

L'Africaine

1988

Friday, September 9, 1988 7:00 PM
Tuesday, September 13, 1988 7:30 PM
Friday, September 16, 1988 8:00 PM
Sunday, September 18, 1988 2:00 PM
Wednesday, September 21, 1988 7:30 PM*
Saturday, September 24, 1988 8:00 PM*
Tuesday, September 27, 1988 8:00 PM*

*These performances are being taped for a future telecast.
Lighting will be augmented accordingly.

SFO_PUB_01_SFO_1988_01

Publications Collection

San Francisco Opera Archives

San Francisco Opera

The background of the cover is a classical-style painting of a lush tropical landscape. In the foreground, there are large, detailed palm trees with fan-like fronds. A river flows through the middle ground, with a small boat or structure visible on its surface. The background shows a dense forest covering a hillside, with light filtering through the trees, creating a hazy, atmospheric effect. The overall color palette is dominated by greens, browns, and warm, golden tones.

1988 SEASON

L'Africaine

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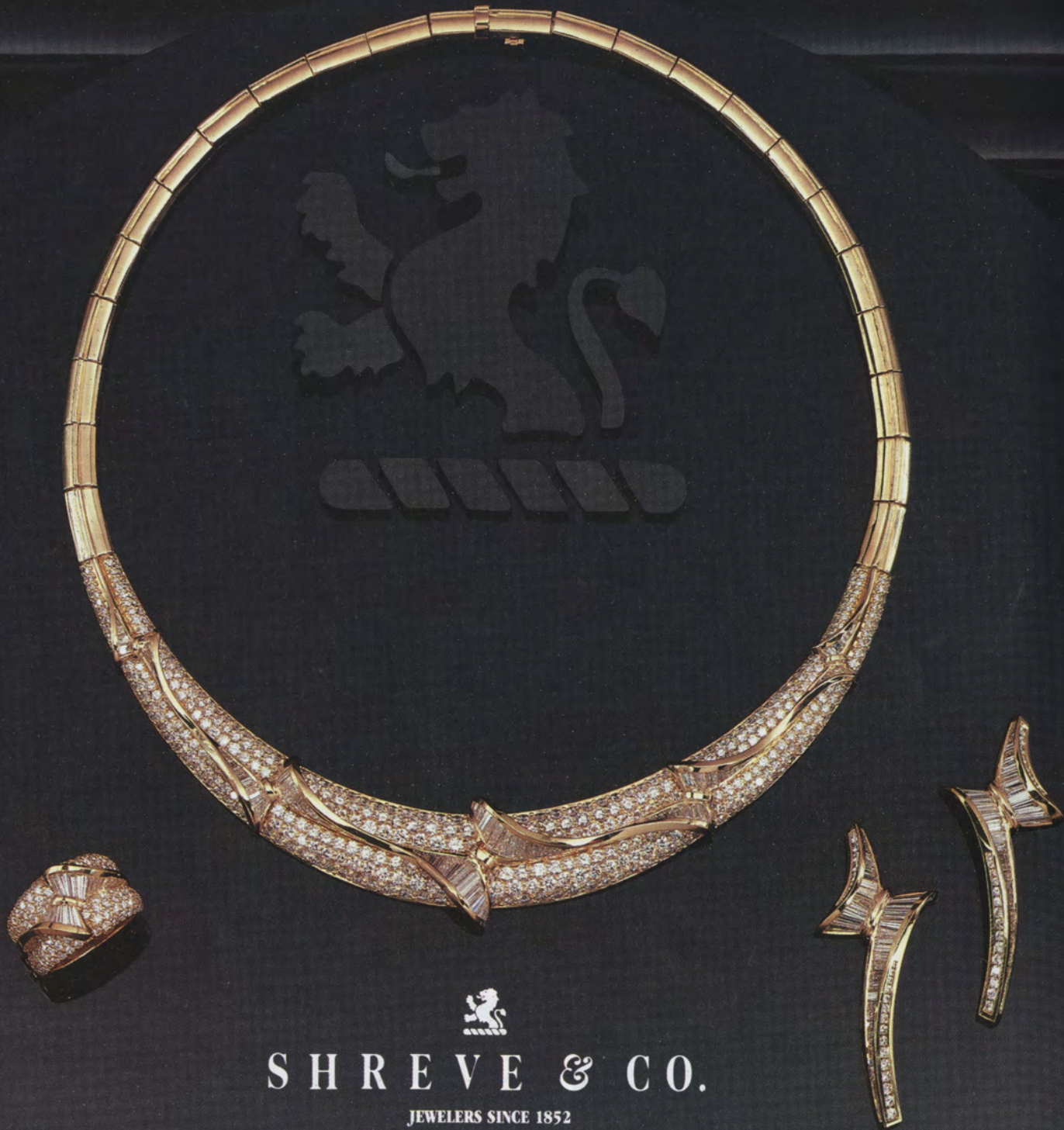


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San Francisco Opera

Lotfi Mansouri, *General Director*

Sir John Pritchard, *Music Director*

L'Africaine

1988 SEASON

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COVER

Frederic Edwin Church,
1826-1900

Morning in the Tropics, 1877
Oil on canvas, 54 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 84 $\frac{1}{8}$

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MCCARTHY

From the Chairman of the Board and the President

We are pleased to welcome you to the 66th annual season of the San Francisco Opera, a season marked by many changes in the San Francisco Opera family. By now you are all aware of the arrival of Lotfi Mansouri, our new general director. He is no stranger to our audiences, having staged an astonishing 40 productions here in the last 25 years. So it is with great pleasure that we welcome him back as a permanent part of our Company and anticipate many fruitful years of collaboration under his artistic leadership.

Other changes over the last year have not been as happy, and it was with deep regret that we witnessed the passing of General Director Emeritus Kurt Herbert Adler and the resignation due to ill health of General Director Terence A. McEwen. Kurt Herbert Adler is universally acknowledged as the force that raised the San Francisco Opera to its remarkable status among the world's great opera houses during the 28 years that he led the Company. He was called the last of the old-time opera impresarios, and we shall not see his like again.

Terence McEwen had fewer years in which to give expression to his own personal vision for the Company, but his tenure was rich in outstanding new productions, including his world-

acclaimed *Ring* cycle, which continued to uphold the tradition of excellence of the San Francisco Opera. Terry's encyclopedic knowledge of opera and his great sense of humor will be fondly remembered by all of us. We wish him well in the future.

Our Board of Directors also suffered the loss of two great champions of opera in San Francisco with the passing of our Directors Emeriti Cyril Magnin and Mrs. Nion R. Tucker. Their generosity and enthusiasm will serve as an inspiration to the entire Board, which this year includes eight new members.

In looking at our repertoire this season, we have many old friends to thank for their generosity in underwriting productions, as well as new donors, whom we welcome with deepest thanks. Funds for our new *Parsifal* have been provided through the generosity of an anonymous friend, and we have the L.J. Skaggs and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation to thank for our production of *Maometto II*. Four production revivals have been generously underwritten: that of *L'Africaine* by the Sells Foundation; *The Rake's Progress* by Mr. and Mrs. Marshall Naify; *Così fan tutte* by the San Francisco Opera Guild; and *La Bohème* by the Bernard Osher Foundation. We also would like to express our gratitude to Mr. and Mrs. William Rollnick, whose financial assistance has made

possible most of this season's Supertitles.

As always, it is a privilege to be able to acknowledge our governmental funding sources, including such stalwarts as the National Endowment for the Arts and the California Arts Council. We also extend our deep gratitude to Grants for the Arts, Mayor Art Agnos and Chief Administrative Officer Rudolf Nothenberg, whose support has been most encouraging.

As in previous years, we extend our appreciation to the San Francisco Opera Guild, the Merola Opera Program, and the War Memorial Board of Trustees for their ongoing support.

We are further pleased to note this year's increase in our subscription base, but the reality of opera production is that ticket sales can cover only slightly more than half of our expenses. The interest of our audience in the magnificent art form of the opera has been amply demonstrated over the past years. With your continued support, and increased contributions wherever possible, we can together continue the glorious tradition of opera in San Francisco.

Reid W. Dennis, Chairman
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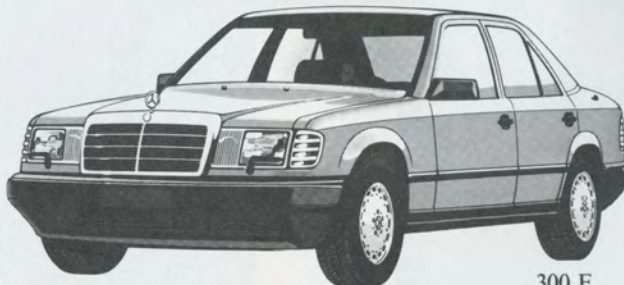
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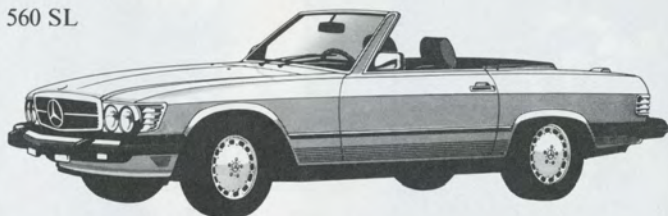


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General Director's Message

Returning to San Francisco has always been a pleasure for me, but never more so than this year, as I embark upon my new position as general director of San Francisco Opera. Long before I received this appointment, I wrote in my autobiography that I regarded San Francisco Opera as my "home" company, and the important role it has played in my career and life cannot be overstressed. During my student years in Los Angeles, I came to know and love the operatic repertoire through San Francisco Opera performances, and my earliest participation was as a supernumerary with the Company during its tours to Los Angeles.

I've always been a great believer in the power of kismet, and I am convinced that way back when I first carried a spear in *Otello* I was already beginning to fulfill part of a grand design—a master plan of some sort that has now come full circle as I assume leadership of my "home" company.

In my work at other opera companies around the world, I have always used the excellence of San Francisco Opera productions as the standard against which all others must be measured. Now it is my fervent hope that I can contribute to the artistic growth and financial stability of this wonderful institution. To use whatever talents I may have been given, all of my energy, my fullest capabilities to maintain San Francisco Opera's status as one of the foremost performing arts organizations in the world—and to prepare the Company to enter the 21st century—that is my pledge to you, the San Francisco Opera family. I am delighted to join with all of you as together we embark upon the next stage in the continuing evolution of the most marvelous of art forms in this, the most marvelous of cities.

San Francisco Opera

Lotfi Mansouri, *General Director*

Sir John Pritchard, *Music Director*

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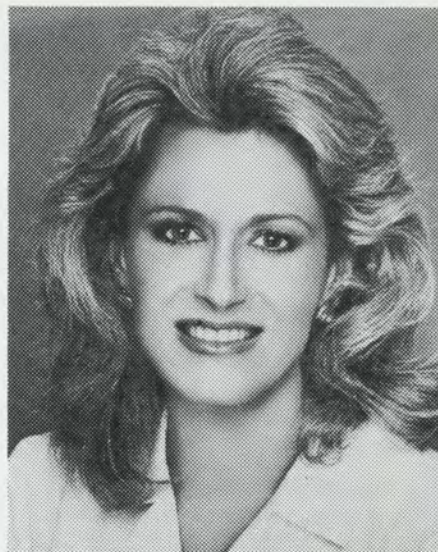
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San Francisco Opera

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1988 Season

<i>Opening Night</i>					
Friday, September 9, 7:00		Saturday, September 24, 8:00		Thursday, October 13, 8:00	
L'Africaine	Meyerbeer	L'Africaine	Meyerbeer	Così fan tutte	Mozart
Verrett, Swenson, Spence*; Domingo, Diaz, Devlin, Anderson, Delavan, Skinner, Rouleau		Sunday, September 25, 2:00		Saturday, October 15, 7:30	
Arena/Mansouri/W. Skalicki/A. Skalicki/Munn/Ray*		Maometto II	Rossini	Der Fliegende Holländer	Wagner
<i>1988 production underwritten through a generous gift from the Sells Foundation.</i>		Tuesday, September 27, 8:00		Sunday, October 16, 2:00	
		L'Africaine	Meyerbeer	Manon Lescaut	Puccini
		Wednesday, September 28, 7:30		Lorengar, Manhart; Dvorský, Vanaud*, Capecci, Wunsch, Travis, Petersen, Skinner, Anderson, Potter Pritchard/Asagaroff/Klein/Arhelger	
		The Rake's Progress	Stravinsky	Tuesday, October 18, 8:00	
		Thursday, September 29, 7:30		Così fan tutte	Mozart
		Der Fliegende Holländer	Wagner	Wednesday, October 19, 7:30	
		Polaski*, Young; Van Dam, Ochman, Koptchak*		Manon Lescaut	Puccini
		Kaltenbach/Calábria/Ponnelle/ Halmen/Munn		Friday, October 21, 8:00	
		<i>Production originally made possible, in part, by the Gramma Fisher Foundation.</i>		Così fan tutte	Mozart
		Friday, September 30, 8:00		Saturday, October 22, 7:00	
		Maometto II	Rossini	<i>New Production</i>	
		Saturday, October 1, 8:00		Parsifal	Wagner
		Der Fliegende Holländer	Wagner	W. Meier*, S. Patterson, Panagulias*, Williams*, Manhart, Hoffman*, Spence; Kollo, Moll, Hynninen*, Berry, J. Patterson, Wunsch, Potter, Anderson, Ledbetter	
		Sunday, October 2, 2:00		Pritchard/Joël/Halmen/Munn	
		The Rake's Progress	Stravinsky	<i>Production made possible by a generous gift from a friend of San Francisco Opera.</i>	
		Tuesday, October 4, 8:00		Sunday, October 23, 2:00	
		The Rake's Progress	Stravinsky	Der Fliegende Holländer	Wagner
		Wednesday, October 5, 8:00		Tuesday, October 25, 7:00	
		Der Fliegende Holländer	Wagner	Parsifal	Wagner
		Thursday, October 6, 7:30		Wednesday, October 26, 8:00	
		Maometto II	Rossini	Manon Lescaut	Puccini
		Friday, October 7, 8:00		Thursday, October 27, 7:30	
		Der Fliegende Holländer	Wagner	Così fan tutte	Mozart
		Saturday, October 8, 8:00		Friday, October 28, 7:00	
		Così fan tutte	Mozart	Parsifal	Wagner
		Csavlek, Montague*, Rolandi; Gulyás, Dickson, Krause		Saturday, October 29, 8:00	
		Bradshaw/Gleue*/Ponnelle/Munn		Manon Lescaut	Puccini
		<i>Production originally made possible by a grant from Crocker National Bank.</i>		Sunday, October 30, 2:00	
		Sunday, October 9, 2:00		Così fan tutte	Mozart
		Maometto II	Rossini		
		Tuesday, October 11, 8:00			
		Der Fliegende Holländer	Wagner		

Tuesday, November 1, 8:00 Manon Lescaut	Puccini	Saturday, November 26, 8:00 La Bohème	Puccini	Saturday, December 10, 7:30 La Gioconda	Ponchielli
Wednesday, November 2, 7:00 Parsifal	Wagner	Sunday, November 27, 1:30 La Gioconda	Ponchielli	Sunday, December 11, 2:00 La Bohème	Puccini
Thursday, November 3, 7:30 Così fan tutte	Mozart	Tuesday, November 29, 8:00 La Bohème	Puccini	(Same cast as December 9)	
Friday, November 4, 8:00 Manon Lescaut	Puccini	Wednesday, November 30, 7:30 Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk	Shostakovich	** American opera debut * San Francisco Opera debut	
Sunday, November 6, 1:00 Parsifal	Wagner	Thursday, December 1, 7:30 La Gioconda	Ponchielli	All performances are in the original language with English Supertitles. Supertitles for <i>L'Africaine</i> , <i>The Rake's Progress</i> , <i>Maometto II</i> , <i>Manon Lescaut</i> , <i>Parsifal</i> , <i>Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk</i> , <i>La Bohème</i> and <i>La Gioconda</i> provided by a generous and most appreciated gift from William and Eloise Rollnick. <i>Così fan tutte</i> supertitles underwritten through a generous grant from American Express. Supertitles for <i>Der Fliegende Holländer</i> are underwritten through a grant from Pacific Gas and Electric Company.	
Tuesday, November 8, 7:00 Parsifal	Wagner	Friday, December 2, 8:00 La Bohème	Puccini	Repertoire, casts and dates subject to change.	
Wednesday, November 9, 7:30 Manon Lescaut	Puccini	Saturday, December 3, 7:30 La Gioconda	Ponchielli	Box Office and telephone sales: (415) 864-3330.	
Saturday, November 12, 8:00 Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk	Shostakovich	Sunday, December 4, 2:00 Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk	Shostakovich		
Barstow, Golden*, de la Rosa, Ganz; Trussel, Lewis, Devlin, J. Patterson, Travis, Petersen, Skinner, Gudas, Coles, Anderson, Delavan, Potter Pritchard/Robertson (December 4)/ Freedman/W. Skalicki/Munn		Tuesday, December 6, 7:30 La Gioconda	Ponchielli		
Wednesday, November 16, 7:30 La Bohème	Puccini	Thursday, December 8, 7:30 La Bohème	Puccini		
Freni, Pacetti; Pavarotti, G. Quilico, Dickson, Ghiaurov, Tajo, Harper, Coles Patanè/Zambello/Mitchell/Button/Munn <i>Production originally made possible by a gift in memory of George L. Quist; revival made possible by the Bernard Osher Foundation.</i>		Friday, December 9, 8:00 La Bohème	Puccini		
Saturday, November 19, 1:00 La Bohème	Puccini	Gasdia*, de la Rosa; Lima, Malis, Delavan, Langan, Tajo, Harper, Coles Fiore/Zambello/Mitchell/Button/Munn			
Saturday, November 19, 8:00 Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk	Shostakovich	Saturday, December 10, 1:00 <i>Family Matinee</i>			
Sunday, November 20, 1:30 La Gioconda	Ponchielli	La Bohème	Puccini		
Marton, Ciorca, Nadler; Polozov*, Opthof, Giaiotti, Irmiter*, Petersen, Pittsinger Kord/Ewers*/Brown/Munn/Sulich <i>Production originally made possible by a friend of the San Francisco Opera and the San Francisco Opera Guild.</i>		Hartlieb, Williams; Wunsch, Ledbetter, Potter, Skinner, Travis, Harper, Coles Fiore/Zambello/Mitchell/Button/ Munn			
Monday, November 21, 8:00 Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk	Shostakovich				
Tuesday, November 22, 8:00 La Bohème	Puccini				
Wednesday, November 23, 7:30 La Gioconda	Ponchielli				
Friday, November 25, 8:00 Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk	Shostakovich				

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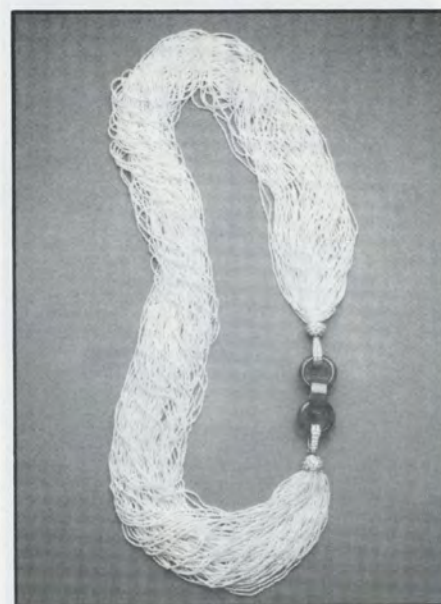
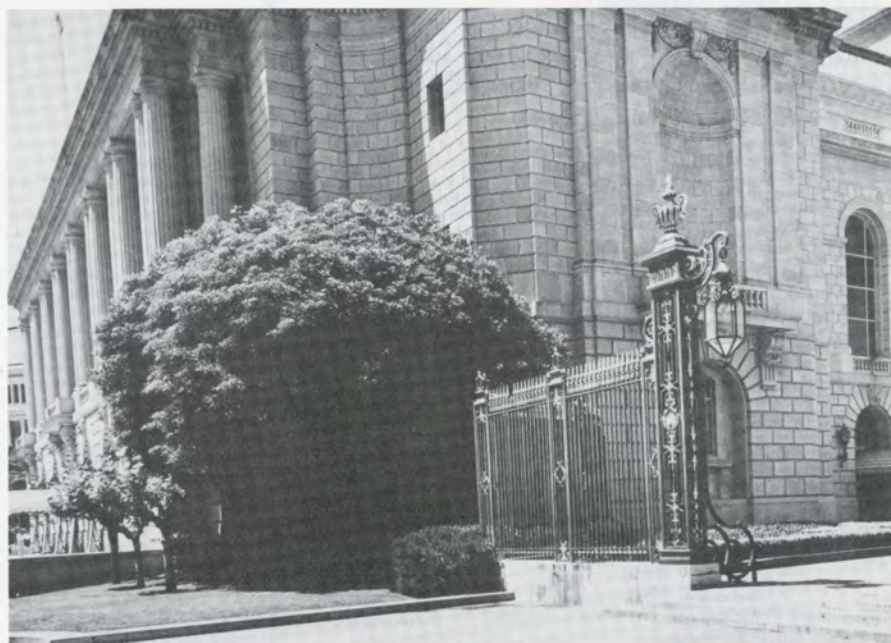
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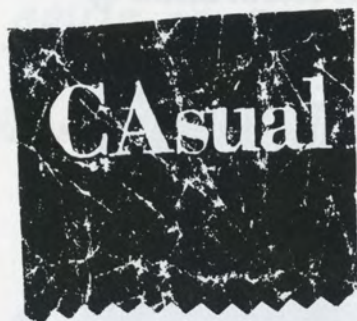
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The Enduring Charms of *L'Africaine*

By JOHN H. ROBERTS

It used to be said that the fate of Meyerbeer offers the perfect example of how a composer once idolized and incessantly performed can finally fall into abysmal obscurity. Certainly his reputation suffered an enormous decline from the triumphs of his own day, when he was hailed as the Michelangelo of Music, to the virtual disappearance of his works from the international repertory during the second quarter of this century. Yet now, as his grand operas are revived with increasing frequency and success, it has become apparent that he is no less remarkable for his durability. After long neglect, much ill-informed abuse, and persistent efforts to turn him into a fossil of social history, Meyerbeer remains defiantly alive, capable—in a performance that meets his formidable technical demands—of exerting much of his old fascination and power. And none of his operas has a greater claim on our affections than his last and finest, *L'Africaine*.

Giacomo Meyerbeer, or as he was originally called Jacob Meyer Beer, was born in Berlin of a prominent Jewish family in 1791. He adopted the Italian form of his given name during his prolonged residence in Italy from 1816 to 1824, retaining it in later years as a tribute to the country that had given him his first operatic success. Although he composed 16 operas, four in German and six each in Italian and French, his reputation today rests almost entirely on the four works he wrote for the Paris Opéra,

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Robert le Diable (1831), *Les Huguenots* (1836), *Le Prophète* (1849), and *L'Africaine*, produced the year after his death in 1864. All four belong to that type of grandiose and sensational entertainment often referred to as "grand opera" (in the parlance of Meyerbeer's time, the term *grand opera* applied to any work performed at the Opéra, no matter what its scale or character). Inaugurated by Auber's *La Muette de Portici* (1828), the genre was generally characterized by a five-act structure, historical subject matter (there are several exceptions, including *Robert*), violent emotions, a prominent and active chorus, and spectacular scenic effects. The librettos of most grand operas, those of Meyerbeer included, were furnished by Eugène Scribe (1791-1861), an extremely skilled and facile theatrical craftsman who was also the most prosperous playwright of his day and the chief provider of librettos to the Opéra-Comique. Meyerbeer and Scribe had a somewhat stormy relationship, leading the composer to turn frequently to others for help in revising his texts, but he always returned in the end to the collaborator who had inspired his first masterpiece.

Few operas have ever undergone as many transformations between initial conception and first performance as did *L'Africaine*. The original libretto delivered to Meyerbeer in 1837 bore remarkably little resemblance to the opera as we know it. As in all subsequent versions it culminated in the death of the dark-skinned heroine Sélica (or Sélika) under the poisonous manchineel tree, an idea taken from the French poet Millevoye, and the outlines of the last three acts were substantially the same; but the action took place in Spain and darkest Africa rather than Portugal and an island paradise in the Indian Ocean, the hero was a humble sailor instead of Vasco da Gama, and the first two acts were almost unrecognizable. Meyerbeer's contract called for delivery of

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the completed score in 1840, but in the summer of 1838 his confidence was rudely shaken by Germain Delavigne, Scribe's closest adviser and his collaborator on the libretto of *Robert le Diable*. Asked for his advice about how to compress the sprawling plot of the new opera into four acts (since the public was said to be wearying of five-act works), Delavigne counseled Meyerbeer that the libretto was fatally flawed and that he should on no account set it to music. This threw the easily disquieted composer into a turmoil of doubt, which was only relieved when he persuaded Scribe to postpone the deadline for *L'Africaine* and begin working on *Le Prophète*. After exacting extensive revisions from Scribe, Meyerbeer finally finished a score of *L'Africaine* without orchestration—all he was required to provide under the current contract—in 1843. But he remained doubtful of its merit and was determined to stage *Le Prophète* first.

With *Le Prophète* securely installed at the Opéra, in 1849, his thoughts again turned to *L'Africaine*, and again he showed the libretto to a trusted friend, Edouard Monnais. The response was not encouraging. One suspects this interview would have sealed the opera's doom once and for all had it not been for a suggestion made by Scribe in an entirely different connection. Discussing an operatic subject identified only as "the story of the man who poisons himself to take revenge on the murderer of his beloved's father," he proposed transferring the action to India. The idea of an Indian opera immediately appealed to Meyerbeer, and soon the complicated suicide was forgotten and they were planning a kindred transformation of *L'Africaine* into a historical drama about the discovery of India by Vasco da Gama. The libretto of the Indianized *Africaine*, now entitled *Vasco de Gama*, was ready in 1853. Meyerbeer did some work on the score at that time, but most of it dates from 1857-58 and 1860-63. Although the 1843 draft is lost, he appears to have reused relatively little of his old music, and what he did retain he often subjected to considerable revision. Following Scribe's death in 1861, he commissioned the playwright Charlotte Birch-Pfeiffer to make further alterations in the libretto, her German verses being translated into French after he had composed the music.

Meyerbeer died on May 2, 1864,

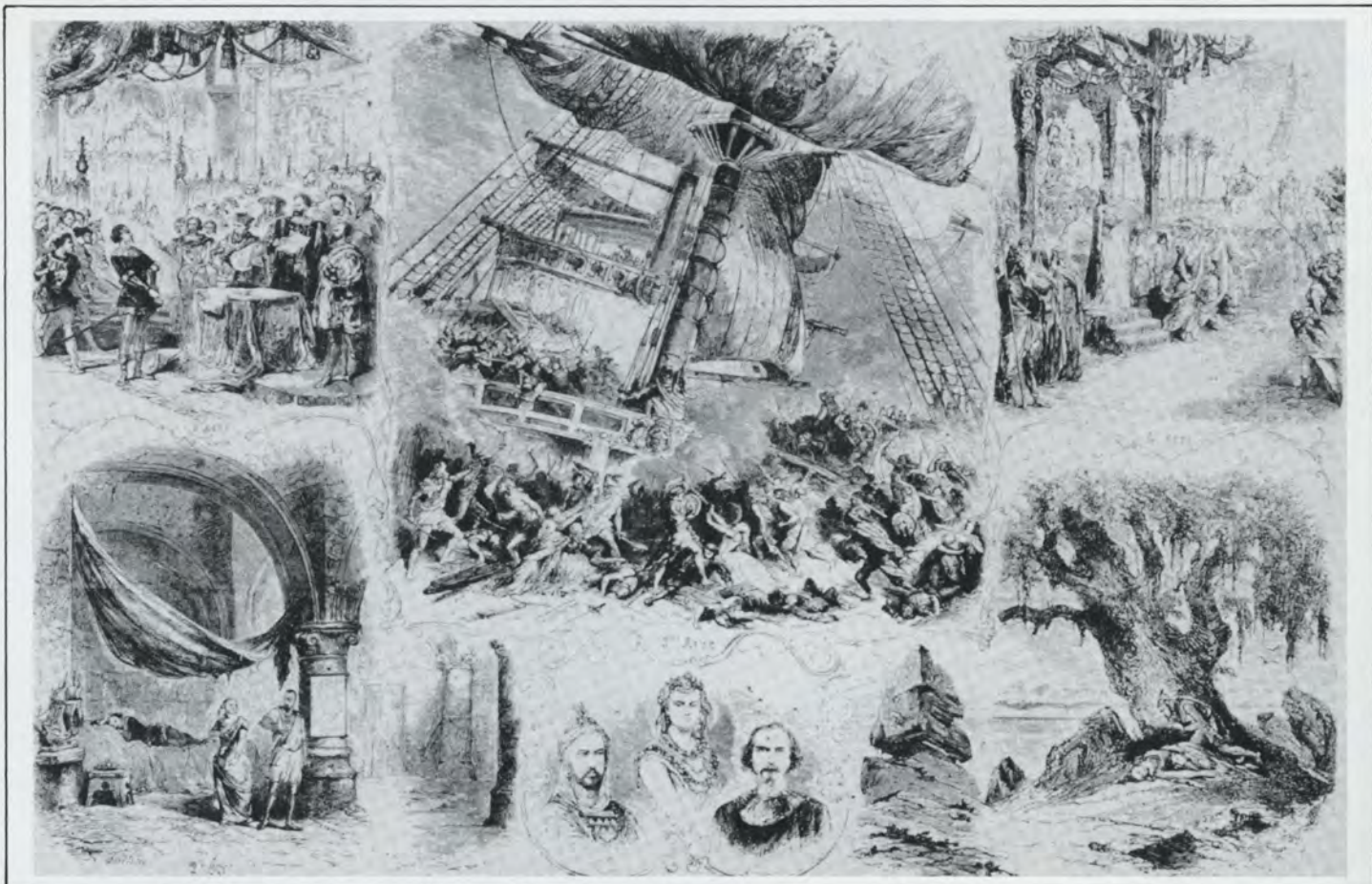


Giacomo Meyerbeer, 1791-1864, in an engraving made by Delpech in the 1830s.

leaving the score of *Vasco de Gama* essentially complete except for the ballets; he had planned three in addition to the *Marche Indienne* in the temple scene. To oversee the performance, Mme Meyerbeer appointed François-Joseph Fétis, the 80-year-old patriarch of French musical scholarship and head of the Brussels Conservatory—an inspired choice, since he was a commanding figure and, if hardly a purist by modern standards, had more respect for the composer's intentions than most people associated with the Opéra. Changes were inevitable. As usual, Meyerbeer had written far more than could possibly be performed even in one of the Opéra's long evenings—a more or less complete run-through without scenery lasted four and a half hours, not counting intermissions—and ultimately about an hour of music had to be sacrificed. The much-reworked text was again heavily revised, first by Camille Du Locle, future part-author of the librettos for Verdi's

Don Carlos and *Aida*, and then by three representatives of Mme Scribe, one of whom was none other than Germain Delavigne, who had urged Meyerbeer to abandon the original libretto in 1838. In deference to the public that had spent more than 20 years eagerly anticipating an opera called *L'Africaine*, the old title was restored and the text retouched to suggest that Sélika might after all be some sort of an African. At first the revisors placed the action of the last two acts in Madagascar, then, more cautiously, on an unidentified island east of the Cape of Good Hope; in any case the coloring of the production remained predominantly Indian. Fétis made numerous minor revisions, especially in vocal lines, and supplied a few bits of necessary filler, but he strongly resisted pressure to tamper with the score in any more substantive way.

Surprisingly, one of the numbers most affected by these changes was the most famous of all, Vasco's "O paradis."



A 1865 issue of the French periodical *Illustration* featured a pictorial representation of *L'Africaine*, along with the portraits of the three principals: Jean-Baptiste Faure, Marie Constance Sass, and Emilio Naudin.

As Scribe had conceived the scene and Meyerbeer had set it, the shipwrecked explorer did not enter alone admiring the sights but was led in on his way to execution by a corps of sacrificial priests, who sang a suitably barbaric chorus, snatches of which can be heard in the course of the aria. The opening words were quite different, putting more emphasis on the sensory delights reflected in the music than on Vasco's hopes of conquest:

O doux climat, splendide rivage!
Ciel si bleu, si limpide,
Dont mes yeux sont ravis,
Brilles au loin sur cette plage
Dont j'aurais doté mon pays!
(O gentle climate, splendid coast!
Sky so blue, so clear,
That delights my eyes,
Shine from afar on this shore
With which I have endowed my
country!)

It was thus the image of shining light ("Brilles au loin") rather than Vasco's swelling ego ("Tu m'appartiens") that inspired his first, and in Meyerbeer's version only, high B flat. The orchestration was also altered. Originally, the vocal

line in the first part of the air had been doubled only by a bass clarinet, but Fétis, a great admirer of the inventions of his fellow Belgian Adolphe Sax, substituted a baritone saxophone. When this instrument failed to produce the desired effect, he gave the melody principally to an English horn and then, in the printed score, restored the bass clarinet in a much reduced role. Fortunately, the essential beauty of the piece was not impaired by any of these transgressions.

Meyerbeer had envisioned the opening of the ship scene as an extended tableau of maritime life, a sequel to the highly successful *Pré aux Clercs* scene in *Les Huguenots*. The entr'acte depicting the ship riding over the waves formed part of this, as did the sailors' reveille, and the obligatory prayer. But the scene had continued with some material no longer in the score: a dialogue for Nélusko and the sailors, a hornpipe accompanying preparations for the morning meal, and a drinking song (*Ronde bachique*) led by one of the sailors. The music is consistently charming, and one may wonder whether the composer, who had salvaged much of it

from the first *Africaine*, would not have chosen to cut elsewhere.

The current S.F. Opera production restores a major excision at the beginning of the queen's garden scene. In the opera as Meyerbeer left it, and as performed here, Inès staggers in, having narrowly escaped from the manchineel tree under which she had been left to die. Vasco enters and has just finished telling her they must forever part when Séliska appears and, assuming he has returned to her rival, orders him out. He bows and exits. Fétis was understandably distressed over this ignominious departure and considered various remedies. In the end it was decided to omit Inès's aria and her duet with Vasco, and to go directly from the entr'acte to Séliska's entrance, excluding Vasco from the act altogether and letting the audience draw its own conclusions as to his sense of decency. Meyerbeer, too, had worried that his hero's willingness to desert the woman who had saved his life and to whom he had just vowed eternal love might put him in an unfavorable light, and Mme Birch-Pfeiffer had devised two alternatives to



Jean-Baptiste Faure as Nélusko in the world premiere (1865) of Meyerbeer's *L'Africaine*.



A 17th-century portrait of Vasco da Gama, 1460-1524.

the final scene, in one of which Vasco returns to Sélika, who dies in his arms. No music was ever composed, however.

All in all, considering the circumstances under which it came into existence, the Fétis version of *L'Africaine* turned out remarkably well. Yet it must be regretted that Meyerbeer did not live to do the job himself. For him and for his contemporaries, the period of rehearsals was an essential part of the compositional process, during which he often added important new material and from which an opera invariably emerged significantly stronger than it had been before. Fétis could only defend a static conception; he could not fill the composer's creative role.

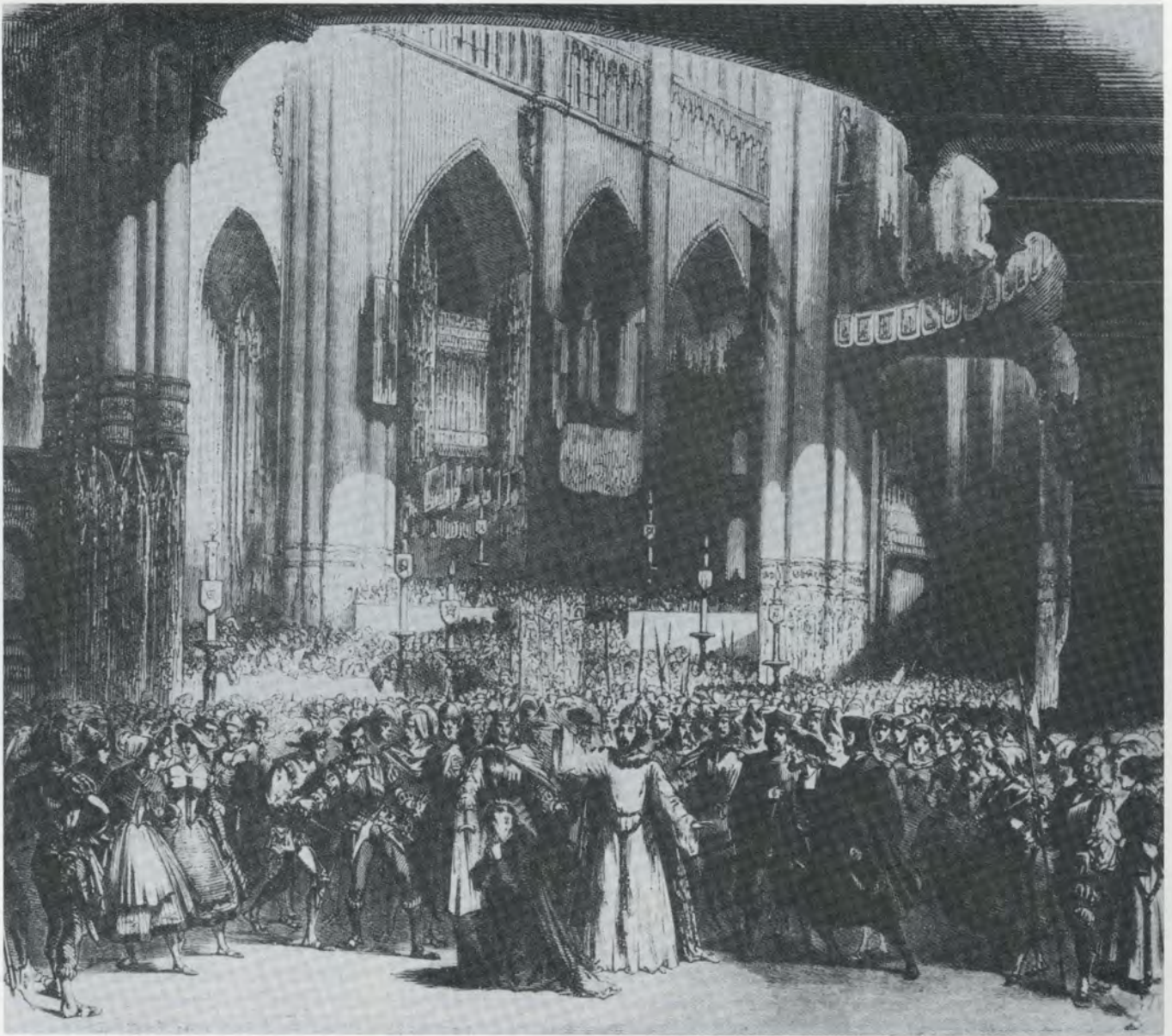
The first performance, on April 28th, 1865—just two weeks after the assassination of Abraham Lincoln—was an enormous triumph. Meyerbeer's recent death, the decades of anticipation, a first-rate cast (including Saxe, Naudin, and Faure), and a visually splendid production (with ballets by Saint-Léon) helped *L'Africaine* to reach its hundredth performance at the

Opéra within a year. Anecdotes and bon mots about Meyerbeer and his masterpiece inundated the press, and the publisher Dufour, not content with issuing his prize in every conceivable musical arrangement, offered a set of twelve stereoscopic views of the principal scenes and a bust of the composer.

The libretto of *L'Africaine* has frequently been castigated for its flagrant misrepresentation of the career of Vasco da Gama (hardly surprising, since most of the plot was conceived without reference to him) and its numerous improbabilities. That Scribe did egregious violence to both the facts of history and the laws of logic can hardly be denied, but we must take care not to apply the standards of historical narrative or realistic drama to a form that has little in common with either. While librettos like those of *Les Huguenots* or Halévy's *La Juive* (1835) bear at least a superficial resemblance to the Romantic dramas of Hugo and Dumas, in his later grand operas Scribe increasingly tended to move away from such models into the

world of romance and fantasy. The *Africaine* libretto can indeed be read for the most part as a romance, a direct if much debased descendant of the epic poems of the Renaissance with their rambling chronicles of extravagant happenings in settings far removed from daily life. An analogy could even be drawn, stretching several points, between Vasco's adventures in the last two acts and the amorous enslavement of Ruggiero on the island of Alcina in Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*. In a sense, the greatest problem with the libretto in its final form is that it begins like a realistic historical drama, setting up expectations that are inevitably disappointed as the action becomes more and more wayward and unhistorical; a pitfall Scribe had avoided in his initial *Vasco* scenario by starting off with an act laid in a wilderness near the Cape of Good Hope where the hero and his two slaves had just been shipwrecked.

Vasco's sudden access of passion for Sélika shortly after learning of the supposed death of his beloved Inès has been a



Coronation scene from the Paris Opera presentation of Meyerbeer's *Le Prophète*.

particular butt of criticism, but here the fault lies mainly with the posthumous revisers. In the version of the text found in the composer's score it is made abundantly clear that during the Hindu marriage ceremony that precedes the love duet ("Brahma! Vishnu! Shiva!") Vasco, along with Sélîka, drinks a magical love potion. This number had in fact been added by Mme Birch-Pfeiffer precisely to account for the hero's subsequent ardor, and the stages of his intoxication are carefully traced in the first part of the duet. Unfortunately, the revisers, apparently alarmed at the overt sensuality of the description of the philter's effects ("a burning thirst, always amorous desires") toned it down to the point where its meaning is easily missed.

From a musical point of view, *L'Afri-*

caine undoubtedly ranks as Meyerbeer's finest achievement. Composed during his late sixties and early seventies, it has all the virtues traditionally associated with artistic old age. If it lacks something of the brilliance and force that caused *Robert le Diable* and *Les Huguenots* to make such a great impression in the 1830s, it offers more than ample compensation in its richer and more refined musical style. There is, in addition, a new lyricism that permeates the entire score. The direction *cantabile*, often accompanied by *soutenu* (sustained) or *doux* (gentle), appears with extraordinary frequency, sometimes in surprising places such as Vasco's defiant cabaletta "D'impie et de rebelle" at the end of the Council Chamber scene, which bears all three markings. Some commentators have spoken of a turn toward the

Italian style, even detecting the influence of Verdi, and it is perhaps significant that in 1852, while working on the libretto of *Vasco*, Meyerbeer expressed his desire to write an Italian opera, as he had not done for nearly 30 years: "I began my real theatrical life in Italy, I would like to seal it with Italian melodies," he told a friend of Felice Romani, to whom he later proposed that they renew their old collaboration. In *L'Africaine*, however, Meyerbeer was probably not so much responding to influence from any particular quarter as reflecting a general movement in both Italian and French opera of the time toward a broader and richer sort of lyricism, a development exemplified by such diverse works as Gounod's *Faust* (1859) and Verdi's *La Forza del Destino* (1862).

Despite the libretto's shortcomings, it suited Meyerbeer quite well in several respects. The Indian setting had fired his imagination from the moment it was suggested (though he told Scribe *modern* India did not appeal to him: "the English officers with their uniforms seem to me prosaic and antimusical"), and he was always inspired by great historical events, no matter how freely depicted. He also found ample scope in the revised libretto for his central dramatic interest: characterization. Although he had little feeling for psychological analysis or the expression of inner emotion, he was a master at creating distinctive theatrical personalities through music, and with Scribe's help he produced in *L'Africaine* his most vivid set of characters. Nélusko is a truly original figure: Meyerbeer saw his character as "a mixture of hatred, wickedness and irony against all Christians, and an unlimited devotion, a superstitious veneration for the royal blood of Sélika, and above all a secret passionate love for her, although he keeps it carefully hidden, because he does not believe himself worthy to aspire to the love of his sovereign." The audacious Vasco, the proud and passionate Sélika, and the cruel and haughty Don Pedro are no less sharply drawn, and the conventional nobility of

Inès serves as an effective foil for Sélika's more pronounced individuality.

Meyerbeer (unlike Scribe) had a Romantic's zeal for local color, and with *Vasco* he took great pains over the depiction of the Indian milieu, in the libretto as well as in the music. He undertook extensive research into the manners, customs, and rites of India and inserted various authentic details into the text and stage directions, many of them later expunged; the cortege in the temple scene was to have included three elephants with palanquins carrying Sélika, Nélusko, and the high priest. He also instructed Scribe at length on the proper delineation of the Indian characters. Of Sélika he wrote that the librettist should try "to make her more a woman of her warm climate and paint her with less European manners . . . She must be given the impetuosity and jealousy that the burning climate of her homeland inspires in the passions, . . . a warm language, colored with distinctive images, verse forms and rhythms to indicate better the difference between it and the language of the European characters." In addition to attempting to give musical embodiment to these "oriental" character types, Meyerbeer also infused such numbers as the chorus of Indians at the end of the ship scene, the *Marche*

Indienne and the ensemble "Brahma! Vishnu! Shiva!" with a special exotic coloring. It should not be supposed that he thought he was accurately portraying India or Indian music; his approach, as always, was purely suggestive. In his *Journal*, the painter Delacroix recounts a revealing conversation with him in 1853, a few months after he began composing *Vasco*: "The talk at dinner was of *local color*. Meyerbeer said rightly that it has to do with a certain something that is not the exact observation of habits and customs. 'Who is more full of it than Schiller,' he said, than Schiller in his *William Tell*? and yet he never saw Switzerland.' "

As in all Meyerbeer's operas, the level of musical inspiration in *L'Africaine* is somewhat uneven, but there are many beauties in each act, and the best pages—Vasco's speeches before the Council, the first part of "O paradis," the cabaletta of the love duet—entitle him to a place among the foremost dramatic composers of the nineteenth century. It seems unlikely that this far from perfect opera will ever again become a staple of the standard repertory. But when, from time to time, it does reappear, it should be welcomed warmly, not only for its association with past glories but for its own enduring charms. ■

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ARTIST PROFILES



SHIRLEY VERRETT

An American artist of international stature, **Shirley Verrett** returns to San Francisco Opera to portray Sélïka in *L'Africaine*, a role she also performed during her debut season here in 1972. She was last heard locally in 1986, receiving public and critical acclaim as Lady Macbeth in the Pier Luigi Pizzi production of Verdi's *Macbeth*. One of the few singers whose range simultaneously spans the contralto/mezzo-soprano and soprano repertoires, Miss Verrett's roles in San Francisco have included Azucena in *Il Trovatore* (1975) and the title role of *Norma* (1978). Appearing this year opposite Plácido Domingo on opening night, the same two artists also opened the 1980 Fall Season in the title roles of *Samson et Dalila*, a performance that was televised nationally. In 1985, Miss Verrett returned for a highly popular concert with Grace Bumbry. The New Orleans native made her operatic debut at the Festival of Two Worlds in Spoleto, Italy, as *Carmen*, a role that was to serve as the vehicle of her subsequent debuts at the Bolshoi (1963), New York City Opera (1964) and the Metropolitan Opera (1968). In 1966 she bowed at Covent Garden as Ulrica in *Un Ballo in Maschera*, and her numerous appearances there have showcased her in most of the roles in her repertoire, including Dalila in the Covent Garden televised production of *Samson et Dalila* that was also released on videocassette. Dalila was the role of her La Scala debut in 1970, the same year as her Vienna State Opera debut as Eboli in *Don Carlo*. She made her Paris Opera debut as Azucena in 1973, and that same year made international headlines after singing the two leading roles of *Cassandre* and *Didon* in Berlioz's *Les Troyens*. In 1975 she appeared at the Met as *Norma*, making her one of only four singers in history to sing the title role as well as that of *Adalgisa* in the same



RUTH ANN SWENSON

opera. Her first *Tosca* was sung at the Metropolitan in 1978 and was televised nationally. Most recently, she added the title role of Cherubini's *Medée* to her repertoire, singing the role in the original French to great acclaim in Paris and Florence. Miss Verrett appears regularly in all of the world's major houses, and is renowned as a recitalist and concert artist as well. Some of her most recent engagements include Azucena in *Il Trovatore* in Chicago (1987), *Norma* in Monte Carlo and a concert in Genoa. She has made a most impressive list of opera and concert recordings (Donizetti's *Anna Bolena* and *Lucrezia Borgia*, Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice*, Rossini's *L'Assedio di Corinto*, Verdi's *Don Carlo*, *La Forza del Destino*, *Luisa Miller*, *Macbeth*, etc.), and is the recipient of numerous honors and awards, including the prestigious Commander of Arts and Letters from France in 1984.

Soprano **Ruth Ann Swenson** sings Inès in *L'Africaine*. She was seen here last season as Juliette in Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette*, a role she also recently sang for the Portland Opera. The young singer made her Company debut as Despina in the 1983 Summer Season production of *Così fan tutte*, a role which she has also sung to great acclaim with the Geneva Opera in 1985. A 1983 and '84 Adler Fellow with the Opera Center, she appeared in Showcase productions of Harbison's *Full Moon in March* (1982), *L'Ormino* and *The Rape of Lucretia* (1983) and has sung the role of Belisa in Susa's *The Love of Don Perlimplin* (1985), the part she created at the work's world premiere at the 1984 PepsiCo Summerfare in New York. During the 1985 San Francisco Opera Summer Season she sang Aennchen in concert performances of *Der Freischütz* and returned that

L'AFRICAINNE



PATRICIA SPENCE

fall to sing Dorinda in *Orlando* and Nannetta in *Falstaff*. In 1985 she made her Seattle Opera debut as Adina in *L'Elisir d'Amore* and that same year also replaced an ailing colleague in the title role of *Martha* for Portland Opera, winning critical acclaim after learning the role in a matter of days. Highlights of her 1986-87 season included the role of Susanna in *The Marriage of Figaro* for Portland Opera, debuts with Netherlands Opera as Nannetta in *Falstaff*, with Canadian Opera as Ilia in *Idomeneo*, with Long Beach Opera in the title role of *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, and a Salzburg Festival debut in a production of Schoenberg's *Moses und Aron* directed by Jean-Pierre Ponnelle. Earlier this year she appeared as Norina in the Geneva Opera production of *Don Pasquale* and made a debut as Euridice opposite Marilyn Horne in Gluck's *Orfeo* in Paris. Miss Swenson made her Metropolitan Opera debut this summer as Adina in *L'Elisir d'Amore*. Future engagements include her Lyric Opera of Chicago debut as Nannetta in *Falstaff* and her Washington Opera debut as Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*. Later this year, she will return to Paris to sing the title role in *Linda di Chamounix* for Radio France.

A native of Oregon, mezzo-soprano **Patricia Spence** makes her San Francisco Opera debut this fall as Anna in *L'Africaine* and also appears as a Flower Maiden in *Parsifal*. She was a participant in the 1987 Merola Opera Program, during which she sang the role of the Princess Bouillon in *Suor Angelica*. Currently an Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, Miss Spence has recently performed Isabella in the Merola Opera Program production of *The Italian Girl in Algiers* and Pilar in *Rosina*, presented by the

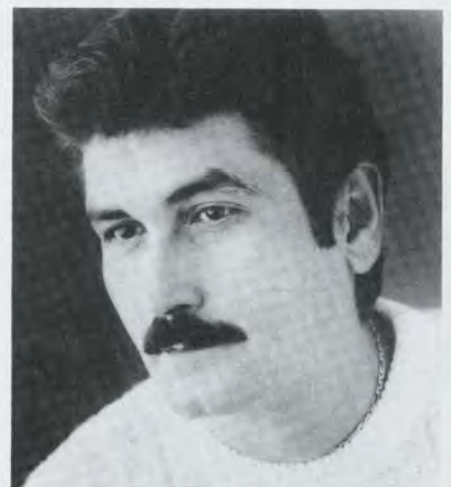


PLÁCIDO DOMINGO

Opera Center Showcase series. She made her professional debut in 1984 with the Eugene Opera and has performed several roles with that company including Madame Flora in *The Medium*, the Marquise of Birkenfeld in *The Daughter of the Regiment* and Elmire in *Tartuffe*.

Following last season's highly acclaimed performances of *The Tales of Hoffmann*, internationally renowned tenor **Plácido Domingo** returns to San Francisco Opera to recreate the role of Vasco da Gama in *L'Africaine*. His first appearance at the San Francisco Opera was as Rodolfo in the 1969 production of *La Bohème* and he has since returned to San Francisco as Don José in *Carmen* and Cavaradossi in *Tosca* (1970), Manrico in *Il Trovatore* (1971), Vasco da Gama in *L'Africaine* and Cavaradossi (1972), the title role of *Andrea Chénier* (1975), Turiddu and Canio in the *Cavalleria Rusticana/Pagliacci* double bill (1976), *Otello* (1978), Dick Johnson in *La Fanciulla del West* in 1979 (also Cavaradossi in the Company's *Tosca* at Manila), Samson in *Samson et Dalila* (1980), which was televised nationally; Don José in *Carmen* (1981), and the never-to-be-forgotten Opening Night substitution performance in the title role of the 1983 *Otello*. Born in Madrid to parents who were zarzuela performers, Domingo moved to Mexico at the age of eight. His early career took him to Israel for two and a half years, where he sang 280 performances of 12 roles, and then to New York City Opera where he proceeded to appear in works from the standard and contemporary repertoire. His Metropolitan Opera debut took place in 1968 (Maurizio in *Adriana Lecouvreur*), and the tenor has since become known the world over for the large number of roles in his repertoire.

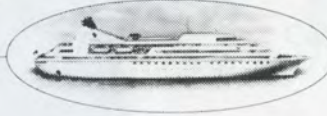
In the fall of 1986, Domingo sang the title role in the Los Angeles Music Center Opera's inaugural production of *Otello*, while also serving as the artistic consultant for that company. He has also recently conducted Verdi's *Macbeth* there. In 1987, he starred in Gian Carlo Menotti's new opera *Goya*, which was commissioned for the tenor by the Washington Opera. Earlier this year, Domingo appeared at the Metropolitan Opera in *Otello*, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* and *Luisa Miller*. On television he has been seen in a number of "Live from the Met" telecasts, as Radames in *Aida*, which opened Houston Grand Opera's new home last October, as well as in documentaries and shows such as "Domingo in Seville" and "Burnett Discovers Domingo". He has recorded more than 50 complete opera albums, ranging from Bellini to Wagner, as well as solo and duet discs. In 1973, the tenor started pursuing a conducting career and bowed at the podium of the New York City Opera's *La Traviata*. Since then, he has led opera orchestras in several European opera centers, as well as San Francisco Opera's 1976 student cast of *The Barber of Seville*. Domingo can be seen as Alfredo in Zeffirelli's movie version of *La Traviata*, as Don José in the film version of *Carmen*, directed by Francesco Rosi and, in one of his most celebrated portrayals, the title role of *Otello* in the Franco Zeffirelli film. Among the many awards and honors Domingo has received are the Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres, Kammersänger of Hamburg, Munich and Vienna and the French Order of the Legion of Honor.



JUSTINO DÍAZ

Justino Díaz sings Nélusko in *L'Africaine* for the first time in his career, the third Meyerbeer role in his repertoire. After making his San Francisco Opera debut in 1978 in the title role of *Don Giovanni*, he returned to the Company during the 1982 Fall Season as Scarpia in *Tosca*, the role he also sang with San Francisco Opera during the 1979 tour to the Philippines. During the 1986 Fall Season he stepped in on short notice to appear as Méphistophélès in Gounod's *Faust*, a role he has sung to great acclaim throughout the United States and Europe. A frequent guest artist at the Metropolitan Opera, La Scala, Covent Garden and the opera houses of Vienna, Munich and Hamburg, the Puerto Rico-born bass made his professional debut at 17 in a San Juan production of Menotti's *The Telephone*. After studying at the New England Conservatory, he won the 1963 Metropolitan Opera Auditions, resulting in a Met contract, and made an auspicious New York debut in a concert performance of *I Puritani* with Joan Sutherland. International recognition came when, at the age of 26, he was chosen to sing the role of Antony in the world premiere of Barber's *Antony and Cleopatra* opposite Leontyne Price in the 1966 opening of the new Metropolitan Opera House at Lincoln Center. He also sang a leading role in the 1971 world premiere of Ginastera's *Beatrice Cenci*, the first opera to be performed at the Kennedy Center. His major roles at the Met have included Procida in *I Vespri Siciliani*, the title roles of *Macbeth*, *The Marriage of Figaro* and *Don Giovanni*, Colline in *La Bohème*, Méphistophélès in *Faust*, Ramfis in *Aida*, Count Rodolfo in *La Sonnambula*, Escamillo in *Carmen*, and Maometto II in *The Siege of Corinth*, the vehicle of his 1969 La Scala debut. At New York City Opera, his assignments have included the four villains in *The Tales of*

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Hoffmann, Scarpia, Leporello, and the title roles of *Attila*, *Don Giovanni* and *Julius Caesar*. He once performed three different Mephisto works—Gounod's *Faust* in New York, Boito's *Mefistofele* in Barcelona and Berlioz's *La Damnation de Faust* in Pittsburgh—within a six-month period. His assignments last season included the title role of *Macbeth* and Iago in *Otello* at the Met, also Scarpia in Caracas, as well as engagements with the companies of Vienna, Pittsburgh, New Orleans, Los Angeles and Miami, and two appearances at Carnegie Hall, one as soloist in the Verdi Requiem and another in an all-star tribute to Richard Tucker. He has been seen as Sparafucile in a national "Live from the Met" telecast of *Rigoletto*, and portrayed Escamillo in the film of Karajan's Salzburg production of *Carmen* as well as Iago in Zeffirelli's film version of *Otello*. His recordings include Rossini's *L'Asedio di Corinto*, Verdi's *Otello*, Handel's *Solomon*, and an album of Mozart arias with the English Chamber Orchestra.

American bass-baritone **Michael Devlin** sings Don Pedro in *L'Africaine* and Boris Ismailov in *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, both career firsts. Since his 1979 Company debut as Golaud in *Pelléas et Mélisande*, he has been applauded here in the title role of Dallapiccola's *Il Prigioniero*, Jokanaan in *Salome*, Escamillo in *Carmen*, Count Almaviva in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, and Dr. Falke in *Die Fledermaus*. He sang the first Wotan of his career in the 1983 Summer Season *Das Rheingold* and returned for the 1985 Ring Festival to sing Gunther in *Götterdämmerung*. Born in Chicago and raised in New Orleans, Devlin made his professional debut with New Orleans Opera

continued on p.45

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San Francisco Opera gratefully acknowledges the generous gift from the Sells Foundation to underwrite the 1988 presentation of *L'Africaine*.

Opera in three acts by GIACOMO MEYERBEER

Text by EUGÈNE SCRIBE

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Maurizio Arena

Stage Director

Lotfi Mansouri

Set Designer

Wolfram Skalicki

Costume Designer

Amrei Skalicki

Lighting Designer

Thomas J. Munn

Chorus Director

Ian Robertson

Choreographer

Robert Ray*

Musical Preparation

Susanna Lemberskaya

Scott Gilmore*

Kathryn Cathcart

Philip Eisenberg

Richard Amner*

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Assistant Stage Director

Laurie Feldman

Stage Manager

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First performance:

Paris, April 28, 1865

First San Francisco Opera performance:

November 3, 1972

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, AT 7:00

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13 AT 7:30

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 16 AT 8:00

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 18 AT 2:00

†WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 21 AT 7:30

†SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 24 AT 8:00

†TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27 AT 8:00

†These performances are being taped for a future telecast. Lighting will be augmented accordingly.

L'Africaine

(in French)

CAST

(in order of appearance)

Inès Ruth Ann Swenson

Anna Patricia Spence*

Don Diego Philip Skinner

Don Pedro Michael Devlin

An usher Jere Torkelsen

The Grand Inquisitor Joseph Rouleau

Don Alvar Kevin Anderson

Vasco da Gama Plácido Domingo

Sélika Shirley Verrett

Nélusko Justino Díaz

First sailor James Croom

Second sailor Valery Portnov

Sailors Alex Guerrero

Lawrence Rush

Frederick Matthews

Raymond Murcell

The High Priest of Brahma Mark Delavan

A priest Sigmund Seigel

Councilors, priests, Indians, soldiers, sailors, Portuguese ladies

Corps de ballet

*San Francisco Opera debut

TIME AND PLACE: Early 16th century; Portugal and India

ACT I Scene 1: The council chamber of the King of Portugal in Lisbon

Scene 2: The inquisitional dungeon in Lisbon

INTERMISSION

ACT II Aboard Don Pedro's ship at sea

INTERMISSION

ACT III Scene 1: The temple of Brahma

Scene 2: Sélika's garden

Scene 3: A promontory overlooking the sea

Supertitles for *L'Africaine* provided by a generous and most appreciated gift from William and Eloise Rollnick.

Supertitles by Clifford Cranna, San Francisco Opera.

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

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

The performance will last approximately three hours and thirty minutes.

Opening night flowers: Foyer and box level lobby—designed by Bloomer's, courtesy of Antonio's Antiques, San Francisco. Boxes and horseshoe—by Robert Evans, Florist, and the San Francisco Opera Guild.

L'Africaine/Synopsis

ACT I

Scene 1—In the days of the great explorations, following the triumph of Columbus and the Spanish crown, the grand admiralty council of a rival country—Portugal—is to discuss its plans for the conquest of new lands. Before the group assembles, Don Diego, chief admiral, has sent for his daughter, Inès. She appears in the empty council chamber with her confidante, Anna. Only one thought possesses her: the memory of her suitor, Vasco da Gama, gone now for two years on a voyage of discovery with the great admiral Díaz. She longs for his return. Her father appears, explaining why he has summoned her: the King of Portugal has expressed a wish that Inès be wed to the ambitious Don Pedro, president of the royal council. Don Pedro enters and tells Don Diego that word has just been received that the Díaz expedition met with disaster near the Cape of Storms (Good Hope) and all aboard are feared lost. Inès cries out in anguish and is led from the room by Anna. Now the grand council assembles, dominated by the smug and hypocritical Grand Inquisitor who is opposed to all new ventures and thoughts of fresh discoveries. Leading the ranks of those who would explore the world is Don Alvar, an enthusiastic young noble. At a crucial point in the proceedings, Vasco da Gama—whose death had been falsely reported—returns as leading survivor of the Díaz expedition to report on its findings. He pleads with the council to equip him with new ships and, when they hesitate, asks their permission to bring in two slaves—a man and a woman—whom he noticed and bought at a slave market in Africa. They are brought in and immediately impress all by their exotic appearance and proud bearing. Their features are alien to the African continent and Europe. The slaves, Sélíka and Nélusko, speak very little. The woman is meek, the man hostile. When the council denies Vasco's request for new ships, he deplores their obstinacy and, insulting the council and inciting the wrath of the Grand Inquisitor, is arrested for contempt and is led away to prison.

Scene 2—As Vasco languishes in his cell, Sélíka—secretly in love with him—stays at his side. Nélusko, filled with jealousy, wants to murder his rival. Sélíka wakes Vasco in order to save his life, and reveals to him the safe passage around the Cape. The prison door is opened and Inès appears with Don Pedro. Overjoyed at seeing Inès, Vasco offers her both Sélíka and Nélusko as slaves. The haughty Don Pedro, Inès's future husband, accepts the offer, buying the captives at a price. He announces to Vasco that he, Pedro, by order of the King, will head a new voyage of discovery. Nélusko treacherously whispers to Don Pedro that he knows the seas past the Cape, and can guide him well. An air of sorrow has filled the prison: Inès has yielded to Don Pedro in marriage only so that Vasco might go free. Heartbroken, Sélíka leaves Vasco and goes to her new master.

ACT II

Don Pedro is aboard the flagship of his fleet, accompanied by Inès and her retinue. Disregarding the warnings of Don Alvar, who suspects Nélusko of double-dealing, he changes the course to the north at the slave's suggestion. He is soon overtaken by Vasco, who follows on a ship of his own, and warns Don Pedro that he is headed for disaster. In a fury, Don Pedro orders Vasco tied to the mast and shot. The commotion brings Inès and Sélíka from their cabin and they plead for Vasco's life. Unnoticed by everyone, Nélusko has been

signaling a fleet of small boats which begins to surround the ship. A sailor calls out that a storm is approaching and the crew rushes to bring down the sails and tie the rigging. Suddenly, native warriors climb over the sides and begin to attack. The storm breaks out in all its fury and the ship is run aground. Sélíka and Nélusko (previously borne to the shore of Africa in a shipwreck of their own) have reached home—an island east of the Cape. During the confusion and chaos, Vasco leaps over the side of the ship, which rolls dangerously as the mast and sails come crashing down in the wind.

ACT III

Scene 1—Grand preparations are made by the High Priest of Brahma for the crowning of Sélíka on her return—for she is of queenly rank. After a celebratory dance by the temple dancers, the High Priest presents a sacred book to Sélíka and asks for a renewal of her sovereign vows, which includes the phrase that no foreigner be allowed to enter their country. A messenger announces that the crew and officers of the Don Pedro expedition have all been slain, and that their women are about to be led to their execution beneath the sacred and deadly manchineel tree, whose flowers emit a perfume that first exhilarates, then kills. The celebrants then retire to the temple. Vasco himself, the only one to have escaped from Pedro's ship, is led in and he vows to gain this paradise for Portugal. Suddenly he is surrounded by warriors with raised swords who are about to kill him, but Sélíka appears and stops them. In order to save him, she claims that he is her husband and asks Nélusko to confirm it. Nélusko, his love for Sélíka greater than his hate for Vasco, swears to it and Vasco is accepted as the queen's consort. A wedding is celebrated, and the pair, left alone, express their rapture, love and fidelity after having drunk some aphrodisiacal wine offered by the High Priest.

Scene 2—Inès, who has managed to escape her captors and the poisonous manchineel, stumbles into the garden and finds Vasco, who tells her of his marriage to Sélíka. Suddenly Sélíka finds them together and, in a jealous rage and feeling betrayed, has Vasco taken away. She proudly confronts Inès, no longer as a slave but as a queen. Her anger turns to grief at Inès's pleading, for she realizes that the latter's love for Vasco is undying and that Vasco's love for herself stems only from gratitude. She instructs Nélusko to take Inès and Vasco away from the island and to his ship, which has been spared the destruction that overtook the fleet of Don Pedro. She then bids Nélusko to join her on a promontory overlooking the sea—the tip of the Cape where the deadly tree grows.

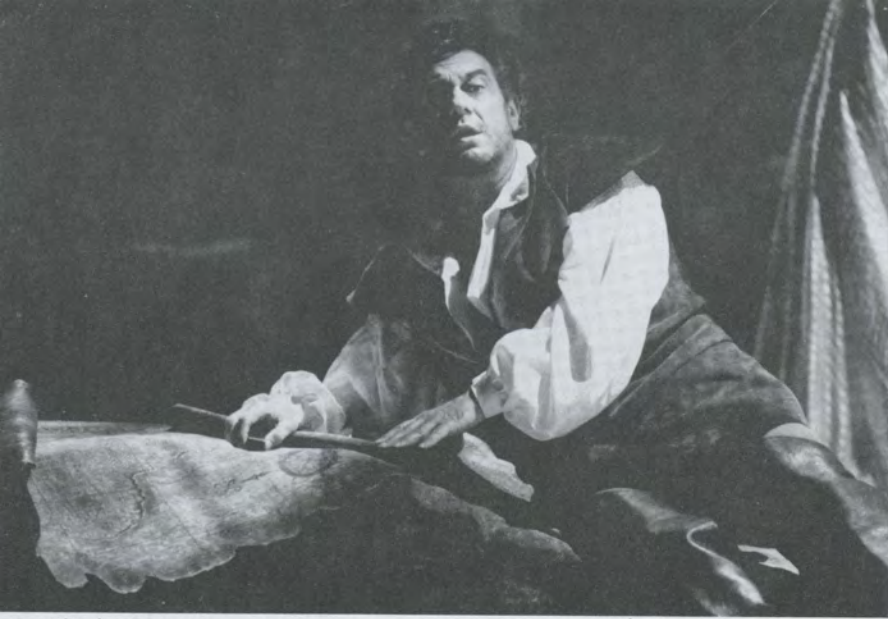
Scene 3—Vasco has departed. Sélíka stands on top of the cliff resolved and weary, contemplating the horizon. She walks beneath the ominous tree's branches, plucks a blossom and inhales its deadly fragrance. Almost immediately she becomes intoxicated and begins to hallucinate. She imagines that she sees Brahma beckoning to her, and that Vasco is descending to her on a cloud drawn by a swan. She sinks to the ground in ecstatic delirium when Nélusko rushes to her in panic and tries to carry her away. "No," she murmurs, "I have found happiness." Disconsolate at the death of the woman he loves, he too inhales the deadly perfume.

L'Africaine

Photos taken in rehearsal
by Marty Sohl



Shirley Verrett



Plácido Domingo



Justino Díaz



Ruth Ann Swenson

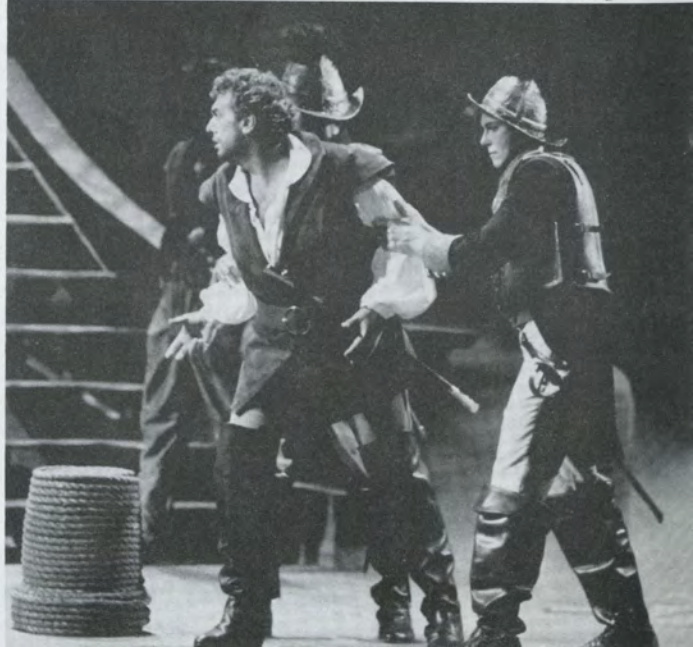


(below) Shirley Verrett, Plácido Domingo



Shirley Verrett

(below) Plácido Domingo





Plácido Domingo



Mark Delavan, Shirley Verrett



Plácido Domingo



Michael Devlin



Shirley Verrett

(below) Justino Díaz, Shirley Verrett



(below) Shirley Verrett





Scene from Act II



Joseph Rouleau



Corps de ballet, Act III

(below) Corps de ballet, Act III



Kevin Anderson



Patricia Spence



Philip Skinner

continued from p.37



MICHAEL DEVLIN

while still a voice student. Following his 1966 New York City Opera debut in Ginastera's *Don Rodrigo*, he sang there for 13 seasons in a variety of leading roles, including Escamillo, which was also the vehicle of his 1978 Metropolitan Opera debut. He returned to the Met for the title role in *Eugene Onegin*, the four villains in *The Tales of Hoffmann*, as well as Peter in *Hansel and Gretel*, which was televised nationally in the "Live from the Met" series. His portrayal of Don Giovanni has earned him great praise in Houston, San Diego, Santa Fe and Toronto, as well as in Hamburg, Prague, Mannheim, Munich, Aix-en-Provence, Frankfurt and at Covent Garden. Highly popular as a concert artist, Devlin has appeared as soloist with nearly every major orchestra in this country. Recent appearances include *Salome* in Miami, *Don Giovanni* in Milwaukee, and the Metropolitan Opera production of *Die Fledermaus* that was telecast nationally.

Bass-baritone **Philip Skinner** appears this fall as Don Diego in *L'Africaine*, a Sea Captain in *Manon Lescaut*, the Priest in *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, and Colline in the family performance of *La Bohème*. He made his San Francisco Opera debut as Quinault in the 1985 Fall Season production of *Adriana Lecouvreur*, and has since appeared in *Il Trovatore*, *Don Carlos*, *La Forza del Destino*, *Faust*, *Eugene Onegin*, *Macbeth*, *Salome*, *La Traviata*, *The Tales of Hoffmann* and *The Queen of Spades*. He participated in the 1985 Merola Opera Program and went on to tour with Western Opera Theater in the title role of *Don Giovanni*. In 1986, he appeared in the Opera Center's Showcase performances of Hindemith's *There and Back* and *The Long Christmas Dinner*. That same year, he



PHILIP SKINNER

was made an Adler Fellow and in 1987 appeared as the Colonel in the Showcase production of *Le Plumet du Colonel*. A graduate of Northwestern University, Skinner received his master's degree from Indiana University, where he performed in several productions. He has also sung with Kentucky Opera, the Columbus Symphony, the Savannah Symphony and at the San Antonio Festival in such roles as Timur and the Mandarin in *Turandot*, Escamillo in *Carmen*, Don Fernando in *Fidelio*, and the King of Egypt in *Aida*. His concert credits include Mozart's Requiem at the Midsummer Mozart Festival, Verdi's Requiem with the Masterworks Choral, and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with the Vallejo and Santa Rosa Symphonies. Recent engagements include Don Basilio in *The Barber of Seville* with the New York City Opera National Company, Ferrando in *Il Trovatore* with Kentucky and Nashville Operas, and appearances with the Atlanta Opera, Edmonton Opera, and at the Spoleto Festival. Skinner will make his Minnesota Orchestra debut this December in Handel's *Messiah*.

Tenor **Kevin Anderson** returns to San Francisco Opera in four roles: Don Alvar in *L'Africaine*, a Lamplighter in *Manon Lescaut*, an Esquire in *Parsifal*, and the Coachman in *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*. The Illinois native made his Company debut during the 1985 Fall Season productions of *Lear* and *Turandot*, and has since returned in *Il Trovatore*, *The Barber of Seville*, *Salome*, *La Traviata* and *Roméo et Juliette*. A graduate of the University of Wyoming, he participated in the Merola Opera Programs of 1983 and '84, and toured for two seasons with Western Opera Theater, portraying Pinkerton and



KEVIN ANDERSON

Goro in *Madame Butterfly* and Ramiro in *La Cenerentola*. He also toured with the San Francisco Opera Center Singers as Nemorino in *The Elixir of Love*. A 1988 Adler Fellow, he portrayed Cherubino in the West Coast premiere of Titus's *Rosina* for the 1988 Opera Center Showcase, having appeared in the 1987 Showcase as the Lieutenant in Sauguet's *Le Plumet du Colonel*. Anderson was a member of the Santa Fe Opera Company Apprentice Program in 1982, and made his Michigan Opera Theater debut as Martin in the company's 1984 residency tour of Copland's *The Tender Land*. During the 1985-86 season he made his European debut in Vivaldi's *Il Giustino* at the Teatro Olimpico in Vicenza, Italy, and bowed at Carnegie Hall in a concert performance of Strauss' *Capriccio*. Local audiences have applauded him in Pocket Opera's performances of *Count Ory*, *Maria Stuarda* and *Orpheus in the Underworld*. Other opera credits include Roméo in Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette* and Will Parker in *Oklahoma* for Marin Opera; Tamino in *The Magic Flute* for Pennsylvania Opera Theater; and Beppe in *Pagliacci* and Remendado in *Carmen* for Opera Colorado. His concert appearances have included performances with the San Francisco Symphony in their Pops Concerts and New Works series with Charles Wuorinen, Handel's *Messiah* with the Honolulu Symphony last December, and two recent Pops Concerts with the Sacramento Symphony.



JOSEPH ROULEAU

Joseph Rouleau returns to San Francisco Opera as the Grand Inquisitor in *L'Africaine*. The Canadian bass made his Company debut in 1986 as the Grand Inquisitor in *Don Carlos* and was here last fall as Capulet in *Roméo et Juliette*. He made his Canadian opera debut with the Montreal Opera Guild in *Un Ballo in Maschera* in 1951 and returned in 1956 to sing Philippe II in *Don Carlos*. His United States debut was with New Orleans Opera in 1955 as Colline in *La Bohème*, followed by the King in *Aida* and the Comte des Grieux in *Manon*. Rouleau's international career was launched with his debut at Covent Garden in the 1957 production of *La Bohème* and *The Magic Flute*. Since then, he has bowed at all the leading opera houses of Europe including those of Paris, Hamburg, Munich, Rome, Geneva, Strasbourg and many others. His travels have also taken him to South Africa, the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro, Chile and numerous festivals including those at Edinburgh, Aldeburgh, Wexford and Glyndebourne. Rouleau has made several tours to Israel and the Soviet Union to perform in *Boris Godunov*, *Faust*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and *Don Carlos*. 1984 marked his Metropolitan Opera debut as the Grand Inquisitor in *Don Carlos* and he repeated the role there in 1986, as well as that of Ramfis in *Aida*. Recent engagements have included *La Forza del Destino* in Calgary and Vancouver, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *La Bohème* and Bizet's *Les Pêcheurs de Perles* in New Orleans, *Rigoletto* and *Otello* in Montreal, Mephisto in *The Damnation of Faust* in Quebec, and the title role of *Boris Godunov* in Montreal. His repertoire includes bass roles in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Turandot*, *La Sonnambula*, *Simon Boccanegra*, *Don Giovanni*, *Billy Budd* and *Pelléas et Mélisande*. Among Rouleau's many recordings are *Semiramide* with Joan Sutherland, *Roméo et Juliette*, *L'Enfance du*



MARK DELAVAN

Christ, *Hamlet*, Stravinsky's *Renard*, a recital of French opera arias and *Les Abîmes du Rêve*, a song cycle written for Rouleau by J. Hétu. His television films include a CBC-TV documentary on his career and a video recording of *Don Carlos*. In 1977 he was honored with the Order of Canada award. In addition to his performing career, Rouleau is active as a professor of voice and has been director of the opera studio at the University of Quebec in Montreal since 1980.

Baritone **Mark Delavan** portrays the High Priest of Brahma in *L'Africaine*, a Sergeant in *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, and Schaunard in *La Bohème*. Last year he sang 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 in 1986 in *Don Carlos* and also appeared in *Faust*, *Eugene Onegin*, *Manon*, and as Valentin in student performances of *Faust*. An Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center from 1986-87, 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*. He received his training at Grand Canyon College and Oral Roberts University, and performed in *The Mikado* and *The Daughter of the Regiment* for the Charlotte Opera Association. For the North Carolina Opera Company, his credits include Papageno, Méphistophélès and Don Magnifico. Other engagements include the Count in *The Marriage of Figaro* for the Carmel Bach Festival, Escamillo and Amonasro in



MAURIZIO ARENA

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. Last 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, which allowed him to compete in the International Mozart Competition in Salzburg where he was a finalist. Recent engagements include Danilo in *The Merry Widow* with the New England Lyric Operetta Company; Mathieu in *Andrea Chénier* at the Portland Opera; and, at Wolf Trap, Tarquinius in *The Rape of Lucretia* and Pantaloon in *The Love for Three Oranges*.

Maestro **Maurizio Arena** is on the podium for *L'Africaine*, returning to San Francisco Opera after leading performances of *Nabucco* last fall and *La Forza del Destino* and *La Bohème* during the 1986 Fall Season. He made his Company debut with Puccini's *Manon Lescaut* during the 1983 Fall Season and returned in 1985 to conduct acclaimed performances of *Adriana Lecouvreur* and *Falstaff*. Born in Messina, Italy, he studied music in Palermo and Perugia, where he was trained in conducting by Franco Ferrara. After many years of collaboration with Tullio Serafin and Antonino Votto, he began his operatic training as repetiteur and assistant conductor at the Teatro Massimo in Palermo from 1960 to 1963. From 1963 to 1969, he was permanent conductor at that theater, where he led performances from the Italian operatic repertoire in addition to many modern and contemporary operas,

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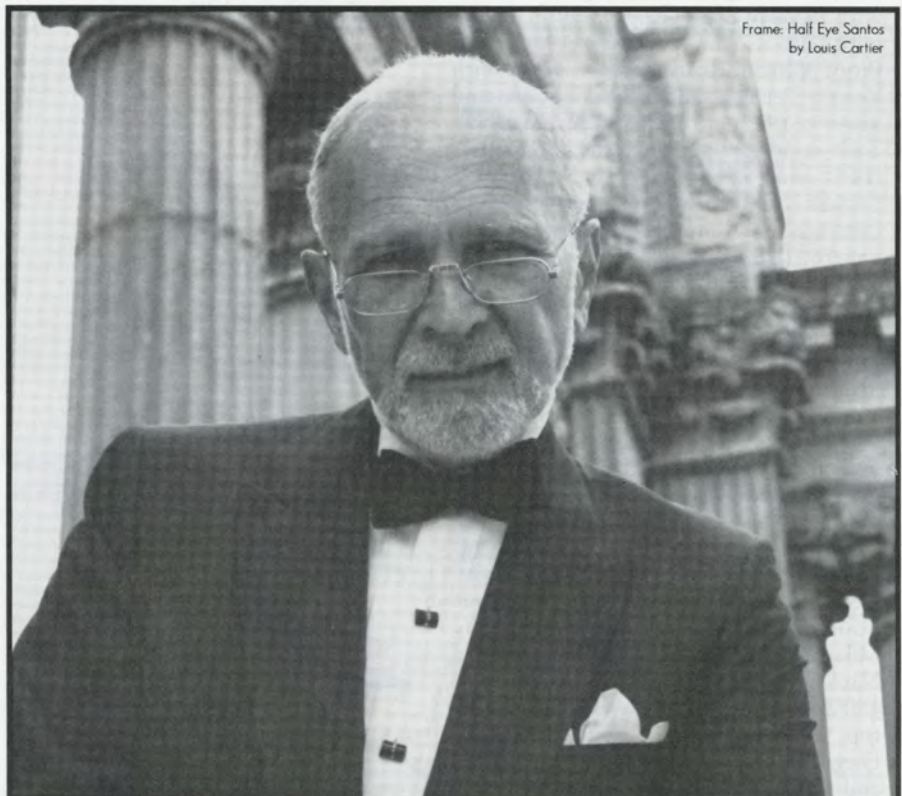
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including *Wozzeck*, *Bluebeard's Castle* and *Carmina Burana*. Since 1969, he has been a guest conductor at most of the important operatic capitals in Europe, including Milan's La Scala, Rome, Trieste, Brussels, Lyons, Paris and Venice. In 1980 he conducted *Der Freischütz* and *Le Nozze di Figaro* in Lyons, Rossini's *Matilde di Shabran* with the French National Radio Orchestra, and led performances of *Nabucco* in Verona and at the Verdi Festival in San Diego. Since then, he has conducted *Caterina Cornaro* at the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires, *Le Nozze di Figaro* in Lyons, concerts in Paris and Italy, *Francesca da Rimini* in Genoa and, at the Teatro Regio in Turin, Verdi's *I Due Foscari* and Ghedini's *Maria d'Alessandria*. Recent engagements include *L'Elisir d'Amore* and *Tosca* at the Vienna Staatsoper, Rossini's *La Donna del Lago* and Respighi's *La Fiamma* at the Verdi Theater in Trieste, *La Fanciulla del West* at the Verona Arena, and Canadian Opera's 1987-88 season opener, *La Forza del Destino*. He recently conducted Pizzetti's *Fedra* in Palermo, the first performance of this rarely-performed opera since 1940, in addition to *Il Tabarro* at the Puccini Festival in Torre del Lago and concerts in Japan. Arena's extensive list of recordings includes *Adriana Lecouvreur* and *Francesca da Rimini*.



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LOTFI MANSOURI

Lotfi Mansouri launches his first fall season as general director of San Francisco Opera by staging Meyerbeer's *L'Africaine*, a production he first directed here in 1972. The Iranian-born former general director of the Canadian Opera Company has staged 40 productions for San Francisco Opera since 1963, including *La Sonnambula* (1963), *La Traviata* (1964), *Die Fledermaus* (1973), *Esclarmonde* (1974), *The Merry Widow* (1981), *Norma* (1982), and *Anna Bolena* (1984), all with Joan Sutherland; *The Daughter of the Regiment* (1974) with Beverly Sills; *Gianni Schicchi* (1964) with Tito Gobbi; *Turandot* (1964) with Birgit Nilsson; *Andrea Chénier* (1965) with Renata Tebaldi and Richard Tucker, and again in 1975 with Plácido Domingo; *Un Ballo in Maschera* (1967) and *Il Trovatore* (1981) with Leontyne Price; Auber's *Fra Diavolo* (1969) with Nicolai Gedda; and *La Gioconda* with Renata Scotto and Luciano Pavarotti, first produced for the 1979 Fall Season and telecast live throughout the United States and to Europe via satellite, and revived for the 1983 Fall Season. Most recently he staged the highly praised 1987 production of *The Tales of Hoffmann* starring Plácido Domingo. From 1960 to 1966 he was resident stage director at the Zurich Opera, and in 1965 began working simultaneously at the Geneva Opera, where he became head stage director in 1966 and stayed until 1976. During his years in Switzerland, Mansouri began working as guest director at various houses throughout Italy (including Milan's La Scala and the companies of Naples, Palermo, Genoa, Turin and Perugia) and North America: Chicago, Houston, Santa Fe, Philadelphia, Tulsa, San Diego, Dallas, and both the Metropolitan and New York City Opera companies in New York. From 1971 to 1975, he staged productions for the Tehran Opera in Iran.



WOLFRAM SKALICKI

In 1976 he was named general director of the Canadian Opera Company in Toronto, a position he held until his resignation earlier this year to accept the general directorship of San Francisco Opera. His Toronto credits include 30 new productions, 12 of them Canadian premieres, including *Wozzeck*, *Lulu*, *Death in Venice*, *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, and Thomas's *Hamlet* (featuring the only Ophelia ever sung on stage by Dame Joan Sutherland). His film credits include opera sequences in *Yes, Giorgio* and last year's critically acclaimed *Moonstruck*.

Wolfram Skalicki is the set designer of *L'Africaine*, a production that was originally seen here in 1972. His long association with the Company began in 1962, with his designs for the San Francisco Opera premiere of *The Rake's Progress*. Other Skalicki settings seen here include the 1963 production of *The Queen of Spades*, *Christopher Columbus*, *Parsifal*, *Pelléas et Mélisande*, *Tannhäuser*, *Il Trovatore*, *Les Troyens*, *Faust*, the complete 1967-72 Ring cycle, *Aida*, *Andrea Chénier* and *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* (*Katerina Ismailova*). A native of Vienna, he is currently a professor at the University for Music and the Performing Arts in Graz, and is associated with the Staatsoper, Burgtheater and Volksoper in Vienna. With his wife, costume designer Amrei Skalicki, he has collaborated on productions in Vienna, Lyons, Marseilles, Strasbourg, Toronto, Dortmund, Munich, Geneva, Buenos Aires, Hamburg, Houston, Miami, Teheran, Athens, Ljubljana and Bogotá. They include designs for *Lulu*, *Giovanna d'Arco*, *Boris Godunov*, *Tristan und Isolde* and *Dialogues of the Carmelites*. Recent productions designed by Skalicki include *Hérodiade* in Nice and at the Orange Festival; *Mefistofele* in Graz; *Boris Godunov* in Ljubljana; *Aida* in Fort Worth; and *Falstaff*, *Hamlet*, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Otello* and *Death in Venice* for the Canadian Opera Company in Toronto, the latter a Canadian premiere. In addition, his designs have been exhibited in Vienna, Zurich, Bayreuth, New York and San Francisco.



AMREI SKALICKI

Austria-born **Amrei Skalicki's** costume designs for *L'Africaine* were first seen here during the 1972 season. In addition to opera, she also creates costumes for television and theater. Her operatic costume designs were first seen in 1970 at the Essen Opera in a production of *Così fan tutte*. Her television debut came with a performance of Massenet's *Manon* for ORTF-TV in Paris in 1973. With her husband, scenic designer Wolfram Skalicki, she has collaborated on productions in Vienna, Lyons, Strasbourg, Dortmund, Marseilles, Innsbruck, Graz, Geneva and Toronto, among other cities. They include costumes for *Lulu*, *Giovanna d'Arco*, *Boris Godunov*, *Bluebeard's Castle*, *Pelléas et Mélisande*, *Andrea Chénier*, *Faust*, *Tosca*, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Manon*, *Macbeth* and *Nabucco*. Recent design credits include the *Ring* cycle and Milhaud's *Christophe Colomb* for the Marseilles Opera; *Falstaff* and *Elektra* for a visit by the Dortmund Opera to the Grand Theatre in Leeds; *Tristan und Isolde* in Innsbruck; and a new production of *Dialogues of the Carmelites* for the Canadian Opera Company in Toronto. Also an established architect, she teaches at the University for Music and the Performing Arts in Graz, and her designs have been exhibited in Dortmund and San Francisco.

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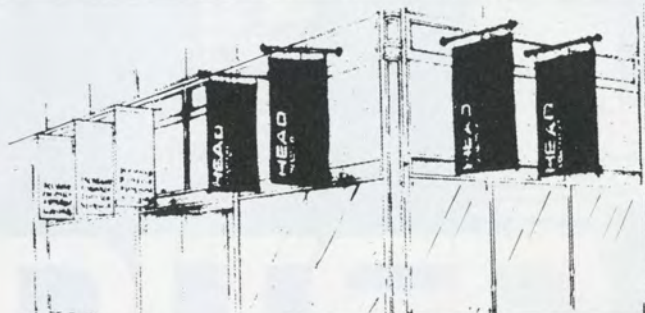
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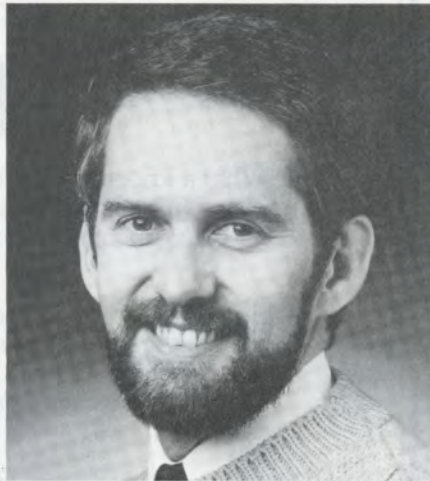


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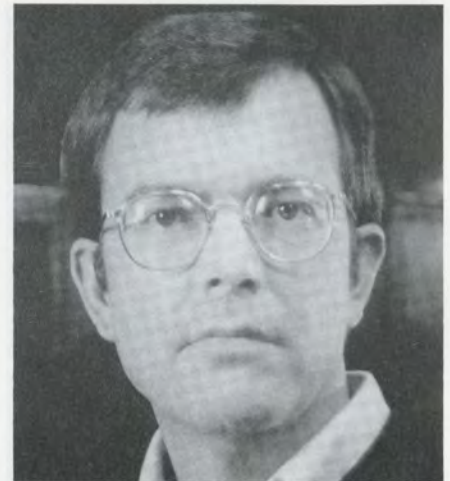
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ROBERT RAY

Australian choreographer **Robert Ray** makes his San Francisco Opera debut with Meyerbeer's *L'Africaine*. He received his early training at the Australian Ballet School and later studied dance in New York with Merce Cunningham and composition at the Juilliard School. In 1979 he was appointed the first full-time teacher of modern dance at the Australian Ballet School. His first professional project as a choreographer was his 1981 *Poems*, which was performed by the Australian Ballet and The Dancers Company. Other projects for the Australian Ballet included *City Dances* (1982), *The Sentimental Bloke* (1985) and, for the Australian Ballet School, *The Nutcracker* (1985). His operatic choreography credits include *Hamlet*, *Adriana Lecouvreur* and *The Merry Widow* for the Australian Opera and the Canadian Opera; *La Belle Hélène* for Victoria State Opera; and *The Soldier's Tale* for the Victorian Arts Centre. *The Sentimental Bloke* was performed this summer by the Australian Ballet on tour to Moscow, Leningrad and Odessa. Recent assignments include *Hamlet* for the Lyric Opera of Chicago and *The Merry Widow* for the Canadian Opera.



THOMAS J. MUNN

Thomas J. Munn is lighting designer for *L'Africaine*, *Parsifal*, *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, *La Bohème* and *La Gioconda*. Last fall, he was responsible for *Salome*, *Die Zauberflöte*, *La Traviata*, *Nabucco*, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, *Roméo et Juliette* and *The Queen of Spades*, in addition to designing the sets for *Nabucco* and co-designing those for *Salome*. In his 13th year with the Company, he has lighted over 100 productions for San Francisco Opera, including the lighting and special effects for all four operas of the 1985 Ring Festival. He serves as scenic adviser for the Company, and has designed scenery for *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, *Roberto Devereux*, *Pelléas et Mélisande* and *Billy Budd*. In addition to his numerous design credits for the War Memorial stage, Munn has designed scenery and lighting for Broadway, Off-Broadway, regional theater, ballet, industrials and film. His television credits include San Francisco Opera productions of *La Gioconda* (for which he received a 1979 Emmy Award), *Samson et Dalila* in 1980, *Aida* in 1981, the Pavarotti concert of 1983, and the Aid and Comfort broadcast in May of 1987. Recent projects include lighting and projection designs for *Madama Butterfly* for the Netherlands Opera; scenery and lighting for Hartford Ballet's production of *Coppélia* and *The Nutcracker*; and lighting designs for the Hartford Opera and Pittsburgh Opera productions of *Hansel and Gretel*. In 1986, Munn entered a partnership with Tom Janus in New York to form "Munn/Janus Associates," through which he handles his architectural lighting and consulting projects. His most notable achievement in this area is the new Muziektheater in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, for which he was the American lighting consultant.



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Shaping *L'Africaine*: Lotfi Mansouri

By TIMOTHY PFAFF

There's not a moment to lose. Lotfi Mansouri, the stage director of San Francisco Opera's revival of its 1972 production of Giacomo Meyerbeer's *L'Africaine*, which opens the 1988 season, has exactly four evenings to stage the difficult choral scenes of the entire piece. Rehearsal time, after money itself the most precious commodity in the world of opera, is all the more so in the case of the big choruses of a 19th-century grand opera. They ask of a director his most detailed and exacting work, of the choristers their closest attention and their greatest patience: there's a numbing amount of "standing by" as the director works with subgroup after subgroup.

Time isn't just money, time is time, and both come in equally limited amounts. Now that the 58-year-old Mansouri isn't just a stage director, but the Company's new general director as well—and as such, the chief custodian of both commodities—it's up to him to proceed with the acumen of an artist and the alacrity of an accountant.

As experienced a stage director as any who treads the boards of the War Memorial's main stage, Mansouri begins, at the stroke of 7 p.m., with a breathless introductory mini-lecture: "This is a very tricky work. It has strong impulses and many dynamic episodes, but it also has a tendency to become pastel and weak. It's up to us to bring out the drama.

"Act I is difficult for the men's chorus,"

he continues, "because it's so unusual. It's like a play. The main characters have a lot of dialogue and you represent three different factions, each allied to one of the principals. You have to react, variously, to everything each one of them says, so it's important that you have a precise notion of what is going on from moment to moment. Because this is going to be on TV, I'm particularly worried that the camera might catch one of you just standing there not reacting. When you leave tonight, we're giving you copies of the libretto for the whole scene, so you can learn all the arguments that are being advanced in the Portuguese Council Chamber. But come the performance, even if you don't understand what is going on, fake it." By the time Mansouri has finished his plain-English plot synopsis, explained his overall blocking design, and provided each of the subgroups with their characterizations and motivations, any need for "faking it" has long since vanished.

"Basses," he explains, "you're for Don Pedro, and basically against progress. Tenors, you're with Don Alvaro. You're the vital ones"—hisses from the basses—"and you're for progress.

"And you bishops, you're the hierarchy of the Catholic Church, and as such you're very powerful. Your opinion will rule. After your procession into the Council Chamber, you gather around—behind—the Grand Inquisitor, who frequently interrupts the proceedings to make state-

ments, grand pronouncements. He plays to you like the gallery. You're all hypocrites," he continues, to a few more scattered hisses from the notoriously interactive Opera Chorus, "a bunch of real yes men. Whether he says yes or no, you mirror his thoughts, his expressions—and you make them even stronger." Mansouri mimics the Inquisitor making a pompous, fusty remark, then a bishop imitating and exaggerating it. "Whatever he says, you give it an even larger physical demonstration. Each of you, feel like you're 500 pounds. *Very expansive.*"

In the three taxing hours that follow, Mansouri, moving robustly while himself enacting every line of the dense libretto, isn't just blocking the entrances and moves and suggesting characterization. He's already fine-tuning. "The bows to Don Pedro—not rococo bows with the big flourishes. We're doing this in the 19th-century style, in keeping with the music, so look dashing and cavalier, but not florid. One hand on your sword, the other across your breast, and a slight bow of the head and from the midriff. But watch your swords. Control them. If you don't, when you kneel for prayer, you'll hit your

Timothy Pfaff is Managing Editor of the U.C. Berkeley Alumni Magazine, California Monthly, a free-lance writer on the arts, and West Coast correspondent for London's Financial Times.

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At the beginning of the Africaine chorus rehearsal, Lotfi Mansouri goes through the opera's plot.

partner behind you.

"Make your entrances looking very aristocratic, but also make them dynamic. There should be a sense of 'Why is this meeting being called?' in your every step. And after you've made your bows and come to your places, look at one another and converse." The choristers' first crack at the entrance yields, "Damn good for the first time. Now, I'd love to do that entrance again, because after it, everything gets easier. Now, this time, as urgent but not as hectic. Remember, you're noblemen. When you get into your small groups, don't make it quite so buddy-buddy. Don't touch. And I'm going to keep bugging you about not lining up. If you make the groups as I have arranged them, everyone will have a clear sightline to the conductor."

Whether rendering the text in exquisite French or explaining it in his clear yet lightly-accented English, Mansouri insists that his choristers grasp the significance of their participation in the momentous

events taking part around them. His explication of Vasco's entrance with the "slaves," Sélika and Nélusko—Vasco's proof of the existence of India around the African Cape—provides a revelatory peek at Mansouri's directorial style.

"When the slaves appear, your reactions have to show your fascination with these strange people," he begins. "You have to put yourselves in the minds of these people, for whom Europe represents all there is of life. Don't act as if these are people you might encounter any day on Market Street. In today's mentality, you have to act like they are aliens—this is E.T. landing.

"But don't indicate their strangeness to you by recoiling. Indicate it by tension in the body, pulling back only slightly. And when they move away from you, then you move in closer. And don't react the same way to them both. Sélika, the princess in her own country, has more grandeur. Her regal bearing is something you can at least relate to. Nélusko is another

matter. You're shocked at his defiance. When he has his outburst, you can pull back, as though King Kong had arrived. And you, bishops, as far as you are concerned, these people are infidels; they should be burned. You respond to them with enormous disdain. Simply pull away."

Lotfi Mansouri is back in town. Back, what's more, a scant few days before the choral rehearsals are to begin. And that after spending a few days consulting at Toronto's Canadian Opera Company, whose general director he will continue to be until next January—and that hard on the heels of a critical and public triumph as the director of a new production of Rossini's *Barber of Seville* at New York City Opera. During an interview in his office two days after his return to the company he now heads, he is delighted to hear that *The New York Times* praised his new *Barber* for "follow[ing] Rossini tradition so faithfully"—and for being so "musically attentive" that "Mr. Mansouri risks being drummed out of the corps of celebrity directors." Duties in Canada had called him away from New York before the reviews had appeared.

"It's funny," he remarks, with his characteristic, relaxed good humor, "I'm a great believer in kismet, or destiny. I started my first season in Canada with a new production of Verdi's *Don Carlos* in the five-act French version. Without having planned it that way, it turns out that the last production I will direct for Canada is a revival of that same *Don Carlos*. And now I'm coming here to start my general directorship with *L'Africaine*, one of my old productions for this house. Somehow it seems prophetic, like it's all part of a grander design.

"Terry [McEwen] had invited me to direct *L'Africaine* and *La Bohème* this season. But because it's all happened so fast here—it's like I've been parachuted in—I've had to give up the *Bohème*. But the other productions I'm doing in Canada this year are *The Makropulos Case*—and a new production of *La Bohème*!"

The energetic, resourceful Mansouri politely dismisses questions about the conflicts of working simultaneously as stage director and general director. "Sure, it's a balancing act," he allows, "but you simply set priorities. Crises always come up, and if they're major, you leave the rehearsal and have your assistant continue. I have been blessed with good



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The rehearsal's progress is reflected in director Mansouri's face.

assistants. The rest is a matter of scheduling. You have to know what you're doing all the time and not procrastinate."

He is convinced that, were he not doing double duty as general director of companies on opposite ends of North America, he would not have had to give up the San Francisco *Bohème*. "If I were only here, I wouldn't have any problems directing two operas and running the company. It's what I'm used to from Canada—and the same kind of thing Wolfgang Sawallisch in Munich and Götz Friedrich in Berlin do. It's part of the business. But because this is a larger company and a more demanding position—and because of my contract in Canada—I've decided to direct less here."

Be that as it may, his relish for his sole directorial assignment this season is patent, and for a number of intriguing reasons. His principals, Plácido Domingo as Vasco da Gama and Shirley Verrett as the title character, Sélika, both notoriously theatrical performers as well as world-renowned singers, are returning to

the roles in which they triumphed 16 years ago. "They're both everything a director wants in his singers: intelligent, sensitive, and enormously flexible artists. They're the farthest thing from 'stand up and deliver' singers. They're both innately aware of the theatrical values in an opera," he says.

The newcomers to the production (and to the opera) are Justino Díaz as Nélusko, Michael Devlin as Don Pedro, and, as Inès, soprano Ruth Ann Swenson, a San Francisco (and Lotfi Mansouri—"I brought her to Canada last year as Ilia in *Idomeneo*, and she was absolutely wonderful, a lovely artist to work with") favorite.

Finally, the production itself, though nominally a revival, to all intents and purposes counts as a new production. "Because *L'Africaine* will be televised—three of the performances will be taped—it's important that it look as good as possible," Mansouri contends. "We have extended the rake at the sides, adding six feet to the width of the stage. We've also

refurbished a lot of the sets, and one scene has been completely rebuilt," he continues. All of the sets have been repainted ("They look like new," he beams), and the final scene has been substantially restored. "The manchineel tree, whose blossoms exude that fatal perfume, was, you may recall, very beautiful—but also very delicate. It was water-damaged in the warehouse and had to be rebuilt in our scene shop here."

The scene of Sélika's coronation in the Brahman temple will be new even to those with vivid memories of the spectacular production of 1972. "I told Terry that I was very unhappy with the temple scene, that it had not been a big success for me," he confides. "I said that since it was being telecast, and with Domingo and Verrett, we should do it new. I also told him I wanted Wolfram Skalicki, who did the original production, back to redo it, and fortunately he was able to engage Dr. Skalicki a year ago.

"Visually, the new temple scene is very



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Surrounded by members of the San Francisco Opera Chorus, with William Tredway on his right, Lotfi Mansouri goes through the paces of the *Africaine* Council Chamber scene.

impressive. An enormous head of Shiva upstage center serves as the entrance to the temple. The ballet sequence and Sélíka's procession is very much like the Triumphal March in *Aida*. It begins with the warriors, continues with the ballet, and ends with the entrance of Sélíka, who is carried in—like Radames.

"We have all new costumes for the ballet in that scene, and we also will have new choreography, by Robert Ray. He has done a lot of work in Australia, where I

first met him when I was doing a production in Sydney. I liked him very much and took him with me for productions in Canada and at the Chicago Lyric. Ballet has always been a prominent part of French opera, but stylistically it needs something very graceful and appropriate. If it's not done well, it can be funny. What convinced me that Ray should do *L'Africaine* was his choreography for our production of Thomas's *Hamlet* in Canada, with Joan Sutherland as Ophelia. His



While the chorus is performing the scene which was just blocked, the ever-alert Mansouri watches from the edge of the stage.

work is very sensitive, so I recommended him to Terry, and I am delighted we were able to get him."

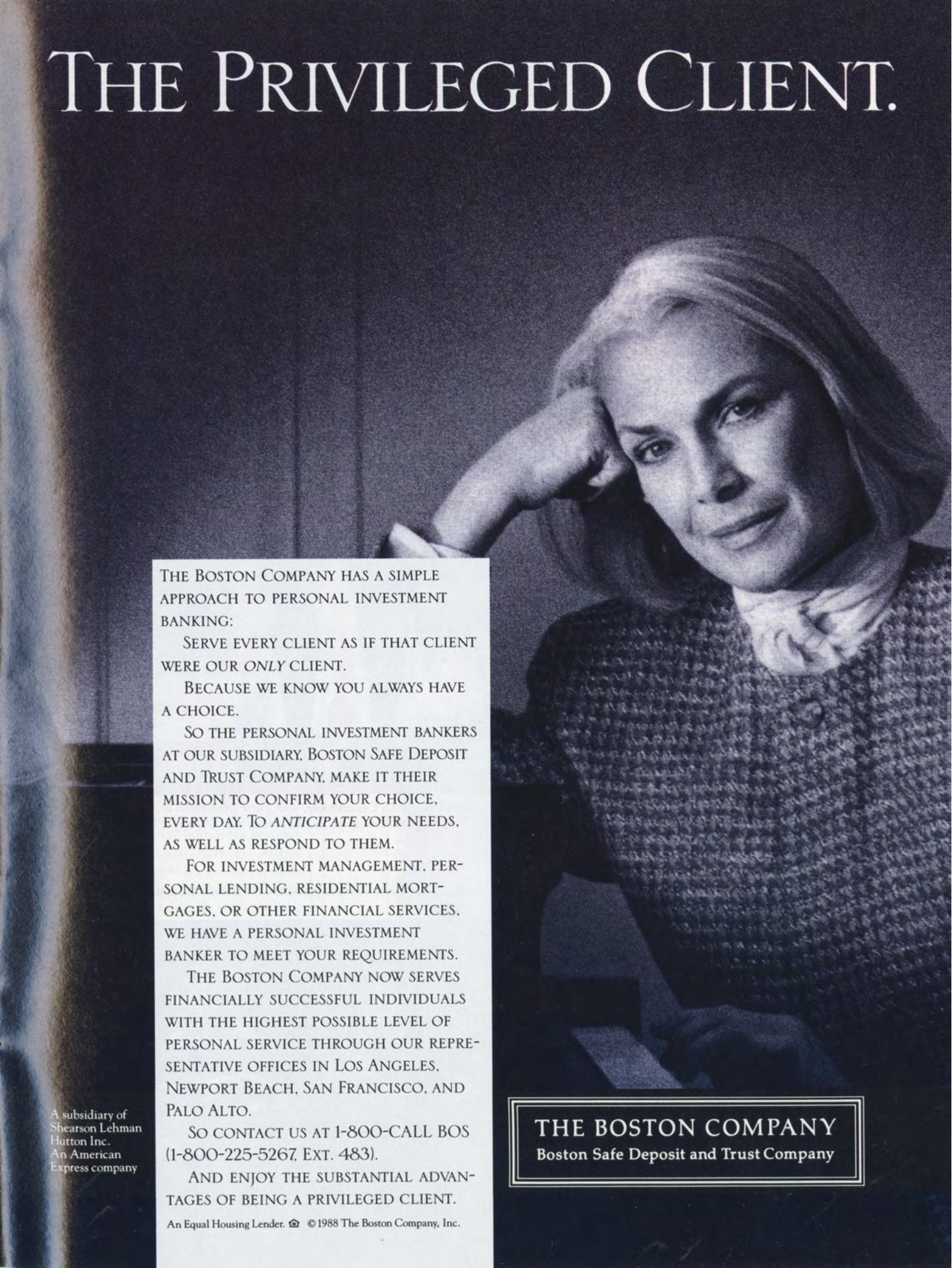
In the end, Mansouri himself may figure as the central reason this season's *Africaine* will emerge as a "new" production. Asked if he had new thoughts about the work since his last go-around with it, he responds with a hearty laugh. "I don't remember what thoughts I had in '72, so I think every thought I have is new. The entrances and exits haven't changed, of course, so some things will be the same, but if you looked, you'd see that I've written hardly anything in my score. I don't write down what I do because I don't want to repeat myself. Whatever I do this season is going to be largely from scratch, which excites me. And I hope I've learned something over the past 16 years. And again, thank God I've got Domingo and Verrett. They're not the kinds of singers who are set in their ways, which suits me perfectly. I doubt very much if Plácido remembers what he did in '72 either—he's had about 900 other projects since then—so he'll be coming to it the same way I am, absolutely fresh."

Mansouri notes that two particular scenes will be his own most daunting assignments. One is the penultimate scene, "when Vasco changes his emotions about Sélíka. It's not a matter of conscience; he's under the influence of a potion. First there's this gorgeous duet between Vasco and Sélíka, at the end of which he's in love with Inès again. The changes are sensitive points, at which I will have to work very hard.

"The ship scene is also very difficult," he adds. "For one thing, it ends in a shipwreck, and you really need all of the technical facilities of a film studio. I would have loved to have been able to engage Mr. Lucas from the valley, to have his wizardry at my beck and call. We have to do it all with suggestions, with lighting. But our lighting director, Thomas Munn, who is so excellent, will bring his own talents to it. He is completely relighting the show, from scratch.

"The only changes we will be making for television, by the way, will be in the lighting, which will have to be a little brighter for the taped performances. So Tom has to light the show two different ways, but I won't have to do anything differently. Brian Large will be directing it for television, and he's so superb, there'll be nothing special for me to do. He'll know

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exactly what to highlight, and what reactions to look for, down to the facial expressions of individual choristers."

Mansouri's memories of his last outing with *L'Africaine* prove the occasion for more mirth. "In those days we had to do everything much faster and, production-wise, the company was not at all as sophisticated as it has since become. There weren't such excellent rehearsal facilities, for one thing. I remember rehearsing *L'Africaine* in the Armory. It never failed. Every time Shirley Verrett would get sensitive with that wonderful lullaby, the gates would open and the tanks would come in! And the soldiers played basketball there. Because the place is so hollow, there was this constant thump-thump of the ball. Looking back, I don't know how we did it."

Looking ahead, there's more scheduling, setting priorities—and not procrastinating. Mansouri has already survived his administration's first trial: the chorus crisis that at one point threatened to postpone or even cancel his first season as general director. "I'm delighted that the negotiations came out," he reflects, "and I think the chorus is happy, too. As a stage director I've had a very good relationship with this chorus, and I know they care about the opera—and that they care about the Company as much as I do. When I lived and worked in Europe, I used to brag about them, commenting that they sang very well but also cared about acting. One of the reasons I don't want to work in Italy again is that the choruses are so mediocre there. Here, they're committed. We get along very well."

Let there be no doubt that an important reason is that Mansouri treats his chorus with deep respect. Although a man of strong artistic temperament, Mansouri is at the farthest extreme from the stereotype of the high-strung, "temperamental" director. He works on a collegial, first-name basis with the singers he knows—all but the newest recruits—and invariably addresses the assembly as "ladies and gentlemen." His corrections generally come by way of statements like "I led you wrong there," or "I've changed my mind," and Mansouri's version of reproach seems to be "I'd love to do that again." No wonder the yield is cooperation—and concentration.

The rehearsal of the shipboard scene proves as taxing as he had imagined, but Mansouri approaches its complexities with equanimity and clarity of purpose.

"Ladies," he explains patiently, "you're the entourage of Inès, so you're noble ladies beautifully dressed for the voyage. The problem will be your hooped skirts. You'll have to come through that door one at a time—but I don't want you to look regimented." He has similar advice for the men: "All sailors have a certain military imprint, but remember, you're the royal navy, not the merchant marine. So come in very strong—no tapping now. This is not Ann Miller."

Such humor is an important ingredient in Mansouri's success as a director. He openly admits that he is concerned about the fact that the "sailors" must, to a one, sway back and forth in the same direction to suggest the rocking of the boat. "If only one of you is going the wrong way, the audience will laugh," he worries. It's a particular concern, of course, for the shipwreck episode, and Mansouri discharges some of the tension with a well-timed joke: "This is a big scene. You know, Meyerbeer is the Cecil B. De Mille of opera."

In the privacy of his office, he reflects more soberly: "I like Meyerbeer, and I think people continue to underestimate him. You have to consider the influence he had on Verdi and Wagner. But influences apart, a piece like *L'Africaine* can stand on its own. Some of the scenes, like the opening Council Chamber scene, are as dramatic and well-structured as a play. The prison scene alone—Sélika's aria, then her duet with Nélusko, then another duet with Vasco—I just love it. And 'O paradis'—my God, where are you going to find another aria like that? People really do underestimate Meyerbeer."

Since his first *Africaine* here, Mansouri has directed *Le Prophète* in Zurich, with James McCracken, *Robert le Diable* in Geneva, with Alain Vanzo, and his favorite, *Les Huguenots*, twice, including a production in Sydney featuring Joan Sutherland as Marguerite de Valois. Although he has no interest in doing *Robert* ever again ("It's crazy, absolutely wild"), the others have held his interest. He even makes the tantalizing suggestion that *Les Huguenots* would be "right for San Francisco. It's a very good piece, structurally, with wonderful, dramatic scenes."

Mansouri now has a standing joke, one he retells with glee—and a dramatic lift of his enormous, expressive eyebrows: "I am the only living stage director who has done four Meyerbeer operas and is still alive." ■

Adler Tradition Continues

By JOHN SCHAUER

On Monday afternoon, April 11, 1988, a distinguished roster of artists gathered in the War Memorial Opera House to perform a unique musical program, one of the sadder events that have been presented on the Opera House stage. The occasion was a memorial tribute to San Francisco Opera's late General Director Emeritus Kurt Herbert Adler, who had died suddenly of a heart attack on February 9. For several generations of Bay Area residents, Adler's name was synonymous with San Francisco Opera, and an outpouring of public and private tributes testified to the prodigious talents and lofty stature of a most remarkable man.

As general director of San Francisco Opera for over a quarter of a century, Kurt Herbert Adler held ultimate responsibility for every facet of the Company—and was frequently called accountable. One local critic, after panning a San Francisco Opera production, pointed out that if the criticism seemed severe, it should be remembered that it was Adler himself who taught us the almost unrealistically high standards that were applied. An Adler production, it would seem, was a very hard act to follow—even for Adler.

That critic did underscore an important facet of Adler's brilliant reign in San Francisco: how much the Maestro taught us. For Adler did not simply mount a staggering succession of splendid produc-

tions in the War Memorial Opera House. During an age when opera in most other cities remained a quaint amusement for a select few in the confines of expensive music-palaces, Adler gave San Francisco its opera, made it an integral thread in the fabric of the city's life. Programs he inaugurated, such as Brown Bag Opera, took performances of operatic music throughout the Bay Area, to the parks, shopping malls, business centers, performances that introduced many to opera for the first time, or broadened their knowledge of repertoire.

But of all the programs he founded, few can match in magnitude the now-traditional celebration that takes place each year on the Sunday afternoon following Opening Night: Opera in the Park. Before thousands of opera devotees in Golden Gate Park's Music Concourse, conducted by Maestro Adler, a dazzling array of some of the biggest and brightest names in contemporary operatic history have performed free of charge to the public (the expenses being graciously covered by the *San Francisco Examiner* and the Friends of Recreation and Parks). It is possible that more operatic luminaries have sung at Opera in the Park than in many of America's regional opera houses: Licia Albanese, Giacomo Aragall, Wolfgang Brendel, Montserrat Caballé, Renato Capecchi, Irene Dalis, Plácido Domingo, Gwyneth Jones, Evelyn Lear, Pilar Lorengar, Sherrill Milnes, Leo Nucci, Elena Obraztsova, Luciano Pavarotti, Paul Plishka, Margaret Price, Katia Ricciarelli, Renata Scottò, Neil Shicoff, Beverly Sills, Thomas Stewart, Stefania Toczyska,



Frederica von Stade performing "Parto, parto" from Mozart's *La Clemenza di Tito* at the April 11 memorial concert, honoring the late Maestro Kurt Herbert Adler.

SOHL

John Schauer is Staff Writer for *San Francisco Opera*.



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Plácido Domingo, Katia Ricciarelli and Kurt Herbert Adler toast the audience with champagne while performing "Libiamo" from Verdi's Traviata, a frequent ending to the popular Opera in the Park concerts.

Shirley Verrett, Ingvar Wixell—these are only some of the names that have thrilled thousands in one of the many traditions Kurt Herbert Adler bequeathed to the City of San Francisco.

This year, we offer a belated thanks to the Maestro when the *San Francisco Examiner*, Friends of Recreation and Parks and San Francisco Opera dedicate the Opera in the Park concerts in perpetuity to the memory of Kurt Herbert Adler. KQED, which annually televises and broadcasts the concert, has prepared a special intermission feature with the

assistance of Nancy Adler. Contributing to the occasion are the supernumeraries of San Francisco Opera, who have purchased a giant sequoia that was planted near the bandshell by Mrs. Adler and her two children, Roman and Sabrina, in honor of her late husband.

A fitting tribute: like a giant sequoia, Opera in the Park has taken root and become part of the unique heritage enjoyed by residents of the Bay Area, a tradition that will continue to flourish and give pleasure to countless future generations. ■



POWERS

Kurt Herbert Adler and Montserrat Caballé acknowledge the applause at the 1981 Opera in the Park concert.

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OFFENBACH

Conductor: Richard Buckley
Director: Frank Corsaro
Designer: Günther Schneider-Siemssen
Cast includes: Plácido Domingo,
Julia Migenes, Rodney Giltry,
Stephanie Vlahos

OCTOBER 8, 11, 14, 16

M O Z A R T
Così fan Tutte

Conductor: Christof Perick
Director: Sir Peter Hall
Designer: John Bury
Cast includes: Carol Vaness, Maria Ewing,
Anne Howells, Jonathan Mack,
Jeffrey Black, Stafford Dean

FEBRUARY 17, 20, 25, 27

Tancredi
ROSSINI

Conductor: Henry Lewis
Director: John Copley
Sets: John Conklin
Costumes: Michael Stennett
Cast includes: Marilyn Horne,
Christine Weidinger, Chris Merritt

APRIL 18, 23, 27, MAY 1

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MARVELLEE CARIAGA RAGNAR ULFUNG MICHAEL DEVLIN

Conductor: Randall Behr
Director: Sir Peter Hall
Designer: John Bury
Cast includes: Maria Ewing,
Ragnar Ulfung, Michael Devlin,
Marvellee Cariaga

OCTOBER 15, 17, 23, 25

**KATYA
KABANOVA**
JANACEK

Conductor: Jiri Kout
Director: Götz Friedrich
Scenery: Hans Schavernoch
Costumes: Lore Haas
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Leonie Rysanek, Warren Ellsworth,
Richard Cassilly

DECEMBER 1, 3, 6, 9, 11

WOZZECK
BERG

Conductor: Simon Rattle
Director: David Alden
Designer: David Fielding
Cast includes: Benjamin Luxon,
Elise Ross

MARCH 25, 28, 31 APRIL 2

OTELLO
GIUSEPPE
VERDI
PLACIDO
DOMINGO

Conductor: Lawrence Foster
Director: Götz Friedrich
Sets: Günther Schneider-Siemssen
Costumes: Jan Skalicky
Cast includes: Plácido Domingo,
Justino Diaz, Ilona Tokody

JUNE 14 - JULY 2

ORPHEUS
IN THE
UNDERWORLD
OFFENBACH

Conductor: John De Main
Director: Peter Mark Schifter
Designer: Gerald Scarle
Choreographer: Michael Phillips
Cast includes: Jonathan Mack, Tracy Dahl,
Robert Orth, Marvellee Cariaga

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Jean-Pierre Ponnelle,
1932-1988

In a year already heavy with significant losses, the San Francisco Opera family has been further saddened by the death of Jean-Pierre Ponnelle. We will continue to celebrate his artistry and vision with stagings of productions he has conceived—this year, with *Der Fliegende Holländer* and *Così fan tutte*—and will always remember the man whose vitality and creative genius were so closely interwoven with the history of the San Francisco Opera.

A Ponnelle retrospective feature will be published in the *Così fan tutte* issue of San Francisco Opera magazine.

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Andy.

He was young, handsome and talented, a conductor with international credits and a permanent position with one of the world's leading opera houses. And then, this past June, as happens all too frequently during this troubled decade, he was dead from AIDS, a disease that has a cruel disregard for age, looks or talent.

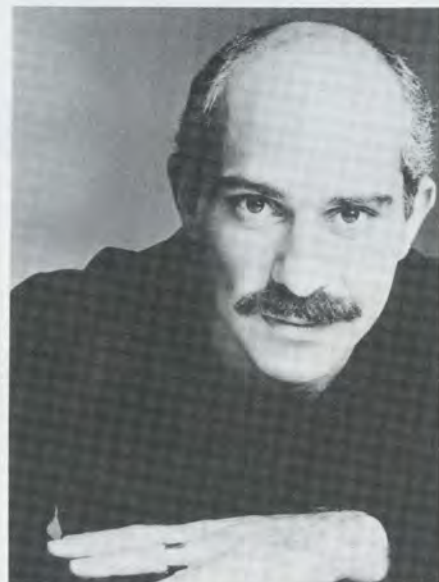
Maestro Andrew Meltzer—"Andy" to virtually everyone who knew him—was adamant that the cause of his death be made explicit. Fiercely outspoken, he would tolerate none of the hypocrisy of euphemistic medical terms, the dishonesty of misleading explanations given when the lives of other public figures in the performing arts were lost to the same tragic ailment. But if Andy ultimately lost his courageous battle with AIDS, he had the personal victory of dying with the same unyielding honesty with which he had lived his life.

Andy's outspokenness and his refusal to compromise may have cost him some friends; but those same qualities also set new standards for the San Francisco Opera Center, for which he served as music director from its inception in 1982. As one of the judges for Opera Center auditions, Andy was largely responsible for identifying such major talents as Ruth Ann Swenson, Dolora Zajic, Cheryl Parrish, Susan Patterson, Mark Delavan, John David De Haan, Philip Skinner—the bright emerging stars whose names will be heard with increasing frequency as time goes on.

Opera Center Manager Christine Bullin recalls, "To judge the nationwide Opera Center auditions alongside Andy was to see a precious side of him. During those exciting years, when now-well-known talent was being discovered, the Opera Center auditions became known for their calm and supportive atmosphere. The tone of these auditions was created by Andy, who was unfailingly encouraging to the auditioning singers and coaches, hoping to see the best of them." But the professional serenity contrasted with the jubilant plane trips home, when the wealth of musical potential displayed by the upcoming Merola Opera Program

participants was discussed and celebrated. "I have never known," Bullin adds, "anyone so generous and hopeful about the development of talent in others."

Since the development of young artists was such an important focus in Andy's career, it is appropriate that he



Andrew Meltzer, 1947-1988.

began as a prodigy himself, attending the prestigious High School of Music and Art in New York. He then went on to study at Oberlin College, receiving his master's degree in 1971. Within a few years he had been hired as a vocal coach at Santa Fe Opera, appointed music director of the Centre Lyrique International at the Geneva Opera, and made his professional American debut with the Minnesota Opera conducting *The Threepenny Opera*.

He came to California in 1974, making his West Coast conducting debut with the Spring Opera Theater production of Cavalli's *L'Ormindo*, and assuming (for two years) responsibilities as music director of the Merola Opera Program and, in 1975, Western Opera Theater. He moved on to spread his conducting wings with productions for New York City Opera, Michigan Opera Theatre, the Edmonton Opera, Vancouver Opera, Minnesota Opera, Spoleto Festival USA and the Houston Grand Opera, including a Euro-



(L. to r.) Christine Bullin, Manager of the San Francisco Opera Center; James Schwabacher, President of the Merola Opera Program; and Andrew Meltzer during auditions. CUNNINGHAM

summer of 1986 had the satisfaction of conducting the performances of *Il Trovatore* in which Dolora Zajic, one of the talents he helped discover, scored a major triumph as Azucena.

As his condition deteriorated, Andy struggled to carry out the duties required of his position with the Opera, and made it his goal to be able to fulfill a cherished assignment: to conduct the new production of *La Traviata* last fall. The story of a woman cut down in the prime of life by an insidious illness, who knows of her impending death but summons the strength to carry on as though nothing were wrong, must have resonated with strong feelings for Andy as he prepared for it, making it the culmination of his all-too-brief career. Sweeping aside the hoary conducting clichés and rhythmic mannerisms that mar less competent performances, Andy devised an interpretation that won over audiences and critics alike for its freshness and insight. The *London Times* reported: "Andrew Meltzer conducted with extraordinary delicacy and grace, rendering the opera as 'French' as it was Italian; phrases slowly and elegantly shaped, violins razor-sharp, tone colors precise. Both 'Dite alle giovane' and 'Parigi o cara' began with near-inaudible whispers, and only gradually spun into fine lines of song." Another international publication, *Opera* magazine, commented on "... the finesse and dramatic acuity of Andrew Meltzer's conducting. The tone was set immediately with a prelude that read us Violetta's death-sentence in its affecting frailty of phrase, the little stabs of lyricism. If one dynamic marking might serve as emblem of the *feeling* of Meltzer's interpretation it would be the *fp*, the dying *forte*, symbol of dashed hopes."

But Andy's hopes were not extinguished, and he intended to return to the podium this fall for *The Rake's Progress*. A sudden decline in his condition last June, however, precluded that from happening. The fruits of his labors did not end with his final performances, however; as the many young artists he helped discover, train and nurture climb to new heights in their careers, so will the gratitude of those who are aware of Andy's contribution. Some of the gratitude will be expressed at a memorial service to be held in late September.

We thank you, Maestro Meltzer. We miss you, Andy. ■

—J.S.

pean tour of their production of *Porgy and Bess*.

Andy returned to San Francisco at the start of Terence A. McEwen's tenure as general director, and was named resident conductor and musical adviser. Audiences of the Opera Center's annual Showcase productions heard him lead performances of *L'Ormino* (1983), *The Turk in Italy* (1986) and *The Love of Don Perlimplin* (1985), a Conrad Susa opera he conducted at the work's 1984 world premiere at the State University of New York at Purchase. During San Francisco Opera's international seasons, Andy made his podium debut with the 1982 Summer Season production of *The Barber of Seville*, returning for *Così fan tutte* in the summer of 1983, *La Gioconda* for fall 1983, and *Die Fledermaus* for the 1984 Summer Season.

Originally scheduled to conduct *Madama Butterfly* for the 1984 Fall Season, Andy had to relinquish the assignment when a stomach disorder required emergency surgery; it was then that he was told by his doctors that he might be developing the early stages of AIDS. Yet despite such a devastating psychological blow, Andy went on with his operatic plans and projects, and during the

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September 30	Chico, CA
October 1, 2, 3	Yreka, CA
October 4	Newport, OR
October 6	Olympia, WA
October 8	Lewiston, ID
October 10	Nyssa, OR
October 11	Caldwell, ID
October 13	Richland, WA
October 15	Spokane, WA
October 17	Missoula, MT
October 18	Havre, MT
October 20	Butte, MT
October 21	Helena, MT
October 22	Billings, MT
October 28	Green Bay, WI
October 29	Manitowoc, WI
October 30	Merrillville, IN
November 1	Stow, OH
November 3	Meadville, PA
November 4	Selinsgrove, PA
November 5	Altoona, PA
November 6	Pennington, NJ
November 9	Stonington, CT
November 11	Geneseo, NY
November 12	Stony Brook, NY
November 13	New York, NY
November 15	Huntington, WV
November 16	Fairmont, WV
November 19	Boca Raton, FL
November 21	Lakeland, FL
November 22	Ft. Lauderdale, FL

Most of the above performance dates will feature Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*.

Brown Bag Opera/Special Event

October 4—Pacific Musical Society,
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Opera Center Benefit Event, "Front and Center"

October 23—Kimball's Restaurant,
San Francisco

Schwabacher Debut Recitals,

Vorpal Gallery, San Francisco

November 20—Robert Tate, tenor

December 11—Ann Panagulias,
soprano

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1988 Opera Previews

Information on opera previews and lectures is carried in *San Francisco Opera Magazine* in order to enable patrons to plan attendance in advance. 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.

Maometto II 9/12

With Philip Gossett, Rossini scholar, Robert W. Reneker Distinguished Service Professor of Music, University of Chicago; and James M. Kendrick, Chief Executive Officer, Boosey & Hawkes.

Marilyn Horne 9/26

Reflections on her life and career.

Parsifal—a technical view of the new production. 10/13

With Pet Halmen, designer; Nicolas Joël, director; Thomas J. Munn, lighting director; Jenny Green, costume director.

Anniversary Panel—Behind the scenes, the past 50 years. 11/9

With Matthew Farruggio, production supervisor; John Priest, technical director; Ivan Van Perre, master of properties (retired); Philip Eisenberg, assistant for artists.

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD PREVIEWS

MARIN

Previews held at Park School Auditorium, 360 E. Blithedale, Mill Valley; refresh-

ments 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.

L'Africaine 9/8

Michael Mitchell

Maometto II 9/15

Philip Gossett

The Rake's Progress 9/22

Albert Takazauckas

Parsifal 10/20

James Keolker

Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk 10/27

Richard Taruskin

La Gioconda 11/17

William Huck

SOUTH PENINSULA

Previews held at the Palo Alto Senior Center, 450 Bryant, at 8 p.m. Series registration is \$22 (students \$11); single tickets are \$5 (students \$3). For further information, please call (415) 941-3890.

L'Africaine 9/7

Michael Mitchell

Maometto II 9/13

Philip Gossett

The Rake's Progress 9/20

Albert Takazauckas

Parsifal 10/18

James Keolker

Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk 10/25

Richard Taruskin

La Gioconda 11/15

William Huck

SAN JOSE OPERA GUILD

Previews held at the Los Gatos History Club, 1234 Los Gatos Blvd., 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). For further information, please call (408) 741-1331.

L'Africaine 9/8

Michael Mitchell

Maometto II 9/13

Philip Gossett

The Rake's Progress 9/20

Albert Takazauckas

Parsifal 10/18

James Keolker

Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk 10/25

Richard Taruskin

La Gioconda 11/15

William Huck

SOMOMA 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 and reservations for receptions and luncheons, please call (707) 938-2432 or (707) 996-2590.

L'Africaine 9/6, 2 p.m.

Michael Mitchell 585 Denmark St., Sonoma

Maometto II 9/12, 2 p.m.

Philip Gossett 1000 Buckeye Rd., Kenwood

continued

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Santa Rosa

Parsifal 10/17, 10:30 a.m.
James Keolker 1229 Los Robles Dr.,
Sonoma

Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk 10/27, 10:30 a.m.
Richard Taruskin La Gare Restaurant
208 Wilson St., Railroad Square,
Santa Rosa

La Gioconda 11/14, 10:30 a.m.
William Huck Red Lion Inn
1 Red Lion Dr., Rohnert Park

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) 346-9772.

L'Africaine 9/7
Michael Mitchell

Maometto II 9/14
Philip Gossett

The Rake's Progress 9/21
Albert Takazauckas

Parsifal 10/19
James Keolker

Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk 10/26
Richard Taruskin

La Gioconda 11/16
William Huck

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Previews of the operas of the 1988 season will be given by Michael Barclay, director of Opera Education International. Lectures will be presented in the auditorium of the Berkeley/Richmond Jewish Community Center, 1414 Walnut St. (at Rose) in Berkeley, at 7:45 p.m. Admission to the series of 10 opera previews is \$65; individual admission at the door is \$7.50. For further information, please call (415) 526-5244.

L'Africaine 9/1
The Rake's Progress 9/5
Maometto II 9/7
Der Fliegende Holländer 9/26
Così fan tutte 10/3
Manon Lescaut 10/10
Parsifal 10/17
Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk 10/24
La Bohème 10/31
La Gioconda 11/14

MERRITT COLLEGE OPERA LECTURE SERIES

Merritt College is offering an opera preview class, Introduction to Opera (Music 13A), with emphasis on the operas of the 1988 season, on Tuesday evenings at 6:30, beginning September 13. The enrollment fee is \$15. Classes will be held at the College, 12500 Campus Drive, Building R, Room 125, in Oakland. For further information, please call (415) 436-2410.

ROBERT GOODHUE'S FALL OPERA COURSE

Ten classes on San Francisco Opera's season are offered, and there is a choice of three series: Mondays from August 22 to November 21 at 6:30 p.m.; Thursdays from September 1 to November 17 at 6:30 p.m.; and Saturdays from September 10 to November 19 from 10 a.m. to 12 noon or from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Monday and Thursday sessions meet at the Sir Francis Drake Hotel, 450 Powell, S.F. Saturday sessions are held at the Galleria Park Hotel, 191 Sutter, S.F. Cost for the series of 10 two-hour classes is \$70. For further information, please call (415) 956-1271.

ED BECKER'S PARSIFAL PREVIEW

A preview of San Francisco Opera's new production of *Parsifal* will be held from 7:00 to 10:40 p.m. on October 14 at 1 Kelton Court (Community Room) in North Oakland. Admission is \$10. For further information, please call (415) 532-9804.



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Without the generous support of our Opera family it would be impossible for the San Francisco Opera to continue to produce world-class opera. In addition to enjoying outstanding entertainment on stage, contributors to the San Francisco Opera receive a number of benefits which enable them to observe many stages of opera production, to meet the artists and to have behind-the-scenes opportunities to participate in Opera life.

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- Listing of your name in performance magazines

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- Invitation to a third final dress rehearsal



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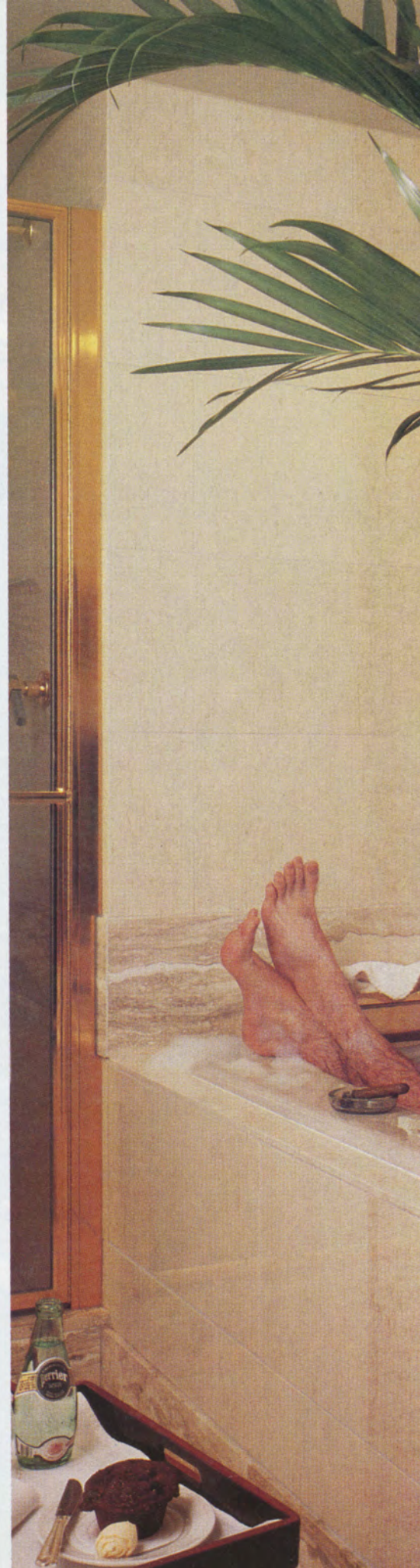
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Look for this bus, marked "47 Special," after each performance in the bus zone at Van Ness Avenue and Grove Street—across Van Ness from the Opera House. Its route is: North on Van Ness to Chestnut, then left to Divisadero where it turns left to Union.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

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

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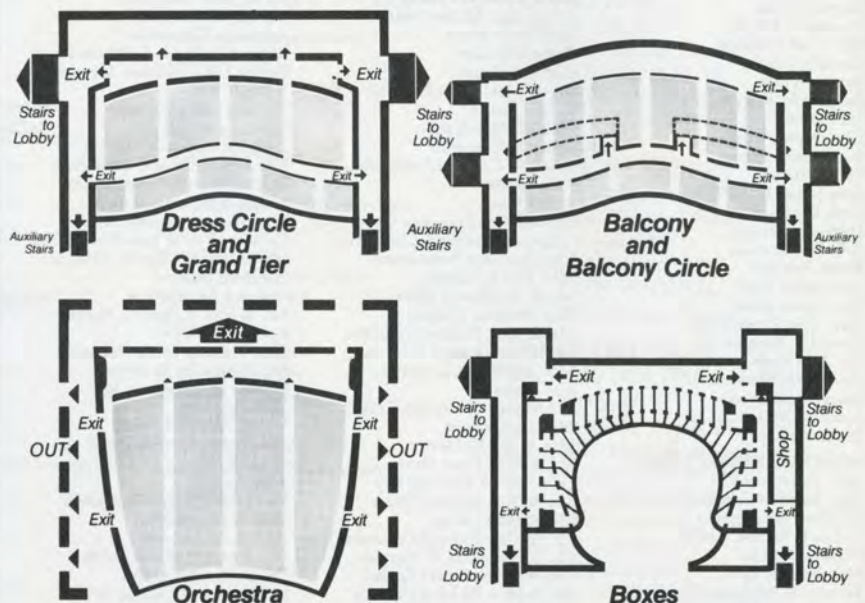
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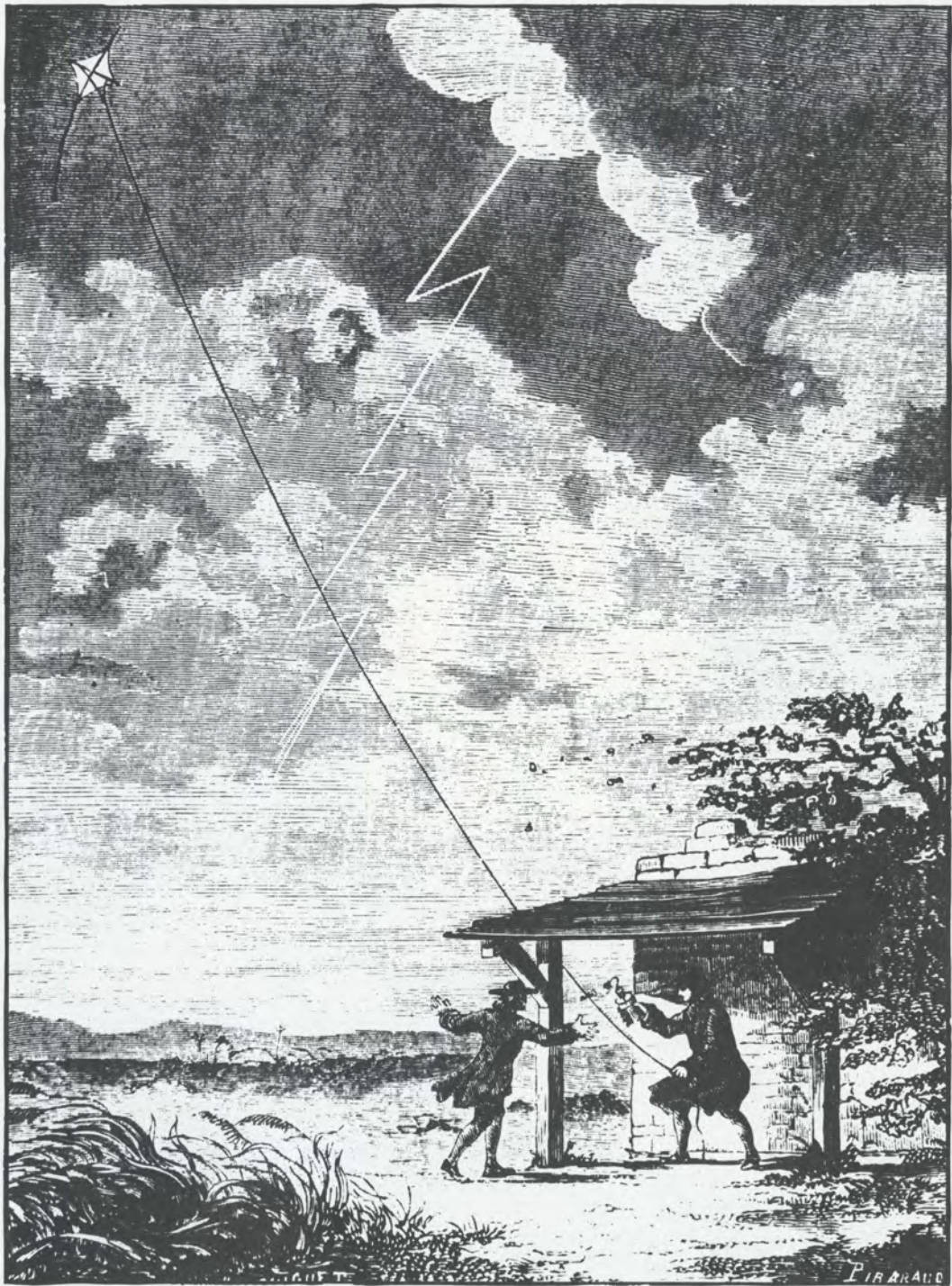
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