

Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk

1988

Saturday, November 12 , 1988 8:00 PM

Saturday, November 19 , 1988 8:00 PM

Monday, November 21 , 1988 8:00 PM

Friday, November 25 , 1988 8:00 PM

Wednesday, November 30 , 1988 7:30 PM

Sunday, December 4 , 1988 2:00 PM

SFO_PUB_01_SFO_1988_07

Publications Collection

San Francisco Opera Archives

An abstract painting with a figure in the foreground and a landscape in the background. The figure is rendered in dark, expressive brushstrokes, with a prominent red mark on its back. The background features a landscape with a blue, conical structure on the left and a dark, circular shape on the right. The overall color palette is dominated by earthy tones like yellow, green, and brown, with accents of blue and red.

San Francisco
1988 SEASON
Opera

Lady Macbeth
of Mtsensk

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San Francisco Opera

Lotfi Mansouri, *General Director*

Sir John Pritchard, *Music Director*

Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk

1988 SEASON

FEATURES

- 26 **The Unmaking of Lady Macbeth** by Richard Taruskin
The strange geneses of *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, both titular heroine and Shostakovich opera.
- 53 **The Opera Guild is Fifty** by Jane Eshleman Conant
The author provides a lively look at the San Francisco Opera Guild.
- 60 **Company Profiles: The Kvistads** by Timothy Pfaff
Getting acquainted with San Francisco Opera Orchestra's principal second violin and principal percussionist/associate timpanist.

DEPARTMENTS

- 10 Administration
13 Company Roster
14 1988 Season Repertoire
25 Box Holders
35 Artist Profiles
39 Cast and Credits
40 Synopsis
65 Extended Company Roster
69 Donor Benefits
70 Corporate Council
71 Medallion Society
76 Supporting San Francisco Opera
82 Services



COVER

Elmer Bischoff, *Girl Reclining*, 1960
Oil on canvas, 67 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 67 $\frac{3}{8}$ in.
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
T.B. Walker Foundation Fund Purchase

Photo by Don Myer

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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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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.

San Francisco Opera

Lotfi Mansouri, *General Director*

Sir John Pritchard, *Music Director*

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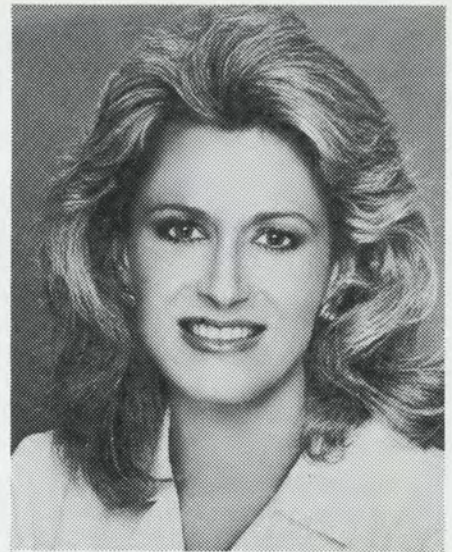
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San Francisco Opera

Lotfi Mansouri, *General Director*

Sir John Pritchard, *Music Director*

1988 Season

<p><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></p>	<p>Tuesday, September 27, 8:00 L'Africaine Meyerbeer</p>	<p>Sunday, October 9, 2:00 Maometto II Rossini</p>
<p>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></p>	<p>Wednesday, September 28, 7:30 The Rake's Progress Stravinsky</p>	<p>Tuesday, October 11, 8:00 Der Fliegende Holländer Wagner Larson**, Young; Pederson, Ochman, Koptchak Kaltenbach/Calábria/Ponnelle/Halmen/ Munn</p>
<p>Tuesday, September 13, 7:30 L'Africaine Meyerbeer</p>	<p>Thursday, September 29, 7:30 Der Fliegende Holländer Wagner Polaski**, Young; Van Dam, Ochman, Koptchak* Kaltenbach/Calábria/Ponnelle/ 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></p>	<p>Thursday, October 13, 8:00 Così fan tutte Mozart</p>
<p>Thursday, September 15, 7:30 The Rake's Progress Stravinsky</p>	<p>Friday, September 30, 8:00 Maometto II Rossini</p>	<p>Saturday, October 15, 7:30 Der Fliegende Holländer Wagner Larson, Young; Van Dam, Ochman, Koptchak Kaltenbach/Calábria/Ponnelle/Halmen/ Munn</p>
<p>Friday, September 16, 8:00 L'Africaine Meyerbeer</p>	<p>Saturday, October 1, 8:00 Der Fliegende Holländer Wagner Martin, Young; Van Dam, Ochman, Koptchak Kaltenbach/Calábria/Ponnelle/Halmen/ Munn</p>	<p>Sunday, October 16, 2:00 Manon Lescaut Puccini Lorengar, Manhart; Dvorský, Vanaud*, Capecchi, Wunsch, Travis, Petersen, Skinner, Anderson, Potter Pritchard/Asagaroff/Klein/Mahoney/ Arhelger</p>
<p>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></p>	<p>Sunday, October 2, 2:00 The Rake's Progress Stravinsky</p>	<p>Tuesday, October 18, 8:00 Così fan tutte Mozart</p>
<p>Sunday, September 18, 2:00 L'Africaine Meyerbeer</p>	<p>Tuesday, October 4, 8:00 The Rake's Progress Stravinsky</p>	<p>Wednesday, October 19, 7:30 Manon Lescaut Puccini</p>
<p>Monday, September 19, 8:00 Maometto II Rossini</p>	<p>Wednesday, October 5, 8:00 Der Fliegende Holländer Wagner Martin, Young; Van Dam, Ochman, Koptchak Kaltenbach/Calábria/Ponnelle/Halmen/ Munn</p>	<p>Friday, October 21, 8:00 Così fan tutte Mozart Csavlek, Montague, Rolandi; Gulyás, Dickson, Capecchi Bradshaw/Gleue/Ponnelle/Munn</p>
<p>Wednesday, September 21, 7:30 L'Africaine Meyerbeer</p>	<p>Thursday, October 6, 7:30 Maometto II Rossini</p>	<p>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></p>
<p>Friday, September 23, 8:00 The Rake's Progress Stravinsky</p>	<p>Friday, October 7, 8:00 Der Fliegende Holländer Wagner Martin, Young; Van Dam, Ochman, Koptchak Kaltenbach/Calábria/Ponnelle/Halmen/ Munn</p>	<p>Sunday, October 23, 2:00 Der Fliegende Holländer Wagner Larson, Young; Van Dam, Ochman, Koptchak Kaltenbach/Calábria/Ponnelle/Halmen/ Munn</p>
<p>Saturday, September 24, 8:00 L'Africaine Meyerbeer</p>	<p>Saturday, October 8, 8:00 Così fan tutte Mozart Csavlek, Montague*, Rolandi; Gulyás, Dickson, Krause Bradshaw/Gleue*/Ponnelle/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></p>	
<p>Sunday, September 25, 2:00 Maometto II Rossini</p>		

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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

Wednesday, November 2, 7:00
Parsifal Wagner

Thursday, November 3, 7:30
Così fan tutte Mozart

Friday, November 4, 8:00
Manon Lescaut Puccini

Sunday, November 6, 1:00
Parsifal Wagner

Tuesday, November 8, 7:00
Parsifal Wagner

Wednesday, November 9, 7:30
Manon Lescaut Puccini

Saturday, November 12, 8:00
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

Wednesday, November 16, 7:30
La Bohème Puccini
Freni, Pacetti; Pavarotti, G. Quilico,
Dickson, Ghiaurov, Tajo, Harper, Coles
Severini**/Zambello/Mitchell/Button/
Munn
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in memory of George L. Quist; revival made
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Saturday, November 19, 1:00
La Bohème Puccini

Saturday, November 19, 8:00
Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk Shostakovich

Sunday, November 20, 1:30
La Gioconda Ponchielli
Marton, Ciurca, Nadler; Polozov*,
Ophof, Giaiotti, Irmiter*, Petersen,
Pittsinger
Kord/Ewers*/Brown/Munn/Sulich
*Production originally made possible by a
friend of the San Francisco Opera and the
San Francisco Opera Guild.*

Monday, November 21, 8:00
Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk Shostakovich

Tuesday, November 22, 8:00
La Bohème Puccini

Wednesday, November 23, 7:30
La Gioconda Ponchielli

Friday, November 25, 8:00
Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk Shostakovich

Saturday, November 26, 8:00
La Bohème Puccini

Sunday, November 27, 1:30
La Gioconda Ponchielli

Tuesday, November 29, 8:00
La Bohème Puccini

Wednesday, November 30, 7:30
Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk Shostakovich

Thursday, December 1, 7:30
La Gioconda Ponchielli

Friday, December 2, 8:00
La Bohème Puccini

Saturday, December 3, 7:30
La Gioconda Ponchielli

Sunday, December 4, 2:00
Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk Shostakovich

Tuesday, December 6, 7:30
La Gioconda Ponchielli

Thursday, December 8, 7:30
La Bohème Puccini

Friday, December 9, 8:00
La Bohème Puccini
Gasdia*, de la Rosa; Lima, Malis,
Delavan, Langan, Tajo, Harper, Coles
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Saturday, December 10, 1:00
Family Matinee
La Bohème Puccini
Hartliep, Williams; Wunsch, Ledbetter,
Potter, Skinner, Travis, Harper, Coles
Fiore/Zambello/Mitchell/Button/ Munn

Saturday, December 10, 7:30
La Gioconda Ponchielli

Sunday, December 11, 2:00
La Bohème Puccini
(Same cast as December 9)

** American opera debut
* San Francisco Opera debut

All performances are in the original language with English Supertitles. Supertitles for *L'Africaine*, *The Rake's Progress*, *Maometto II*, *Manon Lescaut*, *Parsifal*, *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, *La Bohème* and *La Gioconda* provided by a generous and most appreciated gift from William and Eloise Rollnick. *Così fan tutte* supertitles underwritten through a generous grant from American Express. Supertitles for *Der Fliegende Holländer* are underwritten through a grant from Pacific Gas and Electric Company.

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Wednesday, December 7 at 1:00

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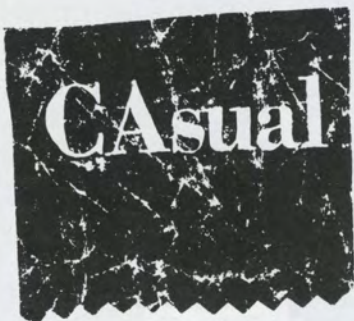
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The Unmaking of

By RICHARD TARUSKIN

Although it is by no means frequently performed, *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District* is one of the most famous operas of the 20th century. Everyone knows it as the opera Stalin hated and for many of us that already seems a good reason to love it, sound unheard. Once the sounds are heard, though, things become less simple. One cannot come to terms with this opera without pain. Confronting it means staring long and hard at some of the ghastliest aspects of life in our ghastly century, and in the end one is not

consoled by what one has learned. An audience willing to put up with such an ordeal already deserves congratulations. And it deserves to be told the whole story—or as much of it as can fit within a program book.

* * *

The tale must begin with some literary background. For a 19th-century author, one sure-fire device for exposing social ills was that of placing a sweet innocent amid injustice and corruption and thus condemn the environment by

contrast. By Charlie Chaplin's day a hackneyed formula that could be redeemed only by farce, in its prime it had motivated works of utmost seriousness (where would Dickens have been without it?). And though it was usually accomplished by transparent contrivance, it fueled the whole movement known as "realism."

The classic example of this maneuver in Russian literature was Alexander Ostrovsky's drama *The Storm*, first performed in 1859 and published the next year in the pages of "The Muscovite" (*Moskvityanin*), one of those legendary "thick journals" at the crossroads of literature, philosophy, and politics, around which the 19th-century Russian intelligentsia led its busy life of the mind. Several operas have been based on it; San Francisco operagoers are likely to remember the one by Janáček, entitled *Káťa Kabanová*, first mounted here in 1977. Ostrovsky's heroine Katerina Kabanova, the wife of a merchant in an unnamed Volga town, is a sensitive, poetic individual, stifling in the prison-like atmosphere of her husband's family, formidably personified by her badgering mother-in-law. She becomes infatuated with another man, gives in to her passion during her husband's absence on a business trip, is forced by conscience to confess, and is driven by her shame to suicide. Her plight is symbolized most forcefully in the scene of her husband's departure, when, humiliated by her mother-in-law's insinuations and torn by her guilty forebodings, she insists upon swearing a hysterical oath of fidelity the audience knows she will be unable to keep. No one who has seen or read this harrowing scene can ever forget it; nor can one help sympathizing with Ostrovsky's unhappy adulteress, however one may



Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk was first seen at the San Francisco Opera in 1981, at which time Anja Silja portrayed Katerina; William Lewis was Sergei.

RON SCHERL PHOTOS

Lady Macbeth

feel about her crime.

Nor can anyone who has read Nikolai Dobrolyubov's famous critique of Ostrovsky's play—and this includes every educated Russian since 1860—think of Katerina without recalling the essay's title: "A Ray of Light in the Dark Kingdom." The precocious Dobrolyubov (1836-61), deified in the Soviet Union as a protorevolutionary "radical democrat," had previously interpreted the plays of Ostrovsky as a sustained yet hopeless invective against patriarchal merchant-class mores. He hailed *The Storm* for at last embodying, in Katerina's suicide, a gesture of protest against the "dark kingdom's" backward, oppressive structure, and a prophesy of its overthrow. For him—and, following him, for Soviet readers and writers—Katerina Kabanova was an early martyr of the revolution.

Of a wholly different order from "realistic" plays and novels, which embodied (or could be interpreted as embodying) themes of social protest, was another favorite 19th-century genre, the horror story. At the beginning of the century such tales generally concerned the supernatural. By century's end their subject matter had shifted to the opposite extreme: "naturalism," which is to say lurid yet minutely dispassionate descriptions of aberrant human behavior, crime and brutality viewed as if under the pathologist's microscope. Though it was part of the naturalist's technique to appear to take no sides, in fact the horror story did tend to condemn by implication those who upset the established order, be

it natural (as in, say, *Frankenstein* or *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*) or social (as in the novels of Zola). This genre had nothing to do with protest.

An early Russian classic of naturalism was Nikolai Leskov's famous "sketch" of ungovernable passion and mayhem, first published in 1865 in *Epokha*, Dostoevsky's own thick journal, under the title "The Lady Macbeth of Our District." On republication in book form, the district was specified—Mtsensk, in South-Central Russia (Oryol Province, a.k.a. Orel), about as close to the middle of nowhere as one could get in a country that had more "nowhere" than any other. The plot shares a number of striking surface features with Ostrovsky's *Storm*. The title character is another childless merchant wife named Katerina whose life is made miserable by a despotic in-law (in this case male) and who is left behind when her husband takes a business trip. In the grip of boredom and frustration she, too, takes a lover. But she does not confess. Rather, she is found out, and by none other than her strict and far from doting father-in-law. To avoid punishment, she murders him. Her husband returns. To avoid having to give up her lover, she murders again, this time with "an evil joy." She marries her lover Sergei (a clerk at the Ismailov mill), conceives his child, and inherits the family business. A complication arises when another heir to the Ismailov fortune unexpectedly surfaces in the person of her late husband's nephew, a saintly little child. To avoid losing her inheritance, she murders for the third time, "as though demons had broken loose from their chains." She and Sergei are apprehended *in flagrante* by a crowd of villagers returning from church (not the subtlest way of contriving a collision with the moral order but hair-raising in its

execution). They are sentenced to hard labor. By now, "light and darkness, good and evil, joy and boredom did not exist" for Katerina. On the way to Siberia, Sergei takes up with another woman. In a paroxysm of despair at losing him, Katerina murders yet again: she grabs her rival and jumps together with her off a ferry into the icy Volga, thus finally murdering herself.

The last glimpse Leskov affords us of his creation is one that likens her to a rapacious animal: "Katerina Lvovna appeared out of another wave, rose



Anja Silja in 1981 in the opera's final moments.

Richard Taruskin, a widely-published musicologist, is on the Music Faculty at U.C. Berkeley. His specialties include 19th-century Russian opera and the music of Stravinsky.

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almost to her waist above the water, hurled herself at Sonyetka like a big pike at a soft little perch and both of them went under." The end. And this was the beginning: "In our part of the world one sometimes comes across people of such character that one cannot recall them without a shudder even when many years have elapsed since the last encounter." One could hardly claim that Leskov had portrayed the monstrous protagonist of his tight-lipped little shocker with "sympathy," or sought to inspire anything of the kind in his reader.

* * *

And yet, that is just what Dmitri Shostakovich tried to do when, 65 years and an October Revolution later, he turned Leskov's sketch into his second—and, as things turned out, his last—opera. In an essay published in the program book for the first production, which had its premiere at the Leningrad Maly Theater on January 22, 1934, the 27-year-old composer made three startling assertions. First, "there is no work of Russian literature that more vividly or expressively characterizes the position of women in the old pre-revolutionary time" than Leskov's. But second, "Leskov, as a brilliant representative of pre-revolutionary literature, could not correctly interpret the events that unfold in his story." Therefore, wrote Shostakovich, his own task was clear: "...in every way to justify Katerina so that she would impress the audience as a positive character."

All this was in stark contrast to Leskov, who cast his story in dispassionate terms, on one level parodying the manner of what in Russia is known as a "procurator," an impartial court officer whose job it is to prepare summaries of evidence for criminal cases. Shostakovich passionately embraced the role of counsel for the defense. His strategy was to exonerate his heroine by indicting her environment, to turn her from sinner to martyr—or, in terms of Shakespearean imagery, from a Lady Macbeth into a Juliet or Desdemona. Here is how he made his case to the public, addressing them exactly as an attorney might address a jury in summation:

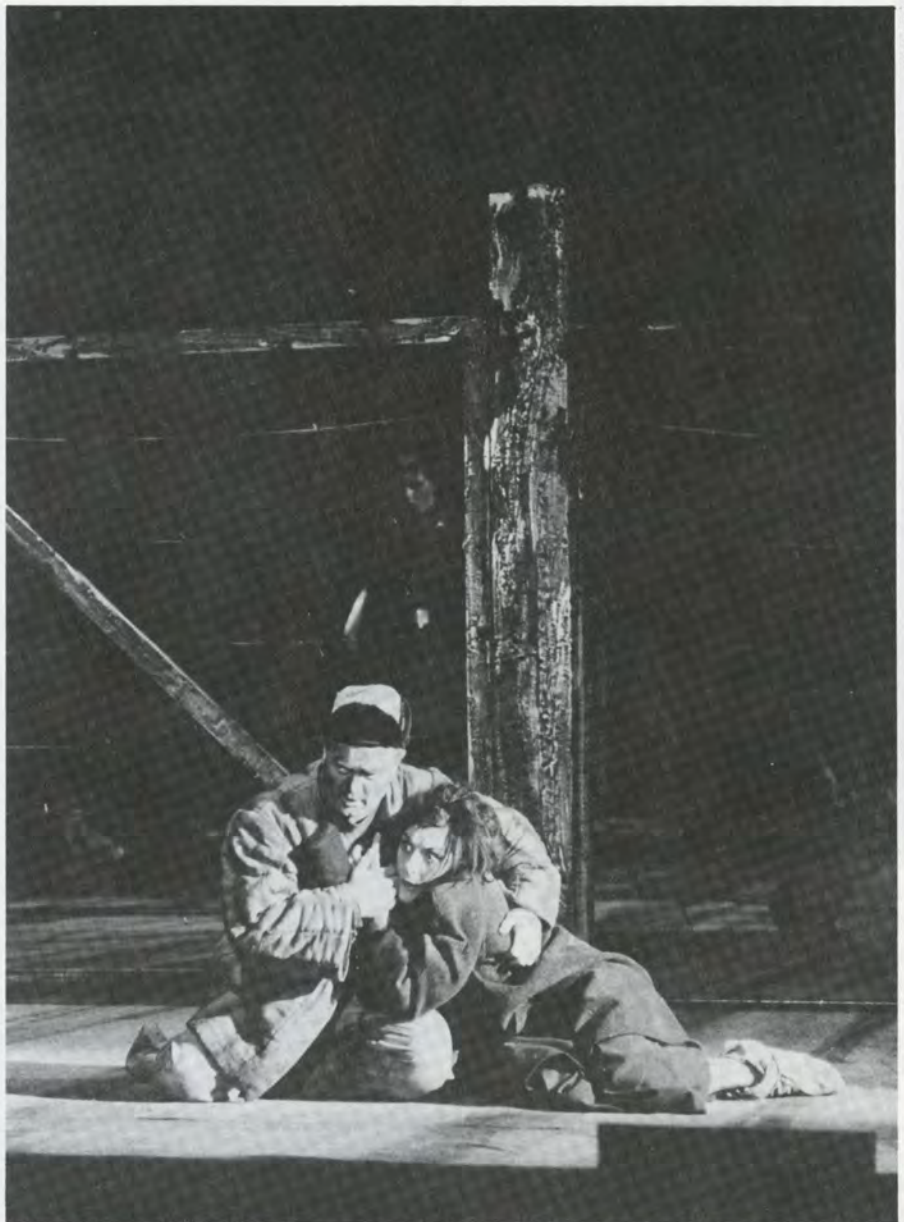
Katerina is an intelligent, talented and interesting woman. Owing to the nightmarish circumstances in which life has placed her, owing to the cruel, greedy, petty merchant environment

that surrounds her, her life has become sad, dull, gloomy. She does not love her husband, she has no joys, no consolations. And all at once there appears the foreman, Sergei ...

Intelligent, talented, interesting ... this is no Katerina Leskov would have recognized. But Ostrovsky would have known her; and as we read Shostakovich's essay and observe the events of her life as Shostakovich portrayed them, it gradually dawns that he has switched heroines on us. And further yet, that he has undertaken to turn Leskov's naturalistic horror

tale into a highminded realist tract. "It would be fairest of all," the composer wrote of his heroine, "to say that her crimes are a protest against the tenor of the life she is forced to live, against the dark and suffocating atmosphere of the merchant class in the last century." This goes beyond Ostrovsky, all the way to Dobrolyubov. And sure enough, Shostakovich does not fail to call his Katerina "a ray of light in the dark kingdom."

In the opera itself—not just in the composer's essay—the Ostrovsky/Dobrolyubov subtext is again brought right to the surface, when the whole husband's-



In San Francisco Opera's 1964 U.S. premiere of the revised version of the Shostakovich opera, titled *Katerina* Ismailova, Marie Collier portrayed the titular heroine; the role of Sergei was interpreted by Jon Vickers.

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departure episode from *The Storm* is transplanted into Leskov's plot at the end of the first scene. As Shostakovich recast it, together with his co-librettist Alexander Preis, the scene is much less subtle than in Ostrovsky. Now it is the evil in-law, not the heroine herself, who insists on the oath. And since it comes before the love intrigue has even begun unfolding, it carries no foreboding. Instead of revealing the heroine's fatal ambivalence, it merely intensifies what is already a heavy-handed portrayal of her oppression. Like everything else in the opera, it whitens Katerina by darkening the background.

But how white, finally, can she get? How dark must a kingdom be to turn a multiple murderess into a ray of light? What prompted such a bizarre reversal? How far can basic moral values be relativized? And how did Shostakovich hope to bring it off?

* * *

The how is easier to answer than the why, so let's begin there. Some of the systematic whitewashing of the title character—and the besmirching of her surroundings—Shostakovich himself describes. He eliminated whatever could not be rehabilitated in Leskov's portrayal of his heroine's behavior. This meant, above all, getting rid of the third of the original Katerina's murders; for, as Shostakovich rather exquisitely puts it, "the murder of a child, no matter how it may be explained, always makes a bad impression." What remained was freely altered so as to reserve the moral high ground for the heroine. Instead of being discovered by a group of religious villagers (with an upstanding engineer from St. Petersburg at their head), the operatic Katerina's crimes are detected by a "seedy lout" who stumbles upon the corpse of Katerina's husband when he breaks into the Ismailov storeroom to steal some vodka. He eagerly runs off to the local constabulary with the news, singing what Shostakovich, in conversation with the now-exiled Soviet soprano Galina Vishnevskaya, would characterize in later (post-Stalinist) years as "a hymn to all informers." In the next scene the police are portrayed as a venal, degenerate lot who spend their days persecuting "nihilists" instead of protecting the rights of citizens, and who are overjoyed to have a pretext to avenge themselves on Katerina Ismailova for not having invited them to her wedding. In an especially odious invention, Shostakovich

precedes the father-in-law's discovery of Katerina's adultery with a lecherous soliloquy in which the detestable old man declares his intention of seducing her himself. The only other figure of potential moral authority in the opera, the priest who is summoned to minister to the poisoned father-in-law, is portrayed even more cartoonishly than the police.

Merely to recite these unsubtle devices is to expose them. In cold verbal summary they do not and cannot make the case for Katerina as victim. Shostakovich knew this very well. "It would be fruitless to argue at length the ways I justify all these crimes," he wrote in his essay, "since the real justification is to be found in the musical material; for I consider that in an opera it is the music that plays the main, the leading, the decisive role." Of course it does, but only if the composer is equal to the task. Few composers have been as well equipped for it as Shostakovich. In his second opera he shows himself an authentic genius of the genre, fully able—like Verdi, like Wagner, like Mussorgsky—to create a world in tone that carries complete conviction. And he used his awesome powers to perpetrate a colossal moral inversion. It was possibly the most pernicious use to which music has ever been put, giving the eternal life to formalists who would deny music the ethical and expressive powers of which the ancients speak, and showing that in the hands of a genius the art of music is still the dangerous and potent thing about which Plato was the first to warn.

The composer maintains control over the emotional projection and reception of his opera's gruesome subject matter in two ways. First there are the overt editorials, in the form of five interludes connecting all scenes not bounded by intermissions. This kind of unmediated author's intervention was obviously something Shostakovich had learned from the third act of *Wozzeck* (performed in Leningrad in 1927, long before its migration westward), in which the composer, Alban Berg, had stepped in despotically to instruct the audience (in Joseph Kerman's words): "This is as he feels about the action, and this is as you too shall feel."

Thus one of Shostakovich's interludes tells us, after we have witnessed Katerina's little wrestling match with Sergei, and before their lovemaking, that her sexual drive has been mobilized, that it



When *Katerina Ismailova* was given at Milan's *La Scala*, in 1964, Inge Borkh was in the title role, with Dino Dondi as Boris. The opera was performed in Italian.

will liberate her, and that we are to rejoice at this. The interlude between the discovery of the corpse and the scene in the police station, a boorish if virtuosically sustained circus cancan, tells us just how we are to feel about Katerina's nemesis. The most forcible directive of this kind, and the one most directly reminiscent of *Wozzeck*, is the searing passacaglia between the two scenes of Act II—that is, between the two Ismailov murders—which bursts upon the farcical episode with the village priest like a howl of pain, and which seems to re-enact the catharsis Katerina inwardly experienced (but which

is never hinted at on stage) upon dispatching her hated father-in-law to the next world.

Yet devices like these, since they are overt, may be resisted. More insidious is Shostakovich's other method. Evoking a wealth of familiar musical genres, and invoking a bewilderingly eclectic range of styles, the composer makes sure that only one character is perceived by his audience as a human being. From the very first page in the score, Katerina's music is rhapsodic, soaring, and—most telling of all—endowed with the lyric intonations of Russian folk song. As the curtain rises to

reveal Katerina alone, lamenting her fate, the clarinet plays a characteristic cadential phrase that had been characterized as "the soul of Russian music" by Glinka, the first great Russian composer, a century earlier. Beyond that, Katerina's is the only music in the opera that has emotional "life," as traditionally portrayed by composers in the heyday of romantic opera. Like the emotions themselves, it waxes and wanes; it has rhythmic and dynamic flexibility; it reaches climaxes. It sets out to move the listener, and it does so because the composer possessed the wherewithal to ensure that it accomplished that objective.

In total contrast, every other member of the cast is portrayed as sub-human. The police, the priest, the "seedy lout," and other minor characters are presented as repulsive caricatures, their music reeking of operetta, of the music hall, of military bands and circus parades at their most trivial. The orchestral *ritornello* that precedes each stanza of the "police station waltz" is the most conspicuous reversion to the brash "wrong-note" vein so familiar from Shostakovich's earlier music, like the notorious polka from the *Age of Gold* ballet, where it had caricatured top-hatted capitalists. The priest, officiating over the last rites for Katerina's first victim, is too dim-witted even for wrong notes: he lapses into a polka of his own, all the more absurd because all its notes are "right." When Katerina's father-in-law—usually painted in the darkest orchestral hues and the ugliest, most distorted harmonies—muses lecherously right before discovering her adultery, he does so to the incongruous strains of a Viennese waltz. The seedy lout's solo scene has to be the most brazen piece of bordello trash ever authored by a "serious" composer.

Most effective of all, though, is Shostakovich's way of accompanying the singing, and above all, the movements of all figures except Katerina with trudging or galloping *ostinati*—inflexibly rigorous rhythmic pulsations that characterize them one and all as soulless, insensate automatons, comic-book creatures, incapable of either experiencing or inspiring an emotional response of any kind. This applies even to the chorus, the "people," who are represented in this opera as a cynical, apathetic and (in the last scene) downright heartless mob.

The technique of dehumanization operates at its most insidious in the scene which portrays the murder of Zinovy



Tenor William Lewis, who portrays Zinovy in this season's staging of *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, was seen in the role of Sergei in S.F. Opera's 1981 presentation of the same work.

the tale into one of class warfare. Katerina's victims were class enemies, creatures at a lower stage of historical development than she, and she had every right, sanctioned by the inexorable laws of historical materialism, to eliminate them. "Yes, she kills, and kills again," wrote Pyotrovsky, who would shortly collaborate with Shostakovich on the ill-fated ballet *The Limpid Stream*, and who shortly afterwards would perish in one of the early Stalin purges. Shostakovich, he would have us believe, "has created the seemingly paradoxical figure of the innocent murderess, a criminal of romantic purity. This he does, not in a spirit of humanitarian forgiveness, but rather by means of a wide-ranging, acute analysis of the social reality that surrounds his Katerina."

It was this kind of "analysis" that was being advanced, even as Shostakovich was writing his opera, in defense of the lawless extermination of the "kulaks," peasants who were resisting forced collectivization in the brutal period of the first Five-Year Plan. It was a time of hideous moral inversions in all walks of Soviet life, when the high tide of Stalinism was coming in and the basest atrocities were being justified in the name of the loftiest humanitarian ideals. It was in the year *Lady Macbeth* was completed that little Pavlik Morozov, a well-indoctrinated "pioneer" from a farm near Sverdlovsk, denounced his parents to the secret police as "enemies of the people." Lynched by an outraged mob of peasants, he became a Soviet saint (not to be de-canonized till the days of Gorbachev). Shostakovich's Katerina was a heroine of similar stripe. His opera is a faithful reflection of that abominable time, and a memento of it.

* * *

In one way, and one way only, Shostakovich was entirely faithful to Leskov; and that was in his shockingly naturalistic portrayal of Katerina's sexual passion. It is lust, pure and simple, that he portrays; it is ignited by rape; and it turns Katerina into a love-slave (quite giving the lie to the oft-repeated myth that she is a liberated, aggressive woman in an age of feminine passivity, and that her audacity is another justification for her crimes). The carnal

Borisovich, Katerina's husband. Up to now, his role in the opera has been a tiny one, confined to the first scene, and culminating in his departure. Shostakovich's music for Zinovy's farewell to Katerina, which parodies the style of a sentimental salon romance, had portrayed him (in contrast to his despicable father) as well-enough intentioned if ineffectual. Katerina, to say nothing of the audience, is given scant reason to hate him. How then is his murder "justified"? Strictly by the "musical material." The scene begins with Katerina and Sergei blissfully in bed, surrounded by the lushest, most lyrical orchestral music in the entire opera. Three times this mood is broken: first by Sergei himself (whose music gets more and more operetta-like as the opera approaches its final scene); second, by an apparition of the first victim; and third, by the off-stage approach of Zinovy, signalled by the use of a typically "trudging" ostinato. Once he arrives on stage, the trudge gives way, literally, to a gallop—that is, to that maddest of all 19th-century ballroom dances, the "galop," of which Shostakovich was the pre-eminent 20th-century master. The whole scene of confrontation and murder is played against its unremitting oompah.

The American composer Elliott Carter, who saw *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* in Germany in 1960, found this scene utterly baffling. "The relation of the music to the action is unaccountable," he thought, unable to comprehend the reason why Shostakovich would have "the heroine and her lover strangle her husband on a large stage-sized four-poster bed to a

lively dance tune." But by now the reason is clear enough: the dance tune is there to dehumanize the husband and mitigate the heroine's crime to one of cruelty to animals at worst.

* * *

Now why should Zinovy Borisovich be dehumanized? Nothing in the action of the opera condemns him morally. Unlike his father he has done nothing to hurt his wife. In fact, by the time of his murder, he has been far more sinned against than sinner. What condemns him is nothing more than the fact of his being a part of Katerina's hated environment. He is dehumanized and killed not for what he has done but for what he is. His status as beneficiary of the social system that oppressed his wife is enough to justify his "liquidation." All of this is conveyed to us by the music alone. Nor, carried away with that music, can we fail to be convinced.

And now we know why Shostakovich's opera was hailed by its earliest critics as such a praiseworthy advance over its literary source. For if—as Adrian Pyotrovsky, the Maly Theater dramaturg, put it in the program book to the premiere production—Leskov's story had been "a defense of resignation, a defense of self-denial and human endurance" by "the ideologist of patriarchal petty-bourgeois humility," Shostakovich had boldly exposed the "latent social truth" hidden within Leskov's naturalistic treatment of his subject and made it "profoundly realistic." Translating this into simpler Soviet language, Shostakovich had turned

theme is exaggerated in the opera beyond anything in Leskov, in fact. According to a number of émigré writers of variable reliability (they include Vishnevskaya as well as Solomon Volkov, the author of Shostakovich's purported "memoirs"), this preoccupation was an autobiographical reflection of the composer's tempestuous courtship of his first wife, to whom the opera would be dedicated. If that is so, she may have had a problem; for the musical terms in which Shostakovich couched his lovers will inevitably strike women today as insultingly androcentric. The rape music reaches its climax with an unmistakable *ejaculatio praecox*, followed by a leisurely detumescence. The salacious trombone glissandos that portray the behavior of Sergei's member achieved instant world fame when *Time* magazine dubbed them an exercise in "pornophony." Even before the first overt encounter with Sergei, moreover, Shostakovich's Katerina is shown to be obsessed with animal sex. Sitting by the window right before her future lover knocks at her door (his line to her—"Have you got anything to read?"—belongs with Siegfried's "Das ist kein Mann" in the annals of unintended operatic humor), she sings:

The foal runs after the filly.
 The tom-cat seeks the female,
 The dove hastens to his mate.
 But no one hurries to me.
 The wind caresses the birch-tree,
 And the sun warms it with its heat.
 For everyone there's a smile
 from somewhere.
 But no one will come to me.
 No one will put his hand round
 my waist,
 No one will press his lips to mine.
 No one will stroke my white breast,
 No one will tire me out with his
 passionate embraces . . .

These words have never been sung on stage in Russia. Along with a few other particularly crude or salty lines, they were censored from the libretto before the premiere and were also omitted from the score published in 1935. In their place, Shostakovich and Preis inserted a hymn to the joys of maternity and conjugal domestic bliss. The original text was imparted by Shostakovich years later to Vishnevskaya, who recorded the uncensored opera in London in 1979, with her husband Mstislav Rostropovich conducting. The recording, which circulated in the United States for several years on the

Angel label, is no longer in print.

Despite this precautionary self-censorship, there was more than enough left of an explicitly erotic character to scandalize a certain lapsed seminarian of the Georgian Orthodox Church, who decided to take in a performance of the chief ornament of the Soviet musical stage during the third year of its triumphant run. *Lady Macbeth* had already had 83 performances by the time Stalin saw it. The 84th was the last.

The immediate result of the dictator's indignation was the infamous *Pravda* editorial of 28 January 1936, "Muddle Instead of Music," which remains one of the great paradigmatic documents of the buffeting the arts have suffered in the great 20th-century totalitarian states. Its first target was the opera's obscurity:

The music croaks and hoots and snorts and pants in order to represent love scenes as naturally as possible. And "love" in its most vulgar form is daubed all over the opera. The merchant's double bed is the central point on the stage. On it all the "problems" are solved. . . . This glorification of merchant-class lasciviousness has been described by some critics as satire. But there can be no question of satire here. The author uses all the means at his disposal and his power of musical and dramatic expression to attract the sympathy of the spectators for the coarse and vulgar aims and actions of the merchant's wife, Katerina Ismailova. *Lady Macbeth* is popular among bourgeois audiences abroad. Is it not because the opera is so confused and so entirely free of political bias [!!] that it is praised by bourgeois critics? Is it not perhaps because it titillates the depraved tastes of bourgeois audiences with its witching, clamorous, neuras-thenic music?

This was only the launch-pad. Criticism next turned to the opera's style, the real "muddle instead of music." Its rhetoric notwithstanding, the article was the first conclusive indication that the arts policies of the Soviet state would be governed henceforth by the philistine petit-bourgeois taste of the only Soviet critic that mattered:

From the very first moment the audience is deafened by a purposely harsh and discordant stream of sounds. Fragments of melody, the

continued on p.64

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ARTIST PROFILES



JOSEPHINE BARSTOW

Soprano **Josephine Barstow** returns to San Francisco Opera to sing Katerina Ismailova in *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*. Renowned as a singing actress, Miss Barstow's performances of Katerina last year with the English National Opera met with outstanding critical acclaim. She last sang here in the Summer of 1984 as Rosalinde in *Die Fledermaus*, having made her Company debut in 1982 in the title role of *Salome*. Her American debut was in Miami as Lady Macbeth in Verdi's *Macbeth* and she performed the same role at the Lyric Opera of Chicago. Miss Barstow has won acclaim for her interpretations of many Verdi and Puccini heroines, as well as for her performances of Emilia Marty in *The Makropulos Case* and Leonore in *Fidelio*. She was chosen to appear in the world premieres of Tippett's *The Knot Garden* and *The Ice Break*, Henze's *We Come to the River* and Penderecki's *The Black Mask*. Her professional debut was as Mimi in *La Bohème* and she was made principal soprano at the Welsh National Opera for three years. Her roles there included Violetta in *La Traviata*, Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*, Amelia in *Simon Boccanegra*, Mimi, and the Countess in *The Marriage of Figaro*. In England, Miss Barstow has most recently sung in *Peter Grimes* at the Royal Opera Covent Garden. In May of 1986 she made her debut at the Bolshoi Opera and went on a tour of the USSR during which she sang in performances of *Tosca* and *Macbeth*. Last season Miss Barstow appeared in Paris and Munich as Verdi's Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*, at Boston Opera in the title role of *Medea* and at the Adelaide Festival in Prokofiev's *Fiery Angel*. Future engagements include the Marschallin in *Der Rosenkavalier* and Chrysothemis in *Elektra* for Houston Grand Opera, as well as the title role in *Tosca*, Amelia in *Un Ballo in Maschera* and Leonore in *Fidelio* at the Salzburg Festival under the baton of Herbert von Karajan. In February of 1985 she was made a



EMILY GOLDEN

Commander of the British Empire and in November of the same year was presented with the Fidelio Medal on behalf of the Association of International Opera Directors, one of only six awards of its kind ever granted.

After touring with Western Opera Theater in 1980 in the title role of *La Cenerentola* and as Prince Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus*, and singing Stephano in *Romeo and Juliet* with Spring Opera Theater in 1981, mezzo-soprano **Emily Golden** makes her San Francisco Opera debut as Sonyetka in *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*. The native New Yorker began her early musical training at the Juilliard School, and received her Bachelor of Music degree from the Manhattan School of Music. During the 1982-83 season, she made her debut with the Chicago Symphony under Georg Solti in a concert performance of *Das Rheingold*, and appeared in the Rossini Festival at Carnegie Hall in *La Donna del Lago* opposite Marilyn Horne. In subsequent seasons she made her Lyric Opera of Chicago and Spoleto USA debuts as Sonyetka, and appeared in the title role of *Carmen* in the famed Peter Brook adaptation which she performed throughout Europe and in New York. Orchestral debuts included the Verdi Requiem with the Milwaukee Symphony, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with the St. Louis Symphony, Octavian in *Der Rosenkavalier* with the New Jersey Symphony, Handel's *Messiah* with the Minneapolis Symphony, and Mahler's Eighth Symphony with the Columbus Symphony. Miss Golden made her debut at the Opéra de Nice in 1985 as Prince Orlofsky and that summer sang in the U.S. premiere of Sallinen's *The King Goes Forth to France* with the Santa Fe Opera. In the 1986-87 season she sang *Carmen* with the Scottish Opera and the Opera Theatre of St. Louis, and at the Washington Opera she appeared as Otta-

LADY MACBETH OF MTSENSK



EVELYN DE LA ROSA

via in Monteverdi's *The Coronation of Poppea* and as the Secretary in Menotti's *The Consul*, directed by the composer. Last season she sang Prince Orlofsky in Seattle, Nancy in Flotow's *Martha* in Baltimore, and made her Deutsche Oper Berlin debut as Jokasta in the world premiere of Wolfgang Rihm's *Oedipus*. This year she returns to Berlin as Countess Geschwitz in *Lulu*, the Composer in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, and makes her Buffalo Philharmonic debut in Rossini's *Stabat Mater* conducted by Semyon Bychkov.

Soprano **Evelyn de la Rosa** returns to San Francisco Opera to reprise the role of Aksinya in *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, and sing Musetta in *La Bohème*. Her first appearance with the Company was as the Celestial Voice in the 1979 production of *Don Carlo*, and she has since returned to San Francisco as Aksinya (1981), Berta in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* (Summer 1982), Clorinda in *La Cenerentola*, Chloe in *The Queen of Spades* and Susanna in the English-language performances of *The Marriage of Figaro* (Fall 1982), and Frasquita in *Carmen* (Summer 1983). A participant in the 1979 Merola Opera Program, she created the role of Dorine in American Opera Project's 1980 world premiere of Mechem's *Tartuffe*. In 1981 she appeared as Susanna with Spring Opera Theater and created the part of Diana in the world premiere of Henry Mollicone's *Emperor Norton* with Brown Bag Opera. As a participant in the 1982 Western Opera Theater tour, her assignments included Susanna in *Figaro* and Musetta in *La Bohème*. A native of Reno, Miss de la Rosa has performed frequently with the Nevada Opera, appearing in their productions of *The Magic Flute*, *Cinderella*, as Marie in *The Daughter of the Regiment* and as Marguerite in *Faust*. She has also appeared with the Houston Grand Opera in *Il*



SARA GANZ

Barbiere di Siviglia and as Constanze in *The Abduction from the Seraglio*; with the Anchorage Opera as Violetta in *La Traviata*; and at the Spoleto Festival USA as the Spinster in *Lord Byron's Love Letter*. Recent engagements include Adele in *Die Fledermaus* with Michigan Opera Theatre, Rosina in *The Barber of Seville* with Des Moines Opera, and appearances with the Sacramento Symphony, the San Diego Symphony, Mendocino Music Festival and Midsummer Music Festival. Future engagements include her debut at the Kennedy Center with the Washington Opera in Mozart's *The Impresario*, followed by her first *Manon* with Sacramento Opera.

Soprano **Sara Ganz** returns to San Francisco Opera as the Female Convict in *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*. She was first heard with San Francisco Opera as Jano in *Jenůfa* during the 1980 season, and has since appeared here in *Rigoletto*, *Manon* and *The Merry Widow*. During the 1987 season she sang Annina in the family performances of *La Traviata*. As a member of the 1980 Merola Opera Program, she performed in *La Rondine* and *Albert Herring*, and received a Merola Fund Award in the Grand Finals of the San Francisco Opera Auditions. She has toured with Western Opera Theater as Adina in *The Elixir of Love*, Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet*, and made her Spring Opera debut as Wanda in *The Grand Duchess of Gerolstein*. Miss Ganz has appeared as Norina in *Don Pasquale* in Green Bay, Adina with the California Coast Opera, Nella in *Gianni Schicchi* with San Antonio Opera, and Gretel in *Hansel and Gretel* with the Opera Guild of Southern California. With Donald Pippin's Pocket Opera, she has sung Susanna in *The Marriage of Figaro*, Zerline in *Fra Diavolo*, and has specialized in the works of Handel and Offenbach. During her first six seasons at the Carmel Bach Festival, she was heard as Marzelline in *Fidelio*, Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*, Despina in *Così fan tutte* and Papagena in *The Magic Flute*, as well as in oratorio and cantata



JACQUE TRUSSEL

assignments. A versatile concert artist, she has appeared with the Pasadena, Sacramento, Stockton, and Marin symphony orchestras, the Pasadena Chamber Orchestra and the California Bach Society. She has been winner in the Metropolitan Opera Auditions and the International Concours in Geneva, Switzerland. For the 1986-87 season, Miss Ganz served as Artist-in-Residence at the University of North Carolina.

American tenor **Jacque Trussel** is Sergei in *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*. He has performed in the same work with the Lyric Opera of Chicago, the Festival of Two Worlds in both Spoleto and Charleston, and San Francisco Opera, where he sang the role of Zinovy Borisovich in the 1981 Fall Season. He also performed the role of Sergei in a new staging at the English National Opera during the 1986-87 season, a production that was televised by the BBC. A native of San Francisco, Trussel was last heard here as Edmund in the 1985 revival of Reimann's *Lear*, the vehicle of his 1981 Company debut. For Spring Opera Theater's 1973 *Carmen*, he first performed the role of Don José, which he went on to sing with Houston Grand Opera, New York City Opera (including a Live from Lincoln Center telecast), Welsh National Opera and Vancouver Opera (also telecast on the CBC). Other companies with which he has sung include the Opera Company of Boston, the Dallas Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Philadelphia Lyric Opera and the companies of Baltimore and Fort Worth. He opened the inaugural season of Spoleto USA as Gherman in *The Queen of Spades*, a role in which he had won acclaim in Spoleto and subsequently sang in Ottawa. Trussel made his San Diego debut in the American premiere of Saint-Saëns's *Henry VIII* during the 1982-83 season, and has also appeared in the world premieres of Floyd's *Bilby's Doll* and Pasatieri's *The Seagull*, as well as the American premiere of Vaughan Williams's *Hugh the Drover*. He performs frequently with New York City Opera,



WILLIAM LEWIS

where he has been featured in new productions of *Der Freischütz*, *L'Amore dei Tre Re* and *Tosca*. Last season he won critical acclaim in the title role of *Peter Grimes* at the Maggio Musicale in Florence and another staging in his debut at the Royal Opera House at Covent Garden. He also returned to the Lyric Opera of Chicago as Alwa in *Lulu*, a role he also sang at the Bavarian State Opera in Munich the previous season. His repertoire also embraces works of musical theater and operetta, including *The Student Prince* for New York City Opera, the role of Danilo in *The Merry Widow* in Houston and San Diego, and Gaylord Ravenal in *Showboat*, a role he sang on a national tour by Houston Grand Opera. His busy concert schedule has included guest appearances with the Chicago Symphony, the Philadelphia Orchestra, Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Concertgebouw Orchestra, and the symphonies of San Francisco and St. Louis.

Tenor **William Lewis** sings the role of Zinovy in *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*. Since his Company debut in the dual roles of Erik and the Steersman in the 1975 Jean-Pierre Ponnelle production of *The Flying Dutchman*, the American singer has been applauded in over a dozen San Francisco Opera productions, appearing in such diverse roles as Frank Sargent in the world premiere of Imbrie's *Angle of Repose* (1976), Matteo in *Arabella* (1980), Golitsin in *Khovanshchina* (1984), and three roles in 1981: Kent in the American premiere of Reimann's *Lear*, the title role of *Le Cid* and Sergei in *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*. He has also appeared here in three Janáček operas, portraying Albert Gregor in *The Makropulos Case* (1976), Boris in *Katya Kabanova* (1977) and Števa in *Jenůfa* (1980). He was most recently seen here as Loge in the 1985 festival production of Wagner's *Ring* cycle. Lewis made his 1958 Metropolitan Opera debut as Narraboth in *Salome*, becoming the youngest tenor ever to appear in a leading role at the Met. Since that time, he has been a regular at



MICHAEL DEVLIN

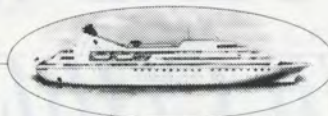
the Metropolitan, appearing in numerous roles including Aeneas in *Les Troyens*, Roméo in *Roméo et Juliette*, Arrigo in *I Vespri Siciliani*, Gherman in *The Queen of Spades*, Hoffmann in *The Tales of Hoffmann*, Alwa in *Lulu*, and the title roles of *Idomeneo* and *Oedipus Rex*. He made his Covent Garden debut during the 1982-83 season in *Simon Boccanegra* and *Hoffmann*, and has appeared at the Vienna State Opera as Don José in *Carmen*; at the Paris Opera as Oedipus; in Hamburg as Alwa under Christoph von Dohnányi; at La Scala in Milan as Aron in *Moses und Aron* and Oedipus Rex; and in Cologne in *The Queen of Spades*, *Moses und Aron* and *Ariadne auf Naxos*. He sings regularly at the Salzburg Festival, where he recently appeared as Idomeneo and Hoffmann, roles he also performed in Venice and Florence, respectively. Last season, he sang the title role in the world premiere of Testi's *Riccardo III* at La Scala, an assignment he repeated this spring in Turin. A native of Tulsa, Oklahoma, Lewis has recently become a resident of Lake Tahoe, where he is artistic director of The American Opera Festival of the Sierra. He has also branched out into stage directing, having directed (and sung the leading roles) in *Peter Grimes* for the Opera Company of Philadelphia, and *Carmen* for the Oakland Opera.

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

continued on p.45

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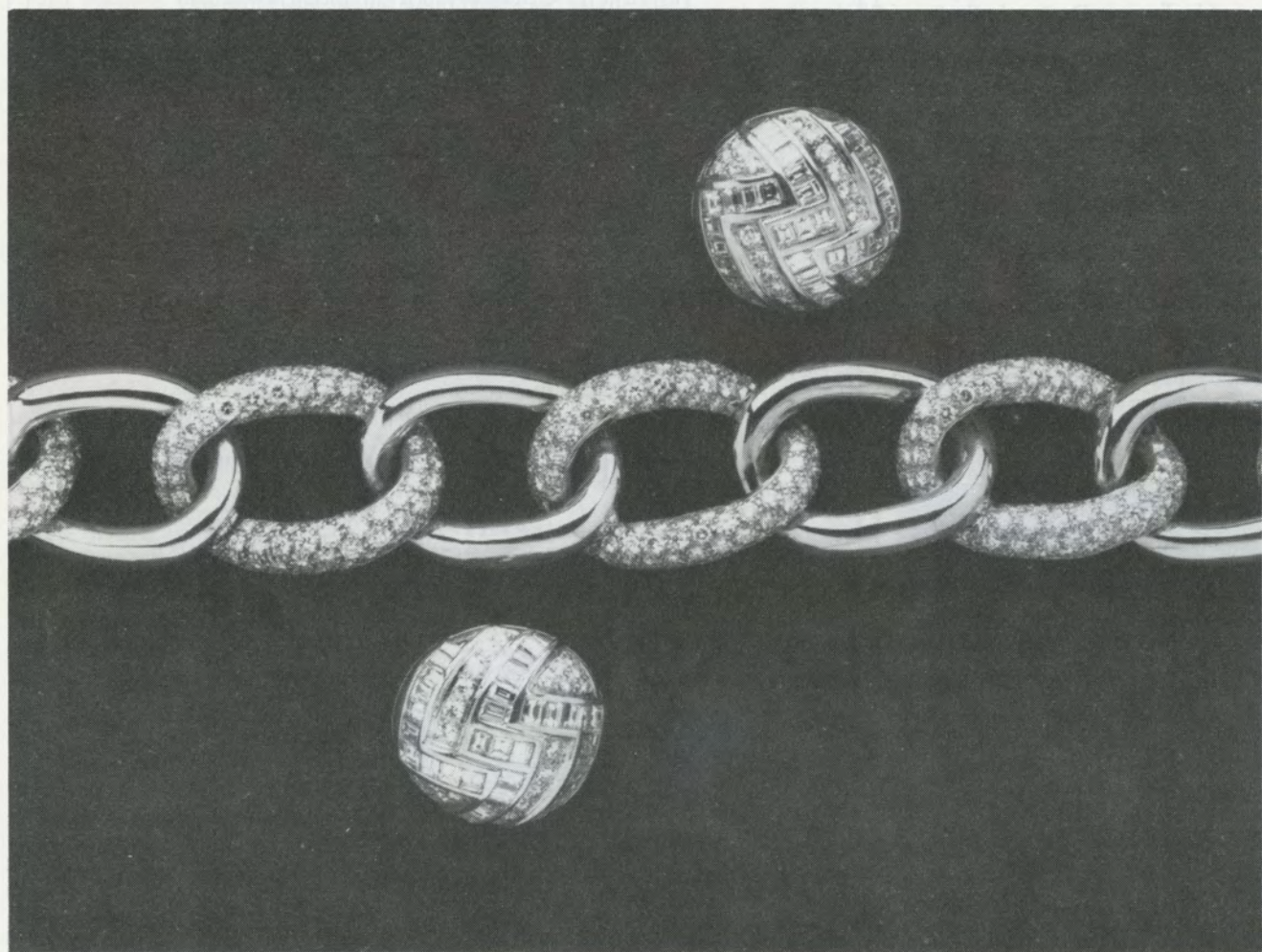
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San Francisco Opera gratefully acknowledges a gift from Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Tilton toward this revival of *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*

Opera in three acts by DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH

Libretto by ALEXANDER PREIS and the composer

After the story by Nikolai Leskov

(Used by arrangement with G. Schirmer, Inc., sole U.S. agent for Musikverlag Hans Sikorski, Hamburg)

Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk

(in Russian)

Conductor

John Pritchard
Ian Robertson (December 4)

Stage Director

Gerald Freedman

Designer

Wolfram Skalicki

Lighting Designer

Thomas J. Munn

Chorus Director

Ian Robertson

Musical Preparation

Susanna Lemberskaya

Mark Haffner

Ian Robertson

Richard Amner

Prompter

Jonathan Khuner

Assistant Stage Director

Paula Williams

Stage Manager

Jerry Sherk

Scenery constructed in

San Francisco Opera Scenic Studios

Costumes executed by

San Francisco Opera Costume Shop

Miss Barstow's costumes designed by

Lawrence Casey

Baldwin organ provided courtesy of

Baldwin Piano & Organ Center,

Santa Clara, California

First performance:

Leningrad, January 22, 1934

First San Francisco Opera performance:

September 19, 1981

(Revised version, Katerina Ismailova,
received its American premiere at San
Francisco Opera on October 23, 1964)

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 12 AT 8:00

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 19 AT 8:00

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 21 AT 8:00

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 25 AT 8:00

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 30 AT 7:30

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 4 AT 2:00

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 and one-half hours.

CAST

<i>Katerina Lvovna Ismailova,</i> <i>wife of Zinovy Borisovich</i>	Josephine Barstow
<i>Boris Timofeyevich Ismailov,</i> <i>a merchant</i>	Michael Devlin
<i>Zinovy Borisovich Ismailov,</i> <i>his son</i>	William Lewis
<i>A millhand</i>	Mark Coles
<i>Sergei, a new hired hand</i>	Jacque Trussel
<i>Aksinya, a maid</i>	Evelyn de la Rosa
<i>A coachman</i>	Kevin Anderson
<i>The village drunk</i>	Dennis Petersen
<i>A porter</i>	Valery Portnov
<i>A shop man</i>	Raymond Murcell
<i>First foreman</i>	Gerald Johnson
<i>Second foreman</i>	James Croom
<i>Third foreman</i>	Kenneth Rafanan
<i>A priest</i>	Philip Skinner
<i>The police inspector</i>	Dale Travis
<i>A policeman</i>	Cameron Henley
<i>A local nihilist</i>	Paul Gudas
<i>An old convict</i>	James Patterson
<i>A sentry</i>	Thomas Potter
<i>Sonyetka, a convict</i>	Emily Golden*
<i>A female convict</i>	Sara Ganz
<i>An officer</i>	Mark Delavan
<i>A drunken guest</i>	James Croom
<i>Laborers, policemen, wedding guests, convicts</i>	

*San Francisco Opera debut

TIME AND PLACE: Mid-19th-century Russia

ACT I *Scene 1:* The bedroom of Katerina Lvovna
Scene 2: The courtyard of the Ismailov house
Scene 3: The millyard of the Ismailov house
Scene 4: The bedroom of Katerina Lvovna

INTERMISSION

ACT II *Scene 1:* The courtyard of the Ismailov house
Scene 2: The bedroom of Katerina Lvovna
Scene 3: The courtyard, near the cellar entrance
Scene 4: The district police station
Scene 5: The wedding party

INTERMISSION

ACT III On the banks of a river in Siberia

Supertitles for *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* provided by a generous
and most appreciated gift from William and Eloise Rollnick.

Supertitles by Christopher Bergen, San Francisco Opera.

Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk/Synopsis

ACT I

Scene 1—Katerina, the wife of the rich merchant Zinovy Ismailov, is bored and depressed sitting around the house with nothing to do. Her father-in-law, Boris, berates her for not producing a child after four years of marriage.

Scene 2—Zinovy must go away on business, and Boris makes Katerina take an oath on an icon promising to be faithful to her husband.

Scene 3—The servants have cornered the buxom cook Aksinya and are amusing themselves by making ribald comments while grabbing and teasing her. Katerina puts an end to it and is soon introduced to the handsome new worker, Sergei, who has the reputation of being a great womanizer. He squeezes her hand with such force that she pushes him away violently, but he challenges her to a wrestling match and throws her to the ground. Her father-in-law enters and threatens to tell his son everything.

Scene 4—Katerina feels lonely as she prepares for bed. Sergei knocks at her door on the pretext of borrowing a book. He recalls their playful wrestling and proposes a rematch. She protests, but when he seizes her in an embrace, her resistance slowly subsides and they fall into each other's arms.

ACT II

Scene 1—Unable to sleep, Boris prowls the millyard. He sees a light in Katerina's window and catches her saying goodbye to Sergei, who has been her lover for a week. Boris catches Sergei and calls in the other workers. Punishing the "thief," he whips Sergei until he draws blood. Katerina rushes to defend Sergei, who is subsequently locked in the storeroom. When Boris demands that Katerina fix him some of his favorite mushrooms, she puts rat poison in them. A priest is summoned as Boris dies in terrible spasms, declaring that his death is not natural and pointing to his daughter-in-law, but the crowd thinks he is raving in a delirium.

Scene 2—After making love, Katerina promises Sergei that she will make him a merchant and marry him. As he falls asleep, she sees

the ghost of her father-in-law, who accuses her of murder and curses her forever. Katerina's husband returns and interrupts the love idyll. Sergei hides, but Zinovy notices his belt. He accuses Katerina of infidelity and begins beating her. As Zinovy starts to call the villagers, Katerina pushes him to the ground and, with Sergei's help, strangles him. They hide his body in the cellar.

Scene 3—A drunken peasant who has seen Katerina standing by the cellar door breaks in to taste the vodka he believes is stashed there. He smells a terrible odor and discovers Zinovy's rotting body.

Scene 4—At the police station, the policemen complain of their lot: no graft and nothing to do. They are annoyed at not having been invited to the wedding of Katerina and Sergei. As they are taunting the local teacher about his nihilism, the peasant staggers in and announces he has found a corpse in the Ismailov cellar. The police are delighted at this pretext to attend the wedding feast.

Scene 5—The guests toast the bridal pair. Katerina notices that the lock to the cellar has been broken and, panic-stricken, suggests to Sergei that they flee. But it is too late. As the policemen arrive, Katerina confesses and begs forgiveness of Sergei, who is led away with her.

ACT III

A column of convicts, among them Katerina and Sergei, are being marched through Siberia. They stop for the night on the banks of a river. By bribing a sentry, Katerina is able to approach Sergei on the men's side of the compound. Tired of her, he accuses her of ruining his life. He moves toward a pretty young convict, Sonyetka, who asks him to prove his avowal of love by getting her some new woolen stockings. He cajoles Katerina into giving him hers to protect his legs bruised by the iron fetters. When she sees him giving them to Sonyetka, she tries to rush at him, but is stopped by the women convicts, who jeer at her for her hopeless passion. In despair, Katerina pushes Sonyetka off the bridge and then throws herself into the river and drowns.

Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk

Photos taken in rehearsal by Marty Sohl



Josephine Barstow



Josephine Barstow



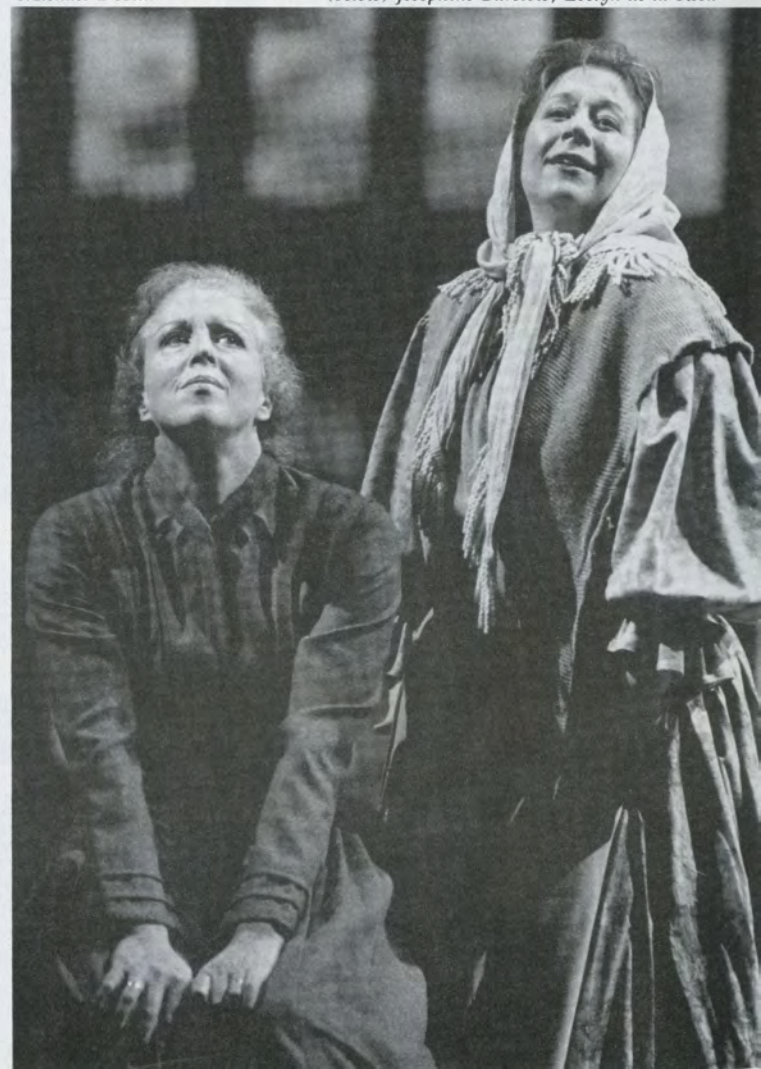
Michael Devlin



*Paul Gudas (seated), Dale Travis, Cameron Henley,
Members of the San Francisco Opera Chorus*



Josephine Barstow, Michael Devlin, William Lewis



(below) Josephine Barstow, Evelyn de la Rosa



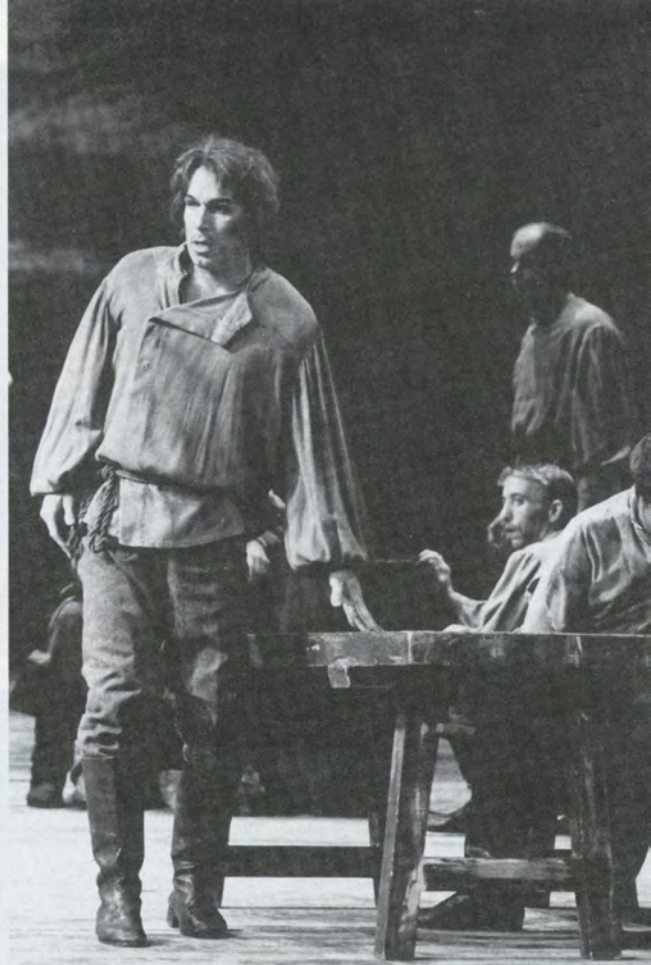
Philip Skinner, Members of the San Francisco Opera Chorus



James Patterson, Mark Delavan, Josephine Barstow



William Lewis, Mark Coles, Michael Devlin



Jacque Trussel

(below) Jacque Trussel, Josephine Barstow

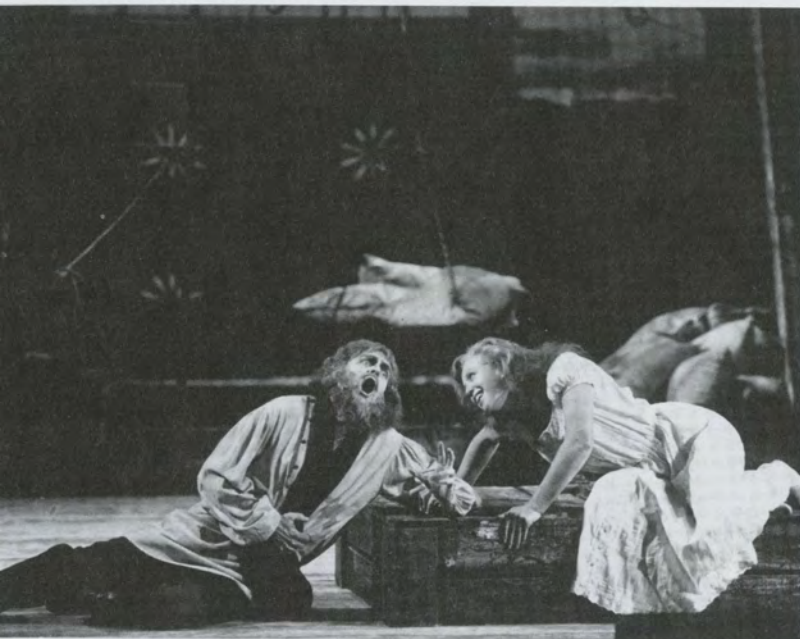




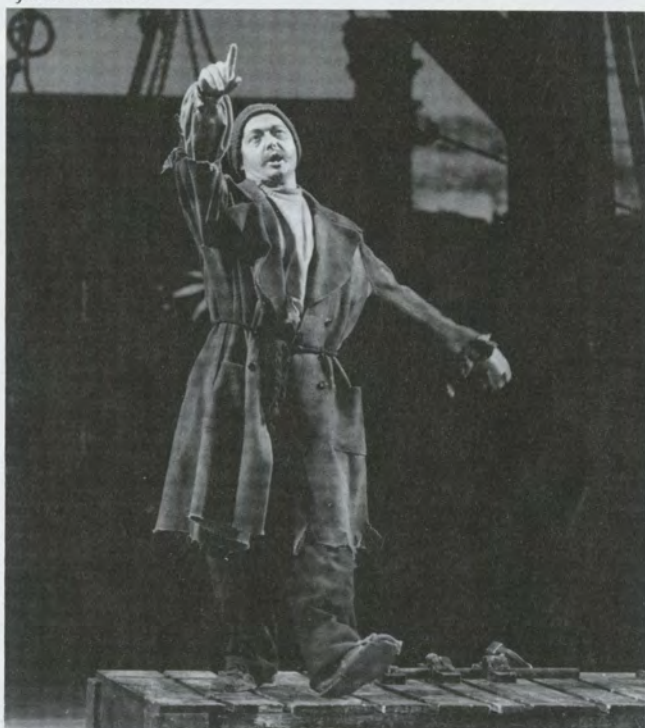
Josephine Barstow, Michael Devlin



James Patterson



Michael Devlin, Josephine Barstow



Dennis Petersen

(below) Emily Golden



Michael Devlin, Philip Skinner, Josephine Barstow





JAMES PATTERSON

continued from p.37

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

Bass **James Patterson** sings Trulove in *The Rake's Progress*, Titurel in *Parsifal*, and the Old Convict in *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*. He was last seen as the Marchese di Calatrava in *La Forza del Destino* and Hans Schwarz in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* during the 1986 Fall Season. During the 1985 Fall Season, Patterson performed four roles: The King of France in *Lear*, Johann in *Werther*, Tommaso in *Un Ballo in Maschera* and the Police Commissioner in *Der Rosenkavalier*. A graduate of the 1982 Merola Opera Program and a 1983-84 Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, he appeared in productions of *Rigoletto* and *The Magic Flute*, and went on to portray Sparafucile in Western Opera Theater's 1982 touring production of *Rigoletto*. He was heard in Opera Center Showcase productions of *L'Ormino* and *The Rape of Lucretia* in 1983, and for the 1984 Showcase was Osmin in *The Abduction from the Seraglio*. Since his Company debut as a Customhouse Guard in the 1983 Summer Season production of *La Bohème*, he has sung nearly 20 roles here, including Fafner in *Das Rheingold* and *Siegfried* during the 1985 Ring Festival.

1988 Season



DALE TRAVIS

During the 1986-87 season, Patterson sang the role of Rocco in concert performances of *Fidelio* with the New Jersey Symphony and appeared with the San Jose Symphony in the Beethoven *Missa Solemnis*. He also portrayed Sarastro in *The Magic Flute* with the New Orleans Opera, Dr. Bartolo in *Le Nozze di Figaro* with the Vancouver Opera and appeared in *Aida* and *Hamlet* with the Greater Miami Opera. Last January, he made his Lyric Opera of Chicago debut in *Tosca*. Other recent appearances include the world premiere of David Diamond's *A Song of Hope* in New York, Sarastro with Seattle Opera and Colline in *La Bohème* with Opera Hamilton.

Bass **Dale Travis** makes his Company debut as the Warden in *The Rake's Progress*, and will also appear in *Manon Lescaut* as a Sergeant, in *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* as the Police Inspector and in the Student/Family production of *La Bohème* as Benoit and Alcindoro. Currently an Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, he was a member of the 1986 and '87 Merola Opera Program and toured with Western Opera Theater for two seasons, performing in *Don Pasquale* and *La Bohème*, a production which also traveled to China. Travis is originally from New Jersey and has attended Susquehanna University and the University of Cincinnati's College Conservatory of Music. His college credits include roles in *The Secret Marriage*, *Don Giovanni*, *Falstaff*, *Gianni Schicchi* and *The Love for Three Oranges*. He has appeared locally in the title role of *Don Pasquale* with Opera San Jose, as Méphistophélès in *Faust* with Marin Opera and as Mr. Bluff in *The Impresario* with the Opera Center at Chalk Hill Winery.

American tenor **Dennis Petersen** is a Dancing Master in *Manon Lescaut*, the Village Drunk in *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, and Isèpo in *La Gioconda*. He made his Company debut during the 1985 Season, appearing in five productions—*Adriana Lecouvreur*, *Werther*, *Falstaff*, *Un Ballo in Maschera* and *Der Rosenkavalier*—and returned in the summer of 1986 for *Il*



DENNIS PETERSEN

Trovatore. During the 1986 season, he was heard in *Le Nozze di Figaro* and *Die Meistersinger*; last year he sang in *Salome*, *Tosca*, *Roméo et Juliette* and *The Queen of Spades*. In January of 1987, Petersen made his debut with the Vancouver Opera in *Le Nozze di Figaro*. The spring of last year saw several debuts including Petersen's first Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte* with the Cedar Rapids Symphony in April; Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with the Fort Wayne Symphony; and Jacquino in *Fidelio* with the New Jersey Symphony and the Baltimore Symphony. Petersen has been an artist-in-residence at the University of Iowa, where he performed Alfredo in *La Traviata*. Earlier this year, he sang the Fox in Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen* in Vancouver, Jacquino in *Fidelio* with the New Jersey Symphony, Tamino in Cedar Rapids Symphony's *Magic Flute*, and the title role of Offenbach's *Christopher Columbus* with the Opera Ensemble of New York. Last February he was featured in the S.F. Opera Center's Schwabacher debut recital series in the Vorpál Gallery.

Bass-baritone **Philip Skinner** appears this fall as Don Diego in *L'Africaine*, a Sea Captain in *Manon Lescaut*, the Priest in *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, and Colline in the family performance of *La Bohème*. He made his San Francisco Opera debut as Quinault in the 1985 Fall Season production of *Adriana Lecouvreur*, and has since appeared in *Il Trovatore*, *Don Carlos*, *La Forza del Destino*, *Faust*, *Eugene Onegin*, *Macbeth*, *Salome*, *La Traviata*, *The Tales of Hoffmann* and *The Queen of Spades*. He participated in the 1985 Merola Opera Program and went on to tour with Western Opera Theater in the title role of *Don Giovanni*. In 1986, he appeared in the Opera Center's Showcase performances of Hindemith's *There and Back* and *The Long Christmas Dinner*. That same year, he was made an Adler Fellow and in 1987 appeared as the Colonel in the Showcase production of *Le Plumet du Colonel*. A graduate of Northwestern University, Skinner received his master's degree from Indiana University, where he performed in several productions. He has also sung



PHILIP SKINNER

with Kentucky Opera, the Columbus Symphony, the Savannah Symphony and at the San Antonio Festival in such roles as Timur and the Mandarin in *Turandot*, Escamillo in *Carmen*, Don Fernando in *Fidelio*, and the King of Egypt in *Aida*. His concert credits include Mozart's Requiem at the Midsummer Mozart Festival, Verdi's Requiem with the Masterworks Chorus, and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with the Vallejo and Santa Rosa Symphonies. Recent engagements include Don Basilio in *The Barber of Seville* with the New York City Opera National Company, Ferrando in *Il Trovatore* with Kentucky and Nashville Operas, and appearances with the Atlanta Opera, Edmonton Opera, and at the Spoleto Festival. Skinner will make his Minnesota Orchestra debut this December in Handel's *Messiah*.



MARK COLES

Bartered Bride, *Susannah*, and most recently *Of Mice and Men* with the Chicago Opera Theater. He was also heard in Chicago Symphony performances of *La Traviata*, *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges* and in excerpts of *Die Meistersinger*. In 1975 Gudas made his debut with the Zurich Opera in *My Fair Lady*, singing there for three years in a variety of roles. A member of the San Francisco Opera Chorus since 1983, he made his Company debut in that year's Family Performances of *La Traviata*. Subsequent performances here have included roles in *Manon Lescaut*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Billy Budd*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Die Meistersinger* and *La Bohème*. He recently made his debut as Bardolfo in *Falstaff* at the Mississippi Opera, where he will return next season as Pong in *Turandot* and Doctor Blind in *Die Fledermaus*. Other upcoming engagements include Don Basilio in *The Marriage of Figaro* with the Pittsburgh Opera Theater and the tenor soloist in *Carmina Burana* with the Dubuque Symphony.



KEVIN ANDERSON

with the Glendale Symphony later this year as soloist in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. A graduate of Kent State University, Coles appeared as soloist with the Kent State Chorale at the 1981 Spoleto Festival. Other concert credits include performances with the Midsummer Mozart Festival Orchestra and in Berlioz's *L'Enfant du Christ* with the Master Sinfonia Chamber Orchestra.

Tenor **Kevin Anderson** returns to San Francisco Opera in four roles: Don Alvar in *L'Africaine*, a Lamplighter in *Manon Lescaut*, an Esquire in *Parsifal*, and the Coachman in *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*. The Illinois native made his Company debut during the 1985 Fall Season productions of *Lear* and *Turandot*, and has since returned in *Il Trovatore*, *The Barber of Seville*, *Salome*, *La Traviata* and *Roméo et Juliette*. A graduate of the University of Wyoming, he participated in the Merola Opera Programs of 1983 and '84, and toured for two seasons with Western Opera Theater, portraying Pinkerton and Goro in *Madame Butterfly* and Ramiro in *La Cenerentola*. He also toured with the San Francisco Opera Center Singers as Nemorino in *The Elixir of Love*. A 1988 Adler Fellow, he portrayed Cherubino in the West Coast premiere of Titus's *Rosina* for the 1988 Opera Center Showcase, having appeared in the 1987 Showcase as the Lieutenant in Sauguet's *Le Plumet du Colonel*. Anderson was a member of the Santa Fe Opera Company Apprentice Program in 1982, and made his Michigan Opera Theater debut as Martin in the company's 1984 residency tour of Copland's *The Tender Land*. During the 1985-86 season he made his European debut in Vivaldi's *Il Giustino* at the Teatro Olimpico in Vicenza, Italy, and bowed at Carnegie Hall in a concert performance of Strauss' *Capriccio*. Local audiences have applauded him in Pocket Opera's performances of *Count Ory*, *Maria Stuarda* and *Orpheus in the Underworld*. Other opera credits include Roméo in Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette* and Will Parker in *Oklahoma* for Marin Opera; Tamino in *The Magic Flute* for Pennsylvania Opera Theater; and



PAUL GUDAS

Tenor **Paul Gudas** is the Village Nihilist in *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*. Last fall he portrayed Ambrogio in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and Giuseppe in the student performances of *La Traviata*. Born and raised in Chicago, he attended the Lyric Opera School of Chicago and made his 1971 debut with that company in *Werther*, with subsequent appearances in *Wozzeck*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Peter Grimes*, *La Bohème*, *Don Quichotte* and *Manon*. Other Chicago area credits include *La Périchole*, *The*

Bass-baritone **Mark Coles** returns this season to play the Millhand in *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, and the Sergeant in *La Bohème*. Coles made his Company debut in 1986 when he undertook five roles: the Foreman in *Jenůfa*, a Surgeon in *La Forza del Destino*, Hans Foltz in *Die Meistersinger*, the Guard in *La Bohème*, and the Herald in *Macbeth*. He returned in 1987 to play the Fifth Jew in *Salome*. A national finalist in the 1985 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, he joined the Merola Opera Program after two seasons with the San Francisco Opera Chorus and appeared as Leporello in Western Opera Theater's 1985-86 national touring production of *Don Giovanni*. He portrayed the Doctor in San Francisco Opera Center's 1986 Showcase production of Hindemith's *There and Back*, and appeared as Sparafucile in the Bear Valley Music Festival production of *Rigoletto*. Last year, he made his Michigan Opera Theatre debut as the Innkeeper and Governor in *Man of La Mancha*, and most recently sang Zuniga in *Carmen* to open Calgary Opera's 1988-89 season. He will be appearing



MARK DELAVAN

Beppe in *Pagliacci* and Remendado in *Carmen* for Opera Colorado. His concert appearances have included performances with the San Francisco Symphony in their Pops Concerts and New Works series with Charles Wuorinen, Handel's *Messiah* with the Honolulu Symphony last December, and two recent Pops Concerts with the Sacramento Symphony.

Baritone **Mark Delavan** portrays the High Priest of Brahma in *L'Africaine*, a Sergeant in *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, and Schaunard in *La Bohème*. Last year he sang Fiorello in *The Barber of Seville*, Sciarrone in *Tosca*, Hermann in *The Tales of Hoffmann* and Plutus in *The Queen of Spades*. He made his Company debut in 1986 in *Don Carlos* and also appeared in *Faust*, *Eugene Onegin*, *Manon*, and as Valentin in student performances of *Faust*. An Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center from 1986-87, Delavan was a participant in the 1985 Merola Opera Program and performed the title role of *Don Giovanni* on Western Opera Theater's 1985-86 national tour. In the Center's 1986 Showcase series, he appeared as Roderick/Sam in the American professional premiere of Hindemith's *The Long Christmas Dinner* and as the Poet in Rossini's *The Turk in Italy*. He received his training at Grand Canyon College and Oral Roberts University, and performed in *The Mikado* and *The Daughter of the Regiment* for the Charlotte Opera Association. For the North Carolina Opera Company, his credits include Papageno, Méphistophélès and Don Magnifico. Other engagements include the Count in *The Marriage of Figaro* for the Carmel Bach Festival, Escamillo and Amonasro in concert performances of *Carmen* and *Aida* with the Stockton Symphony, Dr. Falke in *Die Fledermaus* for Marin Opera, and the elder Germont in *La Traviata* for Sacramento Opera. Last summer he was a guest artist with the Merola Opera Program in the title role of *Gianni Schicchi* at Stern Grove. Delavan is the 1986 winner of the Pacific Region of the Metropolitan Opera Auditions and the winner of the Institute for International Education's travel grant, which allowed him to com-

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THOMAS POTTER

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

Baritone **Thomas Potter** returns this season to portray the Innkeeper in *Manon Lescaut*, the second Knight of the Grail in *Parsifal*, the Sentry in *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, and Schaunard in the family performances of *La Bohème*. He made his San Francisco Opera debut in the 1985 production of *Der Rosenkavalier*, and returned in 1986 for *Die Meistersinger* and *Macbeth*. A 1987-88 Adler Fellow, he performed in *Salome* and sang Germont in the family performances of *La Traviata*. For the Opera Center's 1987 Showcase he sang Sylvester in *Morem's Three Sisters Who Are Not Sisters*. A participant in the Merola Opera Program in 1985 and 1986, he portrayed Valentin in the Stern Grove production of *Faust* and at Villa Montalvo sang Masetto in *Don Giovanni*, a role he recreated for Western Opera Theater's 1985-86 national tour. He returned to Villa Montalvo in the summer of 1986 for Marcello in *La Bohème*, and repeated it on Western Opera Theater's national tours, culminating with performances in Shanghai, China. He portrayed Silvano in the Lyric Opera of Philadelphia's production of *Un Ballo in Maschera* featuring Luciano Pavarotti. His professional experience includes performances with the Indiana Opera Theater, Michiana Opera, Central City Opera, Texas Opera Theater and the Inspiration Point Fine Arts Academy. A recipient of a master's degree in voice from Indiana University, Potter won the 1985 Pavarotti Vocal Competition in Philadelphia and received the 1986 Kent Family Award at the Merola Opera Program's Grand Finals. Recent engagements include the San Francisco Symphony Pops Series, and the role of Mr. Scruples in the Opera Center's special



SIR JOHN PRITCHARD

production of Mozart's *The Impresario* at the Chalk Hill Winery.

San Francisco Opera Music Director **Sir John Pritchard** conducts three productions this season: *Manon Lescaut*, which he led earlier this year in Cologne; *Parsifal*, which he conducted in the acclaimed Jean-Pierre Ponnelle production in Cologne in 1983; and *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*. He made his 1970 Company debut with *Così fan tutte* (repeated in 1973 and 1979) and returned for *Peter Grimes* (1973 and '76), *Don Giovanni* and *La Cenerentola* (1974), *Thaïs* (1976), *Idomeneo* (1977), *Un Ballo in Maschera* and *Der Rosenkavalier* (1985), *Don Carlos* (1986) and, last fall, *Salome* and *Fidelio*. A protégé of Fritz Busch, Pritchard made his operatic conducting debut at Glyndebourne in 1951 with three Mozart operas: *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Così fan tutte* and *Don Giovanni*. That same year he made his Vienna Staatsoper debut leading *La Forza del Destino*. He opened the 1952-53 season at Covent Garden with *Un Ballo in Maschera* for his first assignment with the Royal Opera and conducted more than 80 performances of 11 operas in his first two seasons there. He has returned virtually every season since; among the historic performances he led there are the world premieres of Britten's *Gloriana*, Tippett's *King Priam* and *The Midsummer Marriage*, and the famous Visconti production of *Don Carlos*. From 1956 to 1962 he was musical director of the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, which earned a royal charter during his tenure. He was musical director of the London Philharmonic Orchestra from 1962 to 1966, and in 1963 was appointed principal conductor and artistic counselor of the Glyndebourne Festival, of which he became music director in 1969. In 1978 he relinquished his Glyndebourne post to become chief conductor at the Cologne Opera, a position he continues to hold. In 1980 he became principal guest conductor with the BBC Symphony and since 1982 has been chief conductor of that organization. At the beginning of the 1981-82 season he was named music director of the National



IAN ROBERTSON

Opera in Belgium. Maestro Pritchard is one of the most well-traveled of international conductors, and has taken the BBC Symphony on tours to Germany, Spain, Switzerland and the United States. His assignments during 1988 have included *Così fan tutte* at the Lyric Opera of Chicago; *The Magic Flute* in Geneva; *Aida*, *Faust* and *Wozzeck* at Cologne; *Lucia di Lammermoor* at Covent Garden; Rossini's *Otello* at the Rossini Festival in Pesaro; a tour of the BBC Symphony to Austria as well as East and West Germany; plus assorted concerts in Parma, London, Brussels and Paris. He also has just finished recording Schoenberg's *Moses und Aron* with the BBC Symphony.

San Francisco Opera Chorus Director **Ian Robertson** conducts the December 4 performance of *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*. Before joining the San Francisco Opera in 1987, Robertson was Head of Music and Chorus Director of Scottish Opera where he made his conducting debut in *The Barber of Seville* and conducted *The Secret of Susanna* for Scottish Television's award-winning film. He went on to conduct several productions for that company including *The Pearl Fishers*, *The Abduction from the Seraglio*, *Idomeneo*, *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, *My Fair Lady*, *The Magic Flute*, *L'Elisir d'Amore* and *Rigoletto* as well as concerts with the Scottish Opera Orchestra. A native of Scotland, Robertson trained at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music where he won awards as concert pianist and accompanist. He subsequently graduated Bachelor of Music with Honors from the University of Glasgow and completed a research course in 20th-century piano music. His recital career led to appearances at the Edinburgh International Festival and the Wigmore Hall and Purcell Room in London and he recorded many recitals for the BBC. He appeared as pianist with The New Music Group of Scotland in contemporary works and was harpsichordist with Cantilena, the chamber orchestra specializing in the baroque repertoire, which performed throughout Europe and South

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GERALD FREEDMAN

America, and was featured on records and on television. Since coming to San Francisco, Robertson has conducted the 1987 Fol-de-Rol program, the Kurt Herbert Adler Memorial Concert and the opening concert of the 1988 Stern Grove Festival in a performance of Mozart's *Coronation Mass* and Orff's *Carmina Burana*. Recently he conducted the performances of San Francisco Opera Center's *The Italian Girl in Algiers* and *The Impresario* with the Santa Rosa Symphony.

With his second production of *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, director **Gerald Freedman** continues his 16-year association with San Francisco Opera, where his credits include *Nabucco* (last Fall and Summer 1982), *La Bohème* (1986), *Katya Kabanova* (1983), *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* (1981) and, for his Company debut, the world premiere of Andrew Imbrie's *Angle of Repose* (1976). He received wide recognition for a series of productions for Spring Opera Theater, including Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* (1972), Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* (1973 and '76), *Death in Venice* (1975) and *The Cry of Clytaemnestra* (1981). Additional opera credits include the world premiere of Ginastera's *Beatrice Cenci* for the Opera Society of Washington, which opened the opera house at the Kennedy Center, and numerous productions for the New York City Opera, including the acclaimed 1986 revival of *Brigadoon*. Freedman has served as a leading director of Joseph Papp's New York Shakespeare Festival from 1960 to 1971 (the last five years as artistic director); co-artistic director of John Houseman's The Acting Company (1975-77); artistic director of the American Shakespeare Theatre (1978-79); and, in 1985, he assumed artistic directorship of Cleveland's Great Lakes Theater Festival. His numerous musical stage credits include the landmark musical *Hair*, which opened Papp's Public Theatre in mid-1967; *The Grand Tour* with Joel Grey; the Broadway revival of *West Side Story*, which he co-directed with Jerome Robbins; *The Au Pair Man* with Julie Harris during the inaugural season of the New York Shake-



WOLFRAM SKALICKI

speare Festival at Lincoln Center; the Broadway premiere of Arthur Miller's *The Creation of the World and Other Business*; and the controversial Off-Broadway satire *Macbird!*. A native of Lorain, Ohio, Freedman currently serves on the theater panel of the National Endowment for the Arts.

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



THOMAS J. MUNN

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

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Opera House Tours

Sponsored by the San Francisco Opera Guild, tours of the War Memorial Opera House will be conducted every half hour from 10 a.m. to 12 noon on the following dates:

Sunday, October 16
Tuesday, October 25
Sunday, October 30
Sunday, November 13
Thursday, November 17
Friday, November 25
Saturday, November 26
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The Opera Guild is Fifty

By JANE ESHLEMAN CONANT

"If you ask me to name a memorable performance at the Opera House, one quickly comes to mind," a member of the San Francisco Opera Guild said.

"It was the day they booed the Scarpia ..."

The display of exuberant displeasure had come from a sold-out War Memorial Opera House, the moment the great Puccini villain strode on stage to pursue the hapless Tosca.

Wasn't it an occasion for dismay?

"No," the member said. "It was just fine. It was a student matinee, and the booing showed us that our educational programs have worked well. Our efforts to bring opera to the youngsters have paid off. Boys and girls alike have become familiar enough with the opera to show the villain that they know just what he's up to."

A good many of the children who have attended these Guild-sponsored performances, now grown up, come to the opera today, on their own. Their mission now is not to boo the Scarpia for his villainy but to applaud him for his art. They have become fans.

"This is what we started out to do," said Mrs. Sheldon Cooper [at that time wife of the late President of the S.F. Opera Association, Robert Watt Miller], one of the public-spirited San Franciscans who have supported the Guild since its inception in 1938. "The idea was to make the opera enjoyable for young people who, of course, become supporters in later years.

"I see many of them now as adults, becoming season ticket holders, who went to those student performances as children."

Now the Guild, headed this year by Mrs. Mark R. Hornberger, is celebrating

Jane Eshleman Conant is a Bay Area freelance writer and former award-winning reporter for the S.F. Call-Bulletin, News Call-Bulletin and San Francisco Examiner.



View of the audience before the beginning of a 1984 Opera Guild student matinee.

its 50th anniversary. It does so by continuing the job it undertook half a century ago, introducing children to Scarpia and Tosca, Violetta and Alfredo, Butterfly and the faithless Pinkerton. The first student matinee was presented on May 16, 1939, with the then-international star Jarmila Novotná as Butterfly and with an admission fee of 50 cents. This year's student opera is *La Bohème*, in three performances; Nikki Li Hartliep sings Mimì and the children come for from \$2 to \$10. In each case, the prices represent great savings in comparison with those of the regular tickets; underwriting by the Guild makes this possible.

In the intervening years, except during World War II when the Guild sponsored low-priced performances for servicemen instead, school children by the thousands have been entertained in the great tradition of San Francisco Opera. They have heard, among others, *Lucia di Lammermoor* and *Così fan tutte*, *Carmen* and *Aida*, *Faust*, *Cavalleria Rusticana*, *Pagliacci*,

Gianni Schicchi and, of course, the *Tosca* that engendered the curiously satisfactory clamor at the entrance of the wicked chief of the Roman police.

The educational programs occupy the greater part of the Guild's time and budget, including as they do the scores of briefing sessions at the schools before the performances themselves. However, they are not the organization's sole reason for being.

"We have two main purposes," said Mrs. David Hartley, the Guild's vice-president for educational affairs. "In addition to the student projects, we are very active in fund-raising, to support our own programs and to help the Opera itself. For example, we are underwriting *Così fan tutte* this year." (A long-standing Guild policy, announced in 1950, is "to assist the (Opera) Association by presenting them with a new production whenever possible." The first of these, in the same year, was a commitment to pay for a new production of *Parsifal*.)

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To do such things, one must have money, and the Guild goes after it in captivating ways. For example, by staging the annual Fol de Rol.

This is one of those "only in San Francisco" affairs, a great party for the community at large as well as the Opera aficionados. Year after year, the international stars who come here to sing in the Opera itself take time off, without pay, to dance, sing and laugh with the rest of us in Civic Auditorium or, more recently, the Opera House itself.

There was a memorable Fol de Rol in which each singer in the Sextet from *Lucia di Lammermoor* performed in a different language. The list of stars covers a wide range (Lily Pons in one year, Turk Murphy's Jazz Band in another), and the growing popularity of this elegant bash is reflected in the profits. They add up to \$11,000 from the first Fol de Rol to some \$150,000 in 1987.

The Opera Ball, another of the Guild's responsibilities, is part of the white-tie, designer-gowns-and-diamonds glamor of the season's Opening Night. Here the City shows off its style—and the Guild reaps a substantial benefit in terms of support for its many works.

Another fund-raiser, unique this year, was the Guild's sponsorship of the gala opening event at the great new Nordstrom store at Fifth and Market Streets.

"We planned the party," Mrs. Hartley said. "We sent out the invitations, attended to the details, and Nordstrom turned over the proceeds to us, to support the December 7 performance of the student matinee."

The costs of the Guild's projects, along with everything else, continue to grow, and this has brought about a basic change in the format of the student matinees. In the beginning, the students heard the same stars as those who sang in the adult performance, but this is no longer true.

To present a *Bohème* with this season's Rodolfo—Luciano Pavarotti—would require ticket prices prohibitive for the school children. Thus the modern student performances are sung by young professionals on the rise in their careers; the youngsters' Rodolfo this year is Douglas Wunsch, an Adler Fellow who is eminently qualified for the role but whose paycheck, one must assume, hardly compares with that of the great Italian.

The student performances have contributed to the main Opera in more than a few ways; for example, in providing experience for the younger artists who will star in their own right before too long.

Another, of which not many have been aware, is in the new and surprisingly popular system of Supertitles.

"The Guild tried out Supertitles in the 1984 student matinees with the help of a grant from Citicorp," Mrs. Hartley said. "We noticed immediately an incredible change—it made it so much easier for the kids and helped them to understand better, and of course we were pleased when the main Opera adopted them, too."

(Not a few seasoned operagoers, whose eyebrows rose when they learned of the Supertitle plan, have since revised their thinking and have come to value the bright lines of translated script above the stage.)

The funds raised by the Guild, through its members, friends and generous business enterprises, have served several other uses. Among them: the annual scholarships that are awarded young people coming along in opera. These do not necessarily go only to singers; opera needs qualified professionals in other areas as well. Thus last year's Guild scholarship total of \$14,500 went to a production assistant, an assistant director and an apprentice coach as well as to four singers.

Another way in which the Guild spends money is its sponsorship of matinees for seniors and disabled persons, many of whom might otherwise never see an opera. The Guild also conducts Opera House tours, Opera House "Glimpses," particularly for tourists, and a number of other programs in its five semi-autonomous chapters: San Francisco, East Bay, Marin, Sonoma County and South Peninsula. All of these people are busy: Guild members gave a total of 4,328 hours of volunteer service in 1987, and the figure for 1988 is expected to be three or four times as great.

The greater part of this service goes to the school programs, and many of those who take part regard the activity as more fun than work.

"The children are so responsive," Mrs. Hartley said. "It's a joy to see their reactions—and many of these are kids who might otherwise never be aware that opera exists..."

The performances are the highlights of the project, but the most important part is, very likely, the briefing at the schools before the performances. No matter how beautiful the music, how handsome the hero, how villainous the villain, an opera is not going to make much sense to a 12-year-old if he or she hasn't a clue to what it's all about. By the time the Guild volunteers get through with them, they do know—and well enough, as we

have seen, to boo a Scarpia as he emerges to do his wicked work.

The briefings come in several forms, one or the other of which is presented at some 75 schools each season, to students in grades 4 through 12. A "Teacher's Guide," sent to the school beforehand, enables the teacher to lay the groundwork for the volunteers' presentation. Then comes the day of what is called the "Opera-Go-Round."

In its earliest form, this consisted of a lecture with slides and taped music, taken to the schools by trained docents. In more recent times, the format goes far beyond that. Developed by Lise Deschamps Ostwald, long a Guild board member, it is a 45-minute production by three professional singers, a pianist, a docent narrator and various speaking, dancing and chorus parts undertaken by the students themselves. More than the music itself is covered; the presentations include information about the composer, the librettist and the historical context and general background of the opera.

"It is incredibly exciting," Mrs. Hartley said, "to see the students react to the live artists. Their enthusiasm is evident in the period after the performance when they ask questions of the singers and pianist."

Over the weeks of preparation and the "Opera-Go-Round" itself, students can become engrossed in the art and the workings of the opera. They become so familiar with the story and the music that, once they and their chaperones have filled the 3200-seat Opera House and the curtain goes up, they are themselves involved. They hope, vainly enough, that Mimi and Rodolfo will be happy again and that perhaps, just this once, Mimi will not die.

Even more deeply involved are the students who take part in an even more sophisticated program: the "Opera-tunities," begun in 1980 by another board member, Nan McDowell. In this one, designed for the middle to high school levels, students themselves take part in what is described as a "mini-production" of the matinee opera, complete with costumes, props and stage sets. The leading roles are sung off-stage by young professional singers who work with the students to put together the performance.

Students take all of the roles; school choruses and/or orchestras present the ensemble numbers, and the performance is given for the school student body, neighboring schools, parents and friends.

The current "Opera-tunities" project is the most ambitious to date: a condensed version of Wagner's *Ring*. Preparations

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are already underway for the 1989 offerings, *Das Rheingold* and/or *Die Walküre*; *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung* are scheduled for 1990 to coincide with the San Francisco Opera's *Ring* cycle.

Still another unusual program has been the "Renaissance Summer School," a joint effort of the Berkeley city schools, the University of California, Berkeley, and the Italian Consulate in San Francisco. It came about, naturally enough, at one of the student matinees, when the parent-chaperones with a Berkeley student group got into conversation with Lisa Grossi, the Guild's previous vice president for education.

The talk turned to the Berkeley schools' after-school Italian language courses and, said Mrs. Hartley, "It was decided to capitalize on this, and the Renaissance Summer School was the outcome.

"In the mornings, the students have classes in Italian Renaissance art, history, culture, cooking, taught by teachers from the Berkeley schools and the University. In the afternoon, 50 of these students participate in the writing and producing of an opera, some of it in Italian."

The Guild provides a director, composer and workshop counselors to help the students. And after the five-week period, the opera is performed for the community.

Does all of this satisfy the Guild members? Of course not.

They are in the process of working with the OPERA America organization and the San Francisco public schools on a program to introduce opera studies into the regular classroom curricula. Students would produce an opera of their own creation and, further, study opera in the context of its time and its relation to our days.

These numerous activities are considerably broader in scope than the founders envisioned in 1938. The Guild then was more of a social group than one of diligent work and innovation. The founders' names were a mini-Social Register in themselves, and, it must be admitted, the whole idea was that of a New Yorker.

She was Mrs. Herbert Witherspoon, a director of the Metropolitan Opera Guild and the wife of a former general manager of the Met. It was she who encouraged the San Francisco civic and social leaders to form the local Guild, as an associate of New York's. The Met's magazine, *Opera News*, had this to say at the time:

"Opera has always played an important part in the social and artistic life of San Francisco, almost from the founda-



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San Francisco Opera Guild's annual Fol de Rol features opera (and other) stars, all of whom contribute their services towards the ultimate goal: raising funds in support of student matinees. The 1965 Fol de Rol was a memorable one: the master of ceremonies was Frank Sinatra, who is shown escorting a particularly well-received performer: Leontyne Price.

tion of the city. Tetrzzini, singing at Lotta's Fountain on New Year's Eve, and Caruso, voiceless with fright, sitting on his luggage in the middle of Market Street on the day of the earthquake in 1906, are part of the community folk lore . . ."

The *Opera News* went on to say that the "Metropolitan Opera Guild welcomes among its ranks a group of members who have joined forces in the city of San Francisco to perform a similar mission for the San Francisco Opera Company.

"Under the chairmanship of Mrs. Stanley Powell, the following officers head an enthusiastic body of opera lovers: Mrs. Edward Otis Bartlett, Vice-Chairman; Milton H. Esberg, Jr., Secretary; Jerd Sullivan, Treasurer, and Miss Jane Neylan, Chairman of the Membership Committee."

The Guild was registered as a non-profit corporation with the California Secretary of State on January 19, 1939, by Mrs. Powell, J.L. Bradley, Esberg and Sullivan.

During its first two years, its activities went smoothly enough: the first Opera Museum-Library, open at night during Opera House performances; a luncheon honoring baritone Lawrence Tibbett, student performances, a tea for soprano Lily Pons, lectures by the city's then-music critics, Alexander Fried and

Alfred Frankenstein and, finally, the first of the Opera Balls, after a performance of *Don Pasquale* on October 13, 1941.

The Opera itself continued through the World War II years, during which servicemen and women heard such greats as Lily Pons, Zinka Milanov, Bidú Sayão, Licia Albanese, Ezio Pinza, Leonard Warren, Jan Peerce and Risë Stevens at 55 cents per ticket, under Guild sponsorship. Other than that, however, the Guild's programs were suspended for the duration.

When peace came, so did renewed and greatly-expanded activity for the Guild. More and more, it reached out to school children and others, in keeping with its stated purpose: "To develop and cultivate a wider public interest in opera through educational programs and to support the San Francisco Opera Association through fund-raising events and volunteer activities."

Today, some 2000 members of the San Francisco Opera Guild serve as a sturdy support group for the San Francisco Opera and for the young people who, before long, will join the army of adult opera-lovers in helping the city rank with the great opera centers of the world.

Do the Guild programs mean something significant to the children? Listen to their own words, in letters to some of the

singers after a *Marriage of Figaro* student matinee:

"You did fantastic! . . . It was my first opera. It was impressing because a long time ago I thought opera was boring and dull, but now, I know what opera really is, especially when you hid under the bed. I thought that this opera was hilarious."

"Your voice brought a new feeling to me about the opera . . ."

"I liked your singing. You sure can do it loud. You must practice a lot!"

The effort to make all of this possible is enormous. The logistics give one pause: scheduling the matinee performances and the school dates well ahead of time, providing the school teachers with background material and encouraging them to prepare the students for the visits of the docents and artists; getting the latter to the schools at the right time and, again, well-prepared; distributing the tickets and collecting the money; arranging for chaperones (one adult per 10 or 12 children); arranging for transportation and, finally, achieving silence (or what passes for silence among 3000 children) in the Opera House as the conductor raises his baton.

Not all of these tasks fall directly on Guild members' shoulders, but, of course, the general responsibility is theirs. They work hard and are rightfully pleased when, as the music swells, the spell of opera begins to envelop the children.


Granted, a good many of these youngsters will never become confirmed operagoers, but nevertheless the effort is not wasted. Every new idea that comes to a child's mind, in the view of the Guild docents, brings its own value to his developing life. Each briefing in a school, each afternoon in the Opera House, broadens the youngster's horizon a little, or perhaps quite a lot. The student witnesses a fantastic and beautiful scene, of which he or she otherwise would never have been aware, and is richer for having seen and heard an opera. And for the boy or girl who does come to love the opera as a grownup, this becomes a priceless gift.

The Guild has won recognition for its work, for example the Opera Guilds International's 1987-88 award for superior innovative educational programs, and the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce 1988 award in recognition of 50 years of educational programs for the community.

These are welcome rewards. But so are the boos that greeted Scarpia, and so is the spontaneous remark of a young girl as she emerged from a student matinee:

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Company Profiles: The Kvistads

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

Like most professional instrumentalists, Richard "Rick" Kvistad and his wife, Virginia Price Kvistad, have performed—and to a degree continue to—in every imaginable kind of ensemble. But it's no accident that Rick is the San Francisco Opera Orchestra's principal percussionist and associate timpanist and Virginia its principal second violinist. While not having had to forsake all else, both have made central commitments to playing opera—in San Francisco—for the most understandable of reasons.

Rick reports that as an undergraduate at Oberlin, he was "required" (he says it with a big grin) to spend his junior year abroad—in Salzburg. It so happened that his junior year coincided with Herbert von Karajan's famous production of the Strauss *Rosenkavalier*, with Elisabeth Schwarzkopf. "It was my first psychedelic experience," he recalls, a quiver invading his otherwise sonorous baritone. "There was a jazz drummer from Chicago in the audience that night who had tears in his eyes." It also happened that he was studying orchestration that year with a teacher who had worked with Strauss himself.

"Those experiences made me realize how great opera can be," he says.

Virginia, who had been performing with the San Francisco Symphony, played her first season with the Opera in 1976. (Playing with both orchestras was possible until the opening of Davies Symphony Hall in 1980.) "The first opera I played for was *Thaïs*," she recalls, "which starred Beverly Sills and Sherrill Milnes—and Sir John [Pritchard], our music director now, was conducting. Then Karl Böhm came to conduct *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, which was a real eye-opener. The second violin part was 104 pages long—and most of them were pages I really had to practice. But to this day I'm amazed at the sound that came out of the orchestra when that little man, with his little beat, conducted. And at the end of the season it really turned me upside down to hear Plácido Domingo sing the double bill of *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Pagliacci*. I was in tears. I spent as much time looking at the stage as I could get away with. By the time that season was over, I was completely hooked. At home, every day I'd put on the recording of *La Traviata* with Lorengar and Aragall



San Francisco Opera Orchestra's Virginia and Richard Kvistad are captured by the photographer before proceeding on their separate ways to a rehearsal in the orchestra pit.

and think, 'Now that's music.'"

Although they're stationed on opposite sides of the pit, it was the Opera Orchestra that first brought the couple together, albeit outside the opera season. They were both playing for San Francisco Ballet's *Nutcracker* in 1981, during which Virginia had a birthday. Rick was among those persuaded to join her for a celebratory drink at Kimball's after the performance—where the voluble pair struck up an amicable conversation. "We haven't shut up since," they say, almost in unison.

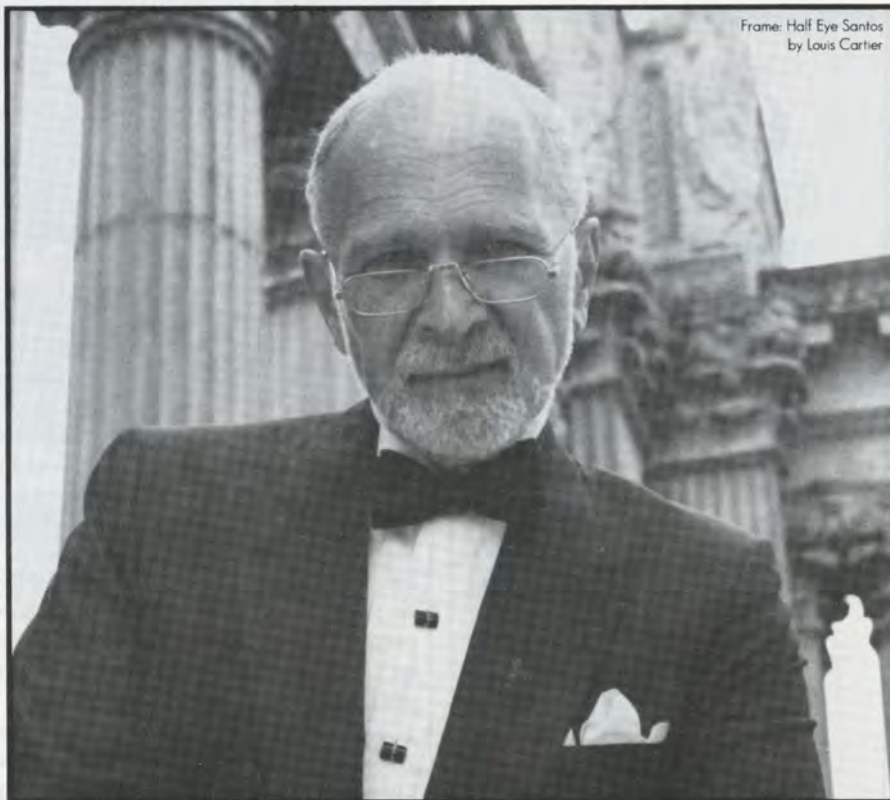
Thus far their union has produced two daughters, Laura, age six, and Jennifer, age three. Both appear to be fundamentally musical. "Laura was in the womb when we were doing *Salome*," Virginia says, "and she used to kick every time we played *Salome's* dance. Jennifer was a *Ring* baby. I had to remind myself not to drink too many liquids before those performances; the acts are long." Both children have already asked for violins. "I was nine when I started," Virginia adds. "When it comes time for them, we'll have to find them other teachers."

In the meantime, of course, there's opera. Laura will be attending her first *Bohème* this season, and there are strong indications she's well disposed to the art form. After last year's *Traviata*, she named one of her dolls Violetta.

The children have caused a number of changes in the couple's lives. A search for the best local school system prompted a move to Belmont, which the pair has decided is good all around. "At first we worried about the commute," Rick says, "but it's not that long, and we've discovered it's a good opportunity to unwind from playing. And thanks to all-night grocery stores, we now do most of our shopping after performances, when it's quieter."

For Virginia, childcare has, predictably, become a central concern. Although the Opera House is "dark" most Mondays, that's her busiest day. "I spend the whole morning on the phone lining up people for the week. I have a whole network of people now, but it's still complicated. Thank God my mother has moved close." They both add that, in emergencies, they have brought their children to the Opera House while they perform.

Long *tacets*, periods when instrumentalists don't play, are part of any opera percussionist's daily life. When not devoted to child care, Rick performs a considerable range of tasks during the longest rests, from procuring dinner for the two of them to doing such chores as banking—difficult things for orchestra members to do during the season, consid-



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ering the heavy rehearsal and performance schedule.

Rick also has used the breaks to compose and write. Belwin Mills has published his *Accents, Studies, and Etudes for Snare Drum*, a technique book. Yet more exciting for him is his forthcoming performance of his own *Concerto for Timpani and Chamber Orchestra*, scored for five timpani, which will receive its premiere by Samuel Cristler's Sinfonia San Francisco at Herbst Theater next March 6. He is grateful for the feedback and assistance on it he has received from various members of the Opera Orchestra—including, of course, Virginia, who reviewed and otherwise helped him with the string parts. He does most of his composing on his new Macintosh-based synthesizer, among the pleasures of which is its ability to print out accurate, published-looking parts. Rick appreciates the "total control" he's had over the project all along, and adds, "This is for the soul."

Rick's brother Garry, a percussionist who performs with the Steve Reich ensemble, also is the inventor of the Woodstock Chime, a wind chime he has parlayed into a \$5-million-a-year business. One of the things it has allowed him is the purchase of a complete Balinese gamelan. Rick, who was a student at Berkeley's Center for World Music in the 1970s, remains to this day a devotee of the gamelan, noting that it's the kind of instrument ensemble "regular people" in Balinese and Javanese cultures play. "They even had me playing it," Virginia chimes in. "It was great." Now the couple is working on a record album, to be called *The Chimes of Woodstock*, and they will be producing it entirely by themselves (with assistance from the computer, of course), overdubbing the various instrumental lines.

Rick's most daunting—and to him, delicious—musical assignment this season is Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, which makes extensive and exciting use of percussion instruments. The score calls for six percussionists and timpani, but it's Rick's job as section principal to bring it in with five. One of the things that means is that he will be playing, in addition to snare drum and woodblocks, the triangle and tam tam. He also mumbles something about "holding sticks in both hands," but it's not a complaint. His judgment on the matter is short and to the point: "Shostakovich is one of the best composers for percussion, and, especially for an opera percussionist, it's a great thrill to have a meaty part."

What Virginia has to say is this: "Any opera with a good percussion part has a



Virginia Price Kvistad at her stand before a Parsifal rehearsal.

bad violin part. The Shostakovich happens to be an exception, though."

Her most daunting assignment this season, she says, was *Maometto Secondo*, "a killer. Rossini is notorious for putting all the noodling in the second violin part, and in that opera the seconds never rest." For string players, at constant risk of tendinitis, any long opera is hard, and initially, she had misgivings about this season's *Parsifal*. (She hadn't played it before and was hardly alone in that; it has been absent from the Company's repertory since 1974.) "It's a little less accessible than the other Wagner operas," she comments, "and far less accessible than Verdi or Puccini, where at least the keys and meters are familiar and don't keep changing all the time.

"But," she adds, "Wagner has really grown on me. I came to love the *Ring* while we were doing it. And I used to dread *Die Meistersinger*—because it's so long, and you're playing all the time. But at this point I have to say, it's become my favorite of the Wagners."

The two laugh together at a particular memory of the *Ring* summer. "We were playing *Götterdämmerung* one night while the Beethoven Festival was going on across the street," Rick recalls with a chuckle. "The Symphony was being broadcast. It wasn't wasted on anyone in our orchestra that they played half their program—one whole symphony—during one of our intermissions."

For all the talk about how many



In a photo taken several years ago, Richard Kvistad poses for an autoprotrait taken in his backyard, also featuring (l. to r.) five Chinese temple blocks, a Javanese gong, a Balinese gender (metal xylophone) and, in front, five Chinese tom-toms.

services (rehearsal and performance sequences) Opera Orchestra members put in during the season, what's equally clear is that most wouldn't have it any other way. "We miss the summer season," Virginia notes, "because now, apart from playing for ABT, our only extra assignments are "Fol de Rol" and "Opera in the Park." We're really encouraged to hear reports of new summer plans. It will improve morale to have more performances."

Both feel comfortable with the repertory now and are confident that their commitment to playing in the theater is for life. "Some nights, looking out into the audience is almost as much of a show as looking at the stage," Virginia comments. Adds Rick: "We both still love to go to the Symphony, and enjoy that music. But

sometimes, as I'm listening to it, I do find myself wishing that there were something besides the musicians to watch." "The other day Beethoven's Seventh was on the radio when I was driving around," Virginia says. "I was struck all over again about what beautiful music it is—but it did seem to be over awfully quickly."

"We hear from friends who play in the Symphony that one of the big problems over that long season is boredom," Rick confides. "That's not a complaint you'll hear on this side of the street." "Our season is a little like summer camp," Virginia concludes. "It's concentrated and intense, and all of us in the orchestra get very close. At the end of our season, we feel like we've had a real experience. And we celebrate!"

—Timothy Pfaff



Richard Kvistad is San Francisco Opera Orchestra's principal percussionist and associate timpanist. Before a Parsifal rehearsal, he tries out a passage while following the score, which is on his right.

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The Unmaking of Lady Macbeth

continued from p. 33

rudiments of a musical phrase, are drowned, torn to pieces, and disappear in a rumbling, grating, screeching din. It is difficult enough to follow such music; to remember it is impossible . . . If the composer happens to strike a simple melody that can be understood, he immediately, as though alarmed at such a calamity, again plunges into his musical uproar, which at times becomes a veritable cacophony.

In a phrase that probably scared the poor composer half out of his wits, the chief official organ of Soviet power denounced him for "trifling with difficult matters," and hinted that "it might end very badly."

* * *

Dmitri Shostakovich, perhaps Soviet Russia's most loyal musical son, and certainly her most talented one, had been made a sacrificial lamb. Though his opera had no doubt given the Great Leader and Teacher of the Peoples a genuine pain, it had surely been marked for denunciation and suppression before Stalin ever visited the theater. It was a target precisely by reason of its unprecedented success, and Shostakovich was a target by reason of his preeminence among Soviet artists of his generation. The real purpose of the *Pravda* editorial was to demonstrate how directly the arts were to be subject to Party controls in the wake of what the unsuspecting Shostakovich himself had hailed in the program book as "the historic April resolution."

This was an action the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party had taken on April 23, 1932, in accordance with which all existing Soviet arts associations were liquidated and replaced with "unions" of writers, artists, composers, etc. that were directly answerable to the party bureaucracy. It had at first been greeted by serious artists as a positive move, for it removed from contention with them the clamorous "proletarian" associations that during the 1920s had been denouncing high culture with a zeal reminiscent of today's campus nihilists. In fact, the resolution had removed all barriers that might have protected the arts from the naked exercise of Stalin's arbitrary rule, which in the middle '30s was clamping down on all aspects of Soviet life and culture in preparation for the great purges. Shostakovich, through his opera, was one of the first victims of the new dispensation; and if, as things

turned out, he was spared the ultimate Stalinist fate, he had to live for the next 17 years and more with the constant threat of "a bad end." That this unhappy man nevertheless continued to function as an artist and a citizen has lent his career a heroic luster no benignly neglected Western counterpart can ever hope to equal.

It is inevitably in that heroic light that we now view *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*. We know it as the work through which the Soviet Union's great composer was disgraced; a work whose suppression—since it spelled the end of what would surely have been one of the great operatic careers—was an incalculable loss to world art; and, finally, a work that had to endure a 27-year ban before it was cautiously let back on stage, retitled *Katerina Ismailova*, in a bowdlerized version sans porno-phony, and with final scene fraught with a new and poignant sub-text relating to its creator's tribulations.

So ineluctably has the opera come to symbolize pertinacity in the face of despotism that it is almost impossible to see it clearly now as an embodiment of that very despotism. Though its fate is what opened Shostakovich's eyes to the nature of the regime under which he was condemned to live, and though it could thus be argued that by virtue of its martyrdom, *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* humanized its creator, it remains a profoundly inhumane work of art. For its technique of dehumanizing victims is the perennial method of those who would perpetrate and justify genocide, whether it be of kulaks in the Ukraine, Jews in Greater Germany, or aborigines in Tasmania.

If ever an opera deserved to be banned it was this one, and matters are not changed by the fact that its actual ban was for wrong and hateful reasons. We in the liberal West, who believe that no opera deserves to be banned, might do well to ask on what basis that conviction rests. If it is on the assumption that life and morals cannot be threatened by great art, then we are perhaps more vulnerable than we might imagine to the dehumanizing message of the very great opera we are hearing tonight. If it is on the assumption that ethical concerns have no bearing on matters of esthetics, then the process of dehumanization would seem to have begun. If for the sake of its inspired music and its dramatic power *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* is to hold the stage today, it should be discussed, understood, and viewed with open eyes. ■

1988 San Francisco Opera Company (Continued)

Although our program magazines regularly list members of the Administration and Company (please see pages 10 and 13), we know that those lists are by necessity incomplete. In order to give recognition to the many skilled professionals whose work has contributed so greatly to the quality of San Francisco Opera productions, we provide, once a year, a list of everyone involved in our season. In this issue, department heads are listed in front of the magazine, as usual; the many others, upon whom so much depends, are listed below.

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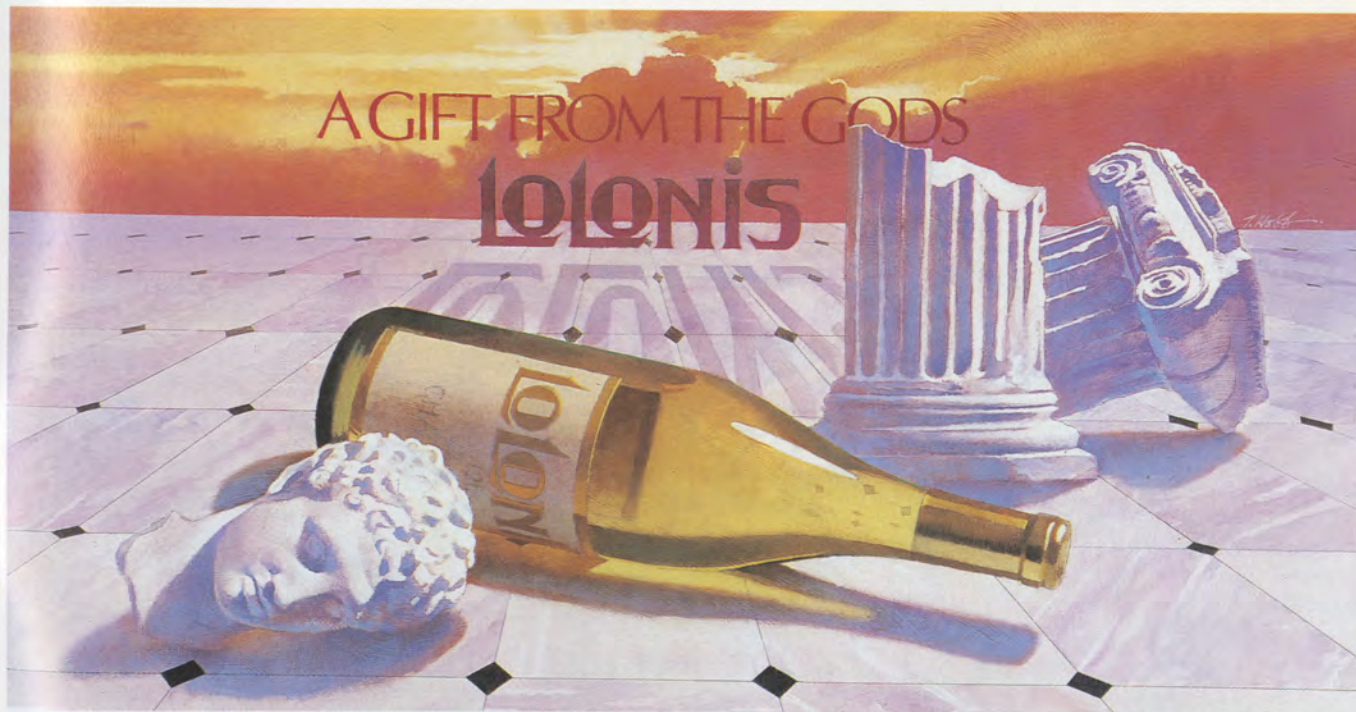
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Bus Service Many operagoers who live in the northern section of San Francisco are regular patrons of the Municipal Railway special "Opera Bus."

This bus is added to Muni's north-bound 47 line following all evening performances of the Opera. The service is also provided for all Sunday matinees.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Opera glasses are available for rent in the lobby. Please note that no cameras or tape recorders are permitted in the Opera House. Children of any age attending a performance must have a ticket.

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

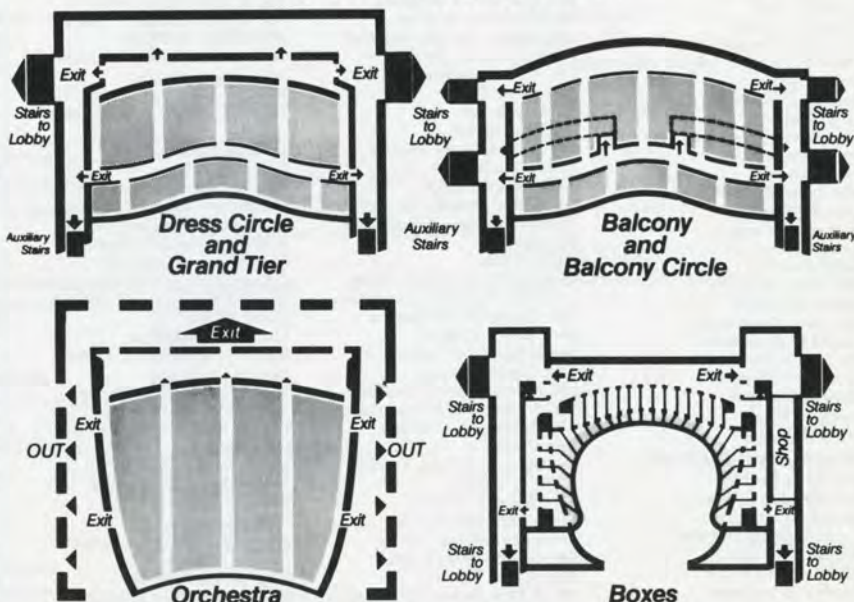
For lost and found information, inquire at check room No. 3 or call (415) 621-6600, 8:30 A.M. to 11:30 A.M. Monday through Friday. For the safety and comfort of our audience all large parcels, backpacks, luggage, etc., must be checked at the Opera House cloakrooms.

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

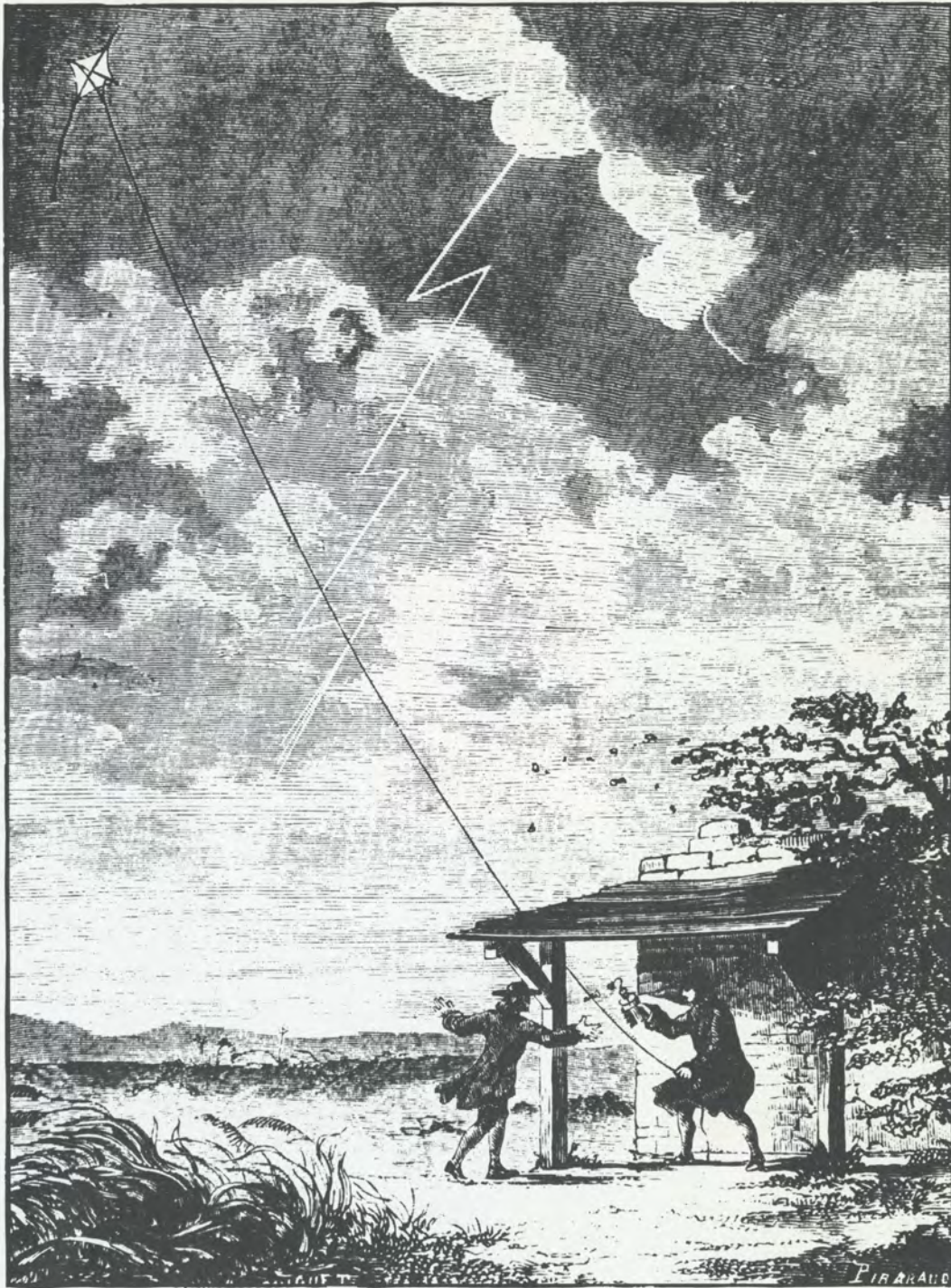
Performing Arts Center Tours Tours of the San Francisco Performing Arts Center, which include the War Memorial Opera House, the Louise M. Davies Symphony Hall and the Herbst Theatre take place as follows: Mondays, 10:00-2:30 on the hour and half hour. Davies Hall only: Wednesday, 1:30/2:30—Saturday 12:30/1:30.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

San Francisco War Memorial and Performing Arts Center

War Memorial Opera House



Patrons, Attention Please! Fire Notice: There are sufficient exits in this building to accommodate the entire audience. The exit indicated by the lighted "EXIT" sign nearest your seat is the shortest route to the street. In case of fire please do not run—walk through that exit. (Refer to diagrams.)



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