

Così fan tutte

1988

Saturday, October 8, 1988 8:00 PM

Thursday, October 13, 1988 8:00 PM

Tuesday, October 18, 1988 8:00 PM

Friday, October 21, 1988 8:00 PM

Thursday, October 27, 1988 7:30 PM

Sunday, October 30, 1988 2:00 PM

Thursday, November 3, 1988 7:30 PM

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1988 SEASON



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Così fan tutte

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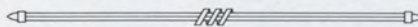
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San Francisco Opera

Lotfi Mansouri, *General Director*

Sir John Pritchard, *Music Director*

Così fan tutte

1988 SEASON

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Some pertinent thoughts on Mozart's transcendent opus.
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Going to the opera in Mozart's days was nowhere near what we are used to today.
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The genius of the French director/designer has left a long-lasting effect on the San Francisco Opera.

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COVER

Antoine Watteau, 1684-1721
Couple Seated on a Bank
Red, black and white chalk on
buff paper, 9½ x 13¾ in.

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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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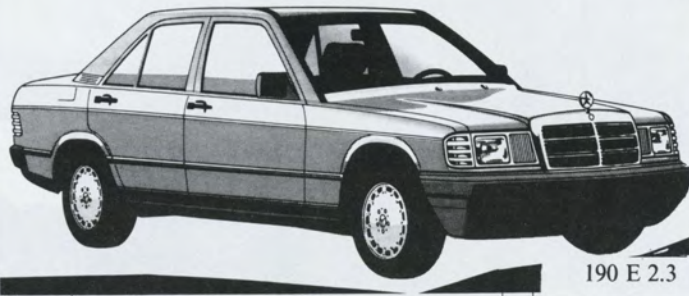
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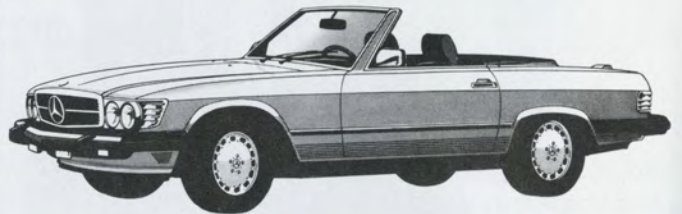
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General Director's Message

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.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Letitia M. Davis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.



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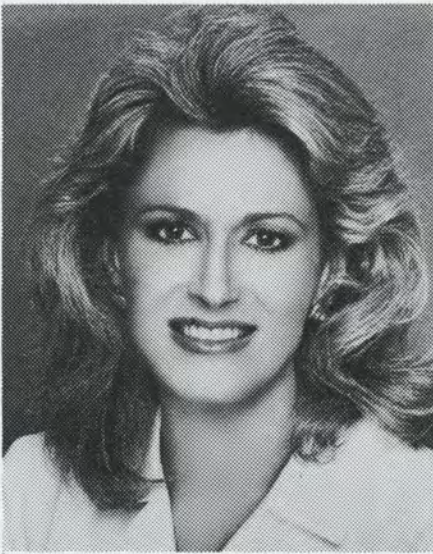
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San Francisco Opera

Lotfi Mansouri, *General Director*

Sir John Pritchard, *Music Director*

1988 Season

<i>Opening Night</i>			
Friday, September 9, 7:00			
L'Africaine	Meyerbeer		
Verrett, Swenson, Spence*; Domingo, Díaz, Devlin, Anderson, Delavan, Skinner, Rouleau Arena/Mansouri/W. Skalicki/A. Skalicki/Munn/Ray*			
<i>1988 production underwritten through a generous gift from the Sells Foundation.</i>			
Saturday, September 10, 8:00			
The Rake's Progress	Stravinsky		
S. Patterson, Christin, Vergara; Hadley* Shimell**, J. Patterson, Green, Travis* Mauceri/Cox/Hockney/Sullivan			
<i>Production originally made possible by a gift from the L.J. and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation; revival made possible by a generous gift from Mr. and Mrs. Marshall Naify.</i>			
Tuesday, September 13, 7:30			
L'Africaine	Meyerbeer		
Thursday, September 15, 7:30			
The Rake's Progress	Stravinsky		
Friday, September 16, 8:00			
L'Africaine	Meyerbeer		
Saturday, September 17, 8:00			
<i>American Premiere</i>			
Maometto II	Rossini		
Horne, Anderson*; Alaimo*, Merritt*, Tate, Wunsch Zedda/Frisell/Benois/Arhelger <i>Production underwritten by the generous grant from the L.J. and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation.</i>			
Sunday, September 18, 2:00			
L'Africaine	Meyerbeer		
Monday, September 19, 8:00			
Maometto II	Rossini		
Wednesday, September 21, 7:30			
L'Africaine	Meyerbeer		
Friday, September 23, 8:00			
The Rake's Progress	Stravinsky		
Saturday, September 24, 8:00			
L'Africaine	Meyerbeer		
Sunday, September 25, 2:00			
Maometto II	Rossini		
Tuesday, September 27, 8:00			
L'Africaine	Meyerbeer		
Wednesday, September 28, 7:30			
The Rake's Progress	Stravinsky		
Thursday, September 29, 7:30			
Der Fliegende Holländer	Wagner		
Polaski**, Young; Van Dam, Ochman, Koptchak* Kaltenbach/Calábria/Ponnelles/ Halmen/Munn <i>Production originally made possible, in part, by the Gramma Fisher Foundation; revival made possible by a generous gift from Mr. and Mrs. Alfred S. Wilsey.</i>			
Friday, September 30, 8:00			
Maometto II	Rossini		
Saturday, October 1, 8:00			
Der Fliegende Holländer	Wagner		
Sunday, October 2, 2:00			
The Rake's Progress	Stravinsky		
Tuesday, October 4, 8:00			
The Rake's Progress	Stravinsky		
Wednesday, October 5, 8:00			
Der Fliegende Holländer	Wagner		
Thursday, October 6, 7:30			
Maometto II	Rossini		
Friday, October 7, 8:00			
Der Fliegende Holländer	Wagner		
Saturday, October 8, 8:00			
Così fan tutte	Mozart		
Csavlek, Montague*, Rolandi; Gulyás, Dickson, Krause Bradshaw/Gleue*/Ponnelles/Munn <i>Production originally made possible by a grant from Crocker National Bank; revival made possible by a grant from the San Francisco Opera Guild.</i>			
Sunday, October 9, 2:00			
Maometto II	Rossini		
Tuesday, October 11, 8:00			
Der Fliegende Holländer	Wagner		
Thursday, October 13, 8:00			
Così fan tutte	Mozart		
Saturday, October 15, 7:30			
Der Fliegende Holländer	Wagner		
Sunday, October 16, 2:00			
Manon Lescaut	Puccini		
Lorengar, Manhart; Dvorský, Vanaud*, Capecchi, Wunsch, Travis, Petersen, Skinner, Anderson, Potter Pritchard/Asagaroff/Klein/Mahoney/Arhelger			
Tuesday, October 18, 8:00			
Così fan tutte	Mozart		
Wednesday, October 19, 7:30			
Manon Lescaut	Puccini		
Friday, October 21, 8:00			
Così fan tutte	Mozart		
Saturday, October 22, 7:00			
<i>New Production</i>			
Parsifal	Wagner		
W. Meier*, S. Patterson, Panagulias*, Williams*, Manhart, Hoffman*, Spence; Kollo, Moll, Hynninen*, Berry, J. Patterson, Wunsch, Potter, Anderson, Ledbetter Pritchard/Joël/Halmen/Munn <i>Production made possible by a generous gift from a friend of San Francisco Opera.</i>			
Sunday, October 23, 2:00			
Der Fliegende Holländer	Wagner		
Tuesday, October 25, 7:00			
Parsifal	Wagner		
Wednesday, October 26, 8:00			
Manon Lescaut	Puccini		
Thursday, October 27, 7:30			
Così fan tutte	Mozart		
Friday, October 28, 7:00			
Parsifal	Wagner		
Saturday, October 29, 8:00			
Manon Lescaut	Puccini		
Sunday, October 30, 2:00			
Così fan tutte	Mozart		

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> La Bohème	Puccini		
Sunday, November 20, 1:30 La Gioconda	Ponchielli	Hartliep, Williams; Wunsch, Ledbetter, Potter, Skinner, Travis, Harper, Coles Fiore/Zambello/Mitchell/Button/Munn			
Marton, Cieurca, Nadler; Polozov*, Ophhof, 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>					
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				
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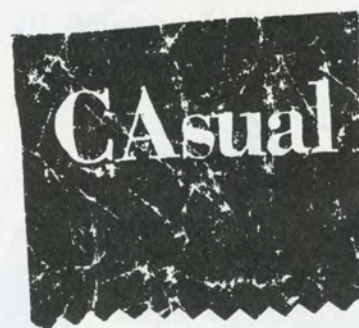


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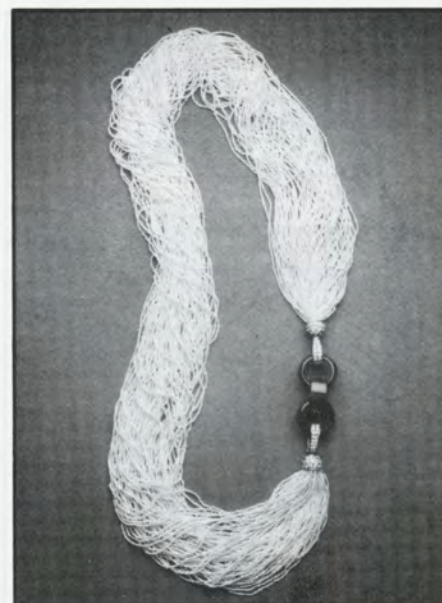
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Poster for the *Così fan tutte* Vienna premiere.

Transcending Conventions

By ANDREW PORTER

Così fan tutte, o sia La Scuola degli Amanti, was the third of Mozart's collaborations with Lorenzo Da Ponte (after *Le Nozze di Figaro*, in 1786, and *Don Giovanni*, in 1787). It had its first performance at the Vienna Burgtheater on January 26th, 1790, and was given five times before the death of Joseph II and a period of mourning ended the run. It was revived in June, July, and August, but not again until 1794 (in German), three years after Mozart's death. The music achieved some circulation in ecclesiastical guise: Fiordiligi's "Come scoglio" acquired the text "Omni die dic Mariae"; "Secondate, aurette amiche" became the gradual "Ave Jesu, summe bonum"; two sacred versions of "Il core vi dono" and a complete Mass based on *Così fan tutte* survive. But the opera did not join the international repertory as *Don Giovanni* did, or become as well known as *Le Nozze di Figaro* and *The Magic Flute*. For the 19th and the earlier part of the 20th century, the subject matter proved unpalatable. It is only in the last 50 years that *Così fan tutte* has entered the Mozart canon. The Met did not stage the opera until 1922; San Francisco Opera until 1956; Covent Garden's first production was in 1968.

Da Ponte has little to tell us about *Così* in his memoirs. Count Zinzendorf, who seldom had anything good to say about Mozart, mentioned it favora-

bly in his diary: "La musique de Mozart est charmante, et le sujet assez amusant." But apologies for it began early. Mozart's early biographer F.X. Niemtschek (1798) wrote: "People wonder how the man could descend to lend his divine melodies to such a dreadful libretto. It was not in his power to refuse the commission, and the subject was prescribed for him." In 1837, Friedrich Heinse declared that Joseph II himself had prescribed the subject and that it was based on a real-life affair between two of his officers and their betrothed; but no confirmatory evidence for this has been found.

Later in the century, Wagner wrote: "Mozart's greatness is confirmed by his inability to compose music such as he had in *Figaro* for the dull and insignificant libretto of *Così fan tutte*; had he done so, he would have shamefully desecrated music itself." But others thought that the music,

Andrew Porter is the music critic of The New Yorker; his fourth volume of New Yorker reviews, Musical Events 1980-1983, has just been published by Summit Books. His English translation of Così fan tutte was first performed by the Opera Theatre of St. Louis, directed by Jonathan Miller, in 1982, and most recently by the Santa Fe Opera.

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at least, was worth saving, and so new librettos were devised. German versions were called *Die Zwei Tanten aus Mailand* (*The Two Aunts from Milan*) and *Die Dame Kobold* (a version of Calderón's *La Dama Duende*). In Paris, the opera appeared as *Le Laboureur Chinois* and as *Peines d'Amour Perdues* (a version of *Love's Labours Lost*, contrived by the librettists of Gounod's *Faust*). These adaptations were intended for audiences who might find "Thus do all women" an unchivalrous or offensive declaration. Sometimes the slight on feminine constancy and capacity was removed by allowing Fiordiligi and Dorabella to penetrate the Albanians' disguise at once and turn the tables on them: another German version of *Così* was entitled *Mädchenrache* (*Maidens' Revenge*), and the first two English versions appeared as *Tit for Tat, or The Tables Turned!* ("The Musick from the masterly Compositions of Mozart . . . altered and adapted from the *Così fan tutte*") in 1828, and *The Retaliation*, in 1841.

Bernard Shaw described these as "hopeless attempts to fit the music to a new libretto." In 1890, the Reverend Marmaduke Browne produced an English libretto of *Così* ("adapted and translated from the German [*sic*] and Italian text") that kept the original plot. This witty, entertaining Victorian version held the stage for a long time and is still on occasion heard today. Edward J. Dent, who translated several other Mozart operas, did not tackle *Così* but was content to revise the Marmaduke Browne translation. (And in my own *Così* translation—which is a little closer, I hope, to Da Ponte—I did not hesitate to retain some of the Victorian clergyman's felicitous turns of phrase.)

The *Figaro* text had been based on the Beaumarchais play. That for *Don Giovanni* was a brilliant expansion of Giuseppe Bertati's libretto for Gazzaniga (with elements from Molière and elsewhere added). A close precedent for *Così fan tutte* has not been found, though its links with



The San Francisco Opera premiere of *Così fan tutte* took place in 1956 with a cast that included (l. to r.) Patrice Munsel as Despina, Nell Rankin as Dorabella, and Elisabeth Schwarzkopf as Fiordiligi. The ticket demand was so great a third performance was added to the originally scheduled two. LACKENBACH

Ovid, Ariosto, and Goldoni have often been noted. In Book VII of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Cephalus puts his wife Procris to the test by wooing (and winning) her in disguise. (Grétry's *Céphale et Procris* appeared in 1773.) Canto 43 of Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* contains a related tale. (Da Ponte knew Ariosto well; *Orlando* also contains a heroic Fiordiligi who goes to join her beloved on the battlefield; and in the initial version of Guilelmo's¹ first aria, cataloguing his and Ferrando's manly attributes, he adduces parallels with Orlando and Medoro.) In Goldoni's *Le Pescatrici* (which was set by many composers, Haydn among them), the doubled deception appears: two fisher-lads, disguised as noblemen, woo their sweethearts and win them all too easily. Antoine d'Auvergne's *Les Troqueurs* (1753) is an *opéra bouffon* with a plot based on

bride-swapping (though in this case the young women turn the tables on their swains).

In a 1979 article², Cornelia Kritsch and Herbert Zeman argued convincingly that *Così fan tutte* crowns a series of works dealing with constancy in love and, on occasion, specifically with whether men or women are the more faithful. The subject seemed to be in the air. The authors propose Gluck's Orpheus and his Alceste as two heroic, classical exemplars of constancy; but comedy explorations became more common. Marivaux's plays, which share motifs with *Così*—especially *Les Fausses Confidences*—were popular in Vienna. Among the operas were Anfossi's *La Donna Stabile*; Guglielmi's *La Donna Amante di Tutti e Fedele a Nessuno*; Cimarosa's *La Donna al suo Peggio Sempre si Appiglia*, *La Donna di Tutti i Caratteri*, and

¹The baritone lover is called *Guilelmo* in the autograph, in the first libretto, and in early vocal scores. He became the more familiar *Guglielmo* only in the first published full score (1810).

²H. Zeman, ed.: *Die Oesterreichische Literatur: Ihr Profil an der Wende vom 18. zum 19. Jahrhundert* (Graz, 1979), pp.355-77.

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JEANETTE

In 1957, mezzo-soprano Nan Merriman joined San Francisco Opera's *Così fan tutte* cast, performing the role of Dorabella.

L'Amor Costante; Salieri's *La Scola de' Gelosi* and *La Grotta di Trifonio*; and (with a Da Ponte libretto) Martin's *L'Arbore di Diana*.

In 1766, J.E. Schlegel had published his cantata texts *Prokris und Cephalus* and *Der Weibertauch* (*Wife Swapping*), in which two couples change partners but then decide that they had been better off as they were before. In Paul Weidmann's comedy *Der Mädchentauch* (*Girl Swapping*), which appeared at the Burgtheater in 1789, the exchanges are made to everyone's satisfaction. Two years before, also

at the Burgtheater, there had appeared J.F. Schmidt's comedy *Who is Inconstant in Love? The Man? or the Woman?*, in which Karl and Karoline, and Theodor and Therese, change partners, and the prince at whose court the action plays sums things up in these Don Alfonso-like words:

You are human beings, like everyone else. Take my advice. Theodor and Karoline, Therese and Karl, perhaps you were too hasty in your first choices . . . I will forget that you were incon-



JEANETTE

S.F. Opera's 1960 *Così fan tutte* cast included the *Despina* of Mary Costa and *Guglielmo* of Frank Guarrera.

stant, and crown your love . . . The big question—which sex is the truest and most constant—remains undecided; and it will remain undecided, since we are all human beings.

The theme, of course, is basic ("since we are all human beings"), and enough has been written about its especial applicability to Mozart, who in life was engaged to marry one sister and then married another. *Così* tells of infatuation, trust, suspicion, temptation, changing affections, infidelity, reasonable cynicism, and loving acceptance of imperfection. The opera was once deemed frivolous. Today—in too far a swing of the pendulum—it is sometimes regarded as a consistently dark and serious tragedy. The truth about *Così* is that it is many things at once. The Red Queen advised Alice to practice believing six impossible propositions before breakfast. Here are ten statements about *Così fan tutte* arranged in five incompatible pairs: The opera is an artificial, mannered comedy, providing

what Alfred Einstein called "the aesthetic satisfaction of a chess problem well solved"; and it is a drama proclaiming profound, passionate truths about human character and human behavior. The four lovers are, in Edward J. Dent's words, "more like marionettes than human beings"; and they are distinct, recognizable, living and breathing people. The score is Mozart's loveliest and most extended *divertimento*—a radiant sequence of movements scored for six voices and orchestra, in ever-changing combinations—and it is a music drama with a score ever responsive to the action and the psychological progress of the characters. It is precisely and delicately constructed and balanced; yet Act II contains a sequence of arias that Hermann Abert described as "without peer in its monotony among Mozart's mature works." It is an improbable tale of devotion destroyed in an instant by flightiness and frivolity; and it is a believable account of events that might really happen—reflecting, indeed, Mozart's

real-life transference of affection from one sister to another.

Those other pieces dealing with constancy and inconstancy are forgotten. *Così fan tutte* survives because its music is more beautiful, richer, greater; and because it explores subtleties and ambiguities of emotion, employing but transcending convention, turning the trivialities of its predecessors into disturbing truths. Many approaches to the rich score are possible. Mozart's full orchestra—pairs of woodwinds and horns, trumpets, drums, strings—is heard in the overture and then not again except in the finales. Each number has its own instrumental color. Trumpets are not reintroduced until the third of the opening trios, the one that begins with Ferrando's "Una bella serenata." The clarinets are held back until the entry of the sisters. Ferrando and Guglielmo's serenade, "Secondate, aurette amiche," is accomplished by a wind sextet (becoming an octet when the chorus takes up the refrain), evidently intended to be onstage.



When first seen at the San Francisco Opera, in 1970, the Jean-Pierre Ponnelle production of *Così fan tutte* featured the Dorabella of Teresa Berganza and Guglielmo of Alberto Rinaldi. JONES

Ensembles, variously constituted, make up the greater part of the first two scenes. In the third, the solo voices come forward, each with an aria, and in the first-act finale the six voices—so far brought together only toward the close of the mid-act sextet—are heard together for the first time in an extended number. In Act II, amid four duets, a quartet, and the finale, are set six arias: for Despina, Ferrando, Fiordiligi, Guglielmo, Ferrando again, and Dorabella. Don Alfonso, instigator of the action, has just three short solo utterances, barely thirty seconds long. One, “Nel mare solca,” seems to set out as an aria but cadences after just three phrases. The others are the first and last solo numbers to be heard: “Vorrei dir” and the little proclamation, before the final scene, leading to the “*Così fan tutte*” refrain. “*Vorrei dir*,” incidentally, is the only number of the opera in a minor key.

Allusions and references appear both in the text and in the music. In the overture, Mozart cites the figure to which

in *Figaro* Don Basilio sang “*Così fan tutte le belle*.” In the second trio of the opening scene, “*E la fede delle femmine*,” Don Alfonso is quoting an aria text by Metastasio, from *Demetrio*, while Da Ponte has changed a single word—*amanti* to *femmine*—to make the statement specific to the female sex only. In Guglielmo’s original “catalogue” aria he mentioned Charles Le Picq, who choreographed and danced in Mozart’s early ballet *Le Gelosie del Seraglio*. Fiordiligi launches her first aria by adapting a line of the *Aeneid*: Virgil’s “*Velut . . . rupes immoto resistit*” becomes “*Come scoglio immoto resta*.”

There is an undoubted parody element—too much protesting, as in Dorabella’s first aria, in which she boasts of outdoing the Eumenides. Fiordiligi’s “*Come scoglio*” is another extravagant protestation, yet we can hardly doubt that she herself means every word of it. In the Act II duet between Fiordiligi and Ferrando, is he wooing her so eloquently just out of bitterness of heart—because his

beloved Dorabella has betrayed him and his friend Guglielmo has boasted of possessing superior, irresistible attractions? Or has a new, deeper love inspired him? His music seems to tell of true love, not pretence. But people sometimes forget that his previous and most serious aria, “*Tradito! schernito!*,” is a declaration of undying love for Dorabella, despite her infidelity.

Romantics have long argued that the “mispairing” in the central scenes reveals the true matches—that the emotional Fiordiligi and Ferrando are meant for one another, as are those impulsive realists Dorabella and Guglielmo. The music seems to point this way, though the text denies it. By that reckoning, Don Alfonso is either a perceptive character-reader whose wager is a brilliant stroke of psychological counsel or a cynic whose jesting inadvertently does much good. The logical consequence is that the wedding ceremony begun in spoof should go ahead in earnest. Don Alfonso’s final advice is “*Join hands, be united, kiss and be silent; all four of you laugh now, as I have laughed*.” And in the final ensemble they follow his advice. But who joins hands with whom? The historical answer is



Sir Geraint Evans as Don Alfonso in San Francisco Opera’s 1973 staging of *Così fan tutte*. SCHERL

ARTIST PROFILES

plain: convention demands that the original couplings should be re-established. So does the text: in the penultimate scene, Ferrando and Guglielmo avow that, despite everything, they are still in love with their original beloveds. The romantic answer calls for new soprano-tenor and mezzo-baritone pairings. Sometimes the modern answer is an agony of distress and indecision. It is a measure of Mozart's insight into the ambiguities of life that the question can still be asked, and that no answer seems final.

The director of a particular production has to make a choice, but his audience—however he may have decided—may legitimately feel uncertain. The marvelous music has laid bare too many possibilities. At the end, we are left with six voices crying—defiantly? triumphantly?—that reason and a sense of humor will enable people to weather the tempests of life. *Così fan tutte* proclaims sentiments that Jane Austen and George Eliot would recognize. ■

*Frederica von Stade as Dorabella and Evelyn Lear as Fiordiligi in San Francisco Opera's 1973 performances of *Così fan tutte*.*



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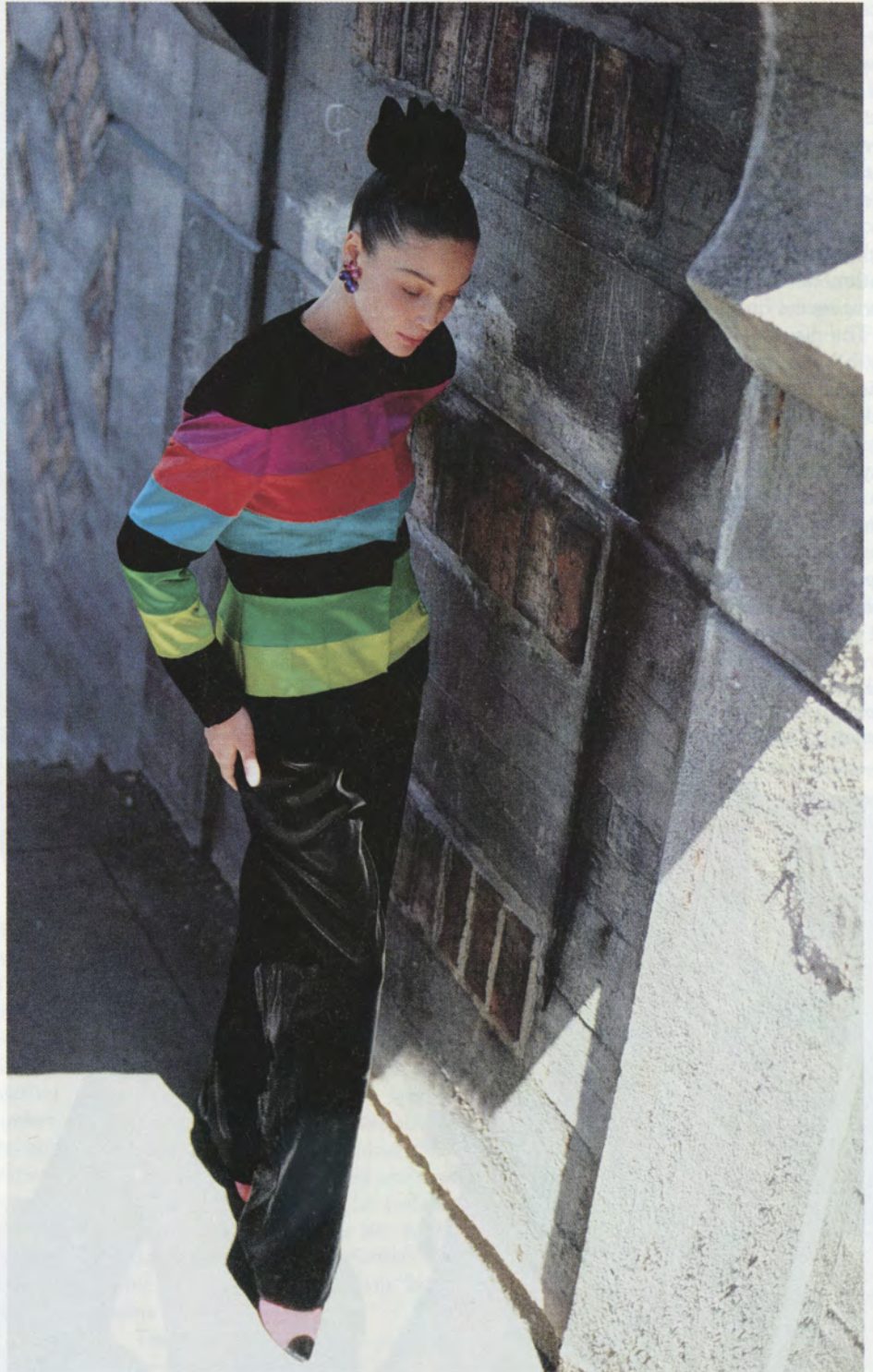
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ETELKA CSAVLEK

After making her triumphant American debut as Pamina in San Francisco Opera's 1987 production of *The Magic Flute*, Hungarian soprano **Etelka Csavlek** returns to the Company as Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*. After studying voice privately, she auditioned for the Budapest State Opera in 1982 and was immediately made a regular member of that company. She won acclaim at the 1983 Dresden International Festival, where she sang the role of Giselda in Verdi's *I Lombardi*, and appeared as Giulietta in a Hungarian TV production of *The Tales of Hoffmann*. It was at the invitation of Soviet pianist Sviatoslav Richter that she performed at a special concert in Moscow's Pushkin Museum in 1984, singing Bartók's folk songs with pianist Zoltán Kocsis. Her repertoire ranges from Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*, the title role of *Aida* and the Marschallin in *Der Rosenkavalier* to such rarities as Erkel's *Bánk Bán* and Bozay's *Csongor and Tünde*. During the Budapest Opera's 1987-88 season, she sang Desdemona in *Otello*, the Countess in *The Marriage of Figaro*, and the title role of *Anna Bolena*. Her many concert credits include performances of Bach's *St. John Passion* and Mass in B minor, the Requiem masses of Mozart and Verdi, Kodály's *Buda Te Deum* and the *Stabat Maters* of Pergolesi and Rossini. She was recently soprano soloist in a London performance of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony conducted by Antal Dorati on the occasion of the maestro's birthday, and participated in a tour of Italy on which she performed at the Assisi Music Festival and was featured soloist in Liszt's *Legend of Saint Elizabeth* and *Christus*. She also scored a personal triumph as Violetta in the Zeffirelli production of *La Traviata* at the Paris Opera. Miss Csavlek recently received the prestigious Liszt Award.



DIANA MONTAGUE

British mezzo-soprano **Diana Montague** makes her San Francisco Opera debut as Dorabella in *Così fan tutte*. She made her professional debut in 1977 as Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* with the Glyndebourne Touring Opera and in the following year joined the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. She has appeared in many roles with that company both in London and on tours to Japan and Korea. Miss Montague has also appeared with the English National Opera as Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro* as well as in Monteverdi's *Orfeo* with the Scottish Opera and the ENO. She made her American debut at the Cincinnati May Festival in Mozart's C Minor Mass. 1986 was the year of her acclaimed debut at the Salzburg Festival in a production of *Le Nozze di Figaro* staged by the late Jean-Pierre Ponnelle and conducted by James Levine. Last year Miss Montague made her Metropolitan Opera debut as Annio and Sesto in *La Clemenza di Tito* and recently returned to that company as Dorabella. Other highlights of the 1987 season included her first performances of the Composer in Strauss' *Ariadne auf Naxos* in Metz and Nancy; Nicklausse in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* at the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie in Brussels; Cherubino at the Salzburg Festival and Idamante in concert performances of *Idomeneo* in London under Simon Rattle. Her future plans include performances as Sesto in a new production of *La Clemenza di Tito* at the Frankfurt Opera and a return to the Met for Nicklausse in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*. Miss Montague's recordings include the title role of Gluck's *Iphigénie en Tauride*, Mozart's C Minor Mass, Monteverdi's *Orfeo* and a Handel disc with Simon Preston. She returns to Glyndebourne in the title role of *Orfeo* next season, and sings Sesto for that company in 1991.



GIANNA ROLANDI

Soprano **Gianna Rolandi** returns to San Francisco Opera to perform the part of Despina in *Così fan tutte*. She last appeared here in 1986 as Susanna in *Le Nozze di Figaro* and she made her Company debut during the summer of 1986 in the title role of *Lucia di Lammermoor*, the opera in which she has also been seen on a "Live from Lincoln Center" telecast. 1986 was also the year of Miss Rolandi's debut with the Chicago Lyric Opera as Dorinda in Handel's *Orlando*, opposite Marilyn Horne. She then returned to New York to portray Susanna at New York City Opera, a company with which she has been closely associated since the beginning of her career. Her roles with that company have included Elvira in *I Puritani*, the title role of *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Gilda in *Rigoletto*, Zerbinetta in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, the title role of *The Cunning Little Vixen*, Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Marie in *La Fille du Régiment*, Olympia in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* and Cleopatra in *Giulio Cesare*. In recent years she has also been heard in a new production of *Lakmé*, mounted for her, and the title role in the Maurice Sendak production of *The Cunning Little Vixen*, which was broadcast on PBS. Miss Rolandi's Metropolitan Opera debut was in 1979 as Sophie in *Der Rosenkavalier* and she made her European debut in 1981 at the Glyndebourne Festival as Zerbinetta in *Ariadne auf Naxos*. The 1984-85 season saw Miss Rolandi's Paris Opera debut, for which she sang Constanze in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* and her Italian opera debut at the Teatro Regio in Turin in Rossini's *Tancredi*. Last year Miss Rolandi returned to Glyndebourne for a concert version of *Le Nozze di Figaro*, sang Bianca in Miami Opera's *Bianca e Falliero* and then performed in *Cendrillon* for the Netherlands Opera. Engagements earlier this year included singing Gilda in Seattle Opera's *Rigoletto* and a return to the Glyndebourne Festival to perform Constanze in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*.



DÉNES GULYÁS

After making his San Francisco Opera debut during the 1986 Fall Season as Lensky in *Eugene Onegin*, Hungarian tenor **Dénés Gulyás** returns to the Company as Ferrando in Mozart's *Così fan tutte*. In 1978, he made his professional operatic debut as Alfredo in *La Traviata* with the Budapest State Opera, where he has since been a leading tenor. In 1979 he was a winner of the Verdi Voice Competition, after which, in 1981, he made his Italian debut in Genoa as Rodolfo in *La Bohème*. He has also appeared in Florence as Nemorino in *L'Elisir d'Amore*, in Parma at the Teatro Regio and at La Scala in Milan. Gulyás made his American debut with the Opera Orchestra of New York in 1981 as Viscardo in *Il Giuramento* and returned to sing the role of Prince Andrei in concert performances of *Khovanshchina*. That same year, he won the first Luciano Pavarotti Voice Competition and made his American stage debut in 1982 with the Opera Company of Philadelphia as Rinuccio in *Gianni Schicchi*. He has also bowed at Houston Grand Opera and Washington Opera as the Duke of Mantua in *Rigoletto*. His Metropolitan Opera debut was in the role of the Italian Singer in *Der Rosenkavalier* for that company's 1985-86 season, during which he also sang Prince Andrei in *Khovanshchina* and the role of Roméo in Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette*. Later that season Gulyás made his debut with the Dallas Opera as Rodolfo, went on to sing Nemorino in *L'Elisir d'Amore* there during the same season and appeared in *Rigoletto* with the Greater Miami Opera Association. He returned to the Met during the 1986-87 season as Rodolfo, the Duke of Mantua, and as Des Grieux in a new production of Massenet's *Manon*. Recent engagements include performances of *L'Elisir d'Amore* in San Diego, *Madama Butterfly* in Montreal, *La Bohème* at Covent Garden, *Così fan tutte* in Hamburg, and *La Clemenza di Tito* in Bonn. On record, Gulyás may be heard as tenor soloist in Liszt's *Coronation Mass*, as Rinuccio in *Gianni Schicchi*, Almaviva in Paisiello's *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, the world premiere



STEPHEN DICKSON

recording of Salieri's *Falstaff* and Erkel's *Hunyadi László*, as well as a collection of arias.

Baritone **Stephen Dickson** returns to San Francisco Opera as Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte*, the role of his 1977 Santa Fe Opera debut. He has also sung the role at the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires and in a Jean-Pierre Ponnelle production with L'Orchestre de Paris in 1983 and 1986. He made his 1982 San Francisco Opera debut as Prince Yeletsky in *The Queen of Spades* and returned in 1985 as Albert in *Werther* and last fall as Mercutio in *Roméo et Juliette*. Dickson's professional debut took place in a 1976 production of *Albert Herring* with the Opera Theatre of St. Louis, where he has returned for numerous assignments since. During the 1979-80 season he made his European debut as Papageno in *The Magic Flute* at the Grand Théâtre de Nancy. He has also appeared in Monte Carlo, Nice, Lyon, and Paris. He made his Glyndebourne debut in 1980 as Papageno, the vehicle of his 1981 Metropolitan Opera debut. In 1980, he was heard as Ford in New York City Opera's *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. The next year, he bowed with the Lyric Opera of Chicago as Dr. Falke in *Die Fledermaus* and with the Pittsburgh Opera as Silvio in *Pagliacci*. That same year he was seen on a live telecast from the White House hosted by Beverly Sills. Dickson has also performed with the opera companies of Houston, Fort Worth, Washington, D.C., Baltimore, Omaha, Philadelphia and Wolf Trap. He appeared at the 1983 and '85 Aix-en-Provence Festivals, singing Papageno in *The Magic Flute* as well as Arlecchino in *Ariadne auf Naxos*. Last season included his debut with the Munich Opera as Silvio in *Pagliacci*, appearances with the Metropolitan Opera as Arlecchino (telecast "Live from the Met") and with New York City Opera as Valentin in *Faust* and Papageno, the latter being a role he also performed with New York City Opera on a "Live from Lincoln Center" telecast in October of last year.



TOM KRAUSE

Distinguished Finnish baritone **Tom Krause** returns to San Francisco Opera as Alfonso in *Così fan tutte*, a role he sang last season in Frankfurt, having previously appeared here as Guglielmo in the same work during the 1983 Summer Season. He made his Company debut during the 1982 Fall Season, when he appeared as Count Almaviva in *Le Nozze di Figaro* and sang Count Tomsy in *The Queen of Spades*, returning as Sharpless in the 1984 production of *Madama Butterfly* and, last fall, as the four villains in *The Tales of Hoffmann*. Krause made his American debut in Britten's *War Requiem* with the Boston Symphony at Tanglewood in 1963, and has performed with the orchestras of New York, Chicago, Cleveland, Philadelphia, Boston, Los Angeles, Pittsburgh and San Francisco. As a member of the Hamburg Staatsoper for many years, he was heard in many leading roles there and he made his U.S. opera debut with that company on a tour to the United States in 1967. He made his Metropolitan Opera debut that same year as Mozart's Count Almaviva. Since then, Krause has appeared many times at the Met, as well as with the Chicago Lyric Opera and Houston Grand Opera. In Europe, he performs with the Vienna State Opera, the Paris Opera, La Scala in Milan and has also sung at the festivals of Salzburg, Bayreuth, Glyndebourne, Edinburgh and Prague. An acclaimed concert artist, Krause's recent performances have included *Elijah* with the Cleveland Orchestra under Christoph von Dohnányi and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with the Detroit Symphony, with which he will perform Brahms's *German Requiem* this season. Other recent engagements include *Pelléas et Mélisande* in Geneva and Hamburg, and productions of *Le Nozze di Figaro* with both the Vienna State and the Paris Opera. His extensive discography includes *Così fan tutte*, *Elektra*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Tristan und Isolde*, Tchaikovsky's *Yolanta*, Berlioz's *Roméo et Juliette*, Mozart's *Requiem*, Rossini's *Stabat Mater*, Rachmaninoff's *The Bells*, Mendelssohn's



RICHARD BRADSHAW

Elijah and Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, as well as a special tri-centennial celebration performance of Handel's *Messiah* recorded at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. Krause's future engagements include performances of Rolf Liebermann's *Der Wald* in Frankfurt, *Così fan tutte* in Barcelona and Frankfurt, *Parsifal* in Brussels, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* in Miami, *Aida* at the Savonlinna Festival, and a series of concerts in Munich, Madrid and Helsinki.

After leading performances of *Tosca* at the War Memorial last fall, **Richard Bradshaw** returns to San Francisco Opera to conduct *Così fan tutte*. He made his American conducting debut with the Company leading the 1977 family performances of *Faust*; subsequent San Francisco Opera credits include the 1982 English-language performances of *The Marriage of Figaro*; *La Traviata* (1983 Fall Season); *Madama Butterfly* (1984 Fall); the family performances of *Falstaff* (1985); and, in 1986, *Eugene Onegin*. For Spring Opera Theater he conducted *La Traviata*, Handel's *Julius Caesar* and John Eaton's *The Cry of Clytemnestra*, and he has led a wide variety of works for the Opera Center's Showcase series, including new works by Vivian Fine and John Harbison as well as Britten's *Rape of Lucretia*, Mozart's *Abduction from the Seraglio* and Handel's *Rodelinda*. A native of England, Bradshaw has appeared with most of the major British orchestras, including the London Philharmonic, the BBC Philharmonic, the Royal Philharmonic, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, the London Mozart Players and the City of London Sinfonia. For the 1979 International Verdi Congress in Irvine, California, he led the original version of *La Forza del Destino*, a work he conducted in Seattle in 1984. He led the American premiere of Handel's *Tamerlano* at Indiana University, and won praise for the 1985 world premiere of Eaton's *The*

continued on p.41

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Così fan tutte

This revival of *Così fan tutte* is sponsored by a generous gift from the San Francisco Opera Guild in celebration of its 50th anniversary.

The production was originally made possible by a grant from Crocker National Bank.

Opera in two acts by WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART
Text by LORENZO DA PONTE

Così fan tutte

(in Italian)

*Conductor and
Harpichord Continuo*
Richard Bradshaw

Production
Jean-Pierre Ponnelle

Stage Director
Jutta Gleue*

Designer
Jean-Pierre Ponnelle

Lighting Supervisor
Thomas J. Munn

Chorus Director
Ian Robertson

Musical Preparation
Mark Haffner
Christopher Larkin
Ernest Fredric Knell

Prompter
Jonathan Khuner

Assistant Stage Director
Laurie Feldman

Stage Manager
Jamie Call

Scenery constructed in
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First performance:
Vienna, January 26, 1790

First San Francisco Opera performance:
October 2, 1956

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 8, AT 8:00
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 13 AT 8:00
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 18 AT 8:00
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 21 AT 8:00
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 27 AT 7:30
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 30 AT 2:00
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 3 AT 7:30

CAST

(in order of appearance)

Ferrando Dénes Gulyás
Guglielmo Stephen Dickson
Don Alfonso Tom Krause
Fiordiligi Etelka Csavlek
Dorabella Diana Montague*
Despina Gianna Rolandi
Townspeople

*San Francisco Opera debut

TIME AND PLACE: Late 18th-century Naples

ACT I *Scene 1:* An inn
Scene 2: A garden of Fiordiligi and
Dorabella's villa
Scene 3: Fiordiligi and Dorabella's boudoir
Scene 4: The garden

INTERMISSION

ACT II *Scene 1:* The boudoir
Scene 2: The garden
Scene 3: The boudoir
Scene 4: The garden

Supertitles for *Così fan tutte* underwritten
through a generous grant from American Express.

Supertitles by Christopher Bergen, San Francisco Opera.

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

Così fan tutte/Synopsis

ACT ONE

Trio

La mia Dorabella

Trio

È la fede delle femmine

Trio

Una bella serenata

Duet

Ah guarda sorella

Aria

Vorrei dir, e cor non ho

Quintet

Sento, o Dio

Chorus

Bella vita militar

Quintet

Di scrivermi ogni giorno

Terzettino

Soave sia il vento

Recit. and aria

Smanie implacabili

Aria

In uomini

Sextet

Alla bella Despinetta

Recit. and aria

Come scoglio

Aria

Non siate ritrosi

Trio

E voi ridete?

Aria

Un' aura amorosa

Finale

Ah che tutta in un momento

ACT TWO

Aria

Una donna a quindici anni

Duet

Prenderò quel brunettino

Duet with chorus

Secondate, aurette

Quartet

La mano a me date

Duet

Il core vi dono

Rondo

Per pietà, ben mio

Aria

Donne mie, la fate a tanti

Cavatina

Tradito, schernito

Aria

È amore un ladroncello

Duet

Fra gli amplessi

Così fan tutte

Introduction—Scene 1—An inn

Don Alfonso expresses doubts about the constancy of women. Guglielmo and Ferrando put forth their fiancées Fiordiligi and Dorabella as prime examples of feminine loyalty.

Don Alfonso proposes a wager: each of the two officers should pay court to the fiancée of the other. They swear by their soldiers' honor to follow Don Alfonso's plans.

Scene 2—A garden

Fiordiligi and Dorabella gaze at the portraits of their fiancés, promising to be faithful forever.

Don Alfonso announces that both officers have been called to war.

Guglielmo and Ferrando are satisfied with the sadness both girls are showing and firmly believe they will be winners of the wager.

The "military" call.

The lovers bid tender farewells. Ironic commentary from Don Alfonso.

The girls are left behind with Don Alfonso.

Scene 3—The boudoir

Dorabella in despair.

The maid Despina suggests to her mistresses that they enjoy life in the absence of their fiancés.

With the help of the bribed Despina, Don Alfonso introduces the disguised fiancés who flirt with the shocked girls.

Fiordiligi firmly believes her constancy is unshakeable.

Guglielmo boasts about his qualities and Ferrando's. The girls flee. He considers their constancy proved.

Guglielmo and Ferrando claim victory. Don Alfonso refuses to admit defeat.

Ferrando sings about the happiness of love.

Scene 4—A garden

Fiordiligi and Dorabella are lonely. The disguised fiancés pretend to have committed suicide.

Don Alfonso calls in Despina, disguised as a doctor. General confusion.

Scene 1—The boudoir

Despina starts another clever attack on the girls, who are not so steadfast any more.

Fiordiligi and Dorabella decide to allow themselves a little flirting. They make a choice, and each one picks the other's fiancé.

Scene 2—A garden

Guglielmo and Ferrando stage a romantic serenade.

Don Alfonso and Despina leave. The pairs are left alone.

Guglielmo woos Dorabella. She falls in love with him. As a token of her love, she gives him her fiancé's locket.

Fiordiligi, aware that she cannot remain indifferent to Ferrando much longer, begs forgiveness from her distant fiancé.

Guglielmo, seeing Ferrando's despair, shows him Dorabella's locket. He wonders about the reasons for feminine infidelity.

Ferrando is disturbed because of his fiancée's inconstancy and also because of his new love.

Scene 3—The boudoir

Dorabella sings about the ways of Cupid, after which Fiordiligi admits to have fallen in love.

After a last desperate attempt to remain true to her fiancé and follow him to war, Fiordiligi gives in to Ferrando's advances.

Don Alfonso has won: All women are like that!

Finale—Scene 4—A garden

A mock wedding is prepared. Despina, disguised as a notary, brings the marriage contracts. A march announces the return of the soldiers from the war. The lovers run away, but return immediately dressed as officers. Everything is disclosed. General consternation—despair—reconciliation. Allegro finale.

Così fan tutte

Photos taken in rehearsal by Marty Sohl



Etelka Csavlek, Diana Montague



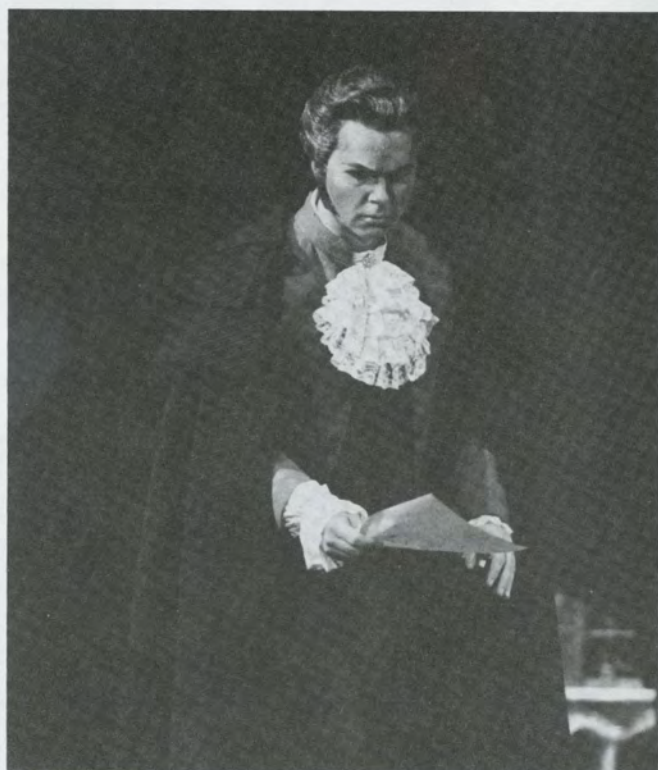
Diana Montague



(below) Dénes Gulyás, Diana Montague



Tom Krause



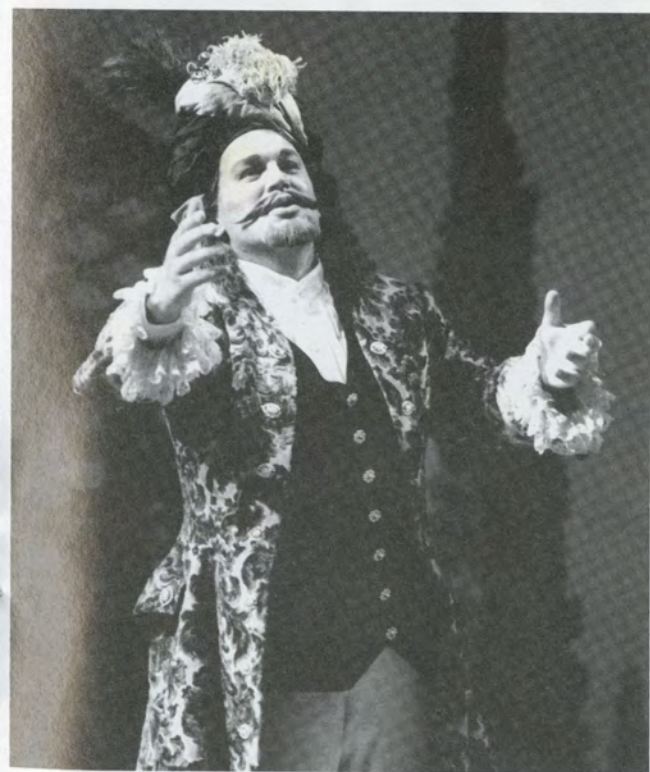
Stephen Dickson (Werther, 1985)



Gianna Rolandi



Etelka Csavlek



Dénes Gulyás





Victor Ledbetter (cover), Tom Krause, Dénes Gulyás



Gianna Rolandi, Tom Krause



Etelka Csavlek, Diana Montague



Diana Montague, Etelka Csavlek

continued from p.33

Tempest at Santa Fe. In October of 1985, he inaugurated the Lincoln Center Opera-in-Concert series with Verdi's *Giovanna d'Arco* featuring Margaret Price, Sherrill Milnes and Carlo Bergonzi. Engagements in 1986 included opening the Hong Kong Performance Center with *Don Giovanni* and leading *The Rake's Progress* for Hawaii Opera Theater. He made his conducting debut at Glyndebourne in 1986 with Monteverdi's *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, followed by *Porgy and Bess* in 1987. Recent assignments have included *Otello* in Seattle; a new production of *Così fan tutte* for Santa Fe Opera; *Giovanna d'Arco* with Margaret Price in Frankfurt; and *The Merry Widow* for the Canadian Opera Company. His concert schedule includes orchestral engagements in the Far East, in addition to leading the Rotterdam Philharmonic in concerts of music by composers-in-residence Michael Tippett and Harrison Birtwistle. Future plans include *Roméo et Juliette* for Edmonton Opera, *Madama Butterfly* and *Il Trovatore* for Seattle Opera, *Tosca* for Canadian Opera, a Verdi concert with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in London's Royal Festival Hall, concerts with the Hong Kong Philharmonic, and a debut recording with the Rotterdam Philharmonic.

German-born **Jutta Gleue** makes her San Francisco Opera debut as stage director of *Così fan tutte*. A long-time associate of the late Jean-Pierre Ponnelle, she assisted him on this production in Paris, and directed revivals of the same in Nice, Tel Aviv, Washington, D.C., and at the 1986 Mozart Festival in Paris. She began her directorial studies in Essen and worked as an assistant director in Mannheim, Kiel, Essen and at the Deutsche Oper am Rhein in Düsseldorf. From 1976 to 1979 she assisted numerous opera directors including Ponnelle, John Cox, August Everding, Michael Hampe, Harry Kupfer, Hans Neugebauer and Mauricio Kagel. Her association with Ponnelle was long and prolific. At the Salzburg Festival she assisted him on *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Idomeneo*, *Die Zauberflöte* and *Moses und Aron*. In Paris they worked on *Figaro* and *Don Giovanni*, in addition to *Parsifal* in Toulouse, *Turandot* in Munich, *Peter Grimes* in Florence, *Carmen* in Tel Aviv, *Ariadne auf Naxos* in Houston and Cologne, and a production of *Tristan und Isolde* at the Bayreuth Festival. Ponnelle productions solely directed by Miss Gleue include *Orfeo ed Euridice* at the Teatro del Liceu in Barcelona, *Die Frau ohne Schatten* at La Scala in Milan, *Don Giovanni* and *Figaro* at the Paris Mozart Festival, and *The Magic Flute* and *Turandot* at La Fenice in Venice. She was also the resident director at the



JUTTA GLEUE

Cologne Opera for Ponnelle's entire Mozart Cycle, and for his productions of *Parsifal*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Turandot* and *Salome*. She has staged her own productions of *The Barber of Seville* in Saarbrücken, *Die Fledermaus* in Montpellier, and Weill's *Mahagonny* Singspiel in Cologne. She has also taught at the Opera Studio of the Cologne Opera, and was an instructor of scenic and dramatic art in Essen and at the Rheinland Conservatory of Music.

One of the world's most noted and discussed directors and designers, the late **Jean-Pierre Ponnelle** conceived the productions of *Der Fliegende Holländer* (1975) and *Così fan tutte* (1970), designing the sets for both and the costumes for the latter. His productions of *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Pagliacci* were seen during the summer of 1986 and in 1985 he returned to recreate his production of *Lear* and to direct his new production of *Falstaff*. Ponnelle studied at the Sorbonne in Paris, his native city, and in 1952 created the scenery for the world premiere of *Boulevard Solitude*, Hans Werner Henze's first opera. During the 1950s he designed for the principal German theaters, both opera and drama, and made his design debut at the Vienna State Opera, the Rome Opera, the Opéra-Comique in Paris and San Francisco where his American debut was marked by productions of Orff's *Carmina Burana* and *The Wise Maiden* in 1958. He returned to San Francisco in 1959 for the American premiere of *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. In 1968 he began to assume dual responsibility as director/designer with productions of *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and *Così fan tutte* at the Salzburg Festival, where he returned for numerous productions. The first American project both designed and directed by Ponnelle was San Francisco Opera's *La Cenerentola*, seen here for the first time in 1969 and revived for the 1974 and '82 Fall Seasons. Other

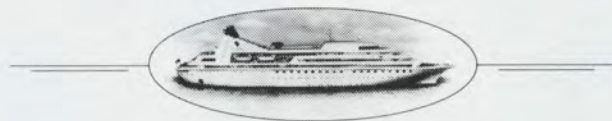


JEAN-PIERRE PONNELLE

Ponnelle San Francisco productions include *Otello*, *Rigoletto*, *Gianni Schicchi*, *Tosca*, *Turandot*, *La Bohème*, *Il Prigioniero*, *Idomeneo* and *Carmen*. His productions have been seen in all of the world's major houses. In 1981, he staged *Tristan und Isolde* at Bayreuth, a production that was subsequently filmed. For the Zurich Opera, he mounted a highly acclaimed Monteverdi cycle and also staged a Mozart cycle: *Mitridate*, *Idomeneo* and *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*. Other successes in past years include Wagner's *Liebesverbot* (Munich), *Così fan tutte*, *Le Nozze di Figaro* and *Don Giovanni* (Paris), *Parsifal* (Cologne), *Fidelio* (Berlin), *Aida* (Covent Garden), *La Clemenza di Tito* (Metropolitan Opera), *Cavalleria Rusticana/Pagliacci* (Vienna), and *Lulu* (1985 Munich Opera Festival). Ponnelle's production of *L'Italiana in Algeri*, created for La Scala, received rave reviews in Bologna last year and his production of the world premiere of Reimann's *The Trojan Women* at Munich in July of 1986 received wide critical and popular acclaim. Television viewers have been privileged to see many of his productions, including *Idomeneo* and *Le Nozze di Figaro* from the Met, *The Magic Flute* from the Salzburg Festival, as well as filmed versions of *Madama Butterfly*, *Carmina Burana*, *Rigoletto*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *La Cenerentola*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *La Clemenza di Tito*, and the three extant Monteverdi operas.

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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.

The Way It Was

By JOHN ARDOIN

Anyone interested in music who has seen the film *Amadeus* is quick to realize that it is an allegory—a struggle between genius and talent, with Mozart and Antonio Salieri as symbolic polarities. Few people will confuse this with fact. What you might be willing to accept on face value as authentic are the staged excerpts from operas by Mozart and Salieri. Don't. That's not the way it was.

About all the film got right were the uses of candles and reflectors in the footlights and the wings (though the actual, hard lighting of the scenes hardly suggested candle power) and placing of the orchestra on floor level instead of in a pit. The rest was fantasy. The scenery looked more like the work of Peter Max than that of the Quaglio family, the staging and dancing were equally suspect, audiences were entirely too rapt and well-behaved and neither Mozart nor Salieri would have stood to conduct; they would have been seated, indicating tempos from a harpsichord.

To pull back the curtain for a glimpse of what one actually encountered at the opera in the 18th century, you can turn to Charles Burney's *Music, Men and Manners in France and Italy 1770*, a remarkable account of travels on the continent by a musician who was nearly as indefatigable and entertaining a journal keeper as Samuel Pepys. On June 5, Burney, then 34, embarked from Dover in search of materials for a history of music, which he eventually published in two volumes, the first in 1776 and the second in 1789.

On the evening of July 17, 1770, shortly after arriving in Milan, he attended a performance of *L'Amor Artigiano* by Florian-Leopold Gassmann (1729-74). Noting that it was a "burletta" or farce, and that "there is no serious opera here but in Carnival time," Burney observes that "the theater here is very large and splendid: 5 rows of boxes on each side, 100 each row with a room behind every one for cards and refresh-

ments. In the fourth gallery [sic] was a pharo table. There was a very large box, bigger than my dining room [in London] for the Duke of Modena, who is Governor of Milan, and the principessina his daughter, who is married to the 2nd brother of the present emperor.

"There was an abominable noise except during 2 or 3 arias and a duet, with which everyone was in raptures. During this last, the applause continued till the performers returned to repeat it . . . In the dance the stage was illuminated in a most splendid, and to me a new manner—with *Lampioni coloriti*, or colored lamps which had a very pretty effect. The band was very numerous and [the] orchestra [area] large in proportion to the house, which is much bigger than the great opera house in Turin. Each box of the 3 first rows contains six persons who sit 3 on each side facing each other. Higher up they sit 3 in front and the rest stand behind.

"There are very wide galleries that run parallel with all the boxes, where people after the first act walk about and change places perpetually. The English are seldom disposed to be satisfied with their present condition or possessions, or else one might be very well contented with such a comic opera as that we had last year; which on the side of singing was greatly superior to this . . . The opera here is carried by 30 noblemen who subscribe 60 zechins each [a zechin, or sequin, was a gold coin equal to little less than half an English pound] for which each has a box. The rest of the boxes are let by the season. The chance money arises only from the pit [orchestral seats] or 'piccionas' [the balconies]. They perform every night."

In Florence, during September, Burney saw *La Donna Vendicata* by Rinaldo di Capua and he was struck by the enthusiasm of the audience: "I never heard such applause . . . In one of the dances there was a great shower of a printed sonet [sic] or copy of verses in praise of the two principal dancers thrown from the slips [gallery] which flew all over the house and



The Abduction from the Seraglio at the Vienna Burgtheater in 1782. Mozart is standing and conducting in the center of the picture.

were scrambled for by the audience."

By November, Burney had reached Naples and was invited by the British minister there to a performance at the San Carlo Theater given before the King and Queen. Though Burney found the building, the stage and the scenery "magnificent," he goes on to say that because of "the noises of the audience, one neither can hear voices or instruments distinctly, and I was told that on account of the K. and Q. being present, people were much less noisy than on common nights."

Fifty years before Burney's trip, an Englishman, Edward Wright, attended the opera in Venice where he saw Vivaldi take part in the performance. In his

John Ardoin is music critic for The Dallas Morning News and author of the recently published Callas at Juilliard, The Master Classes (Alfred Knopf, New York).



Mid-performance swoon in a box at Covent Garden as seen by caricaturist Isaac Cruickshank in 1818.

account, he tells that "There are more theaters in Venice than in any city of Italy that I have heard of: there are seven for opera, besides others for comedies, etc. . . . The theaters take their names from the neighboring churches, and though they are in general the property of such and such noblemen, yet others have boxes as their inheritance, purchased of the general proprietor of the theater; and of these they keep the keys themselves. But before you can come to your box, there is somewhat to be paid (about one shilling, sixpence) for entrance into the theater . . .

"There are no open galleries, as in London, but the whole from bottom to top is all divided into boxes, which one with another will contain about six persons each. They have a scandalous custom there, of spitting out of the upper boxes (as well as throwing parings of apples or oranges, etc.) upon the company in the pit (a practice frequent here), which they do at random, without any regard where it falls; though it sometimes happens upon some of the best quality; who, though they have boxes of their own, will often come into the pit, either for the better seeing the company, or sometimes to be nearer the stage, for the better hearing some favorite songs."

Wright also tells us the best time for seeing opera in Venice is during carnival time, but that this lessens the enjoyment in going to the theater, for everyone is masked and "not a face is to be seen; but the chief amusement is, to find out, through the disguise of the masque, who such and such one is, which those accustomed to the place can readily do. Those

[who] make use of books [libretti] to go along with the performance, have commonly wax-candles in their hands; which are frequently put out by favors from above."

Evidently, one of the pleasures of opera-going in Venice was the exceptional stage machinery and the marvels it created. Wright made a point of a performance where "The Emperor and the Empress appear in a triumphal chariot, drawn by an elephant. The head, trunk, and eyes of the great beast move as if alive . . . When all of a sudden, as soon as the Emperor and Empress are dismounted and have taken their seats, the triumphal chariot is transformed into an amphitheater, and filled with spectators. The elephant falls all in pieces, and out of his belly come a great number of gladiators, armed with bucklers, which were so many parts of the elephant's sides, so that he seems in a moment to be transformed into a company of armed men, who make a skirmish, all in time to the musick."

Though such contemporary accounts of actual theater practices in Mozart's day (he was 14 at the time of Burney's trip and not yet born when Wright went abroad) are rare, we do have some intimate glimpses of what it was like to attend the opera in Europe during the first few decades of the 19th century, and manners could hardly have altered that greatly in the 30-odd years following the death of Mozart.

One of the liveliest accounts of operatic mores of the time comes from the diaries of Vincent and Mary Novello. Vincent was a well-known English orga-

nist, choirmaster and publisher, and along with Mary—his wife—made their home a center for outstanding figures in the worlds of literature and music. Their greatest passion was the music of Mozart, and when they learned in 1829 that the composer's sister Nannerl was ill and indigent, they organized a fund on her behalf. Later that year, this remarkable couple journeyed to Austria to present to her the money they raised, and to collect material for a projected but never realized biography of "the Shakespeare of music," as Novello described Mozart.

The journal of their trip was not published until 1955. *A Mozart Pilgrimage* is filled with invaluable insights of the composer provided by his wife and sister, but beyond these, the book (currently available as an Eulenberg paperback) is good reading on its own to understand more intimately the fabric of life and the difficulties of travel 160 years ago. Actually the time of year the Novellos chose for their pilgrimage—they left England in late June, 1829—was not the best that they could have chosen for attending opera on the continent. By then, the most important musical seasons were over, though isolated performances of concerts and operas were encountered along their route.

After landing in Boulogne and visiting Antwerp and Cologne, the Novellos reached Mannheim on July 4. The next evening, they attended a performance of Auber's *La Muette de Portici*, a work known in London as *Masaniello*. Mannheim could hardly be called a provincial musical center, given its renowned orchestra, so praised by Mozart during a visit there in 1777. So one assumes that what the Novellos found must have been more of a rule than an exception in Germany.

The performance began at six in the evening, and Mary tells us that the building had "an air of magnificence." She also notes that tickets were scaled from one florin or gulden, 20 kreutzer for a box or first circle seat down to twelve kreutzer for gallery seats. There were sixty kreutzer to a florin, and as Otto Erich Deutsch points out in his *Mozart, A Documentary Biography*, it is misleading to attempt a modern equivalent for the currencies of Mozart's day.

"It seems more useful," Deutsch feels, "to bear in mind certain sums as a yardstick of their value. Thus Leopold Mozart's basic annual salary as vicekapellmeister in Salzburg was 300 florins, with 54 florins subsistence allowance; Wolfgang's annual salary as Imperial

Kammermusicus [in Vienna] was 800 florins; the standard fee he received for composing an opera for the Imperial theaters was 100 ducats (450 florins)."

Inside the Mannheim theater, Mary Novello noted that the orchestra seats "were filled with respectable company, but there is not the same advantage here as at Munich, Vienna and other places, where the place may be previously taken and booked up till the persons arrive [in other words, no reserved seating]. The audience part is remarkably heavy and very ill-lighted. The Boxes appear crushed down by the tiers immediately above them, and I should think that the sound must be much deteriorated and nearly smothered before it reaches the Persons seated in them. The custom of placing a candle inside of each box gives a very singular and not agreeable effect. At the commencement of the Opera, the chandelier in the Pit was drawn up entirely out of sight, leaving the audience almost in darkness, in order, I suppose, to give more effect to the light thrown on the stage.

"The present opera house is an ugly heavy interior and so dark on entering that you are literally obliged to feel your way. The center chandelier is so badly lit that once it went entirely out, to the great amusement of the audience, who applauded as loudly as if some great feat had been achieved, yet this is the only light in the house except the footlights which seldom appear but during the performance, there are indeed a few rush-lights placed at the back of the boxes but these were only partially lighted."

Mary felt "The performance was a mediocre representation," and quickly dismissed the cast as "fit only for Sanders' troop," a circus act in London. She writes that "the house was very crowded and the applause vociferous, especially when any of the commonplace arias were sung; yet whenever their singers failed in a passage they laughed outright without any ceremony."

Vincent added to Mary's comments some of his own dealing with specifics of the performance itself: "The Overture began with a discord and the tappage occasioned by the furious blowing of the wind instruments and the violent drumming was hideously noisy ... Oboe, thin tone ... Clarinet, clever and feeling performer ... Double bass the best performer on the stringed instruments ... the 1st Horn was also a fine player, but the Drum was an absolute nuisance ...

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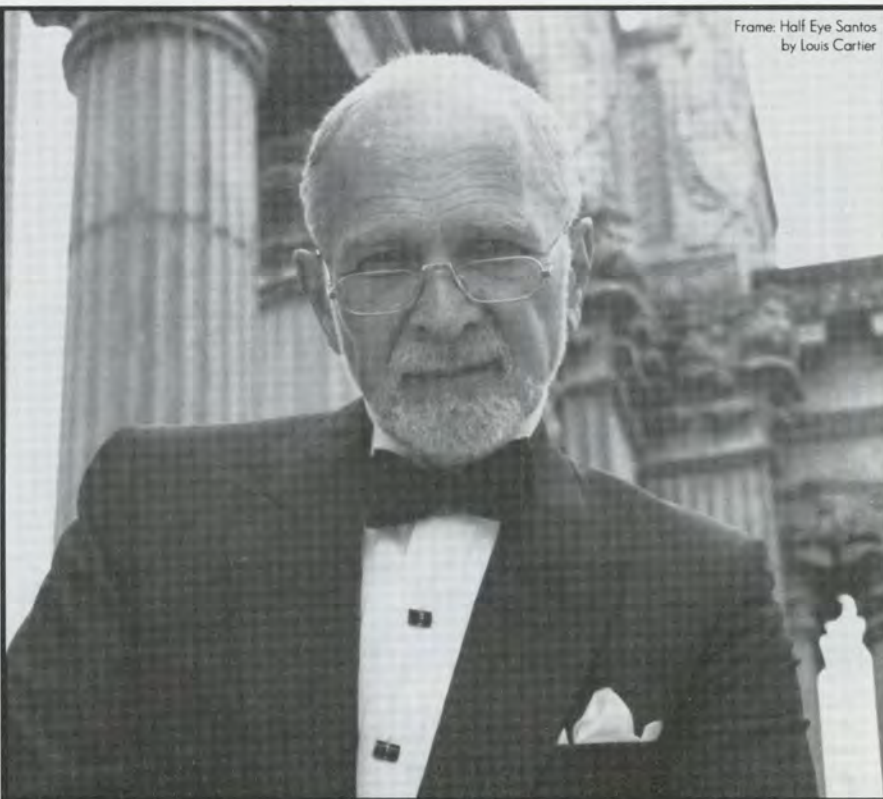



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much in his throat and too flat . . . Prima Donna well in tune but now rather old and wanting polish . . . The Actress who played the Dumb Girl wanting in energy. Finale to 1st Act too violent and noisy—the crowing, shouting, bawling, and the furious crashing of the Orchestra was enough to split our ears—it was absolutely frightful . . . Not a single singer amongst the whole Company appear to have the power of making a shake [trill].”

Adam Carse in his fascinating volume *The Orchestra from Beethoven to Berlioz* has written that “In the year 1800 it would have been difficult, or even impossible, to find any orchestra in which the playing was controlled by a musician who did nothing but beat the time and indicate by gestures how the music should be interpreted . . . At the turn of the century the position everywhere was one of uneasy dual control between the violinist-leader and the musical director presiding at the pianoforte.”

And yet, in Mannheim, Novello tells us “No Piano Forte in the Orchestra but a Person in the centre who beats times all the way through with the score before him. Recitatives are accompanied by the Band—not with Violoncello and Double Bass as in England” [Novello was, of course, thinking of *secco* recitatives, a style abandoned by Auber and eschewed in French opera of the period].

What is fascinating is that this “modern-styled” conductor in Mannheim seems not to have been a fluke. Novello encountered the same phenomenon at a performance of *Don Giovanni* in Vienna’s Kärntnerthor Theater. Only 30 years after Mozart’s death, here was a performance of one of his operas in which “There was no Piano Forte but the conductor sat with the Score before him in the center of the Orchestra and beat time throughout.

“The arrangement which struck me as most peculiar was the mode of placing the Double Basses. The whole four were ranged in a Row just in the middle of the orchestra, opposite the conductor and the Leader, with their backs to the stage. I liked the result of this condensation of force, for each Performer, by having companions and supports, will play with more confidence and decision—also when these four grand Instruments came in altogether in leading or taking up the points of imitations, the effect was strikingly magnificent.”

Fascinatingly enough, Novello also came across the “old” method of conveying tempo, and in a major center—



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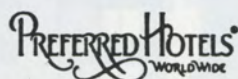
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Munich—during a performance at the Court Theater of *Das Schmuckkästchen* by August von Kotzebue. "The Leader [concertmaster] made himself too prominent and conspicuous by his violent beating and restless fidgeting about. There is no occasion for all this tappage, and if the Orchestra consists of clever performers it is not only unnecessary but an impertinent affront to the other Professors. His own playing partook of the same violent and coarse character; plenty of crashing across the strings but no Legato, dolce or sustained sweet notes . . ."

Regarding the *Don Giovanni* performance in Vienna, Mary Novello had this to say: "Young Mozart said his father's music could not be spoiled, even when indifferently performed; this is most true and was verified last night [July 25] when the performance was little better than provincial, both in actors and scenery . . ."

"Yet notwithstanding, such is the charm and character of the music, that it is by far the best entertainment we have witnessed in Germany. The Choruses, Concerted pieces and Finales went delightfully, indeed the Band is so loud, that scarcely any other can be heard. All the singers sang the notes set down for them without trumpery; and, with the exception of Elvira, well in tune . . . The Damen [women] were the most vulgar-looking I ever saw in a theater . . . indeed all the actresses were so disfigured with rouge, which was literally laid on in a thick coat under the very eyelids and the lower part equally whitened, that I forebore to look at them."

Vincent also tells us that "The House is not large, and is very plainly ornamented; it is about the same size as our English Opera House in the Strand [later the Lyceum]. The pit is divided into two parts . . . there are also five tiers of which the two lower ones are occupied by boxes . . . As I know the whole opera by heart, I of course did not lose anything by its being in German instead of Italian—although the effect was singular to hear such very different sounds and syllables attached to the musical phrases from those to which I had been accustomed."

"One alteration for the worse, all Mozart's beautiful and expressive recitatives (with the exception of the accompanied ones) were left out and the dialogues were only spoken. A long scene of silly buffoonery between Don Giovanni and some officers of justice was introduced in the first Act quite different from the Italian Edition of the opera. But in another instance the performance was better than



Goings-on in a box at La Scala, Milan are pictured in an 1844 engraving.

our Opera in the Haymarket—for they have the good taste to retain Don Giovanni's fine song in F when he is dismissing the Companions of Masetto."

One feels that through inference, it is possible to have some understanding of what operatic life was like in London at the time. What the Novellos disliked abroad was surely a result of what they *did* like at theaters in London, or at least what they were used to. But what about opera-going in the early nineteenth century in Italy? Luckily we have a vivid picture left to us by Hector Berlioz, and from it we can see that things had changed little since Burney's visit over a half-century earlier.

In 1823, six years before the Novello pilgrimage to Austria, Berlioz arrived in Milan and, as he writes in his *Mémoires*, "out of a sense of duty I made myself go to hear the latest opera. Donizetti's *L'Elisir d'Amore* was being given at the Cannobiana. I found the theater full of people talking in normal voices, with their backs to the stage. The singers, undeterred, gesticulated and yelled their lungs out in the strictest spirit of rivalry."

"At least I presumed they did, from their wide-open mouths; but the noise of the audience was such that no sound penetrated except the bass drum. People were gambling, eating supper in their

boxes, etcetera, etcetera. Consequently, perceiving it was useless to expect to hear anything of the score, which was then new to me, I left."

"It appears that Italians do sometimes listen. I have been assured by several people that it is so. The fact remains that music to the Milanese, as to the Neapolitans, the Romans, the Florentines and the Genoese, means arias, duets, trios, well sung; anything beyond that provokes only aversion or indifference."

We as a race of operagoers are infinitely more polite, often entirely too polite, and through the years opera often has become more of a ritual than an entertainment. Still, it is clear that while outer trappings have changed in 200 years, certain human characteristics have remained consistent. Like the Mannheimers, audiences at the Metropolitan Opera applaud every time the Met's chandeliers are raised before a performance begins, audiences today in Parma have been seen lugging baskets of food into the city's opera house, there are still complaints that orchestras drown out singers, and arias and duets remain more prized than choruses or ensembles. But is this so surprising when you remember that opera was once dubbed "the most popular of indoor sports?" ■

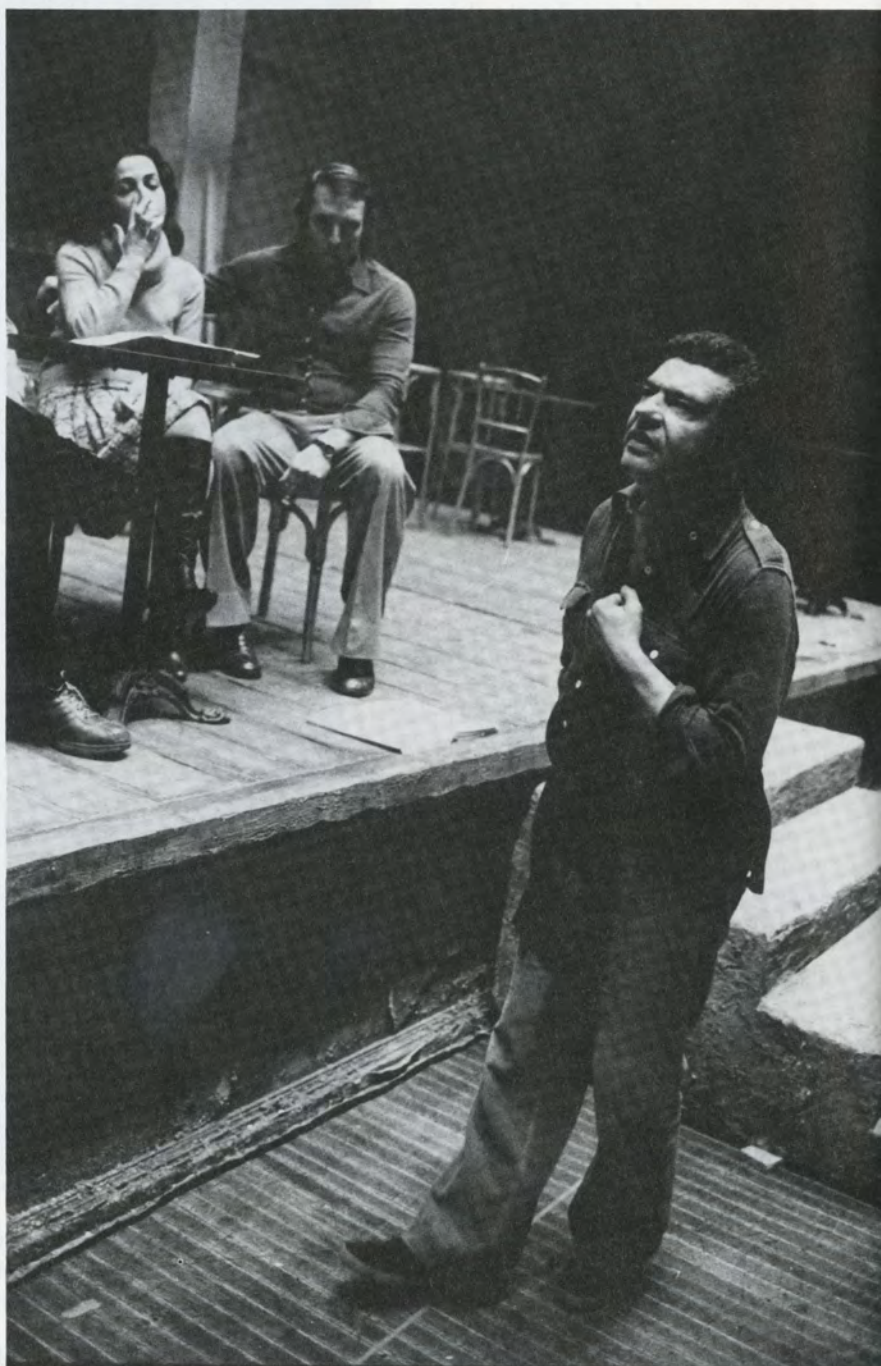
Remembering Ponnelle

By JOHN SCHAUER

As profoundly as the recent death of Jean-Pierre Ponnelle grieved the musical world, it was especially devastating to the staff, artists and audiences of San Francisco Opera, the company that introduced the brilliant designer/director to this country. One of the great credits of the regime of Kurt Herbert Adler, who also passed away this year, Ponnelle became Adler's favorite director, and their collaborations put an individual stamp on San Francisco Opera, defining its profile and greatly accounting for the Company's position in the vanguard of opera production in the United States.

There are some things in the world of opera that people tend either to love or to hate, with no middle ground; music, personalities, voices, productions so distinctive that they cannot go unnoticed and unjudged. Jean-Pierre Ponnelle was such a phenomenon, a man whose name became almost inseparable from the word

John Schauer is Staff Writer for San Francisco Opera.



San Francisco Opera, 1978: Jean-Pierre Ponnelle rehearsing La Bohème with Ileana Cotrubas and Giacomo Aragall.

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genius, yet whose work could be consistently counted upon to generate controversy, to elicit denunciations as well as adulation. But indisputable was his brilliance, forcefulness, creativity, insight and dedication; he made professional critics and first-time operagoers alike think about opera in a new way and expect more than they ever thought they had a right to.

There is not room enough in the space of a magazine article to assess and analyze in depth Ponnelle's influence on opera production in San Francisco, the United States, the world; or to scrutinize the many facets of this figure as a man, an artist, a stage director, a filmmaker. But Ponnelle's special relationship to San Francisco Opera enables us to learn a great deal when we examine even just some of his landmark San Francisco Opera productions, two of which (*The Flying Dutchman* and *Così fan tutte*) are being revived this year.

Born in Paris on February 19, 1932, Ponnelle studied art history and philosophy at the Sorbonne, music at the Paris Conservatory, and painting under the tutelage of Fernand Léger. At the age of 20 he was invited by Hans Werner Henze to design the premiere production of *Boulevard Solitude*, a project that won the young Ponnelle international fame and led him to pursue a career entirely in the world of theater.

When Adler first brought him to San Francisco Opera in 1958, it was as designer of a double bill of Orff's *Carmina Burana* and *The Wise Maiden* (*Die Kluge*). With his first assignment, Ponnelle brought San Francisco Opera into the 20th century and the third dimension. Company Production Supervisor Matthew Farruggio is the only member of San Francisco Opera's artistic staff to have been with the Company since before Ponnelle's debut. In those days "a new production" most often meant a new combination of stock pieces of scenery selected from the Company's inventory, and Farruggio describes what a striking impression the bold young Frenchman made with his vivid, three-dimensional sets: "They were very, very colorful. For instance, the *Carmina Burana* is painted in a medieval style, like an elaborate tapestry, and so is *Die Kluge*. The colors are all bold and stark, and they're played against one another so that they make a brilliant composition. That was unusual, because

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Jean-Pierre Ponnelle during a *Flying Dutchman* 1979 rehearsal break, sharing a lighter moment with the Men of the San Francisco Opera Chorus.

we had things that were all more or less monochromatic, all in tones of gray or brown or sepia. All the sets that we had—if you want to call them sets—were canvas drops that had been painted years before, and all were faded. Unless you lit them specially, they had no color at all. They were kind of chalky looking.

"Painting in perspective was very 'in' at that time, because lighting was all borders and footlights, with some cross-light. When Ponnelle came in, the era had changed; all over Europe they were using three-dimensional lighting, lighting that came from all angles on the sets. You would get lights from behind; people would move and they would be in shadow or silhouette rather than lit from the front. That sort of thing didn't use to happen before.

"Ponnelle worked very closely with our lighting designers because he wanted the effect to be brilliant; he wanted all of his sets to be bright. I think the only time we found him willing to subdue color is in the *Dutchman*."

In 1959 Ponnelle was selected to design our American premiere production of Strauss' *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, but when he returned in 1969 it was for his first American assignment in a new dual capacity he had first essayed the previous year at Salzburg: the role of director/designer for a production of Rossini's

Cenerentola. Local audiences were enraptured, and national music critics took note. *The New York Times* described Ponnelle's direction as "natural, unaffected and so different from opera as practiced so often on the East Coast, with its overloaded productions or its wrenching of the libretto to suit a director's ego. San Francisco is fortunate . . ."

In December 1969, *Opera News* declared, "For its new *Cenerentola* this season, the San Francisco Opera marked another first with the American debut of one of Europe's most imaginative stage directors, Jean-Pierre Ponnelle . . . Ponnelle's designs, whether for opera or legitimate theater, are distinguished by inventiveness, sense of unity, charm and—unlike some of the work of Rouault, Chagall and other painters who have ventured into the theater—theatricality. He knows how to use settings and costumes to visualize the external plot of an opera as well as its internal psychology. The more he learned about decor not just as background but as a medium for clarifying and intensifying the story, the more he realized he would have to direct as well."

In an interview in *Opera Quarterly* (Summer 1985), Ponnelle modestly claimed his preference for directing and designing was more a matter of efficiency than any grandiose Wagnerian notions

about a *Gesamtkunstwerk*: "For one thing, you know, that can also be achieved through good collaboration—a gifted and sensitive director working with a gifted and sensitive designer. As for my work, I'm not so ambitious. I find it much more convenient to do everything, that's all—from a purely professional point of view. When I know, six or eight months before we start rehearsals, exactly how the set will look, then my concept is much clearer. I don't need to assure myself anymore how the scenery will look when it's finished. I can go directly to the carpenters, I'm ready to talk to the painters, and I do my own tech designs, so I know what the result will be. That way I save myself a lot of time—and them, too."

All of Ponnelle's subsequent assignments at San Francisco Opera were as director and designer, and he followed his 1969 *Cenerentola* triumph with another smashing success in 1970, Mozart's *Così fan tutte*, which is being revived as part of San Francisco Opera's 1988 season. The critic of the *San Francisco Examiner* started his review by saying, "Lightning, they say, never strikes twice in the same place. But the artistic electricity generated by Jean-Pierre Ponnelle evidently does, witness Saturday night at the Opera House. M. Ponnelle, author of last year's San Francisco Opera production of Rossini's *Cenerentola*, one of the company's all-time hits, has come up with another show, Mozart's *Così fan tutte*, which is thoroughly its equal in terms of impeccable style and theatrical ingenuity. The result? A deserved standing ovation." The *Los Angeles Times* was equally lavish in its praise, claiming, "Ponnelle has discovered the secret of projecting touching earthiness within strict symmetrical confines. He conveys wit without undue caricature, elegance without mannerism. Formula solutions interest him as little as they interested Mozart."

"The 'new' approach to *Così* stresses humanity under the guise of gentle let's-pretend. The characters are real, not types; their dilemma is patently phony, but it is couched in all-too-genuine, consistently amusing, poignance. Ponnelle ... is brilliantly aided by his ultra-sympathetic designer, who sets the opera on an intimate stage within the stage—quixotic in its elegant transformations, exquisite in its self-conscious detail, and—most important—attractive as it is functional. The designer (who also provided

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Thomas Stewart and the Men of the San Francisco Opera Chorus in a scene from the Jean-Pierre Ponnelle production of Reimann's *Lear*.

the gorgeous yet delicately apt costumes) happens to be the selfsame Ponnelle."

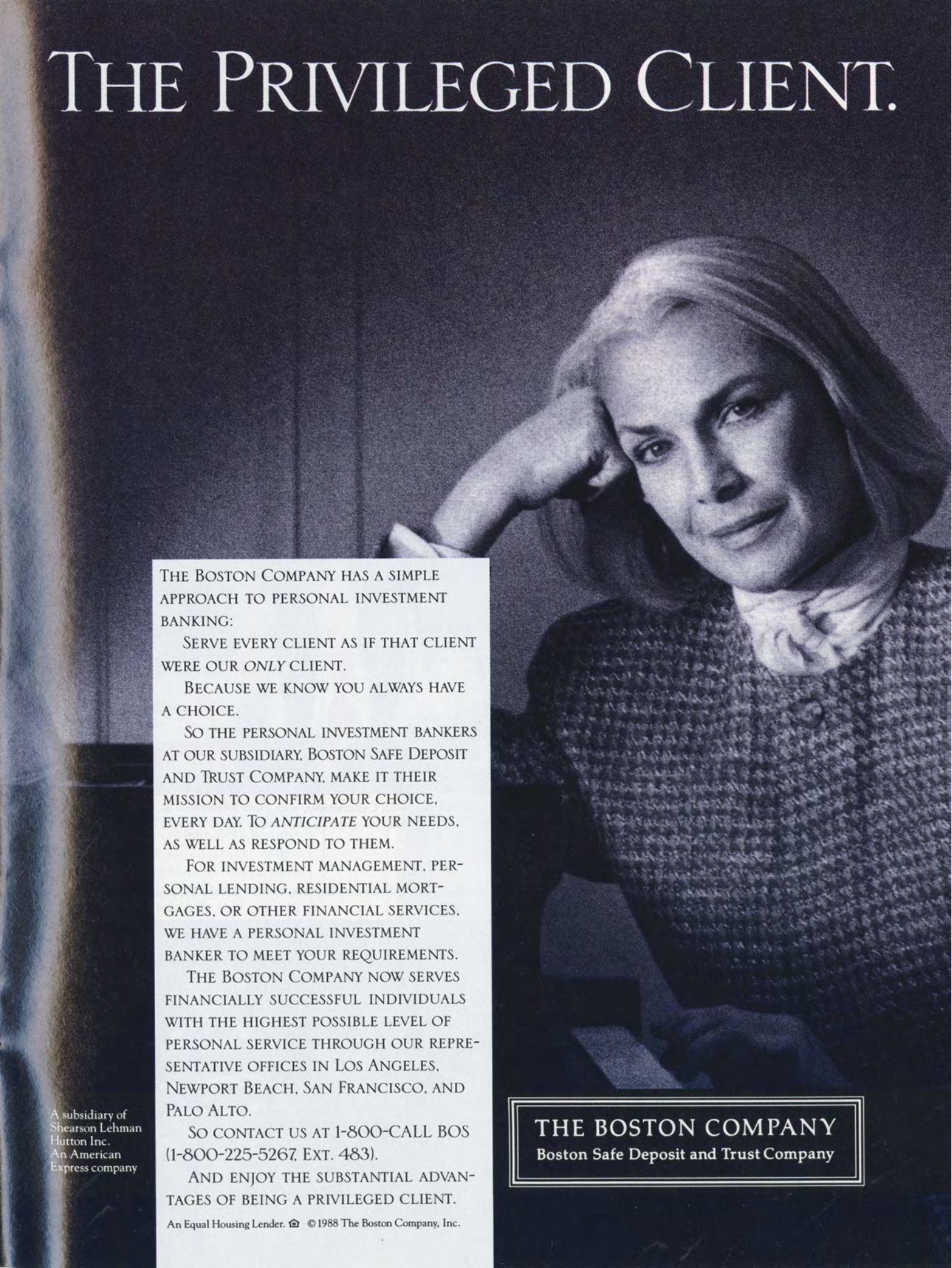
For his *Così*, as he would in other productions, Ponnelle not only required technical capabilities the War Memorial Opera House didn't have, but devised ways, as he would in other instances, to achieve the effects anyway, to make the impossible possible. Farruggio explained, "Since we didn't have the ability to sink a set and bring another set up as some other theaters have, for *Così* we built a 'wagon' that was as big as the width of the whole house, so you could have it all the way off to stage right with a set in the center, and then you could roll it to stage left and you would have a set further on, and further on stage left you would have another set, so you kept pushing this scenery across the stage and have a different set in each position."

More Ponnelle productions entered the repertoire: *Otello* in 1970, *Tosca* in 1972, *Rigoletto* in 1973. As he delved more into the tragic repertoire, Ponnelle reached for new depths and heights, and generated more controversy. The *Rigoletto* was a particularly striking departure from tradition, the stage a three-dimensional Renaissance painting that had come to life in the shattered mind of the title character. The *San Francisco Examiner* called it "a staggeringly brilliant, revolutionary, and profoundly disturbing show. It's handsome, it's Freudian, it's theatrical, it's consistent, and it knocks you out . . . This

is a *Rigoletto* who's gone mad, and as he weeps over his dead daughter he reviews the action in one great horrifying dream of a flashback. The tattered arsenal of his subconscious performs the drama, and it's a strange, wild parade of memory and desire." The *Los Angeles Times*, which voiced some major reservations about the production, did admit, "Luckily, Ponnelle has the good taste, and sufficient respect for Verdi, to impose his bizarre visions discreetly. His visual counterpoint introduced a tone of irony probably not intended by the composer, but it is logical and it never contradicts the musical impulses. Sometimes, in fact, the director asks the protagonists to dance out the music and, in a poignantly eerie way, even that works."

The importance of the music was something intrinsic to Ponnelle's approach; no matter how flamboyantly theatrical he could be, his motivation always came from the composer. "When I'm designing," he told *Opera Quarterly*, "my directing concept is quite clear. I don't start with that, though. For a new production, I begin to think only on a musical level. Only then, when that's ready, do I begin to design and to work out my directing concept. . . For me, all the information comes from the music. After that follows the dramaturgical analysis, trying to discover relationships between the characters. Only then can I really begin to think. When the musical score and the

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Teresa Berganza in the title role of *La Cenerentola*, with Paolo Montarsolo as her father, Don Magnifico. The Jean-Pierre Ponnelle production of the Rossini comedy was first staged here in 1969.

Act I of the much-discussed Jean-Pierre Ponnelle production of Puccini's *Turandot*, staged at the San Francisco Opera in 1977.



analysis of the libretto are ready, I see my *mise en scène* clearly, automatically."

When Ponnelle returned to San Francisco in 1975 for a new production of Wagner's *The Flying Dutchman*, he again placed the action inside the head of one of the characters, as he had in *Rigoletto*. But this time the opera was not seen through the eyes of the title character, but rather as a dream of the Steersman, an inconsequential figure in traditional stagings. In an interview in the program magazine, Ponnelle explained, "I wanted to tell the story on a different level than the primitive legend, so I decided to turn the entire opera into a dream of the Steersman. In that way, it can catalyze all frustrations and complexes as well as become theatrically more believable. I think it's quite believable that a little sailor should be in love with the captain's daughter and that he should project himself, in this dream, into a profession that is completely contrary to his own.

"Like a modern soldier or an astronaut, the Steersman and all the men on Daland's ship have been compelled to leave home without women. This dream, therefore, reflects the young sailor's loneliness and frustration. It also means that Senta becomes more of a myth, since she is only a part of the Steersman's dream. And when she herself dreams of the legendary Dutchman, the audiences will be witnessing a dream within a dream."

As for the traditional ending in which Senta casts herself into the sea, freeing the Dutchman from his curse by her death, Ponnelle said simply, "I'm not doing it. I have an aversion to bombastic endings because they are an abstract. Music theater, in my opinion, is the artistic expression of human behavior and does not have a great deal to do with realistic symbolism." The break with tradition did not bother him. "Tradition can be the death of theater. It is possible to learn a great deal from a wise teacher, but, if we are always imitators, the work begins to die."

Whether it was his specific concept or the sacrosanct inviolability many people ascribe to Wagner's works, Ponnelle's production of *The Flying Dutchman* polarized critics as never before, some openly declaring him a genius, others charging that he had perverted Wagner's creation for his own ends. It also curiously polarized opera audiences of the East and West



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The Ponnelle production of Verdi's *Falstaff* had its premiere during the 1985 S.F. Opera Fall Season. Shown: A scene in Ford's house, Act I.

Coasts: Ponnelle's *Dutchman* was rapturously received by San Francisco audiences and was the sensation of the 1975 season; but when the same production traveled to New York's Metropolitan Opera, it provoked audiences to near-riot. Fights broke out in the theater, and while Ponnelle has gone on to stage several major productions at the Met since then, his *Dutchman* is still discussed there.

In his unending attempt to keep the repertoire alive and lively, Ponnelle—

along with a few other figures like Franco Zeffirelli—acquired a degree of control and power unknown to stage directors of the past. Some singers would decline parts in Ponnelle productions if they felt they could not accept some aspect of his concept; others he would decline to work with if he felt they could not accomplish what he required. This was no longer the age of the imperious and autocratic singer; it was the age of the stage director.

Ponnelle himself saw the new power



Gallery of Ponnelle-characters, as seen in the 1985 *Falstaff*: (Bottom, l. to r.) Joseph Frank (Bardolfo), Alan Titus (Ford), Rémy Corazza (Dr. Caius); (top, l. to r.) Kevin Langan (Pistola) and Walter MacNeil (Fenton).

of the director as merely the current stage of a process that he attributed to the receding place of the contemporary composer in the operatic repertoire. As he said to *Opera Quarterly*, "Around the turn of the century, it was the age of the conductor. Why? Because musical productivity was declining steadily. . . . So it's perfectly logical that creative power should shift to the interpretative artists: to conductors searching for *their* interpretation of all the masterpieces . . . Then, as all the modern ideas from the straight theater infiltrated opera, directors started doing what the conductor had been doing fifty years ago. So, give us new operas like *Lear* opening every week around the world, and perhaps the power of the conductor and the power of the director will decline and revert again to the composer. But for now, our duty is really to keep the entire repertory alive so it doesn't just exist in a museum."

The appearance of more new operas might not diminish the role of the director as Ponnelle predicted; the *Lear* that he referred to was the Aribert Reimann opera he had staged at its 1978 world premiere in Munich and again for its 1981 American premiere at San Francisco Opera, and Ponnelle's extraordinary direction and designs drew more attention than Reimann's stark, 12-tone score. Ponnelle again dazzled with his daring concept, simultaneously stripping the entire stage area bare while requiring massive modifications to the floor, which heaved and moved like one of the protagonists. The production began to win over fiercely devoted converts in an audience that would be expected to resist an atonal work.

Winning converts was perhaps Ponnelle's major ambition and greatest achievement. But that operatic experience so many people have learned to understand and love through Ponnelle's films and telecasts, we in San Francisco have been blessed to know first-hand in the theater. Other Ponnelle productions seen in the War Memorial have included *Gianni Schicchi*, a double bill of *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Pagliacci*, *Idomeneo*, *Turandot*, *Il Prigioniero*, *Carmen* and, most recently, *Falstaff*—they are all part of his legacy. And through the enduring magic of his San Francisco Opera productions, we, like the Steersman in *The Flying Dutchman*, can go on experiencing Ponnelle's fantastic dreams. ■

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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.

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; refreshments served at 7:30 p.m., previews at 8 p.m. Series registration is \$25 for 6 previews (\$20 for students and seniors). Single tickets are \$5 (\$4 for students and seniors). For further information, please call (415) 453-4483.

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.

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.

Parsifal 10/18
James Keolker

Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk 10/25
Richard Taruskin

La Gioconda 11/15
William Huck

SONOMA COUNTY CHAPTER

Previews held at various times and locations (see below). Series registration is \$22 for 6 previews (chapter member); \$25 non-member. Single tickets (member) \$5, non-member \$6, students \$3. For further information and reservations for receptions and luncheons, please call (707) 938-2432 or (707) 996-2590.

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.

Parsifal 10/19
James Keolker

Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk 10/26
Richard Taruskin

La Gioconda 11/16
William Huck

OPERA EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL PREVIEW SERIES

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.

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.

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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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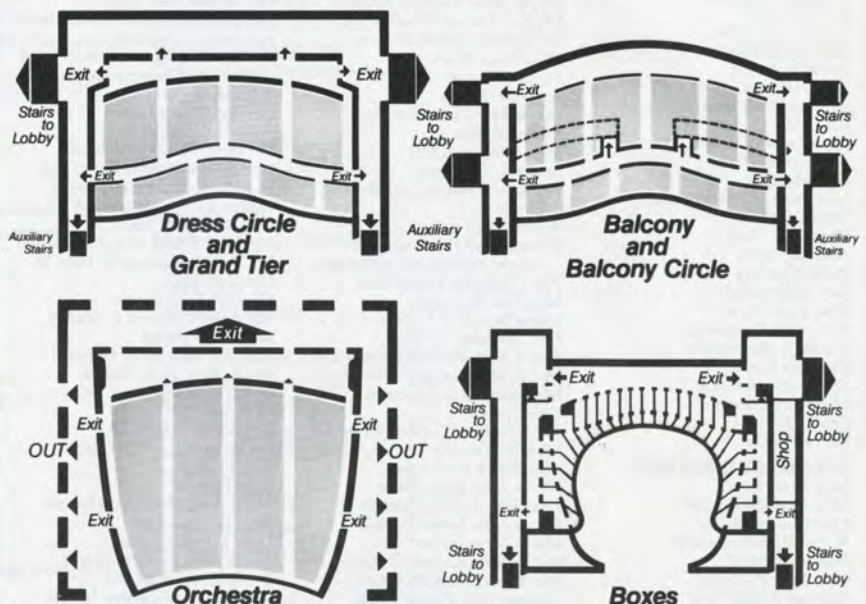
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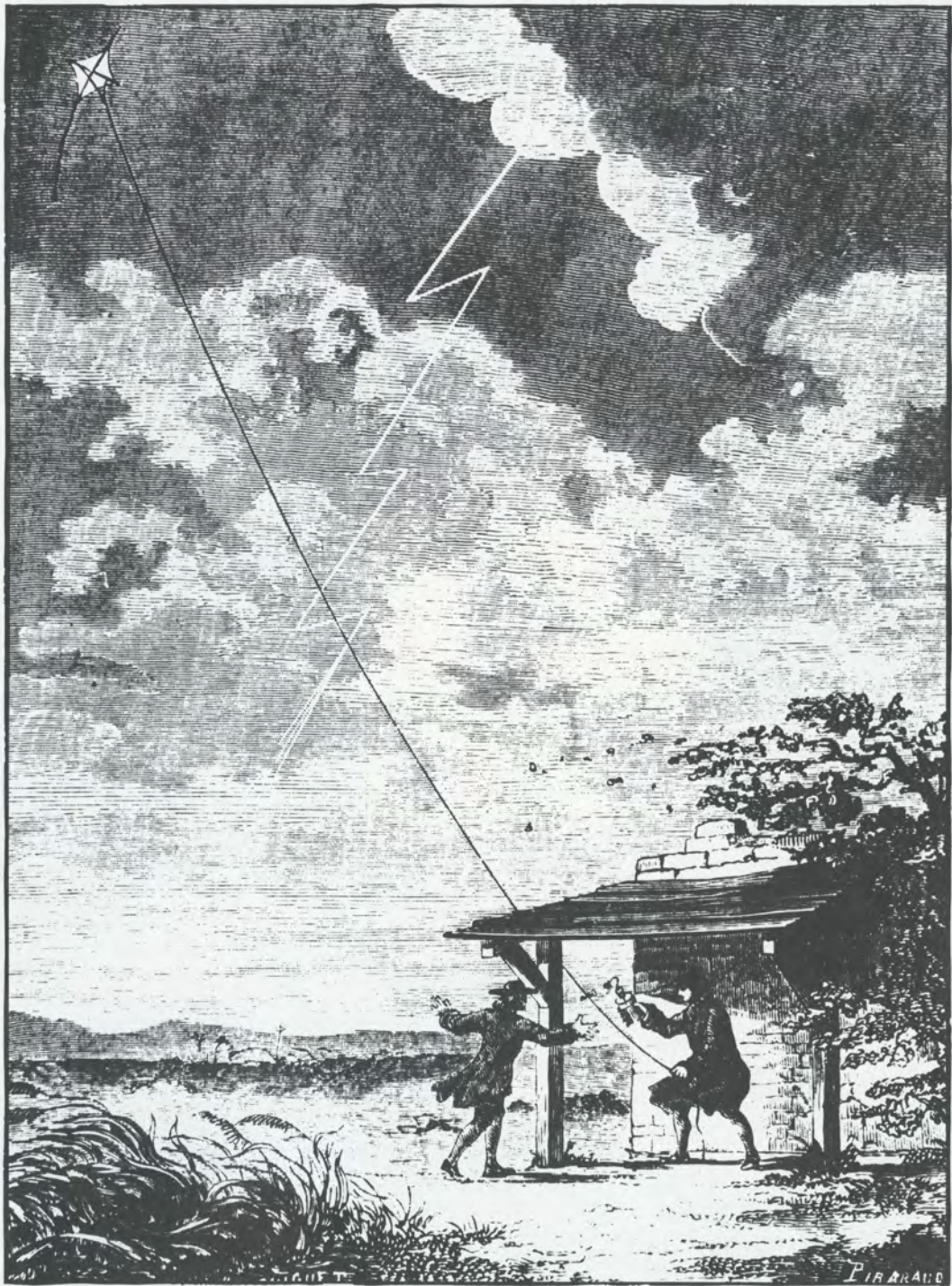
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October 21, 1988

The role of Don Alfonso in tonight's performance of *Così fan tutte* will be sung by Renato Capecchi, replacing Tom Krause, who is ill.



Italian bass-baritone **Renato Capecchi** is currently appearing at San Francisco Opera as Geronte de Ravoir in *Manon Lescaut*. He was heard here last fall as Dr. Bartolo in opening night performances of *The Barber of Seville*, and has sung in a total of 14 productions with the Company since his 1968 debut. He made his professional debut with the Italian Radio in 1948, followed by his stage debut as Amonasro in *Aida* with the Teatro Comunale of Reggio Emilia in 1949. A familiar figure on the world's foremost operatic stages, Capecchi has a repertoire of over 300 roles and has recorded more than 30 complete operas, as well as several special programs of Italian music. For the 1976 Merola Opera Program he directed the American stage premiere of Donizetti's *L'Ajo nell'Imbarazzo* and Gazzaniga's *Il Convitato di Pietra* at the Paul Masson Winery and instructed the young singers in classic commedia dell'arte traditions. Other directorial credits in the United States include *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* with the Chautauqua and New Orleans Opera, *Il Matrimonio Segreto* in Santa Fe, *Così fan tutte* in Connecticut, *Don Pasquale* and *Gianni Schicchi* in Philadelphia and *La Fille du Régiment* at New York City Opera. Among his many engagements last season were *Così fan tutte* in Houston and Philadelphia, *Tosca*, *La Bohème* and *Werther* at the Metropolitan Opera, *Le Convenienze ed Inconvenienze Teatrali* at the Teatro La Fenice in Venice, *Don Giovanni* at the Ravinia Festival in Chicago and *The Marriage of Figaro* at the Ottawa National Art Festival. As a teacher, Capecchi has contributed to many workshops and master classes in five countries. He frequently oversees the young artists at La Scala in Milan and has assisted with the educational programs of the Teatro Comunale in Florence, the Opéra-Comique Studio in Paris, the Amsterdam Opera Studio, the London Opera Center and the Vienna Opera. In the United States, in addition to San Francisco Opera's Merola Program, he has taught in Philadelphia at the Academy of Vocal Arts, at the Chautauqua Festival, the Juilliard School of Music in New York City, and at the University of Colorado in Boulder. His future plans include the Paris Opera production of *Orphée aux Enfers*, *The Barber of Seville* for the Australian Opera, and a return to the Metropolitan Opera for *La Bohème* and *Werther*.

