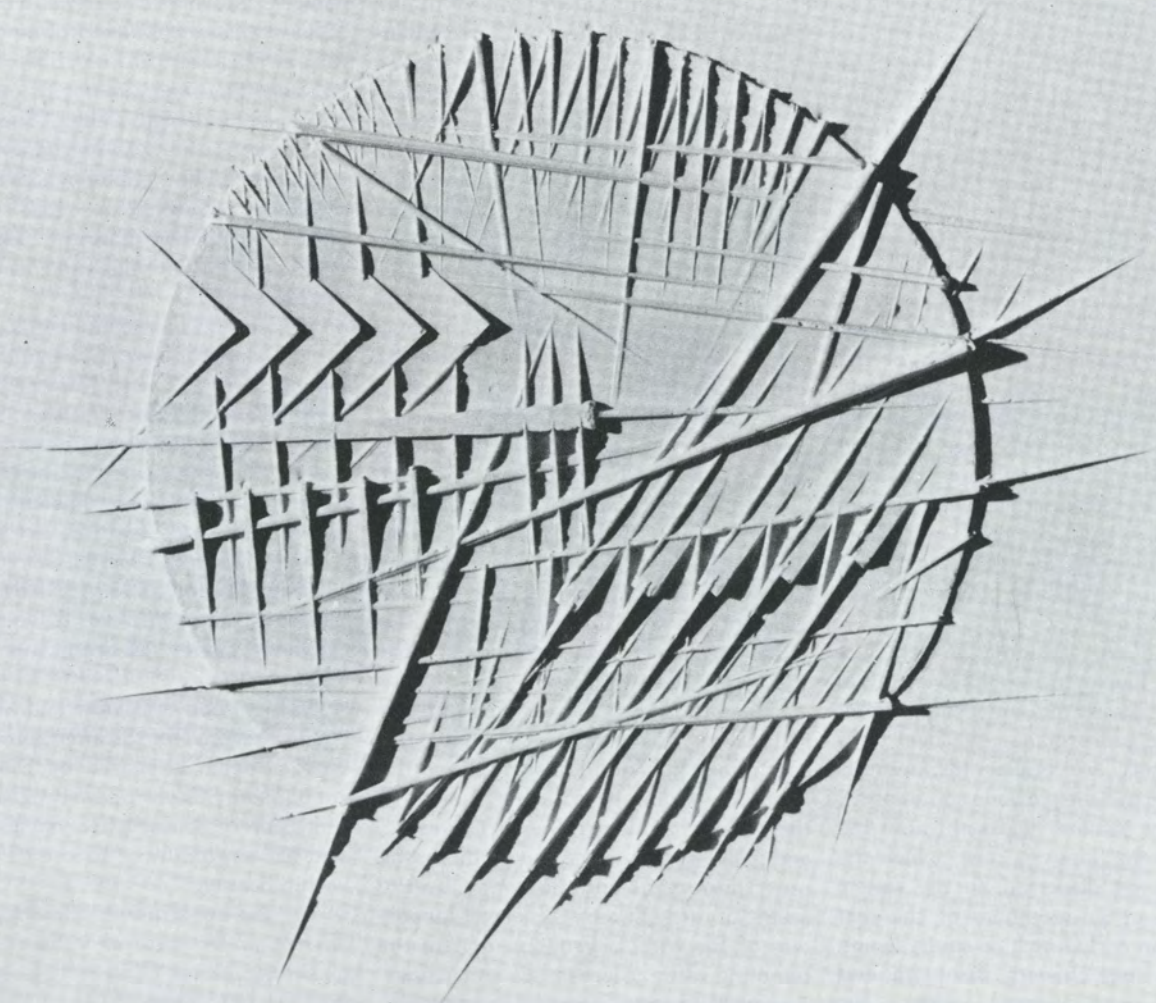
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## General Director's Message

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

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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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Lev Rankov  
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Robert Galbraith  
Janice McIntosh  
Leonid Igudesman  
Julia Skiff

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Eva Karasik  
Lani King  
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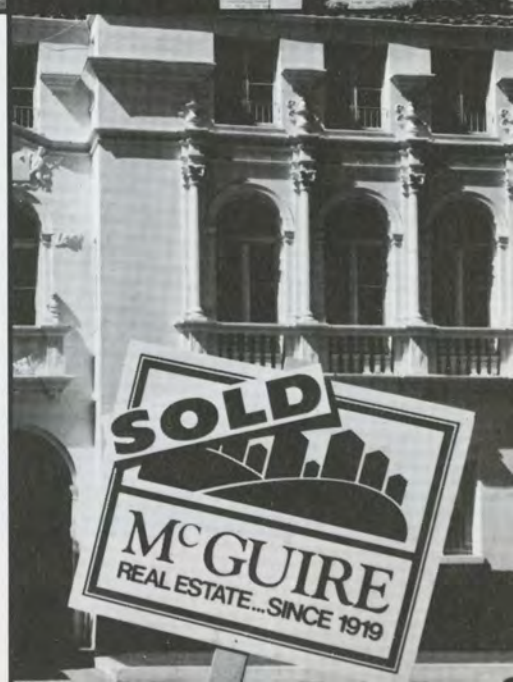
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Peter Conrad is the author of *Romantic Opera and Literary Form* (U.C. Press 1977) and *A Song of Love and Death: The Meaning of Opera* (Poseidon Press 1987). He teaches English Literature at Christ Church, Oxford; his other publications include *One Indivisible, Unending Book: The History of English Literature* (University of Pennsylvania Press 1987).



Giacomo Puccini around the turn of the century.

By PETER CONRAD

## Tosca as Drama

Almost three decades have passed since Joseph Kerman put a curse on *Tosca*. In his book *Opera as Drama*, invidiously contrasting its last act with that of *Otello*, he dismissed it as a “shabby little shocker.” Its easy alliteration made the slur quotable, and critically it has struck. Kerman presumed with a sniff that the work was “admired nowadays mostly in the gallery,” but the low taste for it has been shared by some of the great interpreters of the decades since Kerman wrote—by Callas and Vishnevskaya, Karajan and Sinopoli, Zeffirelli and Ponnelle. Can they have been merely slumming?

Obviously not: *Tosca* need have no fear of Kerman’s jibe. In fact, it’s an exemplar of his prescription for opera—a work in which the music serves the articulation of drama, a work that specifically, since its heroine is herself a diva,





*Cornell MacNeil as Baron Scarpia during the Te Deum in San Francisco Opera's 1970 production of Tosca.*

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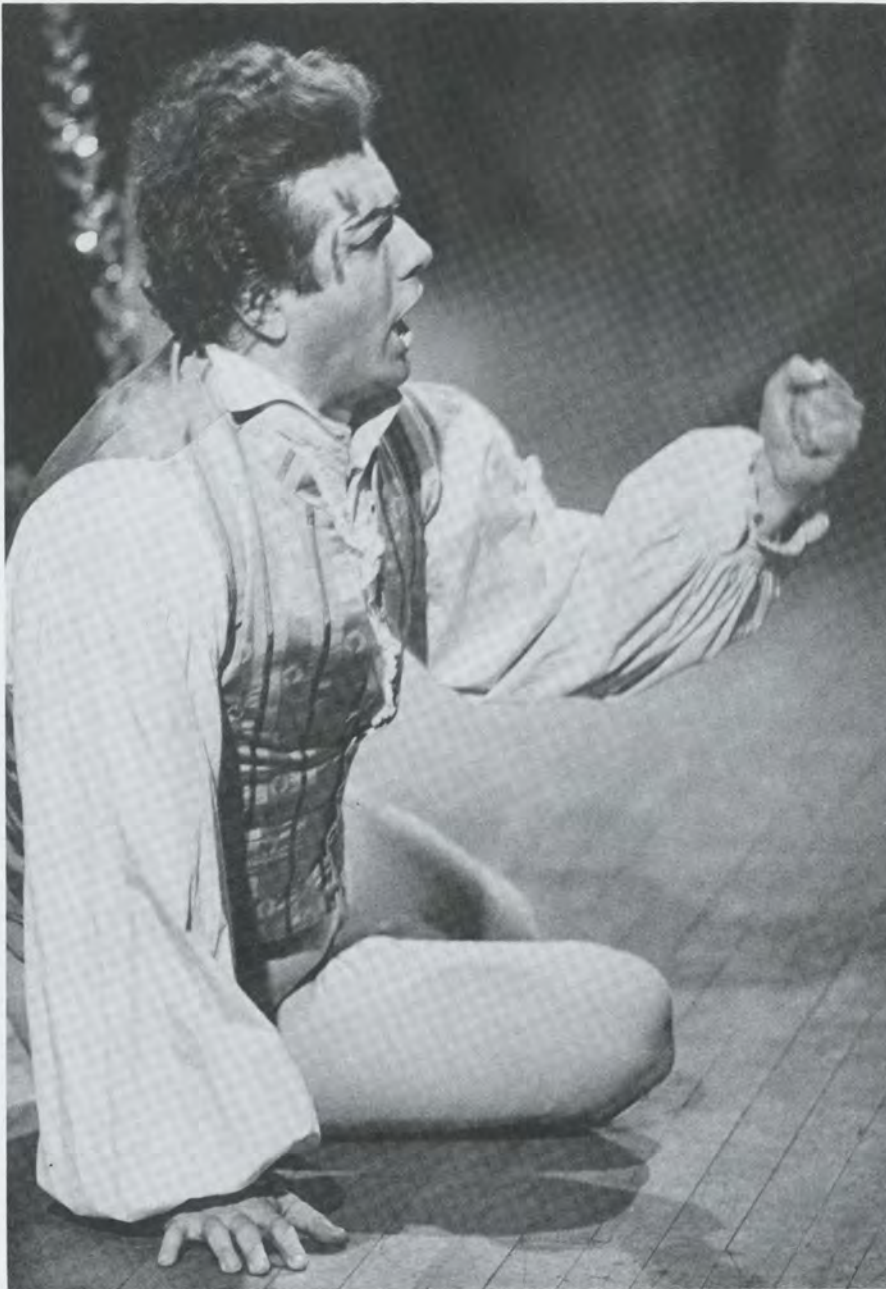
Claudia Muzio as Tosca and Alfredo Gandolfi as Scarpia in the San Francisco Opera production of *Tosca* which opened the War Memorial Opera House in 1932.

reflects on the contradictoriness and in-built deceit of its form. Its particular verismo consists in its realistic truthfulness about the theater and its musically inflated passions, and its awareness—for Tosca is a pious believer in the Deity from whom, as diva, she takes over when onstage—that opera is the dangerous and sensual profanation of a sacred rite. The church, as is clear in *Tosca* during the preparations for the Te Deum, is a repertory theater staging sacramental extravaganzas daily; in the godless age of romantic revolution, the theater supersedes the church. Both institutions are adept at

feigning, and as *Tosca* shows, the law and statecraft are also false fronts, masking cynical machinations behind the scenes. The concern of everyone in *Tosca* is announced by Scarpia when he orders the mock execution “Occorre simular” (It should seem to be really taking place). By these insights into the guile of performance in art and in political or ecclesiastical life, *Tosca* expounds the witty paradox of verismo, whose characters are professional simulators, play-acting emotions they don’t feel—Carmen, or such colleagues of Tosca’s as Adriana Lecouvreur, Nedda in *Pagliacci* and the tantrum-prone

soprano in *Ariadne auf Naxos*.

Opera derives from a sacrilege. Like Tristan and Isolde, its characters believe in the holiness of their instincts. Their music (as Shaw remarked when writing about an operatic archetype, Don Giovanni, in the inferno) is the brandy of the damned. In *Tosca*, the church of Sant’Andrea della Valle is the location for such an operatic reconsecration. Like Scarpia’s “santissimo governo”—the law which, as he explains, relies on the infliction of pain for its efficacy—it’s a formal cover for the prosecution of profane intrigues: a place of flirtatious rendezvous for the Attavanti



Franco Corelli as Cavaradossi in San Francisco Opera's 1965 *Tosca*.

(or so Mario believes), a refuge of political conspiracy for Angelotti, a lunchroom for the greedy Sacristan, a factory for the choir, who rejoice that they'll receive double pay for overtime at the gala, and of course a stage for Tosca when she commandingly flounces on. A prop sums up the imposture of the setting, which corresponds to the duality within opera. Is Mario's portrait a religious icon or a secular pinup? Though Tosca knowingly addresses the Madonna as an intimate and an equal ("È tanto buona!"), is she divine,

as Scarpia calls her, or only a self-dramatizing diva? Might she even be a fallen angel? Scarpia, who begins by blessing her, ends by accusing her of causing him to forget God. The same ambiguity inculpates Scarpia. Despite his Pharisaic manner, Mario calls him a pagan satyr, and the Sacristan reacts to him as to a Christian bogey, a devil from whom—muttering "Liberà me, Domine!"—he hopes to wriggle away.

Tosca, wise in the morality of opera, is careful to secure sacred remission for

profane lapses. Mario notes that she spends much time with her confessor. Yet that institution is revealed to be a fraud when Scarpia, demanding "pronta confessione" from Mario, models his own techniques on it. And like Scarpia demanding, in another parody of religious inquisition, "Pesa le tue risposte" (Weigh your answers), Tosca catechistically extorts compliments from Mario—when he replies distractedly to her question about the evening, she makes him repeat the phrase in penance. Her faith allows her to be absolved after the event if she confesses. Perhaps she hopes to be granted the same impunity in advance when she first prays, then at once arranges an assignation with her lover. Mario unrepentantly adopts this logic of hers in the third act. Offered the services of a priest, he refuses and writes to Tosca instead. His letter is the invocation of a private and—as he describes his unveiling of her—fragrant goddess. Whereas Tosca in "Vissi d'arte" supplicates to gain grudging favors from a demon, Mario's prayer to her is instantly answered when she materializes. Tosca has her own flamboyantly theatrical sense of what constitutes a sin: for her, it's a "peccato" when Mario musses her hair.

Scarpia's most vindictively acute comment on her is his pretense that her hysteria in the second act is no more than painless, vaunting art (which of course, in a performance of *Tosca*, is exactly what it is). "Mai Tosca alla scena più tragica fu!" he laughs—never was Tosca more tragic onstage—in an aside resembling a Brechtian alienation effect. He proves his characterization of her to be correct, for he entraps her by appealing to her enthusiasm for play-acting and offers her the chance to convert Mario to it. The opera is a recessive, inset series of performances: we watch Scarpia watch Tosca performing a play he's cruelly directing, while she watches and grotesquely applauds Mario for his performance in a play she has rehearsed with him and which she imagines she controls.

Kerman scorns as empty-headedly repetitive the succession of leitmotifs in Tosca's third act narration. It cunningly bears out Scarpia's cynical analysis of Tosca, however. Recapitulating his assault, the bargain and the murder, she is already dramatizing them, rewriting his death in the grandiose terms of her own art. When it actually happened, she tonelessly screamed her execration of Scarpia; now, performing the event in retrospect,



Ramon Vinay as Baron Scarpia before ... and after. San Francisco Opera, 1965.





SCHERL



Leonie Rysanek as Tosca. San Francisco Opera, 1976.

SCHERL



Janis Martin as Tosca. San Francisco Opera, 1976.

POWERS



Gwyneth Jones as Tosca. San Francisco Opera, 1982.

she makes it the occasion for a vocal stunt, descending in "Io quella lama gli piantai nel cor" (I drove that blade into his heart) from the top to the bottom of her range. The tribute this provokes from Mario is tendered in the language of the art *he* practices. As a painter, he appraises her according to the skills of his manual and visual art: he sings a tribute to her hands, just as in the first act he has sung one to her eyes.

If Tosca is Puccini's study of the performer, then Scarpia is his disturbing account of the composer and dramatist—to be precise, of himself. For Puccinian opera is, like Scarpia's installation in the Palazzo Farnese, a torture chamber. Verdian song, like that of birds, is a natural reflex of happiness and exultancy. Its defining declarations are Violetta's "Gioir!" or Otello's "Esultate!"; it is the sounding of that trill of energy and health which thrills through all created nature in Falstaff's monologue after his dunking. But Puccinian song is excruciation. Lyricism is wracked from his characters—elicited under pressure, and by the application of pain. Sometimes the agony that makes them sing is mental, as with Butterfly or Suor Angelica; sometimes it's a disease, like Mimì's, sometimes a back-breaking physical degradation, like the laborer's life of which Luigi complains in *Il Tabarro*; in extreme instances, it's tormented from them by the hooks and pincers applied to Liù at the end of *Turandot*. They are hurt, like Mario and Tosca in the second act, into the high notes. Nor are those notes vitally, joyfully resplendent, as in Verdi. At best they signify triumphs of vindictive will, as in Mario's sustained, exhausting "Vittoria!" The soloist's supremacy over a chorus—Scarpia during the *Te Deum*, Tosca in the cantata—announces a calculated pleasure in domination.

There's an admixture of sadism in Puccini's creative psychology, and *Tosca* is unexpectedly modern in its admission that the opera theater is a shadow box of often malign fantasy. Scarpia's back room might house the menagerie of Lulu's victims, or the Bedlam of *The Rake's Progress*. For Puccini as for Scarpia, musical drama is a licensed phantasmagoria. Tosca puts music to more orthodox use in her aria about the nocturnal landscape, and in the cantata. "Fiorite, o campi immensi" is her Orphic attempt to con-

*continued on p.49*

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OLIVIA STAPP

Renowned American dramatic soprano **Olivia Stapp** returns to San Francisco Opera as *Tosca*, a role she has sung at the Metropolitan Opera as well as with numerous companies in Europe. She scored a personal triumph with her most recent San Francisco Opera appearance when she stepped into the title role of Donizetti's *Anna Bolena* on short notice in 1984. Miss Stapp made her 1978 Company debut as Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* and returned the following year as Santuzza in *Cavalleria Rusticana*. During the 1982 Summer Season she portrayed Abigail in *Nabucco*. A native of New York City currently living in Genoa, Italy, she began her career with the New York City Opera, where she was featured in the title role of *Carmen*, as Jane Seymour in *Anna Bolena* and as Sara in *Roberto Devereux*, the last two opposite Beverly Sills. She later settled in Italy, where she launched her international career, and has since earned world-wide recognition for her interpretations of the most challenging roles in the dramatic soprano repertoire. She leapt to international attention with her 1980 debut at the Deutsche Oper Berlin as Lady Macbeth in a new production of Verdi's *Macbeth*, and the same role served as the vehicle of her debuts at the Metropolitan Opera, Washington Opera and the Paris Opera. She sang her first *Turandot* at the 1982 Torre del Lago Festival and appeared in the same part for her 1983 La Scala debut as well as her 1986 debut at Covent Garden, repeating the assignment when the Royal Opera toured to Japan and Korea that year. She has appeared at the Verona Festival as *Aida*, Abigail and Minnie in *La Fanciulla del West* and bowed at the Vienna State Opera as Elektra in 1982, the same year she sang her first *Norma* in Montreal. She has since sung the role in many of the major operatic capitals of the world.



ERMANNANO MAURO

Recent engagements have included her Teatro Colón (Buenos Aires) debut as Salome, her first Elena in *I Vespri Siciliani* in Geneva, *Turandot* and *Nabucco* in Paris, and *Macbeth* in Berlin. Future assignments include her return to the Met as Lady Macbeth, her first Giorgetta in a Barcelona production of *Il Tabarro*, *Turandot* in Berlin and Zurich and new productions of *Elektra* in Frankfurt and *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* in Hamburg.

Tenor **Ermanno Mauro** returns to San Francisco Opera as Mario Cavaradossi in *Tosca*. His most recent appearances here were as Turiddu in *Cavalleria Rusticana* and Canio in *Pagliacci* during the 1986 Summer Season. A leading tenor with the Metropolitan Opera and a regular performer at the Vienna State Opera, the Paris Opera and the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, he made his San Francisco Opera debut during the 1982 Fall Season as Pollione in Bellini's *Norma* with Joan Sutherland and Marilyn Horne, returned the following year in *Manon Lescaut* opposite Mirella Freni, and appeared as Maurizio in the 1985 Fall Season opening production of *Adriana Lecouvreur*. Born in Trieste, he later moved to Canada and made his professional debut with the Canadian Opera Company in Toronto in *Il Trovatore*, replacing the originally scheduled tenor on short notice. He was then invited to join the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, where he remained as principal tenor throughout 1975. He made his German debut in 1972 as Rodolfo in *La Bohème* in Frankfurt, and made a number of important international debuts in quick succession. In 1975, he bowed at the Vienna State Opera as Manrico in *Il Trovatore*, in 1976 as Don Alvaro in *La Forza del Destino* at the Paris Opera, and in 1977 made his Italian debut as Don José in



ALAIN FONDARY

*Carmen* in Genoa. He made his American debut in 1974 as Cavaradossi in *Tosca* in San Diego and then gave his first New York performances as Calaf in *Turandot* with the New York City Opera, where he also appeared as Rodolfo, Andrea Chénier and as Faust in Boito's *Mefistofele*. The year 1978 marked his Metropolitan Opera debut as Canio in *Pagliacci*; his La Scala debut as Manrico; and his Rome Opera debut as Radames in *Aida*. During the fall of 1985, he sang his first stage performances of the title role of Verdi's *Otello* at the Dallas Opera, added the role of Paolo in Zandonai's *Francesca da Rimini* to his repertoire at the Met, and made his Lyric Opera of Chicago debut as Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly*. Other recent engagements have included performances of *Manon Lescaut* in Munich and New York, Manrico in Brussels, the title role of *Ernani* at the Met, and Calaf at the Deutsche Oper Berlin. He was also heard at several major summer festivals in 1987, appearing as Radames in *Aida* in Zurich and Rome, and as Calaf in Torre del Lago. Mauro's upcoming engagements include *Tosca*, *Turandot* and *Luisa Miller* at the Metropolitan Opera, *Otello* in Miami, *Turandot* in Dallas, *Il Trovatore* and *La Gioconda* at the Gran Teatro del Liceu in Barcelona, *Manon Lescaut* at the Hamburg State Opera, *Tosca* and *La Gioconda* at the Vienna State Opera, and *Turandot*, *Aida* and *Carmen* at the Deutsche Oper Berlin.

French baritone **Alain Fondary** makes his American opera debut as Scarpia in *Tosca*. A specialist in the Italian and French operatic repertoire, he made his professional debut as Tonio in *Pagliacci*. In 1984, he bowed at the Paris Opera in Verdi's *Jérusalem*, subsequently appearing there as Amonasro in *Aida* opposite Ghena Dimitrova. During the 1984-85 season, he



JUAN PONS

sang Renato in *Un Ballo in Maschera* in Toulouse, Jack Rance in *La Fanciulla del West* in Ravenna, Hérode in Massenet's *Hérodiade* in Liège, and the title role of *Simon Boccanegra* in Orange. He repeated his acclaimed portrayal of Jack Rance in Ravenna in 1985, and made his Covent Garden debut as Puccini's sheriff that same year. Fondary made his debut at Milan's La Scala in 1985 as Amonasro, a role he repeated there twice in 1986. Recent engagements include *La Fanciulla del West* at Torre del Lago, *Samson et Dalila* in Liège, *Falstaff* at Avignon, Hérode, opposite Montserrat Caballé's Salomé, in *Hérodiade* at Orange, and Rodrigo in *Don Carlo* and the title role of *Nabucco* at the Paris Opera. Future performances include *Samson et Dalila* in Bregenz, and in Chicago with Plácido Domingo, *Tosca* in Dallas, *Cavalleria Rusticana*, *Aida* and *La Gioconda* at the Metropolitan Opera, *Otello* and *Les Troyens* in Marseilles, *Aida* in Strasbourg, Thais at the Opéra-Comique in Paris, *Les Huguenots* in Nice, *Un Ballo in Maschera* and *Pagliacci* in Toronto, and *The Tales of Hoffmann* in Munich. Other roles in his wide repertoire include the title roles of *Rigoletto*, *Macbeth* and *Guillaume Tell*, the Four Villains in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, and the elder Germont in *La Traviata*.

Spanish baritone **Juans Pons** returns to San Francisco Opera as Scarpia in *Tosca* and as the elder Germont in *La Traviata*. He made his Company debut as Nottingham in *Roberto Devereux* in 1979, and returned during the 1984 Summer Season to sing Amonasro in *Aida* opposite Leontyne Price. He made his operatic debut in Barcelona's Gran Teatro del Liceu, and in 1978 sang three Verdi roles in Mexico City: Count di Luna in *Il Trovatore*, Renato in *Un Ballo in Maschera*



ERIC GARRETT

and Don Carlo in *Ernani*. He made his La Scala debut in the title role of *Falstaff* during the 1981-82 season and also bowed at Covent Garden and the Vienna State Opera in *Tosca*, *Cavalleria Rusticana*, *Aida* and *Don Carlo*. He performed the title role of *Macbeth* with the Washington Opera and toured Japan with the Scala company, appearing as Iago in *Otello*, opposite Plácido Domingo and Mirella Freni. The 1982-83 season marked his Metropolitan Opera debut as Count di Luna in *Il Trovatore*, including the national radio broadcast, and he opened the Vienna State Opera season with performances of *Aida*, *Tosca* and *Don Carlo*. Highlights from recent seasons include *Tosca* in Bonn, Milan, Barcelona and New York; *Un Ballo in Maschera* in Paris, New York and Milan; *Nabucco* in Zurich; *Simon Boccanegra* in Barcelona; *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Pagliacci* in Vienna; a new production of *Macbeth* in Trieste; *I Due Foscari* in Madrid; *Salome* in Rome; and *La Traviata* in Dallas. An outstanding event for Pons was his performance opposite Teresa Stratas and Plácido Domingo in Franco Zeffirelli's production of *Pagliacci*, which was televised and released on records. He made his American debut at Carnegie Hall in Verdi's *Aroldo* with the Opera Orchestra of New York, a performance which was issued on a live recording.

After making his San Francisco Opera debut during the 1985 Fall Season as Dansker in *Billy Budd* and as a Notary in *Der Rosenkavalier*, English bass-baritone **Eric Garrett** returns as the Sacristan in *Tosca* and Marquis D'Obigny in *La Traviata*. He made his American opera debut to wide acclaim as Baron Ochs in the 1984 Los Angeles Opera Theater production of *Der Rosenkavalier*. After completing his studies at London's Royal College of



MONTE PEDERSON

Music, he made his Covent Garden debut in 1962, singing the roles of Benoit and Alcindoro in *La Bohème*. He continued his studies with Eva Turner and Tito Gobbi, and appeared in over 50 roles with the Royal Opera, including the Sacristan in the historic Zeffirelli production of *Tosca* with Maria Callas and Gobbi (and subsequently with Plácido Domingo, Luciano Pavarotti and José Carreras), the title role of *Gianni Schicchi*, the One-Armed Man in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, Polonius in *Hamlet*, Antonio in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Don Fernando in *Fidelio*, Truffaldino in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, the Nightwatchman in *Die Meistersinger*, the Mayor in *Jenůfa*, Swallow in *Peter Grimes* and Frank in *Die Fledermaus*. He has won acclaim with the leading opera companies and television studios of Great Britain, Belgium and France as Leporello in *Don Giovanni*, Don Magnifico in *La Cenerentola*, Scarpia, Dulcamara in *L'Elisir d'Amore*, Dr. Bartolo in both *Le Nozze di Figaro* and *The Barber of Seville*, Kecal in *The Bartered Bride*, Count Waldner in *Arabella*, Schigolch in *Lulu*, Fra Melitone in *La Forza del Destino*, and the title roles of *Don Pasquale* and *Falstaff*. Recordings and video performances include roles in *Billy Budd*, *La Fille du Régiment*, *The Tales of Hoffmann*, *A Christmas Carol* and *Andrea Chénier*. Future engagements include the Sacristan, the Mayor in *Jenůfa*, and Count Horn in *Un Ballo in Maschera* at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, where he was recently awarded a medal for 25 years of association with the company.

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



DENNIS PETERSEN

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.

**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



MARK DELAVAN

Petersen appeared as Don Basilio in *Le 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.

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 Uni-



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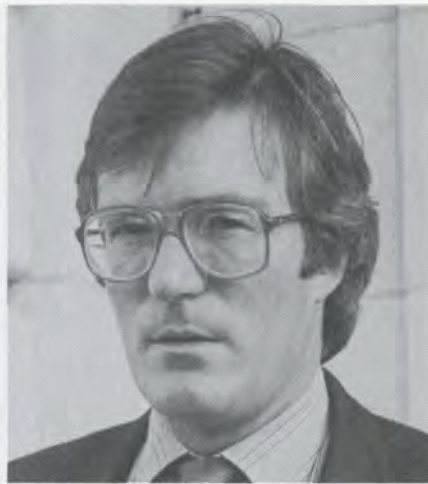
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PETER VOLPE

versity, 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.

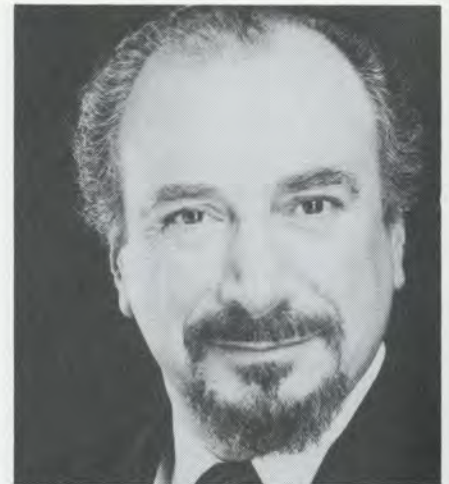
Bass **Peter Volpe** marks his first season with San Francisco Opera by appearing in four roles: the Second Soldier in *Salome*, the High Priest in *Nabucco*, the Duke of Verona in *Roméo et Juliette*, and the Jailer in *Tosca*. He received his operatic training under Nicola Rossi-Lemeni at Indiana University. A participant in the 1986 Merola Opera Program, he went on to perform three roles in Western Opera Theater's 1986-87 touring production of *La Bohème* throughout the United States and in China: Colline, Alcindoro and Benoit. During the 1985-86 season he appeared as Melchior in a touring production of Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors* and made his debut with the New Jersey State Opera as Pimen in *Boris Godunov*. Other roles in his repertoire include Thomas Beckett in *Murder in the Cathedral*, Fasolt in *Das Rheingold*, Simone in *Gianni Schicchi*, Theseus in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and Bartolo in *The Barber of Seville*. His concert credits include Handel's *Messiah*, Beethoven's Ninth



RICHARD BRADSHAW

Symphony and the Verdi Requiem. He was a recent winner of the Puccini Foundation Award from the West Palm Beach Opera Association.

Conductor **Richard Bradshaw** returns to the War Memorial podium for *Tosca*, a work he recently conducted in Edmonton. He made his American conducting debut with the Company leading the 1977 family performances of *Faust*; subsequent San Francisco Opera credits include the 1982 English-language performances of *The Marriage of Figaro*; *La Traviata* (1983 Fall Season); *Madama Butterfly* (1984 Fall); the family performances of *Falstaff* (1985); and, last year, *Eugene Onegin*. For Spring Opera Theater he conducted *La Traviata*, Handel's *Julius Caesar* and John Eaton's *The Cry of Clytaemnestra*, and he has led a wide variety of works for the Opera Center's Showcase series, including new works by Vivian Fine and John Harbison as well as Britten's *Rape of Lucretia*, Mozart's *Abduction from the Seraglio* and Handel's *Rodelinda*. A native of England, Bradshaw has appeared with most of the major British orchestras, including the London Philharmonic, the BBC Philharmonic, the Royal Philharmonic, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, the London Mozart Players and the City of London Sinfonia. From 1975 through 1977 he was chorus director at Glyndebourne, where he made his conducting debut last year with Monteverdi's *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, followed by *Porgy and Bess*. For the 1979 International Verdi Congress in Irvine, California, he led the original version of *La Forza del Destino*, a work he conducted in Seattle in 1984. He led the American premiere of Handel's *Tamerlano* at Indiana University, and won praise for the 1985 world premiere of Eaton's *The Tempest* at Santa Fe. In October of 1985, he



MATTHEW FARRUGGIO

inaugurated the Lincoln Center Opera-in-Concert series with Verdi's *Giovanna d'Arco* with Margaret Price, Sherrill Milnes and Carlo Bergonzi. Last year's engagements included opening the Hong Kong Performance Center with *Don Giovanni* and leading *The Rake's Progress* for Hawaii Opera Theater. Recent assignments have included *Otello* in Seattle, and his future plans include a new production of *Così fan tutte* for Santa Fe Opera; *Giovanna d'Arco* with Margaret Price in Frankfurt; and a new production of *Orpheus in the Underworld* for the Canadian Opera Company. His busy concert schedule includes orchestral engagements in the Far East, in addition to leading the Rotterdam Philharmonic in concerts of music by composers-in-residence Michael Tippett and Harrison Birtwistle.

In his 32nd season with San Francisco Opera, production supervisor **Matthew Farruggio** directs *Tosca*, a work he staged for the Fall Seasons of 1965, '82 and '85, and in 1962 for Spring Opera of San Francisco. In the fall of 1985, he directed *Madama Butterfly*, a work he had staged previously for 1965 Spring Opera, for the Merola Opera Program in 1963, '73 and '78, and for the Fall Seasons of 1968, '71 and '80. Other directing projects include *The Barber of Seville* (1965), *Rigoletto* (1966), *La Bohème* (1967 and '69), *Il Trovatore* (1975), *La Forza del Destino* (1976), *Faust* and *Aida* (1977), and *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Family performances 1981, and Summer 1986). He directed a number of Spring Opera productions in the War Memorial: *La Bohème* (1961 and '64); *Rigoletto* (1963 and '65); *Lucia di Lammermoor* and *Il Trovatore* (1966); *The Pearl Fishers* (1967); *The Abduction from the Seraglio* (1968), and *La Rondine* (1969). As a director of the Merola Opera Program, he coaches young



PIER LUIGI PIZZI

professional American singers in stage department and other aspects of opera performance, and has staged Merola productions of *Faust*, *The Tales of Hoffmann*, *Falstaff* and *Rigoletto*, in addition to directing the last-named work for Western Opera Theater. Farruggio's own performing career has included appearances on Broadway in *Lady in the Dark*, *One Touch of Venus* and *Call Me Mister*, and he has sung on the stages of the Metropolitan Opera, City Center Opera and the Lyric Opera of Chicago. A pioneer in early television opera projects, he studied production in Vienna and Salzburg. He has staged *Aida*, *Cavalleria Rusticana*, *Pagliacci* and *Girl of the Golden West* for the Utah Opera, and has also directed productions in Vancouver, Houston and Honolulu.

Internationally renowned director/designer **Pier Luigi Pizzi** designed the sets for *Tosca* in 1970 for the Lyric Opera of Chicago. He made his San Francisco Opera design debut with the 1971 production of *Maria Stuarda*, and his designs for *Simon Boccanegra* were seen here in 1975 and 1980. His first directing assignment for San Francisco Opera was recreating his production of *Semiramide*, originally seen at the 1980 Aix-en-Provence Festival, for the 1981 Fall Season. Last fall he earned fresh acclaim here with his highly praised *Macbeth*, originally conceived for the Théâtre Musical de Paris-Châtelet. His designs for sets and costumes have been seen for more than 20 years in many of the world's major operatic capitals, and in 1977 he directed his first production, *Don Giovanni*, in Turin. His 1978 staging of Vivaldi's *Orlando Furioso* in Verona was subsequently seen in Dallas in 1980 and in Paris in 1981. Among the many productions he has both

*continued on p.48*

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Text by LUIGI ILLICA and GIUSEPPE GIACOSA

Based on the drama *La Tosca* by VICTORIEN SARDOU

# Tosca

(in Italian)

*Conductor*

Richard Bradshaw

*Stage Director*

Matthew Farruggio

*Set Designer*

Pier Luigi Pizzi

*Costume Designer*

Martin Schlumpf

*Lighting Designer*

Joan Arhelger

*Sound Designer*

Roger Gans

*Chorus Director*

Ian Robertson

*Musical Preparation*

Christopher Larkin

Susanna Lemberskaya

Kathryn Cathcart

Ernest Fredric Knell

Mark Haffner

Joseph De Rugeriis

*Prompter*

Joseph De Rugeriis

*Assistant Stage Director*

Peter McClintock

*Stage Manager*

Jamie Call

San Francisco Boys Chorus

Louis Magor, Director

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Rome, January 14, 1900

First San Francisco Opera performance:

October 2, 1923

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SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10 AT 8:00

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 16 AT 8:00

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 22 AT 7:30

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25 AT 2:00

## CAST

(in order of appearance)

*Cesare Angelotti* Monte Pederson

*Sacristan* Eric Garrett

*Mario Cavaradossi* Ermanno Mauro

*Floria Tosca* Olivia Stapp

*Baron Scarpia* Alain Fondary\*\*

(Oct. 4, 7, 10, 16, 22)

Juan Pons

(Oct. 25)

*Spoletta* Dennis Petersen

*Sciarrone* Mark Delavan

*Voice of a shepherd* Jennifer Ellis

*Jailer* Peter Volpe

*Soldiers, police agents, priests, citizens*

\*\*American opera debut

TIME AND PLACE: Rome in June of 1800

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

INTERMISSION

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

INTERMISSION

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

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American Express.

Supertitles by Francesca Zambello, 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 two hours and forty-five minutes.*

# Tosca/Synopsis

## ACT I

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

## ACT II

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

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

## ACT III

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

# Tosca

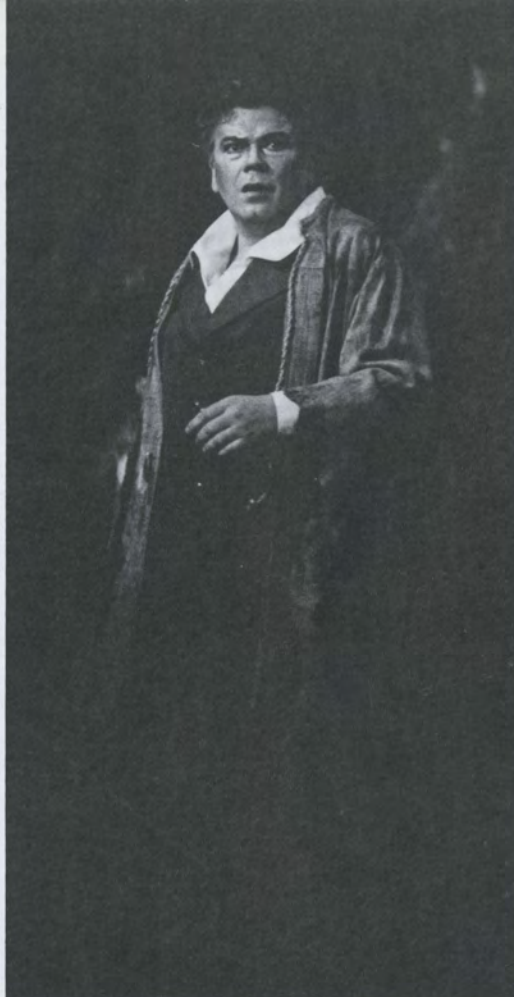
Photos taken in rehearsal by Marty Sohl



*Olivia Stapp*



*Monte Pederson*



*Ermanno Mauro*



*Eric Garrett*



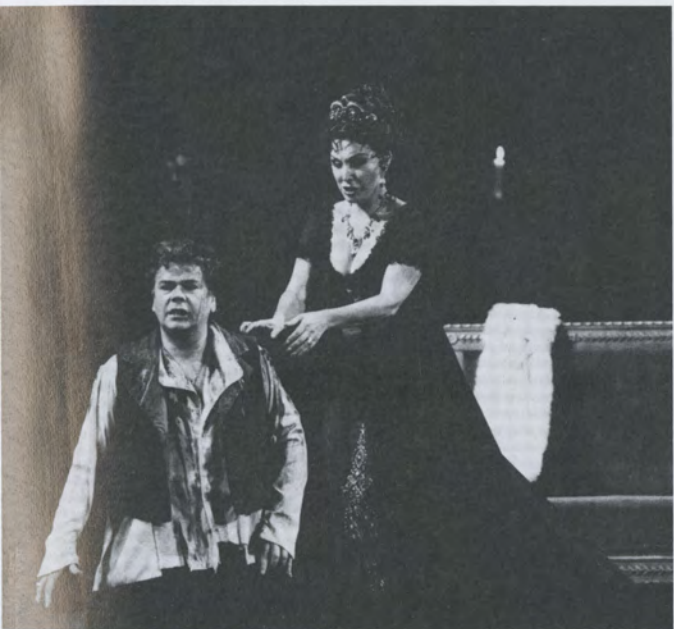
*Alain Fondary, Eric Garrett, San Francisco Boys Chorus, San Francisco Opera Chorus*



*Alain Fondary, Olivia Stapp*



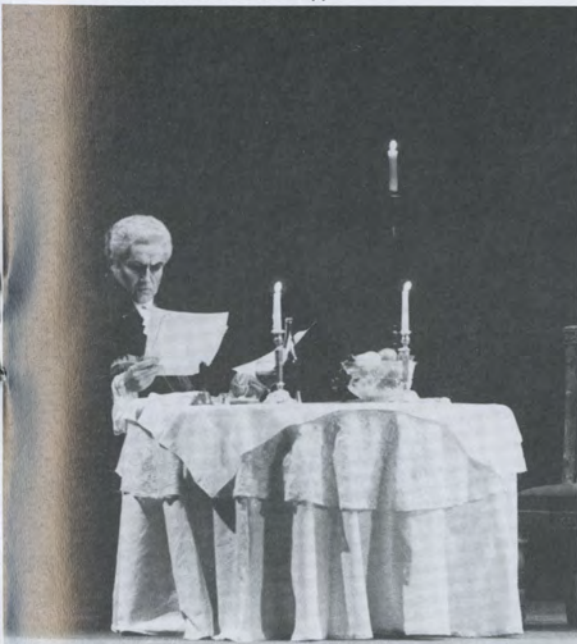
*Alain Fondary, Olivia Stapp*



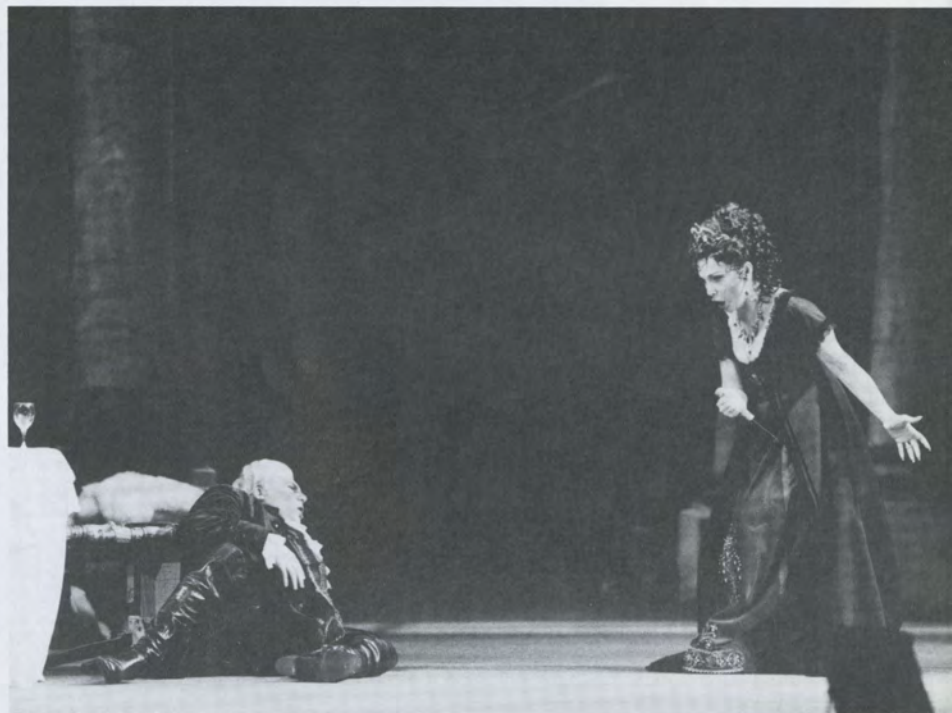
*Ermanno Mauro, Olivia Stapp*



*Mark Delavan, Alain Fondary, Dennis Petersen*



*Alain Fondary*



*Alain Fondary, Olivia Stapp*



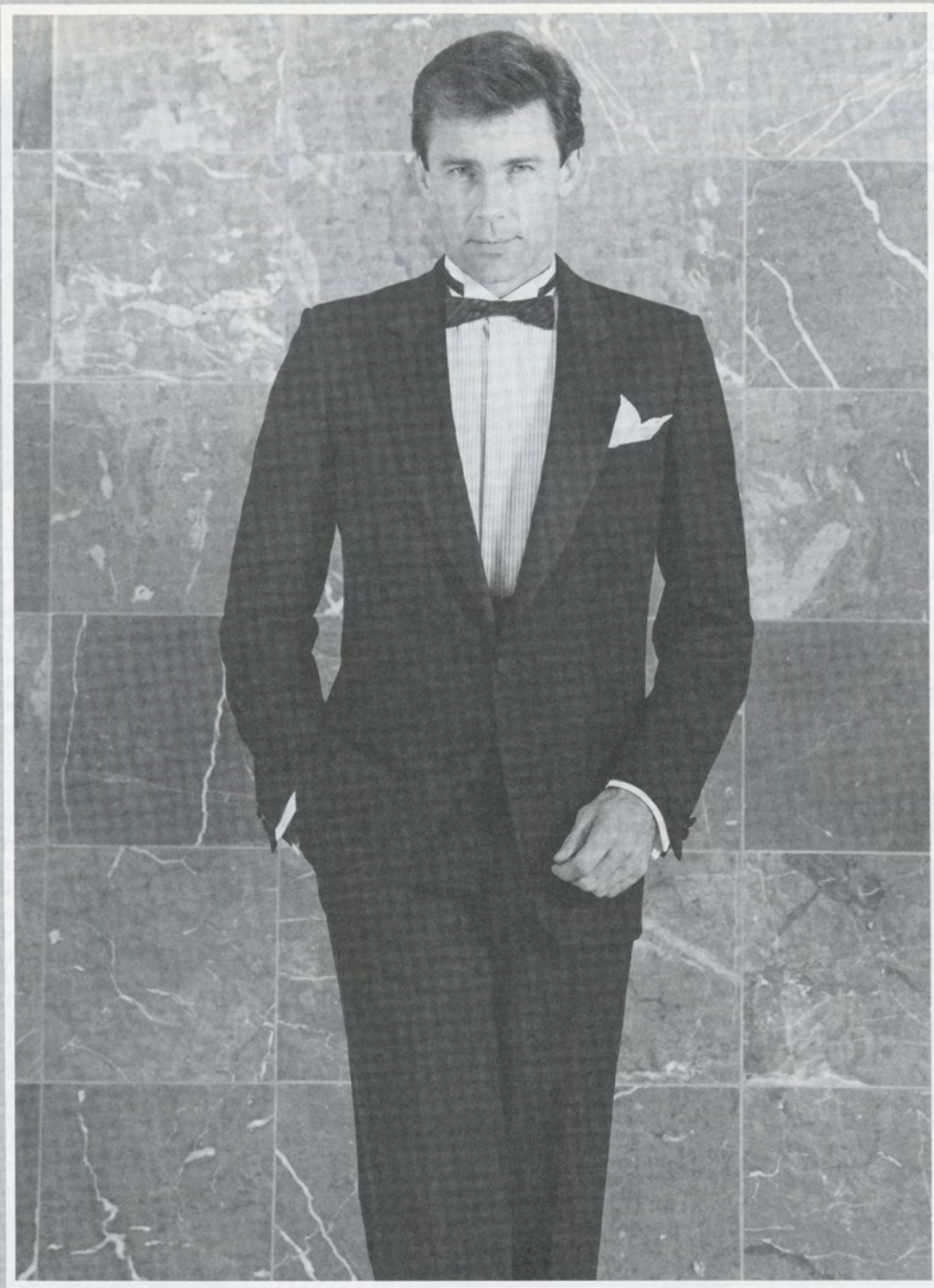
*Olivia Stapp, Ermanno Mauro*



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JOAN ARHELGER

*continued from p.39*

designed and directed are Verdi's *I Masnadieri* and *I Due Foscari* and Handel's *Ariodante* for La Scala; *Khovanshchina* in Geneva and at the Théâtre Musical de Paris-Châtelet; Gluck's *Alceste* in Geneva and at the Paris Opera; Rameau's *Hippolyte et Aricie* for the Paris Opéra-Comique and Aix-en-Provence Festival; *Les Indes Galantes* at Venice and Paris; Handel's *Rinaldo* at Reggio Emilia and Paris; Rossini's *L'Assedio di Corinto* and Verdi's *Don Carlos* in Florence; *La Clemenza di Tito*, Bach's *St. John Passion*, and Verdi's *Stiffelio* and *Aroldo* at Venice; *Salome*, *Dido and Aeneas* with the *Ode for St. Cecilia's Day* in Reggio Emilia; and *La Battaglia di Legnano* and *The Devils of Loudon* for the Rome Opera. His credits at the Rossini Opera Festival in Pesaro have included *Mosè in Egitto*, *Tancredi*, *Maometto II*, *Bianca e Faliero* and *Le Comte Ory*. His new production of *Aida*, which opens Houston Grand Opera's first season in the new Wortham Theater Center this fall, is about to be the subject of a national telecast.

San Francisco Opera Associate Lighting Designer **Joan Arhelger** is lighting director for *The Barber of Seville*, lighting supervisor for *The Queen of Spades*, and lighting designer for *Tosca* and *Fidelio*. Since 1983, when she joined the Company, she has been responsible for the lighting of *Manon Lescaut*, *La Traviata*, *La Sonnambula*, *L'Elisir d'Amore*, *Anna Bolena*, *Werther*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, *The Medium* and *Le Nozze di Figaro*, in addition to serving as lighting supervisor for the entire 1986 Summer Season. Her opera credits in lighting design include productions for Wolf Trap Company, and the opera companies of Louisville, Fort Worth, New Orleans, Pittsburgh, Omaha, Seattle, Anchorage, and repertory seasons with the Kansas City Lyric Opera and the Central City Opera. Her work has been seen locally in Bill Irwin's *In Regard of Flight* (featured on the PBS *Great Performances* series), and with numerous dance companies, including the Bay Area Dance Coalition's "Dancemakers '82" Festival in Herbst Theatre. A student of Gilbert Hemsley, Miss Arhelger served as assistant lighting designer for American presentations by the Ballet Nacional de Cuba, the Stuttgart Ballet, the Bolshoi Opera and the Berlin Opera. For five seasons, she was the resident lighting assistant for Washington Opera at the Kennedy Center.

**Tosca as Drama**  
continued from p.32

duct nature and—by telling the meadows to bloom, the breezes to fan her, the stars to rain down desires—to unite its impulses with her own, like Otello bes-  
triding the whirlwind or describing the glow of Venus in the air. But she's deploy-  
ing the imagery and the musical enchant-  
ment for her own ends. She sings, as Mario points out when he calls her a siren, to compel him, to make him an accomplice of her will.

The cantata also ventures a morally conventional use of music, only to com-  
promise it. Its words describe the human voice raised in hymnal devotion to implore the King of Kings. And the Sacristan has already hailed the Annunciation as the advent of a word that is made flesh when nourished by the Virgin—"Et verbum caro factum est." But can these attestations of faith be trusted? The monarchy the cantata is flattering isn't the one on high it refers to but a political imposi-  
tion—the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, reestablished when Angelotti's Roman Republic was overthrown, or the iniqui-  
tous rule of the Neapolitan Bourbons. For the occasion honors Queen Caroline, sister of Marie Antoinette. And despite the choral praise for "Tuman canticò" and its humble beseeching of the Deity, the



Tito Gobbi as Baron Scarpia in Tosca. San Francisco Opera, 1960.

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NORTON



Dorothy Kirsten taking curtain calls after a performance of *Tosca* in 1970. That season, the soprano was celebrating her silver anniversary with the San Francisco Opera. Mme. Kirsten sang the first *Tosca* of her career with the Company in 1951.

voice that the composition exists to show off is that of Tosca. The chorus sings of a politicized "Iddio della vittoria," the God who's on the side of the big battalions, while Tosca celebrates a small, vainglorious victory of her own: the operative glory of the single voice overtopping the massed community.

No wonder Scarpia, intent on his own vocal and dramatic supremacy, abruptly cancels her triumph by slamming shut the window. But she doesn't permit him the last word, and in her final duet with Mario she revises the text of the cantata. Now, instead of employing their voices to appeal to God, they have themselves been promoted to gods of the operatic kind, joined in the "celesti sfera" and inundating the world with "armonie di canti," the rapturous music of their love.

Kerman is especially impatient with the Shepherd's song and the interlude of matin bells in the third act, citing this passage as "one of the most undramatic things in opera." In fact it has a quite deliberate dramatic function: to summarize the operatic transvaluing of religious values that has preceded. The Shepherd is an invisible voice, like Tosca outside the church in the first act or outside the window in the second. Like her, he manages to perform even in his own absence, for he too is an actor. How can he, with his unbroken voice, have experienced the languishing erotic and poetic emotions he sings of? The montage of bells is equally necessary. The first to be heard are those of the sheep, gradually joined by the babble of church chimes. On the uncoordinated sounds of nature are superimposed those of society, with its formal and punctual religious observances; on these, finally, in another operatic imposition of will, is imposed the single bell that tolls for Mario and announces, rather than matins and the chill dawn, his memory of that perfumed evening of passion—"rather warm," Kerman coolly notes of its erotic temperature. Shocking *Tosca* certainly still is, but never meretriciously so. It's remarkable for the honesty with which it confides the secrets of Puccini's creative neurosis and—as it daringly profanes the sacred—of the unregenerate bad faith that is the official creed of opera. ■

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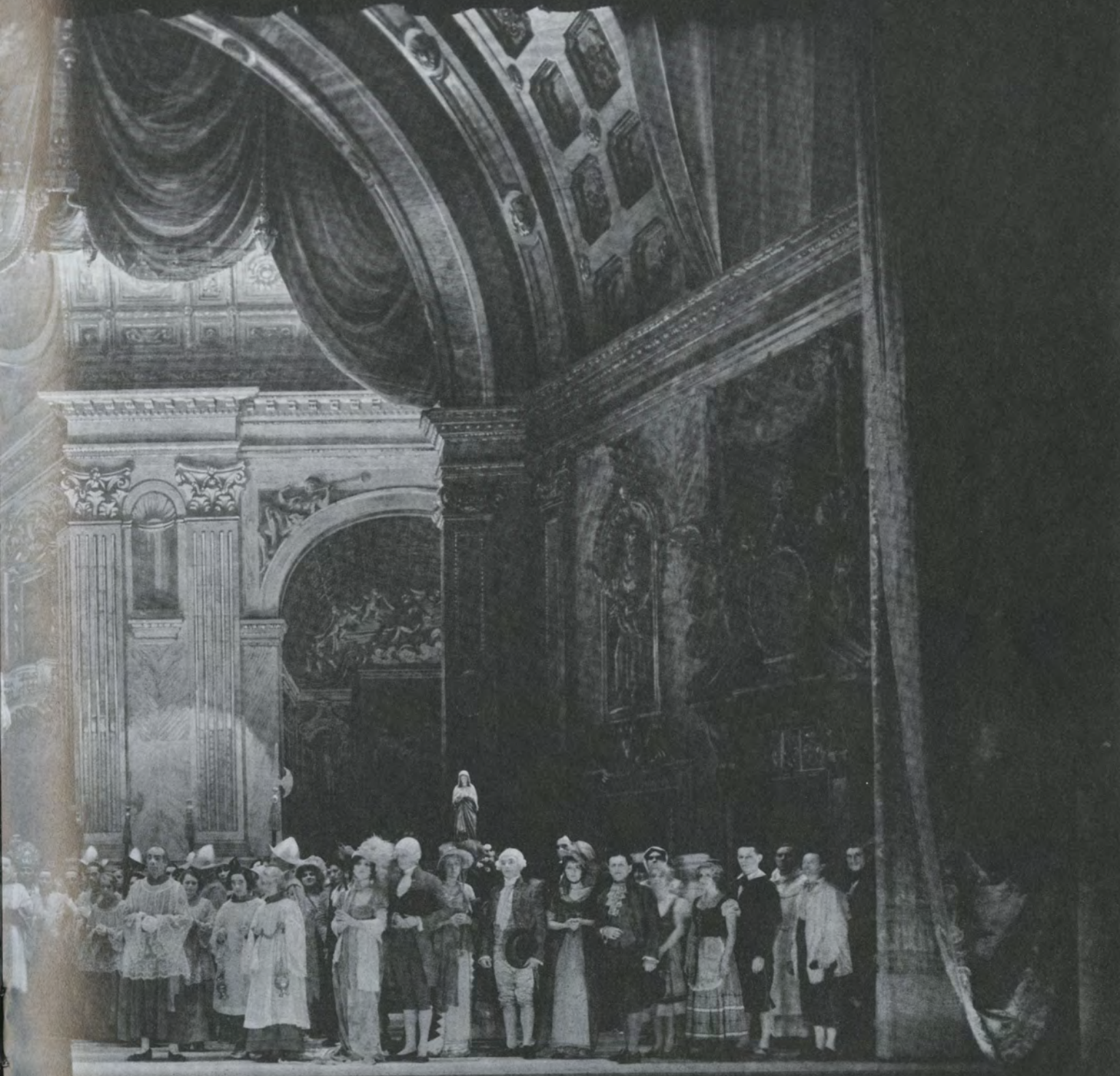
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*Tosca was the opera that inaugurated the War Memorial Opera House on October 15, 1932. This formal portrait was taken during the final dress rehearsal and it shows Alfredo Gandolfi as Scarpia with the choristers and supernumeraries at the end of Act I.*

MORTON

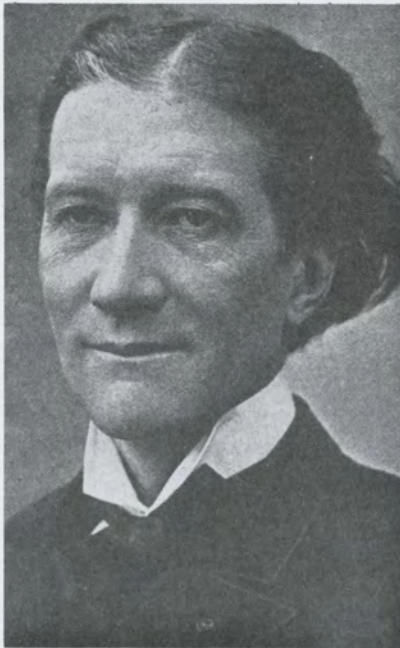


# La Tosca becomes Tosca

By GEORGE R. MAREK

The French poetic drama reached its height with the burning, perfectly shaped, preternatural plays of Racine—*Bérénice*, *Iphigénie*, *Phèdre*—of which he himself wrote that they were “more significant than ordinary life,” that they dealt with life on a plane of high decorum, at all moments fully responsive to the obligations of nobility. These plays had to be heard with sensitive ears and a mind attuned to their music. They were and are untranslatable, and they were not easy entertainment. Far from it! They demanded work and cogitation on the part of the audience. But they were worth it. They disclosed the mystery of the suffering. Racine died in 1699.

More than two and a half centuries later, the French theater had descended to “realism.” At the time when the bourgeois industrialist, his stomach filled, his paunch expanding, the troubles with his



Victorien Sardou, 1831-1908.



Sarah Bernhardt as Floria Tosca in the Sardou play. The photo was taken in the late 1890s.

The late George Marek is the author of numerous books, including biographies of Giacomo Puccini, Ludwig van Beethoven, Felix Mendelssohn, Richard Strauss and Arturo Toscanini.

daughter continuing, his wife restless, his laborers beginning to be recalcitrant, at a time as well when he heard of a new book, *Das Kapital*, which he refused to read, he wanted evening entertainment that made no demands on his imagination or forensic ability. Of course there were exceptions, but in the main the "well-made play" was the criterion by which theatrical fare was judged. The theater had lost nothing of its popularity—indeed, it was more popular than ever—but it had become domesticized. Certainly, some romantic flights still existed, remnants of Victor Hugo and Alfred de Musset, but largely the well-made play took over. It was as carefully put together as the works of a watch. It had to explain in the exposition cause and effect, and spell out the background. Usually each act built to a climax of a crisis known to the audience but unknown to the characters. This was the "confrontation scene." Even the scenery had to be realistic, drapes of velvet, chairs covered in fine silk, real wine served on stage, though not necessarily of first quality. Scenes of love or seduction or sexual betrayal were obligatory. At eleven o'clock everything came out right—or wrong—in the "resolution scene," and everybody rushed for the *garderobe* and for supper.

In a word, these plays "ticked," with the playwrights doing the work, not the audiences. The audiences didn't need to think. Where was the poetry? Where was Racine's verbal music? Forgotten. Even Molière's wit seemed old-fashioned.

The two most successful practitioners of the well-made play were Eugène Scribe and Victorien Sardou. Sardou was sixty years younger than Scribe, who was born in 1791 and was possibly the more talented, but both had long lives, and both furnished composers with no end of serviceable opera projects, Scribe for Meyerbeer, Sardou for Puccini and Giordano. Scribe's best play was *A Glass of Water*, which I saw performed when I was young. A typical Sardou play bears the title *Let's Get a Divorce*. It deals with a bored young housewife. Her cousin tells her the divorce law is to be liberalized and proposes that he become her lover. Under the new law she would soon become his wife. Her husband encourages the plan, for reasons of his own. In the end everything is straightened out, and the errant wife returns to her husband.

A further stroke of luck was the



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May 7, 1889

Dearest Signor Giulio:

After two or three days of bucolic idleness, so that I might rest from all the exertions I have undergone, I realize that my desire for work, instead of diminishing, has returned more strongly than ever. I am thinking of *La Tosca*. I implore you to take the necessary steps in order to obtain Sardou's permission. If we had to abandon this idea, it would grieve me exceedingly. In this *Tosca* I see the opera that exactly suits me, one without excessive proportions, one that is a decorative spectacle, that gives opportunity for an abundance of music.

But after that, Puccini turned to *Manon Lescaut* and *La Bohème*, and it wasn't until six years later that the composer renewed his question. What about *La Tosca*? In the meantime, Ricordi had turned the proposal over to another of his composers, Alberto Franchetti, and the publisher was faced with a pretty problem: his money-making composer, second in importance only to Verdi, now wanted *La Tosca*. He wanted it badly, and what Giacomo wanted Giacomo got. Ricordi persuaded Franchetti the play would not make a suitable libretto, using various specious arguments—"too complicated, too political"—arguments he himself did not believe. It was hardly a moral action.



Giulio Ricordi, 1840-1912.

A page of Puccini's manuscript for Act II of *Tosca*.

presence of two brilliant actresses, among the greatest who ever lived, diametrically different. Sarah Bernhardt, with her flaming red hair, was the prime example of the "temperamental" actress. Her voice was likened to a carillon, she had many lovers, she stormed and fainted at will, she was supposed to demand that her fee—which was enormous—be paid in gold coins, and to prefer to sleep in a coffin. Eleonora Duse was a recluse, in love with

Gabriele D'Annunzio, who wrote embroidered plays for her; slim, conveying emotions with very little movement and eyes filled with inner fire. Bernhardt and Duse appeared in Sardou plays, including *Tosca*.

The reason Sardou is remembered today is a single one: *Tosca*. Early in his career, after the premiere of his opera *Edgar*, Puccini wrote to his friend and publisher, Giulio Ricordi:



Alphonse Mucha's poster for La Tosca with Sarah Bernhardt, 1899.

Franchetti went home, pondered, came back and said, all right, I give up *La Tosca*. The next day Puccini grabbed it. The crowd let go of the bit of cheese, and the fox snapped it up.

Now came the question—would Sardou give his permission? And how much would that cost? Negotiations began at 50,000 francs, an impossible figure. Puccini packed his bag and went to see Sardou, not once but several times. Sardou wanted to hear some of the music Puccini had composed for *Tosca*. He had as yet composed none, so he played excerpts from *Manon Lescaut* and *La Bohème* and pretended they were destined for *Tosca*. Sardou was satisfied. Then Puccini wrote to Ricordi:

Paris, January 13, 1899

This morning I was at Sardou's for an hour. He told me he did not like certain details of the finale. He wanted Floria Tosca dead at all costs [on the stage], poor woman! Now that the sun of the executioner Deibler [head executioner of France, who had just died] has set, the Magician [Sardou] wants to be his successor. But I certainly do not agree with him. He admits Tosca is over-



Eleonora Duse, 1859-1924.

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Lotte Lehmann as *Tosca* at the San Francisco Opera in 1934.

whelmed by madness [in the final moment], yet he would like her to swoon and expire like a bird. Then, in the revival that Sarah Bernhardt will play in a few days, Sardou has introduced a huge flag, fluttering and flashing from the top of the Castello, which, according to him, will make a wonderful effect. He is so taken up with that flag that he is more interested in it than in the play itself. But I am still holding out for my finale with the cry "Scarpia, before God!" [closing words of the opera] and the jump from the parapet. Speaking of the parapet, Sardou sketched the scenery [a sketch that Puccini kept and treasured], and in this sketch Sardou wants the course of the Tiber to be visible, passing between St. Peter's and the Castello. I pointed out to him that the *flumen* flows on the other side, but he, calm as a fish, replied, "That's of no importance." A nice fellow, all life and fire, but full of historic-topographical-panoramic inexactitudes.

... On Saturday morning I have to go and see Sardou again—so the Magician has decreed. Perhaps he will insist on killing Spoletta! We shall see.

Puccini did get *La Tosca*. With his instinct for the theatrical he recognized that, to quote Sardou, "A play that has been given 3,000 times is always right."

Yes, *La Tosca* is an example of a "well-made" play. The background is immediately sketched for the audience, the danger indicated, the Sacristan introduced as an untrustworthy fellow (it isn't Sardou's fault that he is usually acted as a silly, limping comic), Tosca's jealousy motivated. The scene with Scarpia is an "I know" scene, the audience knowing where Angelotti is while Scarpia does not; his preparation of the trap is obvious. The second act is largely the "confrontation scene," heavily spiced with lust and violence, leading to Scarpia's knifing, the climax of the play. This occurs where a climax is expected, at the second fall of the curtain. The dénouement, Cavaradossi's execution and Tosca's suicide, ends the well-made play with all the principals dead. Everything is "resolved."

Effectively though *La Tosca* served Puccini, it is a manufactured article. Sardou at best was a manufacturer, not a



Stella Roman as Tosca and Charles Kullman as Cavaradossi in San Francisco Opera's 1941 staging of Tosca.



Lawrence Tibbett as Baron Scarpia at the San Francisco Opera in 1936.

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Renata Tebaldi and Jussi Bjoerling appeared with the San Francisco Opera in *Tosca* in 1956. The photo was taken during the second act curtain calls.

poet. With all its orotund words, it lacks inner passion. It is cold. It lacks true tragedy. *The Cherry Orchard*, a quiet and superb comedy, contains more tragedy. So does Strindberg's *The Ghost Sonata*, a faulty play. Or Ibsen's *The Master Builder*, *A Doll's House*, *The Wild Duck*, *The Lady from the Sea*, *Hedda Gabler*. All leave something for the audience to work out; all enlist the imagination. In *La Tosca* everything is spelled out, though adroitly, to be sure. The play can make a tolerable evening, and the opera does make an exciting evening, as all of us know, if the cast contains a Callas and Gobbi, or a Tebaldi and Warren.

Though a line has been traced from Scribe and Sardou to Henrik Ibsen, the difference is great. Surface skill does not suffice. Who would really remember the play *La Tosca* without Puccini's music? The well-made play is as obsolete as the collapsible opera hat. Sardou and Scribe remain chiefly as listings in a theater encyclopedia. ■

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# Company Profiles: Marilyn Wilson

This on-going series of interviews introduces our readers to a cross-section of San Francisco Opera Company members who never get to take a curtain call, but whose activities are very important in the process of making opera happen.

"San Francisco Opera."

"Is this where I can get tickets for the Placido Domingo concert?"

"This is where you can order tickets, but we're presenting Domingo in an opera, not a concert this year. But those performances are all sold out."

"So how can I get tickets?"

"We still have good seats for the last two performances of that opera, with Luis Lima."

"No, I mean tickets for the Domingo concert."

"The seats are all sold, but standing room does go on sale two hours before each performance. But best to be there early for Domingo."

"Yeah, Domingo. How do I get tickets to see him?"

"I'm sorry, sir, but as I've said, those performances are sold out. I should tell you that returned tickets do go on sale at the box office as they're called in. But we don't expect many for the Domingo performances."

"But I just need a pair."

One call among hundreds in a long day in the phone room, a second-story establishment south of Market Street that may be one of the last workplaces in San Francisco in which heavy smoking is not only permitted but nearly *de rigueur*. The work climate, to use a dignified term, has some of the flavor of an Ida Lupino women's prison movie, six women slaving away in a room secured by a metal grate. But there are some important differences. The six get along; they like being busy; and they think the "warden" is swell.

That would be phone room supervisor Marilyn Wilson.

"We all get along," Wilson huffs through a lit cigarette, her left hand on a calculator and her right noting the day's sale tallies. Groucho Marx could have learned from Marilyn Wilson about delivering a one-liner through a blast of smoking tobacco.

"Not that we'd have to. At peak times like this—individual tickets just went on sale this morning—we just sit in this room all day long, talking to other people. Six of us take calls on 16 lines. No one's heard of lunch. You've got to have a warped personality to do it, and we all recognize that. Face it. This is just not a regular office atmosphere."

Indeed.

"The thing you've got to know is, there's hardly any turnover around here. There are three of us fulltime and three of

us part-time. The opera's had this phone room for seven years, and that's how long most of us have been here."

No one is happier than "the opera." At this point in its garrulous life, the phone room, the official adjunct to the company's box office, is responsible for "at least" half of the company's single ticket sales. "Last year we did \$2,034,694.75 in sales," Wilson reports after a fact check clocked at 17 seconds.

Wilson harbors no illusions about her staff's sales techniques. "We get calls

because we're the first number listed under San Francisco Opera in the phone book." Nor does she elaborate about the secrets of their success. "We like to be busy. People ask us about burnout, but this is a no-stress job. If you want to see stress, drop by when there's nothing going on and we break out the board games. Not pretty. We'd rather be busy."

Ironically, one of the biggest "problems" for the phone room operators is the sophistication of much of the San Francisco Opera audience. The lion's share of



Marilyn Wilson in the San Francisco Opera Phone Room, in the act of taking down a customer's order.

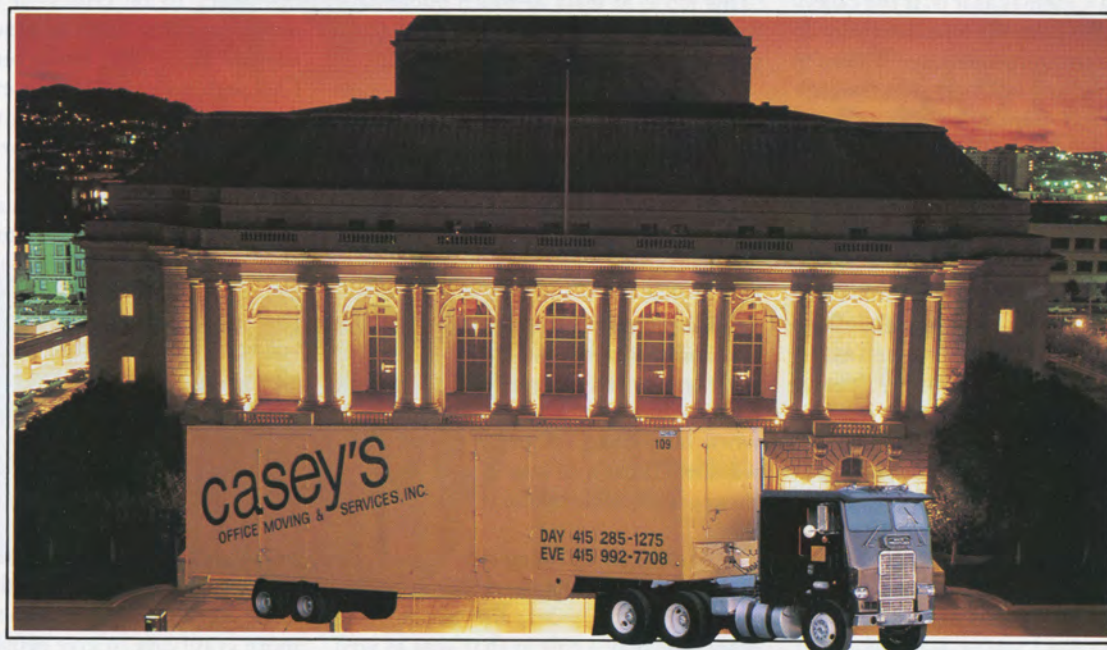
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San Francisco Opera's Phone Room staff: (L. to r.) Jennifer Dash, Marilyn Wilson, Ruth Van Slyke, Laurie Ferguson, Marie Zahler and Evelyn Zahler.

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the calls come from patrons who are keenly aware of what's going on, sometimes knowing about cast changes before phone room operators are apprised of them. Predictably, it's the offbeat calls that keep the job interesting.

"You name it, we get it," Wilson muses with a truncated sigh. "We get people who are ordering tickets for early December in July—and they want to know when the first intermission is, and how long the show lasts. Why? Are we booking our baby sitters six months in advance?"

They get other questions, too. "We get lots of calls from out of town, and people want to know where to stay here. How should we know? We live here. And there are endless questions about restaurants. We hear things, like everyone else, and we're happy to pass along what we hear. But it's not like we lunch in Civic Center. We're lucky to eat at all, let alone out.

"Sometimes when people call about tickets for a sold-out performance, they're not interested in the other dates for that show. So they ask about what else is going on in town. I try to keep track of what good movies are around. God knows, we get enough calls about what's playing at Opera Plaza Cinemas as it is. If the callers are nice and we have the time, we really do try to make recommendations. If they're obnoxious, we just tell them that the pink section in next Sunday's paper will tell them everything they'll want to know."

"Some people get the idea that you have to be nasty to get what you want over the phone," one of Wilson's assistants chimes in from across the room. "This is a major fallacy." Crank calls, obscene calls, and abusive language all are reasons for hanging up, the women agree.

But there are surprisingly few of those—and just enough wacky ones to keep things interesting. People call the phone room to find out what's playing at the Met—and sometimes at opera houses in Europe as well. It's the wrong place to ask, less because of the company affiliation than for another reason: "None of us knows opera, or goes to the opera much. Needless to say, we've learned a fair amount about it from working here, like who the singers are and which of them are hot. But fans? No. Not us. For my part, I'm convinced that every opera singer in the world is really named Mary Jones, and they've all changed their names just to



Marilyn Wilson.

make my life miserable."

Patrons also have called to inquire whether they have to dress formally if they have tickets in the Dress Circle—and even to ask what kind of wax the Opera House uses on its tile floors. "We can't just laugh these things off," Wilson replies. "This job is at least as much public relations as it is marketing. Let's face it, we're the voice of San Francisco Opera."

When the Bolshoi Ballet performed here this summer, the phones rang furiously. "What saved us in that one was when one patron asked what night Gorbachev was dancing. Otherwise, it was fairly grim, since all those seats were sold by mail-order. It's hard having to tell people that there simply are no tickets—and harder yet when people don't believe you and think they just have to find the right way to ask the question to get what they want. It's the reason I'd much rather work here than behind the box office window. There's no way I'd want to look at these people while telling them I can't help them."

Although subscription series are handled through the main box office, and mostly by mail order, the phone room crew does play a role in that area as well. As availability permits, they can sell subscription series after single seats go on sale. And, of course, they're usually the ones called by patrons who have missed mail order deadlines. "When they've missed a deadline, people call in and you

get their whole life's story. Mostly, they've all just gotten back from Europe. If that were true as often as it's claimed, there wouldn't be any people on the streets of San Francisco just before those cutoff dates!"

The public also often wants the operators to be critics—a role they're understandably loath to assume. "I usually say that I don't know because I go to final performances, for the excitement of it. But of course we sometimes do hear things here, and read reviews."

Fortunately for the operators' morale, they are most often able to oblige eager patrons. For the first time this year, the company tried a marketing strategy of selling Triplets, mini-seasons made up of three operas each. "Triplets went gangbusters," Wilson recalls, eyebrows arching heavenward. "By noon the first day we couldn't remember our own names, and by the end of the first day we'd done \$136,000 of business. It was heavy alright, but just the kind of business we like to do.

"Our best days are the busy days, because the time goes fast. And even though we can go home at the end of the day and leave our work here, it's a lot more gratifying to give people what they want and make them happy. Happy people are the ones that we know we're going to hear from again, and if there's one thing we're perfectly clear about, it's that the buck stops here." ■

—Timothy Pfaff

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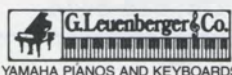
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# 1987 Opera Previews

Information on opera previews and lectures is carried in *San Francisco Opera Magazine* in order to enable patrons to make advance plans. The following is a list of previews and lectures that are open to the public.

## SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD INSIGHTS

Held in Herbst Theatre, Veterans Building, 401 Van Ness Ave., in San Francisco. All informal discussions begin at 6 p.m.; doors open at 5:30 p.m. Series subscription for Guild members is \$16; non-members \$20. Individual tickets may be purchased at the door for \$8. For further information, please call (415) 565-6432. Programs are subject to change.

James McCracken, Paul Plishka 10/19  
and Thomas Stewart  
Tracy Dahl, Nancy Gustafson, 11/4  
Mary Jane Johnson and Lotfi Mansouri

## SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD PREVIEWS

### MARIN

Previews held at Park School Auditorium, 360 E. Blithedale, Mill Valley; refreshments served at 7:30 p.m., previews at 8 p.m. Series registration is \$25 for 6 previews (\$20 for students and seniors). Single tickets are \$5 (\$4 for students and seniors). For further information, please call (415) 453-4483 or (415) 388-6789.

*Fidelio* 10/8  
James Keolker  
*Nabucco* 10/29  
George Martin  
*The Tales of Hoffmann* 11/5  
Michael Mitchell  
*Roméo et Juliette* 11/12  
George Jellinek

### SOUTH PENINSULA

Previews held at the Palo Alto Senior Center, 450 Bryant, at 8 p.m. Gala held at the Palo Alto Cultural Center, 1313 Newell Rd. Series registration is \$22 (students \$11); single tickets are \$5 (students \$3). Gala tickets \$12.50. For

further information, please call (415) 941-3890.

*Fidelio* 10/6  
James Keolker  
*Nabucco* 10/27  
George Martin  
*The Tales of Hoffmann* 11/3  
Michael Mitchell  
*Roméo et Juliette* 11/10  
George Jellinek

## SAN JOSE OPERA GUILD

Previews held at the Villa Montalvo Center for the Arts, 15400 Montalvo Rd., in Saratoga, at 10 a.m. Series is open to the public at a cost of \$5 per lecture; \$2 for students and senior citizens (free of charge to San Jose Opera Guild members and members of Montalvo). For further information, please call (408) 741-1331.

*Fidelio* 10/9  
James Keolker  
*Nabucco* 10/30  
George Martin  
*The Tales of Hoffmann* 11/6  
Michael Mitchell  
*Roméo et Juliette* 11/13  
George Jellinek

## SONOMA COUNTY CHAPTER

Previews held at various times and locations (see below). Series registration is \$22 for 6 previews (chapter member); \$25 non-member. Single tickets (member) \$5, non-member \$6, students \$3. For further information, reservations and the charge for receptions and luncheons, please call (707) 938-2432 or (707) 539-2730.

*Fidelio* 10/5, 2 p.m.; (Wine and cheese following preview)  
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*Nabucco* 10/26, 10:30 a.m.; (Luncheon  
 George Martin following preview)  
 Sonoma Hotel  
 W. Spain & 1st St. West, Sonoma

*The Tales of Hoffmann* 11/2, 7:30 p.m.  
 Michael Mitchell (Refreshments served  
 following preview)  
 1000 Buckeye Rd., Kenwood

*Roméo et Juliette* 11/9, 10:30 a.m.;  
 George Jellinek (Buffet luncheon  
 following preview)  
 510—2nd St. East, Sonoma

**JUNIOR LEAGUE OPERA PREVIEWS**  
 All Junior League opera previews held in  
 Herbst Theatre, Veterans Building, 401  
 Van Ness Ave., San Francisco. Lectures  
 begin at noon and there is no admission  
 charge. For further information, please  
 call (415) 621-1674, or (415) 331-1036.

*Fidelio* 10/7  
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*The Tales of Hoffmann* 11/4  
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*Roméo et Juliette* 11/11  
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The Making of an Opera/*Fidelio* 11/16  
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**OPERA EDUCATION  
 INTERNATIONAL PREVIEW SERIES**  
 Previews of the operas of the 1987 Fall  
 Season will be given by Michael Barclay,  
 director of Opera Education Interna-  
 tional. Lectures will be presented in the  
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nut St. (at Rose) in Berkeley, at 7:45 p.m.  
 Admission to the series of 7 opera  
 previews is \$36; individual admission at  
 the door is \$6. For further information,  
 please call (415) 526-5244.

*The Tales of Hoffmann* 10/5  
*Roméo et Juliette* 10/12  
*The Queen of Spades* 11/16

**FRIENDS OF THE  
 KENSINGTON LIBRARY**  
 A free lecture entitled "The World of  
 Offenbach and the Truth About Hof-  
 fmann" will be given by Michael Barclay  
 on November 6 at 7:30 p.m. at the  
 Kensington Library, 61 Arlington Ave.,  
 Kensington. For further information,  
 please call (415) 524-3043.

**MERRITT COLLEGE  
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 Merritt College is offering an opera  
 preview class, Introduction to Opera  
 (Music 16), with emphasis on the operas  
 of the Fall Season, on Tuesday evenings  
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 enrollment fee is \$15. Classes will be  
 held at the College, 12500 Campus  
 Drive, Building R, Room 125, in Oak-  
 land. For further information, please  
 call (415) 436-2425.

**ROBERT GOODHUE'S  
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 November 16 at 6:30 p.m., and Satur-  
 days from August 29 to November 21 at  
 2:00 p.m. Cost for the series of 10  
 previews is \$70; individual previews are  
 \$12. Location: 13 Columbus, San Fran-  
 cisco. For further information, please  
 call (415) 956-1271.



## Services

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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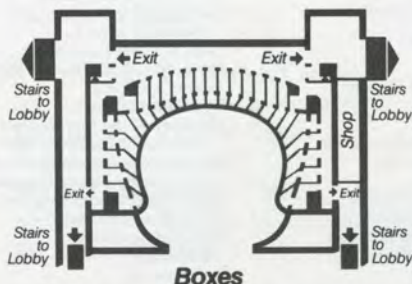
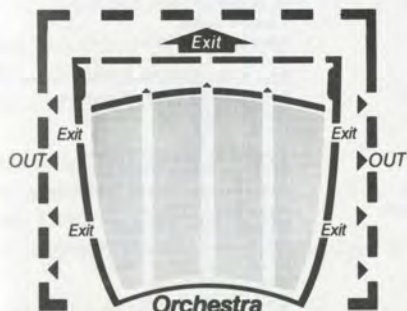
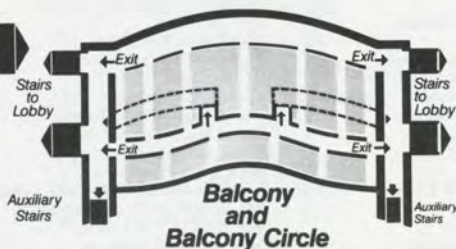
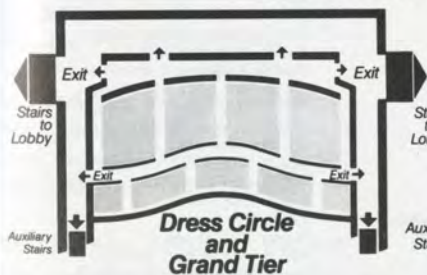
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The Medallion Society, the premier group of the San Francisco Opera family, plays a vital role in maintaining the company's stature as one of the world's leading opera companies. The generosity of Medallion Society members helps to ensure the fiscal stability necessary for the production of world-class opera, season after season.

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