

Manon Lescaut

1988

Sunday, October 16, 1988 2:00 PM  
Wednesday, October 19, 1988 7:30 PM  
Wednesday, October 26, 1988 8:00 PM  
Saturday, October 29, 1988 8:00 PM  
Tuesday, November 1, 1988 8:00 PM  
Friday, November 4, 1988 8:00 PM  
Wednesday, November 9, 1988 7:30 PM

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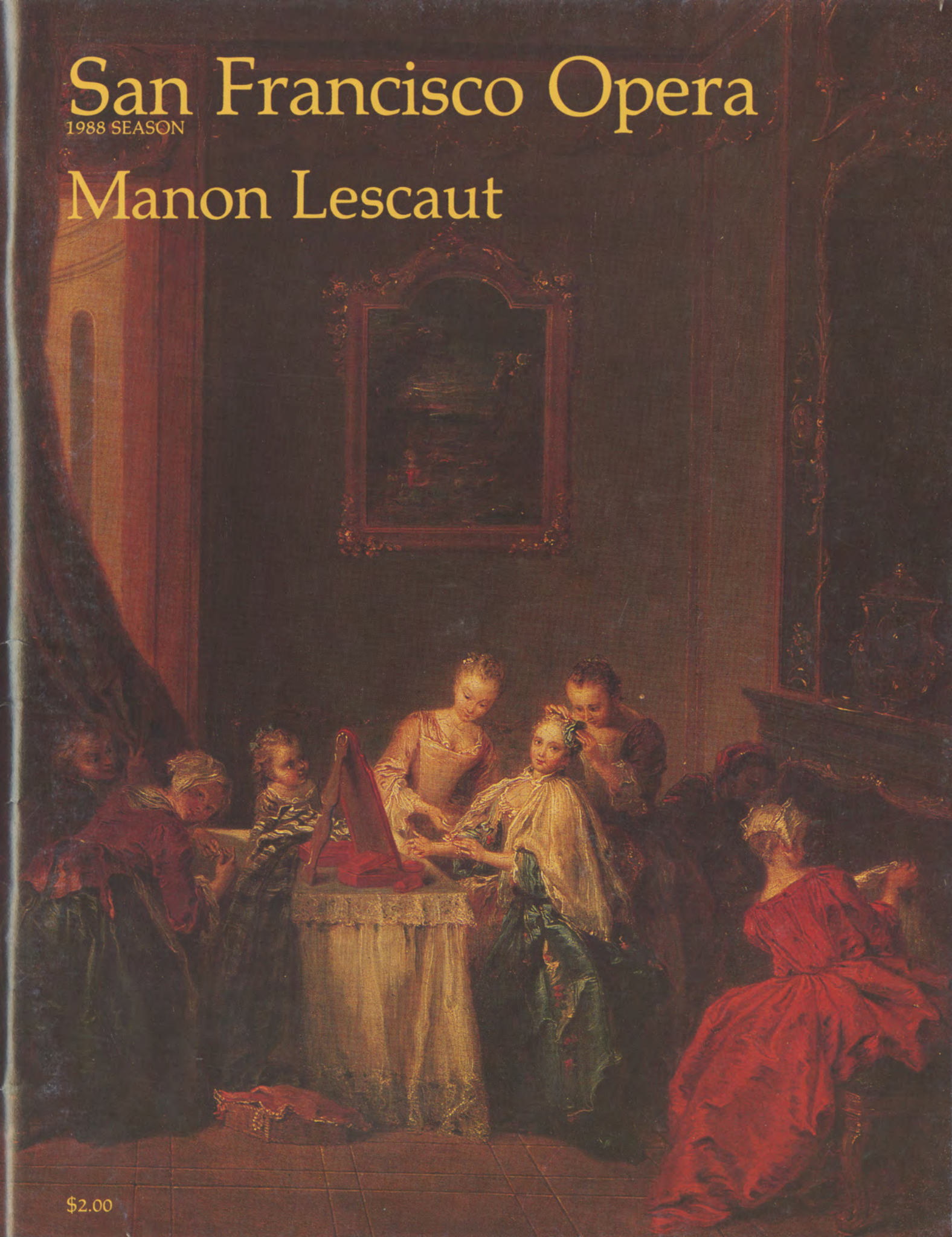
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# San Francisco Opera

1988 SEASON

## Manon Lescaut



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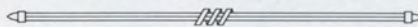
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# San Francisco Opera

Lotfi Mansouri, *General Director*

Sir John Pritchard, *Music Director*

## Manon Lescaut

1988 SEASON

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Jean-Baptiste Pater, 1695-1736

#### *La Toilette*

Oil on canvas, 47 x 38 cm

Bequest of Dr. Louis La Caze, 1869

Reunion des Musées Nationaux, Paris  
Musée du Louvre, Peintures

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Art Director: Frank Benson  
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MCCARTHY

## From the Chairman of the Board and the President

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

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

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

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

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

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

possible most of this season's Supertitles.

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

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

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

Reid W. Dennis, Chairman  
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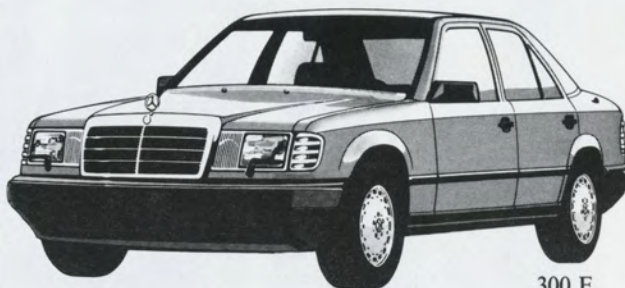




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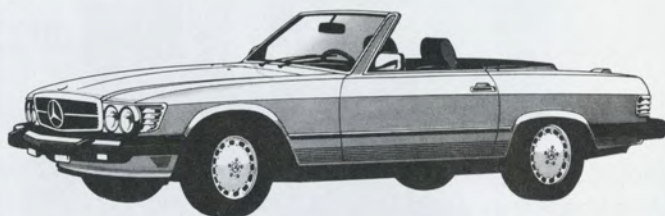
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## General Director's Message

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

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

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





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# San Francisco Opera

Lotfi Mansouri, *General Director*

Sir John Pritchard, *Music Director*

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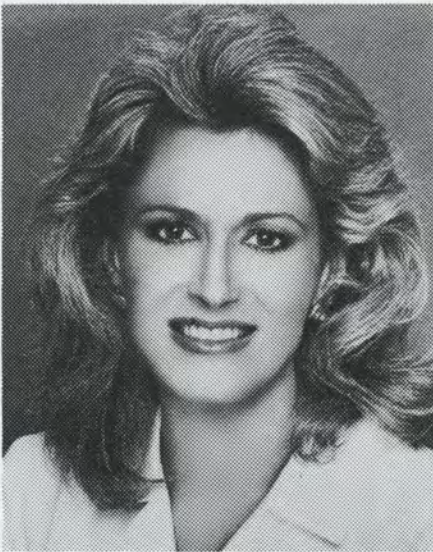
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# San Francisco Opera

Lotfi Mansouri, *General Director*

Sir John Pritchard, *Music Director*

## 1988 Season

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



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

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\*\*American opera debut

\*San Francisco Opera debut

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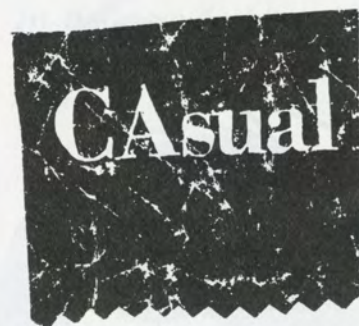


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Bonnie Shapiro

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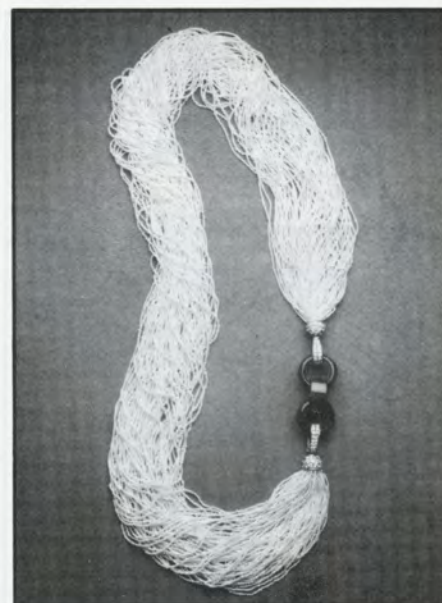
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 Gene Jackson  
 Nikolas Kavayiotidis  
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 Adolf Bruk *Assistant Concertmaster*  
 Ferdinand Claudio  
 William E. Pynchon *Assistant Principal*  
 William Rusconi  
 Agnes Vadas  
 Lev Rankov  
 Barbara Riccardi  
 Robert Galbraith  
 Janice McIntosh  
 Leonid Igudesman  
 Julia Skiff

## 2nd VIOLIN

Virginia Price-Kvistad *Principal*  
 Martha Simonds *Associate Principal*  
 Eva Karasik  
 Lani King  
 Gerard Svazlian  
 Linda Deutsch  
 Laura Kobayashi  
 Beni Shinohara  
 James Dahlgren

## VIOLA

Alison Avery *Acting Principal*  
 Sergei Rakitchenkov *Acting Associate Principal*  
 Jonna Hervig  
 Natalia Igudesman  
 Patricia Wells\*  
 Paul Ehrlich  
 David George

## CELLO

David Kadarauch *Principal*  
 Thalia Moore *Associate Principal*  
 David Budd  
 Helen Stross  
 Victoria Ehrlich  
 Emil Miland

## BASS

Charles Siani *Principal*  
 Jon Lancelle *Associate Principal*  
 Steven D'Amico  
 Shinji Eshima  
 Philip Karp

## FLUTE

Alan Cox *Principal*  
 Julie McKenzie  
 James Walker

## PICCOLO

James Walker

\*Associate Principal for *The Rake's Progress* and *Der Fliegende Holländer*.

## OBOE

James Matheson *Principal*  
 Deborah Henry *Assistant Principal\**  
 Raymond Dusté

## ENGLISH HORN

Raymond Dusté

## CLARINET

Philip Fath *Principal*  
 Joanne Burke Eisler  
 Gregory Dufford

## E-FLAT CLARINET

Joanne Burke Eisler

## BASS CLARINET

Gregory Dufford

## BASSOON

Rufus Olivier *Principal*  
 Jerry Dagg  
 Robin Elliott

## CONTRABASSOON

Robin Elliott

## HORN

William Klingelhoffer *Principal*  
 David Sprung *Principal*  
 Carlberg Jones  
 Brian McCarty  
 Lawrence Ragent

## TRUMPET

James Miller *Principal*  
 William Holmes  
 Timothy Wilson

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# The Story of *Manon Lescaut*

By JULIAN BUDDEN

"The most perfect story ever written, just as *Madame Bovary* is the most perfect novel ever created." That is how Abbé Prévost's *L'Histoire du Chevalier des Grieux et de Manon Lescaut* appeared to the English writer, Arthur Symonds. Written some time between 1728 and 1731, the novel forms the seventh volume of *Les Mémoires et Aventures d'un Homme de Qualité qui s'est retiré du Monde* and the only one that has endured, doubtless because, like the younger Dumas's *La Dame aux Camélias*, it was distilled partly from personal experience. If the original of Manon herself cannot be identified, the careers of Prévost himself and of his fictional hero, Des Grieux, run curiously parallel. Both were torn between a religious vocation and the desire to live life to the full; both became involved in scandal and crime (though whether there was a woman in Prévost's case can only be conjectured) and both—after various vicissitudes—were reconciled to the Church, the writer himself becoming a secular priest in a French aristocratic household. Such was the novel's success that Prévost brought out a revised edition of it in 1753, the year of his death. In 1765 it was turned into a play by J. Brandes. But its influence

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*Julian Budden, internationally renowned musicologist, is the author of a landmark three-volume series, The Operas of Verdi.*





Mirella Freni and Ermanno Mauro in San Francisco Opera's 1983 staging of *Manon Lescaut*. At that time, Mirella Freni was singing the role for the first time in her career.

SCHERL

extended far beyond the 18th century. The occasional outbursts of emotional rhetoric may place the novel firmly in the Age of Sensibility; but it has other, more modern aspects: the fast, urgent pace of the narrative, unencumbered by digression; the psychological acumen; the realism of the setting.

Above all, in *Manon*, Prévost created the first in a line of equivocal heroines, so different from the paragons of female virtue that populate the pages of Samuel Richardson, whose novels he translated. Her successors would include the Marguerite Gauthier of Dumas  *fils*, Merimée's *Carmen* and Wedekind's *Lulu*—all fatally attractive women who, without actively vicious propensities, bring social disgrace or moral degradation upon their lovers. Of *Manon* we are told: "No woman was ever less attached to money for its own





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Abbé Prévost, 1697-1763.

sake, and yet she could not for a moment endure the risk of being without it. She had to have pleasures and amusements, but she would never have wanted a sou if enjoyment could have been had free of charge . . . But this ceaseless round of pleasures was so essential to her being, that without it there was no relying on what she might feel or do. Although she loved me tenderly . . . I was almost sure her love would never stand firm against certain kinds of anxiety. Had I even a modest fortune she would have preferred me to anyone in the world, but I had not the slightest doubt that she would throw me over for some new protector the moment I had nothing to offer her but constancy and fidelity." Caught up in her innocent toils, Des Grieux turns successively renegade priest, card-sharper and unintentional murderer.

The thread connecting Prévost's masterpiece with *La Dame aux Camélias* and thence Verdi's *La Traviata* is laid bare quite explicitly in the Dumas novel. At the auction of Marguerite's effects that follows her death, the unnamed narrator of the story buys a copy of *Manon Lescaut*, which he finds inscribed with the words "Marguerite to Manon—humility." In the subsequent play, Armand, shortly before receiving Marguerite's letter telling him that she has left him, picks up a book which she has left lying open—*Manon Lescaut* again. His eyes fall on the passage: "I swear to you, my dear chevalier, that you are the idol of my heart and that there is no-one in the whole world whom I could love as I love you; but can you not see, poor dear soul, that in the condition to which we are reduced fidelity would be a foolish virtue?" Clearly Manon and Mar-

guerite/Violetta are spiritual sisters.

So it is not surprising that, following the worldwide success of *La Traviata*, Manon Lescaut should have made her debut on the operatic stage in a lightweight *opéra comique* of 1866 by the aged Auber, from which only the so-called "laughing song" (*C'est l'histoire amoureuse*) is occasionally heard today. In 1884 came Massenet's *Manon*, generally considered the composer's masterpiece. This fact alone would have been sufficient to deter the average composer from venturing on the same subject. Not Puccini. "Massenet feels it as a Frenchman," he told his first collaborator, Marco Praga, "with the powder and the minuets. I shall feel it as an Italian, with desperate passion."

Indeed, when he took up the idea, Puccini's financial situation was as precarious as Des Grieux's. He had made a promising start with his first opera, *Le Villi*, which he had submitted to the Concorso Sonzogno for one-act operas in 1883; and though it failed to obtain even an honorable mention from the adjudicators, a number of friends and well-wishers to whom he played the score (among them Boito) got up a subscription to mount the work at the Teatro Dal Verme, Milan, in 1884. This at once attracted the attention of Italy's foremost music publisher, Giulio Ricordi, who persuaded Puccini and his librettist, Ferdinando Fontana, to expand the piece into two acts, in which form it achieved a modest but satisfactory circulation throughout the peninsula. In addition, he provided Puccini with a monthly stipend, to be paid back from future royalties, so as to enable him to compose in peace. But the opera that followed five years later—*Edgar*, written in collaboration with the same librettist—failed to come up to expectations. Ricordi was now under pressure to discontinue the advances, which would have left Puccini in a desperate situation, since he was by this time having to support a "wife" (Elvira Gemignani, whom he would not marry until her husband's death in 1904) and two children, one of them his own. Fortunately, Ricordi dug in his heels; his faith in his young protégé never wavered; nor was it shaken by the clamorous success in 1890 of Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana*, published by the rival firm of Sonzogno. Indeed, from then on until his death in 1912, Ricordi never ceased to involve

himself in Puccini's projects, finding him librettists and subsequently pacifying them in the face of the composer's constant demands for changes and modifications.

None of Puccini's operas has a more complicated genesis than *Manon Lescaut*, nor one that has been so encrusted with legends and bedeviled by the inaccurate recollections of those who were personally involved in it. It has been left to the scholar Mario Morini to disentangle the chain of events once and for all. Unfortunately the results of his researches, together with relevant documents, have yet to be published; his conclusions, however, have been conveniently summarized by Fedele D'Amico in a program note for the Florence opera season of 1985, and may briefly be set forth here. After the experience of *Edgar*, Puccini decided that Fontana, with his bizarre, pseudo-philosophical pretensions, was



Giacomo Puccini (1858-1924) in a photo taken around the turn of the century.



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San Francisco Opera's first Puccini *Manon* was Claudia Muzio, who sang the role in 1926. No photos exist from that production; Madame Muzio is shown here in her *Traviata* costume, taken backstage in 1932.

not the librettist for him. The first to be called in to replace him was the playwright Marco Praga, whose masterpiece, *La Moglie Ideale*, would be produced soon after with Eleonora Duse in the title role (Among his less amiable diversions was a habit of teaching indecent songs to prim young English misses, who were unable to understand their meaning . . .). As Praga wrote only in prose and had never before tried his hand at a libretto, it was decided to call in Domenico Oliva, author of a recently published book of poems, to versify the text. By the early summer of 1890, the libretto was fully sketched out. It consisted of four acts, the first showed the meeting and elopement of Manon and Des Grieux, the second their life together in a humble apartment in Paris, the third Manon as mistress of the wealthy Geronte and the fourth her death in the desert near Louisiana. It was read to

Puccini at a meeting of the three collaborators at Ricordi's summer house on Lake Como and the composer professed himself highly satisfied with it.

But not for long. By June, he was writing to his sister Tomaide, "I'm back at work on *Manon Lescaut*, but the libretto is driving me to despair, so that I've had to have it redone. Even now there are no longer any poets to be found who can do something good." In September he was complaining to Giulio Ricordi of Oliva's prolixity and pointless rhetoric. Yet, it was not Oliva who bowed out but Praga. In his place came Ruggero Leoncavallo, future composer of *Pagliacci*. He had arrived in Milan from Paris with a letter of recommendation from the baritone Victor Maurel to Ricordi, whom he hoped to interest in his ambitious operatic trilogy, *Crepusculum*, based on episodes from Italian Renaissance history, of which he



# MANON LESCAUT

DRAMMA  
LIRICO DI G. Puccini



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1895 Italian poster by V. Bignami, commissioned by Giulio Ricordi.

had written both words and music. Ricordi was more impressed by Leoncavallo's talents as a librettist than as a musician, and set him to work with Oliva on *Manon Lescaut*. How much, if anything, he contributed to the final scheme we shall never know; for after a few months he, too, retired from the project. Ricordi now turned to the poet and playwright Giuseppe Giacosa, who in turn suggested his friend, Luigi Illica, little imagining, no doubt, that he would soon be Illica's partner in the libretti of Puccini's three most popular operas—*La Bohème* (1896), *Tosca* (1900) and *Madama Butterfly* (1904). For the moment, he was content to act as mediator between his future colleague and Ricordi, giving valuable advice to both. Unlike Praga and Leoncavallo, Illica versified his own contribution to the libretto (in their subsequent collaborations he would leave all that to Giacosa), matching his poetry as far as possible to those verses of Oliva that Puccini had already set. In May of 1891, Ricordi felt able to inform Puccini that "the two poets are working with great enthusiasm and it is indeed a pleasure to do business with

two such cultivated and charming people." But the difficulties were not yet over. At some time during the course of composition it had dawned on Puccini that the original scheme of the opera ran too close to that of Massenet's. He decided therefore to remove the second act in Des Grieux's apartment and move what had been Act III into its place. A new third act was devised, loosely derived from the first chapter of the novel where the narrator sees Manon in the company of several prostitutes about to be shipped off to America. Whether we owe the idea to Oliva or to Puccini himself, the scene was certainly much developed by Illica who added to it the song of the lamplighter. Several of the details in Act II surrounding Manon's toilette were also Illica's. The fourth act, Oliva declared in a letter to the *Corriere della Sera* of October 18, 1892, "has been retained exactly as I had conceived and written it." But he was so unhappy with Illica's modifications of the rest of the opera, in particular the suppression of the original second act, that he withheld his own name from the libretto. As Illica could hardly claim sole author-

ship, the opera has remained to this day "*Manon Lescaut*, lyric drama in four acts, music by Giacomo Puccini," with no mention of a librettist.

The score was finished by the autumn of 1892, and the premiere planned for the Carnival Season of 1893—not at La Scala, Milan, where all efforts were directed towards the *prima* of Verdi's *Falstaff*, but at the scarcely less prestigious Teatro Regio, Turin. The cast included Cesira Ferrani in the title role, Giuseppe Cremonini as Des Grieux, Achille Moro as Lescaut, Alessandro Polonini as Geronte; the conductor was Alessandro Pomè. Produced on February 1, *Manon Lescaut* was an unqualified triumph. None of Puccini's later operas was so instantly taken to heart by critics and public alike. All his debts—including Ricordi's advances—were wiped out at a stroke. Puccini would have no more financial worries for the rest of his life.

Ricordi was quick to exploit his protégé's success. When the leading opera houses of Europe began to clamor for Verdi's *Falstaff*, the publisher made it available to them on condition that they





Dorothy Kirsten was *Manon Lescaut* at the San Francisco Opera in 1950, 1956 and 1967. The photo was taken in 1967, during a rehearsal for Act II.

perform *Manon Lescaut* in the same season. Was this an entirely wise move? Certainly it caused some resentment at the Royal Italian Opera, Covent Garden, where both works arrived in 1894. The London public, which had applauded *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Pagliacci* to the echo, was less enthusiastic about the new work that had been thrust upon them. One critic, however, was in no doubt of its superior worth. "In *Cavalleria* and *Pagliacci*," wrote Bernard Shaw, "I can find nothing but Donizettian opera rationalized, condensed, filled in and thoroughly brought up to date; but in *Manon Lescaut* the domain of Italian opera is enlarged by an annexation of German territory. The first act, which is as the opening of any version of *Manon* need be, is also unmistakably symphonic in its treatment. There is genuine symphonic modification, development, and occasionally combination of the thematic material, all in a dramatic way, but also in a musically homogeneous way, so that the act is really a single movement with episodes, instead of being a succession of separate numbers linked together, to conform to the modern

fashion, by substituting interrupted cadences for full closes and parading a Leitmotif occasionally." He concluded, "On that and other accounts, Puccini looks to me more like the heir of Verdi than any of his rivals." He was not mistaken.

However, the genesis of *Manon Lescaut* did not end with its first performance. Having seen the work on stage, Illica realized that the omission of the original second act required some further elucidation of the story. Accordingly, he reworked the finale of Act I so as to allow a short dialogue in which Lescaut explains to Geronte that the lovers will go to Paris where Des Grieux's resources will soon run dry so that the pleasure-loving Manon will be only too happy to leave him for a richer man. Then, too, Puccini himself remained for a long time doubtful about Manon's final aria "Sola, perduta, abbandonata" and in successive editions he either shortened it or omitted it altogether. It was left to Toscanini to persuade him to re-instate it in full for a famous revival at La Scala, Milan in 1922, which produced the definitive version of the score.

In the years that followed, Puccini's third opera was inevitably partly eclipsed by his more mature works as well as by Massenet's more dramatically skillful treatment of the same subject. It is easy to pick holes in *Manon Lescaut*. The omission of the scene in Des Grieux's Paris apartment together with Manon's first act of treachery prevents a full rounding of her character, so that we never really get to know her as we know Verdi's Violetta. Nor is it clear why Lescaut, having helped Geronte in Act I, should turn his coat in Act II. It is unfortunate, too, that all the gaiety should be concentrated in the first two acts, while the remaining two are full of unrelieved gloom (a residue of Leoncavallo's influence, perhaps, of whose *La Bohème* the same is true?). In a word, the faults of *Manon Lescaut*, like its virtues, are those of a young man. If the dramatic layout shows a certain inexperience, this is more than counterbalanced by self-confidence, abundant vitality and a wealth of spontaneous melodic invention. Here, like so many composers from Handel onwards, Puccini has not hesitated to recycle earlier ideas. The "madrigal" in Act



# ARTIST PROFILES

Dorothy Kirsten and Robert Ilosfalvy in the final act of San Francisco Opera's 1967 staging of Manon Lescaut. NORTON

It originated as the "Agnus Dei" of a Mass composed in 1880. The minuet danced by Manon and Geronte draws on two minuets for string quartet that also date from his early years. Another piece for string quartet entitled *Crisantemi*, intended as an elegy on the death of Duke Amedeo d'Aosta, supplied material for moments in the last two acts. The opening strain of Des Grieux's aria, "Donna non vidi mai" can be traced to a student setting of Felice Romani's "Menti all'avviso," made in 1883. But the finest and most original feature of *Manon Lescaut* is the embarkation scene of Act III. If it has the architectural function of the traditional "pezzo concertato," found in many a central finale of Italian romantic opera, it is also for the first time an action piece in which time never stands still. Here, in other words, is Puccini the dramatist at full strength, with whom Massenet is not to be compared; which helps to explain why today *Manon* is a charming period piece, while *Manon Lescaut* is an ever-green. ■



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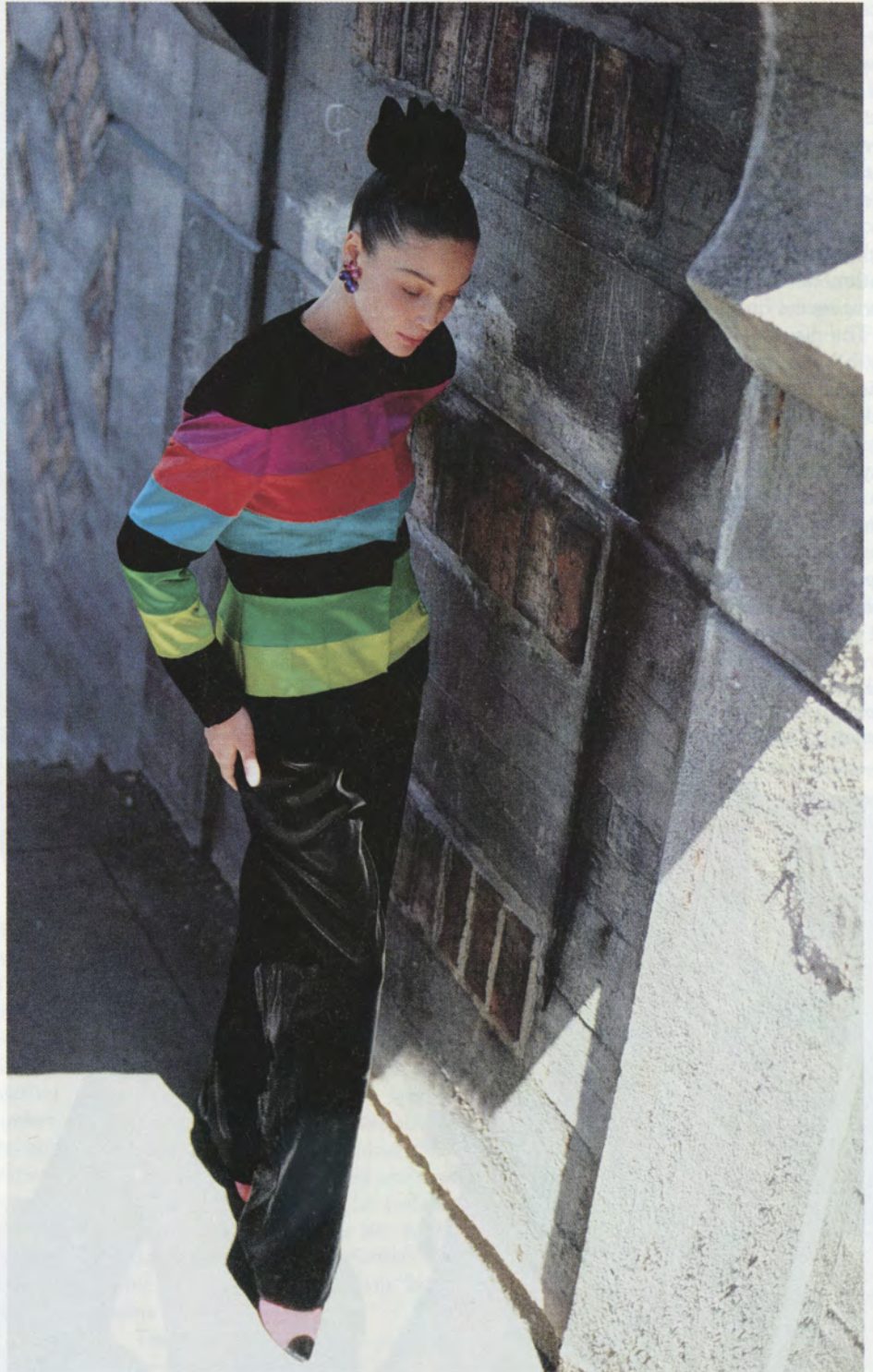
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PILAR LORENGAR



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Spanish soprano **Pilar Lorengar**, a favorite of San Francisco Opera audiences since her American debut here in 1964, sings the title role in *Manon Lescaut*. Born in Saragossa, she started her career in the field of the Spanish zarzuela, producing a large number of recordings which are still highly popular in her native country. One of the most highly-honored and beloved singers at the Deutsche Oper Berlin, she was awarded the title of Kammersängerin in 1963, while in 1984, that company bestowed on her the rare appellation of Honored Member. While appearing at Berlin on a regular basis, Miss Lorengar developed her remarkable international career, singing at the Salzburg Festival, at Vienna, London, Paris, Brussels, Milan's La Scala, Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires, Mexico City, Israel, Japan, Australia, etc. In her U.S. operatic debut season with the San Francisco Opera, she appeared as Liù in *Turandot*, Desdemona in *Otello*, the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, and Micaëla in *Carmen*. Since then, she has been applauded here as Eva in *Die Meistersinger*, Elsa in *Lohengrin*, Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*, as Mélisande, Madama Butterfly, Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*, Mistress Ford in *Falstaff*, Elisabeth de Valois in *Don Carlos* and, in concert performances, Agathe in the 1985 Ring Festival *Der Freischütz*. She appeared here most recently last fall in a recital with pianist Alicia de Larrocha. Following her Metropolitan Opera debut in *Don Giovanni*, she has returned there in many leading roles, including Pamina in the 1966 Chagall-designed *Zauberflöte*. She was also heard with the companies of Chicago, Dallas, Miami, Denver, Cincinnati, and Washington, D.C. In 1984, she appeared at Salzburg and San Francisco in programs of zarzuela arias with Plácido Domingo, scoring a huge success, and resulting in a Grammy Award-winning recording. Her 1985 credits include *Tosca* at the Sydney Opera House and *Desdemona* opposite Plácido Domingo's *Otello* in a unique performance in the Madrid football stadium before more than 40,000 people. Last year she scored a major success in Berlin as Valentine in Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots*. Renowned around the world

as a concert artist, Miss Lorengar has made a large number of song albums and complete opera recordings, among which are *La Traviata*, *Don Giovanni*, *Die Zauberflöte*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Così fan tutte*, *La Bohème*, *Medea*, *The Bartered Bride* and Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice* and *Iphigénie en Tauride*. Among her honors, two unusual Spanish ones stand out, the Saragossa gold medal "Lazo de Isabel la Católica" and a street that was named after her in her native city, bearing the name of "Calle de la Soprano Pilar Lorengar."

Mezzo-soprano **Emily Manhart** returns to San Francisco Opera to perform the Madrigal Singer in *Manon Lescaut* and a Flower Maiden in *Parsifal*. She made her Company debut last year as the Page in *Salome*, a role she has also performed with Houston Grand Opera. After earning her master's of music degree from Ohio State University, she participated in San Francisco Opera Center's Merola Opera Program in 1984 and performed Tisbe and the title role in Western Opera Theater's 1984 tour of *La Cenerentola*. She returned to the Merola Opera Program in 1986, appearing that summer as Dora-bella in the Merola production of *Così fan tutte*. For the past two years, she has been a member of the Wolftrap Opera Company, singing Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Hermia in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Melide in *L'Ormino* in 1987 and as Lucretia in *The Rape of Lucretia* last summer. During the 1986-87 season she was a member of the Houston Opera Studio, appearing as Clotilde in *Norma* and Meg Page in *Falstaff*. Miss Manhart was a national winner of the 1984 Metropolitan National Council Auditions. In the San Francisco Opera Center Auditions Grand Finals, she received the Jean Donnell Memorial Award in 1984 and the Cenacolo Award in 1986. In June of this year she made her debut at the Spoleto, USA festival as Tezeuco in Graun's *Montezuma*.

Czechoslovakian tenor **Peter Dvorský** returns to San Francisco Opera as Chevalier Des Grieux in *Manon Lescaut*, a role he sang opposite Mirella Freni with the Vienna State

Opera in 1986. He also appeared as Des Grieux on that company's tour to Japan, repeating the role in Vienna last season. He made his San Francisco Opera debut as the Duke in *Rigoletto* during the 1981 Summer Season. He studied voice at the Bratislava State Conservatory and made his stage debut as Lensky in *Eugene Onegin* with the Slovak National Theater in 1973. A prize-winner in several international competitions, including the 1974 Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow, Dvorský bowed with the Vienna State Opera during the 1976 season, when he appeared as the Italian Singer in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Alfredo in *La Traviata* and the Duke in *Rigoletto*. The role of the Duke was also the vehicle of his Bavarian State Opera debut in 1977, the same year he made his Metropolitan Opera debut in *La Traviata*. In quick succession he made successful debuts at Covent Garden (as the Duke in 1978), at La Scala (as Rodolfo in *La Bohème* in 1979) and in Zurich (as Werther in 1979). A member of the Vienna State Opera, Dvorský has sung many roles there, including last season's *La Bohème*; *Tosca* with Grace Bumbry; *Rusalka* with Gabriela Beňáčková; *Eugene Onegin* with Mirella Freni under Ozawa; and *Un Ballo in Maschera* under Abbado. He also appeared in *Manon Lescaut* in Hamburg, in *Madama Butterfly* at the Deutsche Oper Berlin, *Un Ballo in Maschera* at Covent Garden and the Bavarian State Opera; and *Eugene Onegin* at Covent Garden. He also sang the role of Maurizio in *Adriana Lecouvreur* for the first time at the Teatro Comunale di Bologna. His recordings include the complete *Cavalleria Rusticana*, *La Bohème*, *Werther*, *L'Elisir d'Amore*, *The Bartered Bride*, *Madama Butterfly*, Dvořák's *Stabat Mater* and Requiem, a disc of opera arias, as well as Janáček's *Jenůfa*, *Katya Kabanova* and *The Makropulos Case*.

A native of Brussels, baritone **Marcel Vanaud** makes his San Francisco Opera debut as Lescaut in *Manon Lescaut*. A graduate of the Brussels Conservatory, he sang for seven years at the Opera de Wallonie in Liège, a period during which he was invited to sing in Strasbourg, Marseilles and





MARCEL VANAUD

Palermo. These engagements led to several Mozart roles in Liège, including Masetto in *Don Giovanni*, Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte* and Figaro in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, in addition to Raimbaud in *Le Comte Ory* and Schaunard in *La Bohème*. Since 1983, Vanaud has been singing throughout Europe in such theaters as Geneva (*Alceste*), Brussels (*Boris Godunov*, *Don Giovanni*, *Figaro* and Ravel's *Alyssa*), Lille (*Les Mamelles de Tirésias* and *Così fan tutte*), Liège (*Faust*, *The Magic Flute*, *Carmen* and *Figaro*), the Châtelet in Paris (*Don Giovanni*), Toulouse (*Comte Ory*) and Vienna (*Così fan tutte*). He made his American debut in a concert version of *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges* with the Pittsburgh Symphony, and has appeared with the New York City Opera and New Orleans Opera in *Les Pêcheurs de Perles*, Tulsa Opera as Rodrigo in *Don Carlo*, the Montreal Opera as Lescaut in *Manon Lescaut* and the Santa Fe Opera in the title role of *Le Nozze di Figaro*. Vanaud can be heard on several recordings, including Franck's *Beatitudes* with Radio France under Armin Jordan, *The Tales of Hoffmann* and *Le Roi d'Ys*. For a forthcoming disc in honor of the bicentennial of the French Revolution, he recorded "La Marseillaise" with Michel Plasson.

Italian bass-baritone **Renato Capecchi** returns to San Francisco Opera as Geronte de Ravoir in *Manon Lescaut*. He appeared here last fall as Dr. Bartolo in opening night performances of *The Barber of Seville*, and has sung in a total of 14 productions with the Company since his 1968 debut. He made his professional debut with the Italian Radio in 1948, followed by his stage debut as Amonasro in *Aida* with the Teatro Comunale of Reggio Emilia in 1949. A familiar figure on the world's foremost operatic stages, Capecchi has a repertoire of over 300 roles and has recorded more than 30 complete operas, as well as several special programs of Italian music. For the 1976 Merola Opera Program he directed the American stage premiere of Donizetti's *L'Ajo nell'Imbarazzo* and Gazzaniga's *Il Convitato di Pietra* at the Paul Masson Winery and instructed the young singers in classic commedia dell'arte traditions. Other directorial credits in the United States include *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* with the Chautauqua and New Orleans Opera, *Il*



RENATO CAPECCHI

*Matrimonio Segreto* in Santa Fe, *Così fan tutte* in Connecticut, *Don Pasquale* and *Gianni Schicchi* in Philadelphia and *La Fille du Régiment* at New York City Opera. Among his many engagements last season were *Così fan tutte* in Houston and Philadelphia, *Tosca*, *La Bohème* and *Werther* at the Metropolitan Opera, *Le Convenienze ed Inconvenienze Teatrali* at the Teatro La Fenice in Venice, *Don Giovanni* at the Ravinia Festival in Chicago and *The Marriage of Figaro* at the Ottawa National Art Festival. As a teacher, Capecchi has contributed to many workshops and master classes in five countries. He frequently oversees the young artists at La Scala in Milan and has assisted with the educational programs of the Teatro Comunale in Florence, the Opéra-Comique Studio in Paris, the Amsterdam Opera Studio, the London Opera Center and the Vienna Opera. In the United States, in addition to San Francisco Opera's Merola Program, he has taught in Philadelphia at the Academy of Vocal Arts, at the Chautauqua Festival, the Juilliard School of Music in New York City, and at the University of Colorado in Boulder. His future plans include the Paris Opera production of *Orphée aux Enfers*, *The Barber of Seville* for the Australian Opera, and a return to the Metropolitan Opera for *La Bohème* and *Werther*.

Tenor **Douglas Wunsch** sings four roles this season: Selimo in *Maometto II*, Edmondo in *Manon Lescaut*, the First Knight of the Holy Grail in *Parsifal* and Rodolfo in the Student/Family matinee performances of *La Bohème*. A native of Washington state, he is now in his second year as an Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center. Last season, Wunsch made his Company debut, appearing in *The Magic Flute*, *The Queen of Spades* and as Alfredo in the Student/Family performances of *La Traviata*. During the Spring of this year he sang Mendoza in the Opera Center Showcase productions of *Rosina*. Showcase credits from previous years include Robert in Hindemith's *There and Back*, Charles in Hindemith's *The Long Christmas Dinner*, Albazar in Rossini's *The Turk in Italy*, Jean in Sauguet's *Le Plumet du Colonel* and Samuel in Rorem's *Three Sisters Who Are Not Sisters*. Wunsch's local credits include Alfred in *Die Fledermaus* with the



DOUGLAS WUNSCH

Marin Opera Company, a role he repeated this spring with the Spokane Symphony. He has also performed with the Northwestern Symphony Orchestra, the San Francisco Symphony Pops and the San Francisco Ballet. Last June, Wunsch appeared with Luciano Pavarotti in the elder tenor's San Francisco Civic Auditorium concert.



DENNIS PETERSEN

American tenor **Dennis Petersen** is a Danc-ing Master in *Manon Lescaut*, the Village Drunk in *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, and Isépo 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 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





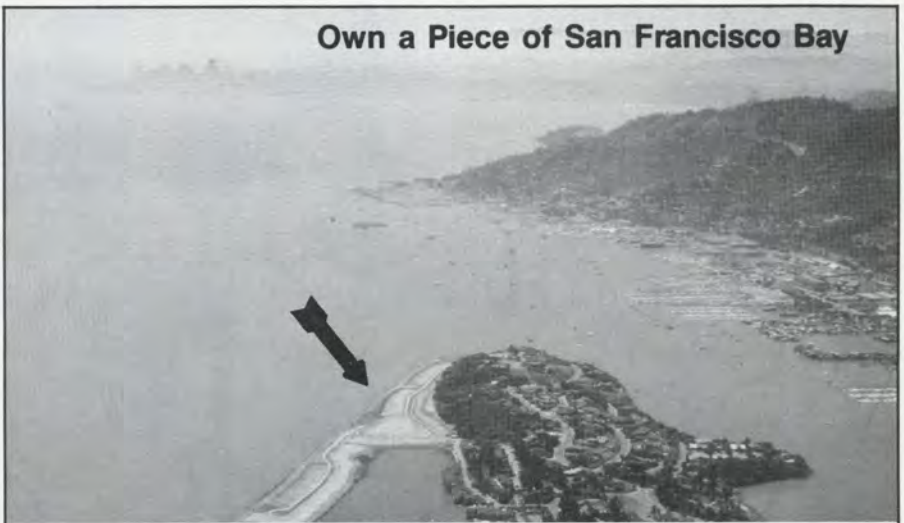
KEVIN ANDERSON

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 Vorpall Gallery.

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 Beppe in *Pagliacci* and Remendado in *Carmen* for

*continued on p.41*

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# Manon Lescaut

Opera in four acts by GIACOMO PUCCINI

Based on *L'Histoire du Chevalier des Grieux et de Manon Lescaut*, by the Abbé Prévost

# Manon Lescaut

(in Italian)

*Conductor*

John Pritchard

*Stage Director*

Grischa Asagaroff

*Set Designer*

Allen Charles Klein

*Costume Designer*

Walter Mahoney

*Lighting Designer*

Joan Arhelger

*Chorus Director*

Ian Robertson

*Musical Preparation*

Robert Morrison

Susanna Lemberskaya

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Joseph De Rugeriis

*Assistant Stage Director*

Fred Frumberg

*Stage Manager*

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Turin, February 1, 1893

First San Francisco Opera performance:

September 28, 1926

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 16 AT 2:00

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 19 AT 7:30

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 26 AT 8:00

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 29 AT 8:00

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 1 AT 8:00

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 4 AT 8:00

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9 AT 7:30

## CAST

(in order of appearance)

<i>Edmondo</i>	Douglas Wunsch
<i>Cavaliere des Grieux</i>	Peter Dvorský
<i>Manon Lescaut</i>	Pilar Lorengar
<i>Geronte de Ravoir</i>	Renato Capecchi
<i>Lescaut</i>	Marcel Vanaud*
<i>An innkeeper</i>	Thomas Potter
<i>A madrigal singer</i>	Emily Manhart
<i>Madrigalists</i>	Joy Garbukas
	Dallas Lane
	Page Swift
	Alexandra Nehra
<i>A dancing master</i>	Dennis Petersen
<i>Sergeant of the archers</i>	Raymond Murcell
<i>A lamplighter</i>	Kevin Anderson
<i>A prison sergeant</i>	Dale Travis
<i>A sea captain</i>	Philip Skinner

*Students, townspeople, singers, dancers, sailors, soldiers, courtesans,  
ladies and gentlemen, police guards*

\*San Francisco Opera debut

TIME AND PLACE: Early 18th century; France and Louisiana

ACT I Courtyard of an inn at Amiens

INTERMISSION

ACT II Manon's apartment in Geronte's house

INTERMISSION

ACT III The harbor of Le Havre

INTERMISSION

ACT IV A barren wasteland in Louisiana

Supertitles for *Manon Lescaut* provided by a generous and most appreciated gift from William and Eloise Rollnick.

Supertitles by Christopher Bergen, San Francisco Opera.

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

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

*The performance will last approximately three hours and fifteen minutes.*



## Manon Lescaut/Synopsis

### ACT I—*Courtyard of an inn at Amiens.*

A merry crowd of students, soldiers and townsfolk await the arrival of the stagecoach. Edmondo, a friend of Des Grieux, serenades the young women, an example soon followed in a mocking vein by the young Cavaliere himself. The coach bringing Manon arrives and Des Grieux is immediately captivated by her beauty. When her brother, Lescaut, and their traveling companion, Geronte, an aged and wealthy roué, enter the inn, Des Grieux introduces himself. To his dismay, he learns that she is on her way to a convent on her father's orders. They are interrupted by Lescaut calling Manon from the inn, but she promises to return as soon as possible. Alone, Des Grieux muses on her beauty. He wanders off as Geronte appears in conversation with the innkeeper. The old libertine plans to abduct Manon for himself, a plot Edmondo overhears and hastens to tell Des Grieux. When Manon returns, Des Grieux warns her of the danger she faces and pleads with her to elope with him. Manon hesitates only for a moment before the two of them rush into the coach that Geronte had conveniently ordered and drive off to Paris. Geronte returns looking for Manon, but Edmondo and the students tell him that she and Des Grieux have fled. Lescaut, who had been playing cards and carousing with the students, assures the humiliated and outraged Geronte that Manon will not stay long with an impoverished suitor, and that he will soon persuade her to leave Des Grieux.

### ACT II—*Manon's apartment in Geronte's house, Paris.*

Lescaut's prediction has come true. Manon now lives as Geronte's mistress, surrounded by every possible luxury—but she is bored and lonely. Her brother arrives and she asks about Des Grieux, admitting that her riches and opulence are but a poor substitute for the love she once knew. Lescaut tells her Des Grieux is now a gambler and, should he win a substantial amount of money, will be certain to return. Their conversation is broken off as Manon's morning reception begins. First a group of singers offer a madrigal and then Geronte and his friends arrive with the dancing master who instructs Manon in the minuet. Lescaut hurries off to inform Des Grieux where he can find Manon. The guests finally leave and, as Manon prepares to follow them, Des Grieux suddenly appears in the doorway. Initial resentment soon turns to passionate love. When Geronte unexpectedly returns and finds Manon in Des Grieux's arms, he feigns indifference, but on leaving utters a threat. Lescaut returns, warning his sister that Geronte has

gone to the police with a complaint against her. Manon and Des Grieux prepare to flee. Manon, however, hates to leave the luxuries Geronte has lavished on her and delays their escape by gathering her jewels and taking them with her hidden in a shawl. The delay is fatal. When the soldiers and guards arrive to arrest her, Manon is so terrified that she allows her shawl to fall down and the jewels to scatter as she is led away.

### ACT III—*The harbor of Le Havre.*

(Manon's sentence is banishment, with other women of loose character, to the then French possession of Louisiana. A brief orchestral *intermezzo* recalls Des Grieux's love for Manon, the journey to Le Havre, and her despair at the tragedy befalling her.)

It is just before dawn. Manon's prison lies in the shadows. Des Grieux and Lescaut, planning to free her from imprisonment, have bribed a guard. Manon, completely demoralized, appears at her prison window and Des Grieux tries to raise her spirits. A lamplighter breaks off their conversation with his mournful song. Des Grieux reassures Manon that they will soon be together, but a cannon shot and Lescaut's breathless return reveal their plan has gone awry. A drum roll summons the imprisoned women for their deportation to America. As they step forward, the crowd cynically comments on their appearance, but Lescaut fires their sympathy for Manon. As she prepares to go aboard, Des Grieux bursts from the crowd to be by her side. A guard threatens him, but he, terrified at the prospect of losing Manon, appeals to the ship's captain to be taken along with her, no matter how lowly the capacity in which he may be required to serve on board. Touched in spite of himself, the captain agrees and Des Grieux and Manon set out for the New World together.

### ACT IV—*A barren wasteland in Louisiana.*

Manon and Des Grieux have left New Orleans—the victims of jealousy and intrigue—and, totally exhausted, arrive at an arid stretch of land in search of shelter. Ill and in despair, Manon regrets having brought such disaster to the man she loves, and begs Des Grieux to leave her to die alone and to save himself. He agrees to leave her for just a short time in order to seek food and refuge. As night arrives, Manon, alone and crazed with fear, laments her fate. Des Grieux returns empty-handed and finds Manon delirious. As her strength fails, she kisses him in a vain effort to hold on to life. Telling Des Grieux that time will obliterate her sins, "but my love will never die," Manon dies.



# Manon Lescaut

Photos taken in rehearsal by Larry Merkle



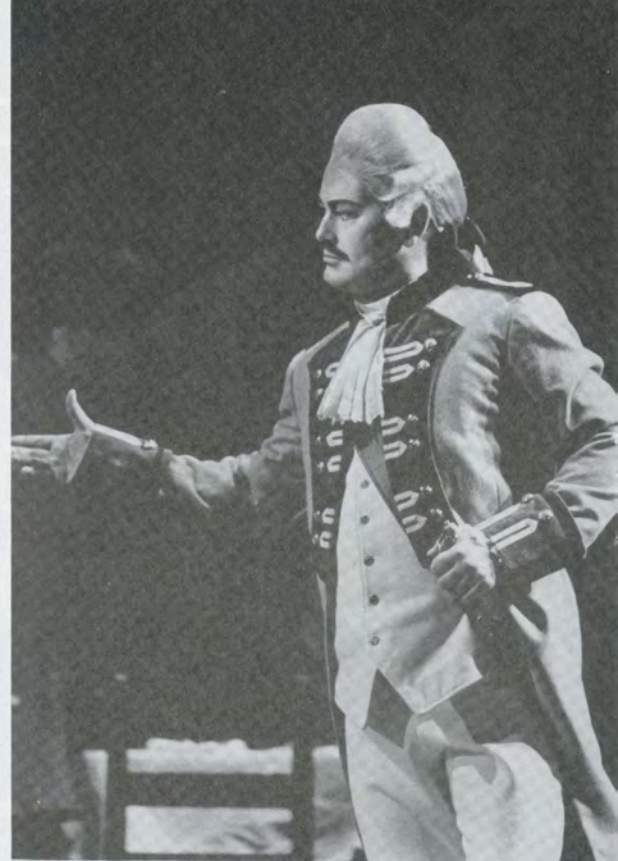
*Pilar Lorengar*





*Peter Dvorský, Pilar Lorengar*

*(below) Pilar Lorengar, Peter Dvorský*



*Marcel Vanaud*

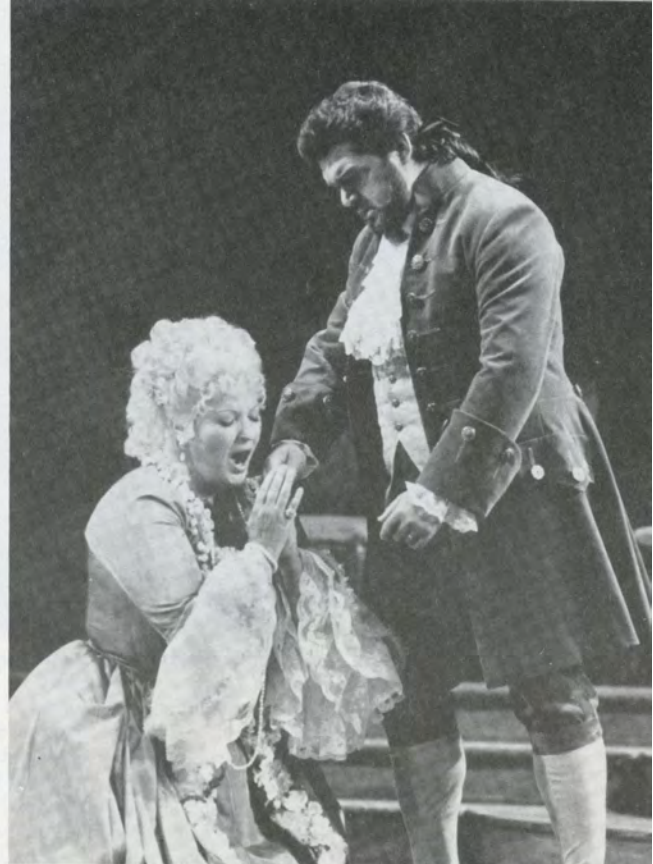
*(below) Pilar Lorengar*







*Renato Capecchi, Pilar Lorengar*



*Pilar Lorengar, Peter Dvorský*



*(below) Peter Dvorský*



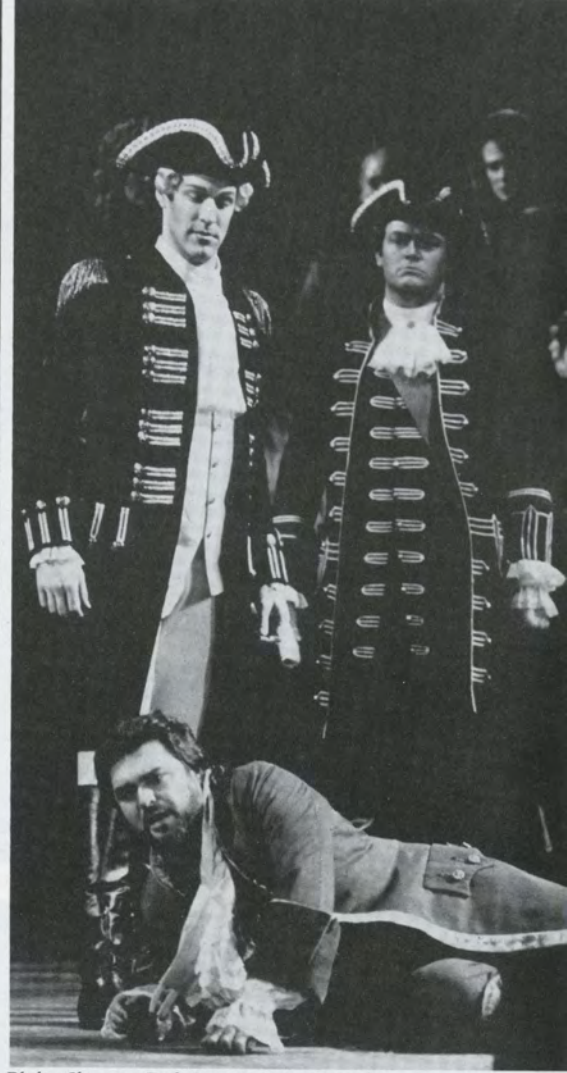
*Pilar Lorengar, Peter Dvorský*





*(Center) Emily Manhart; (L. to r.) Page Swift, Alexandra Nehra, Joy Garbukas, Dallas Lane*

*(below) Douglas Wunsch, Peter Dvorský*



*Philip Skinner, Dale Travis, Peter Dvorský*



*Pilar Lorengar, Marcel Vanaud*





THOMAS POTTER

continued from p.33

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



PHILIP SKINNER

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 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 Chorale, 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, Fernando 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*.

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



DALE TRAVIS

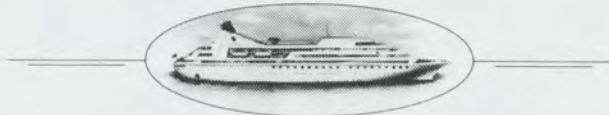
and toured with Western Opera Theater for two seasons, performing in *Don Pasquale* and *La Bohème*, a production which also traveled to China. Travis is originally from New Jersey and has attended Susquehanna University and the University of Cincinnati's College Conservatory of Music. His college credits 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.

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



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SIR JOHN PRITCHARD

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 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.

Returning for his sixth season with the San Francisco Opera, German director **Grischa Asagaroff** directs Puccini's *Manon Lescaut*, a production that he directed during his most recent assignment here in 1983. While studying theater science, music and art history at the University of Munich, he served as stage manager and second assistant at the Bavarian State Opera, where he worked on over 70 different operas from all periods with such directors as Rudolf Hartmann, Günther Rennert, Otto Schenk, August Everding, and the late Jean-Pierre Ponnelle. From 1971 to 1979 he was first assistant and director for the Deutsche Oper am Rhein in Düsseldorf. His first assignment with the San Francisco Opera was assisting Ponnelle on the 1977 production of Mozart's *Idomeneo* and he served director Nikolaus Lehnhoff in a similar capacity for *Die Frau ohne Schatten* in 1980 and *Salome* during the 1982 Fall Season. Other assignments for the Company include the staging of Ponnelle productions of *Rigoletto* (Summer 1981), *La Cenerentola* (Fall 1982), and *Otello* (Fall 1983). From 1979 to 1986, he was principal stage director at the Zurich Opera as well as the director of the opera





GRISCHA ASAGAROFF

studio, and is currently principal stage director and production manager at the Vienna State Opera. Asagaroff's own productions include *La Cenerentola* in Athens, *L'Orfeo* at the Split Festival, *Così fan tutte* in Chicago, *Carmen* in Pittsburgh, *Simon Boccanegra* and *Tosca* in Houston, *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre* in Saarbrücken, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *Maria Stuarda* and *Eugene Onegin* in Vienna, and over 10 operas in Zurich, including new productions of *Fedora*, *Maria Stuarda*, *Rigoletto* and *Macbeth*. Future engagements include Mozart's *Lucio Silla* in Vienna, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Nabucco* and *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* in Zurich, and the complete *Ring cycle* in Saarbrücken.

**Allen Charles Klein** designed the sets for *Manon Lescaut*, a production that was seen here in 1983. He made his San Francisco Opera debut in 1982, with the sets and costumes for *Turandot*. A native of New York, Klein began his studies as a painter, soon becoming a winner in the Metropolitan Opera Guild design competition. He continued his education at Boston University and made his 1964 debut at Houston Grand Opera designing the lighting, scenery, and principal costumes for *Don Giovanni*. His creations have appeared on the stages of the opera companies of Dallas, Houston, San Diego, Washington, D.C., Miami, Philadelphia, Santa Fe, Seattle, Baltimore, Vancouver, Montreal and Toronto. Klein's debut production for the Metropolitan Opera in 1973 was *The Tales of Hoffmann*. His projects have included a number of world and American premiere productions, such as Villa-Lobos's *Yerma* (1971) and Cavalli's *L'Egisto* (1974) for the Santa Fe Opera; Floyd's *Of Mice and Men* (1970) for Seattle Opera; Pasatieri's *The Seagull* (1973) for Houston Grand Opera; and Henze's *The Young Lord* (1967) for San Diego Opera. He made his European debut in 1981 with *L'Egisto* for the Scottish Opera, a production seen on that company's tour to Venice, Paris, London and Edinburgh. Other projects include *La Cenerentola* for the Glyndebourne Festival, *Lulu* for the Vienna Staatsoper, and *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* in Berlin. During the 1986-87 season, Klein



ALLEN CHARLES KLEIN

designed the sets for *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* for Santa Fe Opera, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* and *Salome* for Miami Opera, and *The Turn of the Screw* for Philadelphia Opera.



WALTER MAHONEY

Resident Costume Shop Manager for the San Francisco Opera, **Walter Mahoney** designed the costumes for *Manon Lescaut*, and also interpreted the late Nicola Benois's costume designs for *Maometto II*. Last fall he designed the costumes for Ruth Ann Swenson in *Roméo et Juliette*, and for Hoffmann's three loves (Olympia, Antonia and Giulietta) in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*. Additional Company credits include the designs for Mirella Freni in *Manon Lescaut* (Fall 1983) and *La Sonnambula* with Frederica von Stade (Fall 1984). He also designed the individual costumes for Marilyn Horne in *Samson et Dalila* (Fall 1983); Katia Ricciarelli in *La Traviata* (Fall 1984); Renata Scotto and Cheryl Parrish in *Werther* (Fall 1985); and Gena Dimitrova in *Il Trovatore* (Summer 1986). The native San Franciscan began his local association in 1943 in the Wardrobe Department, and worked with Goldstein & Company, the then-supplier of costumes for San Francisco Opera, until 1971. Since then, he has been devoting all his time to San Francisco Opera's Costume Shop. In addition to his operatic designs, Mahoney's



JOAN ARHELGER

creations have also been seen at numerous Bay Area theater companies, including the Actor's Workshop.

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



## Company Profiles: Ed Corley

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

One of the most exciting things about the year 1988 for San Francisco Opera chorister Edward Corley is that the opera season—his tenth with the company—ends with *La Gioconda*, “my debut opera.” The Company’s production was new in 1979, the year he first sang in it. And, in addition to featuring role debuts by Luciano Pavarotti and Renata Scotto, it was taped for a PBS telecast and was the subject of a four-part television documentary. “The day of the telecast the air was absolutely thick with the tension and the excitement around here,” the 47-year-old tenor says. “That performance remains one of my best memories.”

Corley was a student at the San Francisco Conservatory, on a full vocal scholarship, when he first joined the Company, albeit in another capacity. “A friend of mine at the Conservatory told me about a job in the public relations department at the Opera House, so I rushed over to interview for it,” Corley recalls. “I was hired the same day, and went to work as a go-fer, basically.

“That season,” he continues, “I heard Plácido Domingo and Katia Ricciarelli in *Otello*—and, while they were wonderful, what I remember best is that incredible opening chorus. The chorus was so fantastic—so dramatic—that, by the end of the first scene, I was practically in tears. That’s when I knew that I wanted to be part of that organization.”

Although he was accepted into the Chorus after his first audition, he now almost wonders why. He decided to audition with another item from this year’s repertory, des Grieux’s “Donna non vidi mai,” from *Manon Lescaut*, simply because he loved it. “The audition was very important for me, so I

worked very hard to prepare for it,” he recalls, “but I was having a lot of trouble with the aria. I decided to ask Willie Waters, who was Mr. Adler’s assistant at the time, for help. He kindly coached it with me several times. In a moment of exasperation during our last session, he looked at me and said, ‘Ed, don’t ever sing this aria again.’ During the audition, [then chorus director] Richard Bradshaw listened with a half-bemused, half-pained expression on his face. The high B-flat, in particular, just didn’t come out right that day, and Richard just looked at me in wonder and asked, ‘How *did* you do that?’ But he must have heard something of interest, because he invited me into the chorus anyway.”

Born in Indianapolis, Indiana and raised in Los Angeles, Corley has lived a life in which music has always been present. “My mother, who is very musical, still plays piano in my father’s church,” he explains, “and all my brothers and sisters sing, too. Some of my earliest musical memories have to do with my aunt on my mother’s side. She used to get us kids together, give us a pitch, and then make us sing in three- and four-part harmonies. Mostly as a result of the training I got from her, I was always in some kind of choir from that point on, and I was a church soloist for a long time.”

His family, however musical, was, nevertheless, far from pleased when Corley announced that he was quitting a secure job as an executive trainee—“I was training to be a men’s clothes buyer”—to go into music professionally. “But let’s face it,” he says, with characteristic honesty and enthusiasm, “you’re looking at a ham. I heard the stage calling, and I wanted to be on it. I

MESSICK



Ed Corley as himself.



love performing."

On the advice of his voice teacher in Los Angeles ("who was determined to kick me out the door") he auditioned for the Conservatory in Los Angeles—and left for San Francisco shortly after hearing that he was accepted with a full scholarship. There he studied with the noted tenor Leopold Simoneau and with Lenoir Hosack. "What I learned from both of them," he says, "was technique—how to use, and save, the voice."

His experience with the opera chorus has convinced him that sound technique is as important for choristers as it is for the superstars, if not even more so. "If you think about it," he says, "we sing more than anyone else, at least during the season. The principals have days off between performances. The chorus, by contrast, rehearses in the afternoon and then sings almost every night. And we're in three to four operas at a time. My only gripe, if I have a gripe at all, is that there are some conductors who don't seem to appreciate that."

"Understandably, I suppose, they seem to care only about the sound 'right now.' But they don't understand what it does to us to have to sing full throttle six hours a day, days on end. I wish they could understand that it's sometimes best in the long run if we can mark, rather than sing full voice, at least in some rehearsals. We do need to take care of our voices to get through these exhausting seasons."

Corley has found all three chorus directors of his tenure to be demanding, if in strongly contrasting ways. "Bradshaw was a wild individual," he recalls, "witty and with lots of energy. His commanding spirit got us all psyched up to learn our music, but we were exhausted by the end of every rehearsal. He and Ernest Knell were a good team, in that they were complementary. Ernest was great for the difficult, nitpicking work, learning the notes and the cues. Bradshaw was good for getting the grand sweep."

"Our new director, Ian Robertson, has an entirely different temperament. He works very methodically and very meticulously with us—sometimes he has us sing everything with staccato phrasing, to sharpen the

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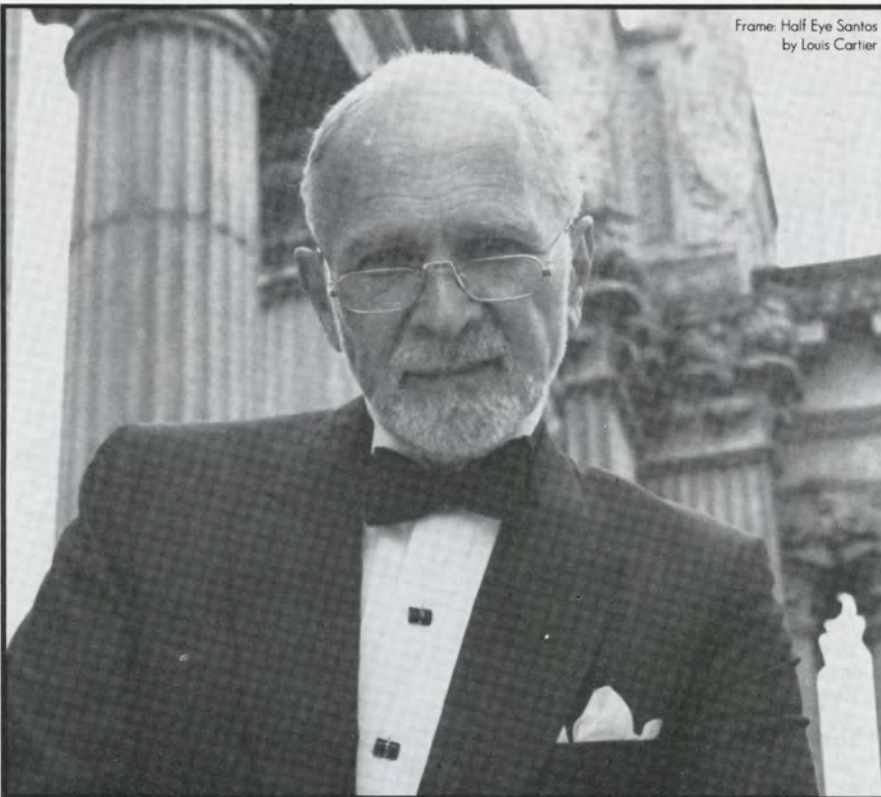


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"Sure, it's been hard for some people to make the transition from director to director, but each of them has had something different to offer, and it's helped us to stay alert and versatile. Those are important qualities, when you consider that each of the conductors we work under expects something different as well."

Corley cites the late Jean-Pierre Ponnelle's work with the chorus on *Falstaff* as his most artistically rewarding experience. "There was a big, chaotic scene in the second act that just wasn't coming together at all," he recalls. "Abruptly, Jean-Pierre stopped everything. After thinking for a second, he looked at four of the choristers and said, 'You do this,' 'You do this,' and so forth—and everything just fell into place. To see that incredible genius clear that scene up in a few minutes . . . Well, let me just say that I'll be doing my best for him in *Flying Dutchman* and *Così fan tutte* this season."

His single most memorable experience on the War Memorial stage was the famous *Aida* performance in which Leontyne Price, after a long absence from the role, stood in for an ailing Margaret Price. "That great lady gave





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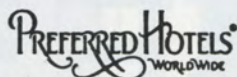
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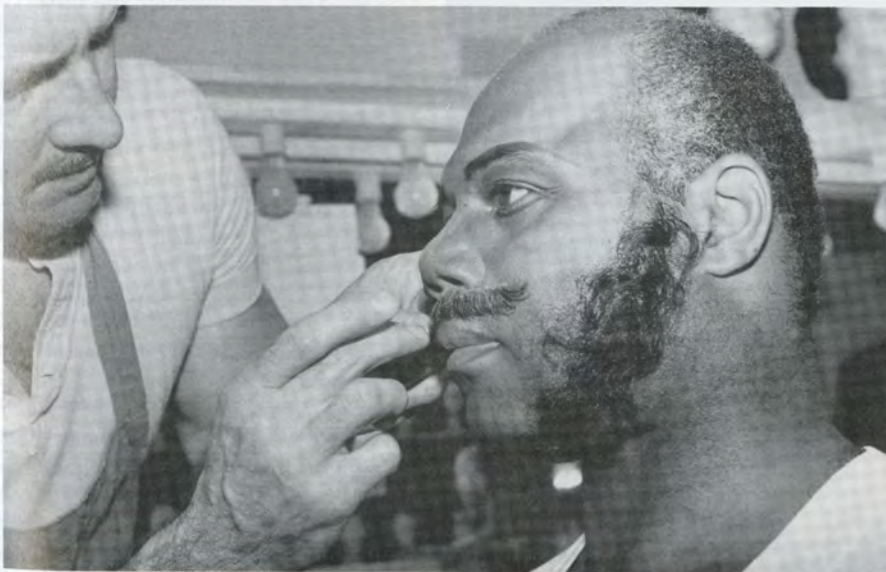


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Three stages of Africaine make-up for Ed Corley. Pat Polen and Robert Rodrigue of the San Francisco Opera Wig and Make-up Department are in charge.

the most exciting performance I've ever heard," Corley rhapsodizes. "The singing was other-worldly."

Corley is hardly the first chorister to have observed that, "during the season, the company virtually owns us—there's little time for the rest of life." But it seems the more true in his particular case. The tenor also serves as the chorus librarian, ordering and preparing choral scores, notating the cues, distributing them to the choristers, and, in general, seeing to it that his colleagues have good, legible material to work from. "It's a time-consuming job," he says, "but I wanted to do it because, as a chorister myself, I have a precise idea of what it is that we really need. In the end it's all a part of doin' what I love."

Corley, who says he has a reputation as a practical joker, is literally practical about one important aspect of the chorus fun: the party after opening night. He has been one of its organizers for the past five seasons. This fall, with fellow choristers Daniel Pociernicki, Tom Reed, and Sigmund Seigel, he organized the most extravagant of the entertainments to date. In addition to ballet dancers, orchestra musicians, supers, and grips, among the 350 or so people in attendance at this September's bash in the Opera House basement were Plácido Domingo, Justino Díaz, Michael Devlin—and new company director Lotfi Mansouri. "The chorus has really enjoyed working with Mr. Mansouri over the years," he adds. "So we feel really hopeful about his directorship."

Although he calls himself a "lazy tenor" and insists that he is not interested in a career as a soloist, Corley does allow that he's taking a renewed interest in the small solo parts occasionally available to choristers. "Singing in the chorus has brought out my confidence on the stage," he explains, "so I'm thinking about looking for a teacher and coach and trying out for some of the small roles."

"But whether or not that works out," he maintains, "I'm already doing what I want to be doing with my life—and getting paid for it. And to be doing it with an organization like San Francisco Opera is more than I could ever have dreamed."

—Timothy Pfaff



# Lotte Lehmann at 100

By BEAUMONT GLASS

This year, 1988, marks the centennial of an operatic immortal, Lotte Lehmann. Her special magic moved audiences all

over the world. Richard Strauss insisted—over opposition (sometimes including her own)—that she create leading roles in

three of his premieres, and he hoped to snare her for a fourth. Giacomo Puccini considered her the definitive interpreter of his *Suor Angelica*. Arturo Toscanini called her “the greatest artist in the world.” Bruno Walter accompanied her at the piano in a series of famous lieder recitals. Those who heard her in person, in opera or concert, will never forget her. Millions who never heard her “live” have listened to her recordings, several of which are now available on CD, with still more promised. On her actual centenary date, February 27, the Vienna State Opera honored her memory with a special performance of *Der Rosenkavalier*, followed the next day by a two-and-a-half hour televised on-stage tribute. In May the University of California, Santa Barbara, hosted a three-day Lotte Lehmann Centennial Seminar. Classical music stations all over the country are featuring many of her famous recordings. A biography is fresh off the press.

Who was this woman, the subject of so many striking tributes? What were her qualities as an artist?

Her life began, simply enough, in the North-German town of Perleberg, halfway between Berlin and Hamburg. She was the daughter of a civil servant whose fondest wish was that she might follow in his footsteps, in a position that would



Lotte Lehmann, 1888-1976.

*Beaumont Glass, stage director and opera coach, is the author of Lotte Lehmann, a Life in Opera and Song, recently published by Capra Press, Santa Barbara. He was Mme. Lehmann's assistant for several years at the Music Academy of the West. "Studienleiter" of the Zurich Opera House, his operatic home for 19 years, he also participated in the festivals of Aix-en-Provence, and accompanied recitals at the Salzburg and Holland Festivals. Since 1980 he has been the Director of Opera Theater at the University of Iowa.*



entitle her to a pension. Her dismal marks in mathematics soon disabused him of that dream. One day a neighbor heard Lotte singing at her housework and persuaded her parents to send her to the Royal High School of Music in Berlin. Her father was assured that she would someday be able to make a respectable living as an oratorio singer—with a pension. Lotte had no repertoire; but one of the more advanced students coached her in Siebel's aria from *Faust* and "Jerusalem" from Mendelssohn's *St. Paul*. She was accepted as a student of singing. She began to haunt the top gallery at the opera. Emmy Destinn and Geraldine Farrar were her idols. Opera became a shining beacon. Soon she found herself dissatisfied with the oratorio orientation of her course at school.

The Etelka Gerster School of Singing seemed to promise more. Mme. Gerster had been the principal rival of Adelina Patti. Her school was famous and frequented by elegant young ladies from many countries. Lotte was granted free tuition. But the vocal methods practiced there, although successful for some students, were nearly disastrous for her. She was expected to sing with a little wooden stick jammed between her jaws, to keep the same degree of opening for all tones, high or low. And when she had difficulties with the second aria of the Countess from *The Marriage of Figaro*, her teacher forced her to repeat the piece over and over again at every lesson until she was overcome with panic and nausea at the mere sound of the opening chord. Sheer tension prevented any progress. She was dismissed from the school and told that she would never earn a penny with her voice. Her father enrolled her in a commercial course. She pleaded with him for one more chance.

Salvation came in the ample form of Mathilde Mallinger, who, many years before, had been Wagner's first Eva in *Die Meistersinger* and who now managed to work wonders with Lotte's voice.

After a year and a half with Mallinger, Lotte was ready for her first engagement. She signed a beginner's contract with the Hamburg Municipal Theater. The role of her debut was the Second Boy in *The Magic Flute* and she spent most of her brief time on stage trying to pull the skimpy tunic a little lower over her legs. According to her own account—unequivocally confirmed by the stage director—

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Lotte Lehmann as Tosca, the role of her 1934 San Francisco Opera debut, poses on the Act I set.

she was at first hopelessly awkward as an actress. She had no idea what to do with her hands or feet. If there were two or three steps to descend she felt with terrifying certainty that she would stumble. Her fresh, lovely voice, however, kept her in the company. For two seasons she practically lived in pageboy tights, but now and then a female part would come her way. Three weeks after her debut she was cast as Freia in *Das Rheingold*. One critic made the comment that among the gods of Valhalla she appeared to be the chambermaid.

Real success, when it came, was very sudden. Otto Klemperer persuaded the theater to let Lehmann sing Elsa in *Lohengrin*. He coached her intensively for a week. He shouted at her in front of the cast. The rehearsals were humiliating. But

the performance made her a star. It was the happiest day of her life until then. She forgot herself and her insecurities and became Elsa. From then on she was cast in leading roles. She found herself a great favorite of the public and the press. Young fans followed her everywhere.

Her early awkwardness disappeared as she gained confidence and experience. She became in time one of the most admired actresses on the operatic stage and was often compared to Ellen Terry and Eleonora Duse.

The director of the Vienna Court Opera came to Hamburg to hear a certain tenor sing Don José; instead he hired the Micaëla. Lehmann made her debut in Vienna as the guest Eva in a performance of *Die Meistersinger*. Two years later she was a regular member of the company. As



such, her official debut was in the role of Agathe in *Der Freischütz*. The critics predicted that she would soon be a favorite in Vienna, as she had been in Hamburg. Nevertheless, she felt that something was missing. Something special was needed to make a real sensation in Vienna. That "something special" came her way a few months later. The second version of the Strauss *Ariadne auf Naxos* was nearing its premiere when one of the singers became ill and missed a rehearsal. Lehmann was called in to take her place, temporarily, in the part of the Composer. Strauss was immensely impressed with her and decided then and there that she would sing the first performance, rather than the singer for whom he had originally written the role. The morning after the premiere "all Vienna knew who Lotte Lehmann was." From then on, Strauss wanted her for all his premieres. She created the Dyer's Wife in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* and Christine, a portrait of his own wife Pauline, in *Intermezzo*. For many years she was his favorite Marschallin. He is said to have written the part of Arabella with Lehmann in mind; but politics intervened and she did not sing the Dresden premiere.

In October of 1920, Puccini came to Vienna to supervise the first production there of his *Trittico*, three one-act operas that had in common the theme of death—violent, transcendent, or satirical. Among his operas, *Suor Angelica* was Puccini's child of sorrows. Soon after the premiere at the Metropolitan Opera, that centerpiece of the "trilogy" had been detached from the side-panels. The nun whose sin for love was forgiven by the Virgin was left to languish in semi-oblivion until Lotte Lehmann revealed what could be done with the part. For this, Puccini, who had never lost faith in his opera, was infinitely grateful. To those critics who belittled *Suor Angelica* he had this to say: "Go to Vienna!" According to his friend and sometime librettist, Giovacchino Forzano, he felt he had found a successor to his beloved Rosina Storchio in Lotte Lehmann who had "absolutely realized" his conception.

Lehmann recalled her relationship with Puccini in a memoir that was unpublished during her lifetime:

He was accompanied, as usual, by his old friend, Riccardo Schnabel-Rossi. Puccini was not satisfied with the casting of the female role in *Der*

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Lotte Lehmann's San Francisco Opera 1934 debut season consisted entirely of operas by Puccini: after Tosca came *Madama Butterfly*, another title role.

*Mantel* [*Il Tabarro*]*—*impatiently and in a sour mood he said to Riccardo, "Please go to the *Angelica* rehearsal and listen to the singer. Probably someone impossible, since I never heard of this Lehmann . . ." Riccardo told me that after five minutes of my piano-rehearsal he dashed back to Puccini, crying: "She is great!"

"Oh, you with your partiality for anybody who happens to be singing in Vienna!" was the maestro's answer.

The role in *Der Mantel* was then given to Jeritza and it is quite unnecessary to mention how enthusiastic Puccini was about the change. I too found him grateful and very delighted with my *Angelica*. I have a very flattering letter from him and a picture . . .

with the lovely inscription: "A l'indimenticabile Angelica di Vienna."

While he was in Vienna we also gave *La Bohème*. I sang Mimì . . . After the performance he came to my dressing room, and when I asked him if he was satisfied with me, he answered: "Look into my eyes—there you see tears of gratitude . . ."

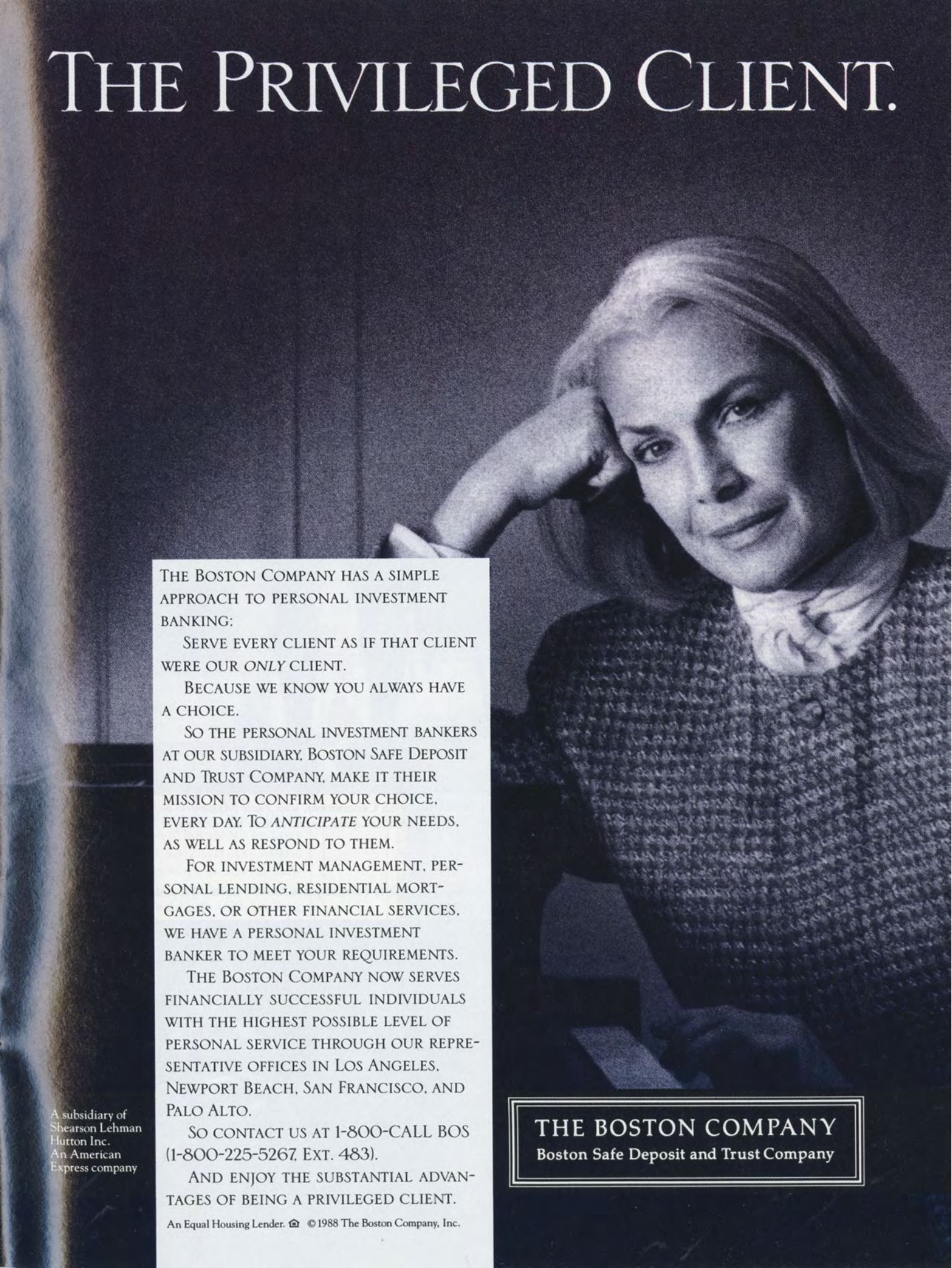
*Suor Angelica* was given in Vienna at a memorial performance after Puccini's death, and my voice and my soul gave greeting to the master of *cantilena*. Perhaps they soared to those regions of light to which he was carried away.

There are three letters from Puccini in the Lotte Lehmann Archive of the University of California, Santa Barbara. The first was written after he heard that

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STROHMEYER

Awaiting her Act III Rosenkavalier entrance, Lotte Lehmann and a close friend pause backstage. San Francisco Opera, 1941.

she had canceled her first scheduled performance as Manon Lescaut; apparently she had expressed the fear he might be annoyed with her.

Gentile e cara Signorina Lehmann

How can I be angry with my *soavissima* Suor Angelica? With much sorrow I heard that you gave up the part of Manon because of illness. I asked about you, but they told me you were not in Vienna.

Be assured of my esteem for I recognize and appreciate your great qualities as an artist. You will sing Manon on some other occasion and I am absolutely certain that you will have a triumphant success.

With best wishes and affectionate greetings

Your devoted  
Giacomo Puccini

Lotte finally did sing in Puccini's *Manon Lescaut*, three years after her first Suor Angelica, and once again the composer came to Vienna, this time especially to hear her.

Dear Signorina Lehmann

I want to tell you how happy I am with your interpretation of Manon—your art, full of sentiment, together with your beautiful voice have given to my Manon a great vividness [*un grande*

*rilievo*] and I thank you cordially and am very happy for the great success you have had.—*A rivederci*—with best greetings

Your affectionate  
G. Puccini

Two months later she received a postcard from Italy:

Many good wishes and greetings to the gentle and exquisite Manon from G. Puccini

Less than a year later Puccini was dead. He never heard her *Tosca*, but he told Forzano he could well imagine that she would bring to the role "more womanliness" than other singers and through that quality make *Tosca* more believable. When Lotte, then in her eighties, happened to read what Puccini had said about her, she burst into tears.

Lehmann's first Puccini roles in America, and her first ever in Italian, were presented by the San Francisco Opera. In the fall of 1934, a few months after her successful Metropolitan Opera debut as Sieglinde, she sang both *Tosca* and *Butterfly* at the War Memorial Opera House. *Tosca*, especially, was an unqualified success. All the reviewers ranked her portrayal among the great ones.

Her *Tosca* had not the sculptured beauty of Muzio; she did not wallow as



Jeritza did when she sang *Vissi d'arte*. What she did was to give us a Tosca evolved out of her inner consciousness, and in that scene with Scarpia, she touched a note of beautiful humility which neither Bernhardt nor Muzio ever gave us ... (Redfern Mason, *San Francisco Examiner*, November 17, 1934)

Superb actress and glorious songstress is Lotte Lehmann ... The German soprano sang the role of the glamorous Tosca ... and negotiated the mellifluous Italian phrases as if to the manner born. However, had she sung in Sanskrit it would have mattered not. For the Lehmann voice and the Lehmann dramatic instinct are bigger than nationality or language ... (Marie Hicks Davidson, *San Francisco Call-Bulletin*)

Lehmann is best remembered today for four of her operatic roles in which she has long been considered unsurpassed: Leonore in *Fidelio* (which, unfortunately, she never sang in America), the Marschallin in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Elisabeth in *Tannhäuser*, and Sieglinde in *Die Walküre*.

San Francisco heard her Sieglinde in a fabulous cast: her colleagues were Kirsten Flagstad, Lauritz Melchior, and Friedrich Schorr. All four artists were then considered the finest in the world for their respective roles. Fritz Reiner was the conductor and a remarkable off-the-air recording has preserved almost all of Act II. Only San Francisco and—for one performance—Milwaukee ever heard Flagstad and Lehmann together on the same stage. Strangely enough, the outstanding Brünnhilde and Sieglinde of their day never joined forces at the Metropolitan Opera.

It was also as a member of the San Francisco Opera, on tour in Los Angeles, that Lotte Lehmann bid a final farewell, on November 1, 1946, to her career as an opera singer. When, as the Marschallin in *Der Rosenkavalier*, she gave that infinitely touching last look to Octavian she said goodbye to a rich and wonderful part of her life.

After she had closed the door to opera behind her, Lehmann gave her irrepressible energy and enthusiasm to exploring the byways of art song and lieder, discovering many previously neglected treasures. She instilled in her American audiences a deeper appreciation of the German *Lied*. There were seasons



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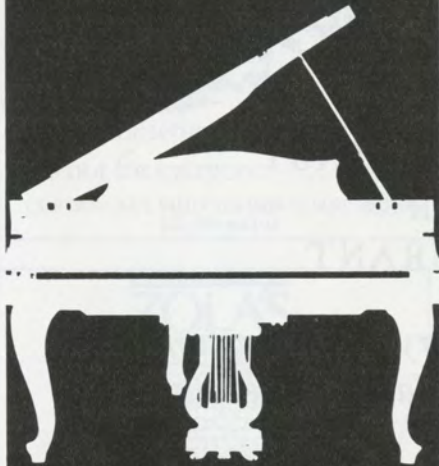


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*Lotte Lehmann backstage at the San Francisco Opera in 1952, visiting the Rosenkavalier Marschallin of the hour, Brenda Lewis.*



NORTON

*Another San Francisco Opera backstage visit, this time in 1968: (l. to r.) Lotte Lehmann, Régine Crespin in her Walküre Sieglinde costume, San Francisco Opera general director Kurt Herbert Adler.*



when she sang as many as eight lieder recitals in New York City alone.

In 1951, just before her last recitals as a singer, Lehmann started a "third career," her famous series of master classes. Those classes were a revelation, a glimpse at the inner workings of an incomparably creative artistic imagination. She never taught singing as such, only interpretation. Unlike some other great artists, she was gifted with the ability to articulate her vision in words. Her master classes in London were hailed as "the" artistic event of the season. "She made the moon rise in the middle of Wigmore Hall with a piano and two young singers without costume, lights, or scenery." She inspired a generation of young singers to surpass themselves. Today her former students are singing in opera houses all over the world.

Lotte Lehmann was one of the most beloved singers of her era. She moved critics in London, Paris, Vienna, and New York to hymns of praise such as one seldom if ever encounters today. She inspired almost fanatical devotion in her audiences.

Her voice was haunting in quality and very individual. She had a genius for expression, for all the nuances of feeling. She never considered herself a great technician; she depended upon—in her own words—the "wings of emotion" to carry her over vocal hurdles. She often sang in a state of ecstasy, an outpouring of love that the audience sent back to her immediately in a surge of affection and gratitude. That intensity, that generosity of feeling, was sometimes paid for with shortness of breath. If a phrase had to be broken, she tried at least to make a virtue out of necessity: she developed the art of the "expressive breath." Her command of *legato* and her exemplary diction kept the illusion of a long-lined phrase even when nature demanded a gulp of air. Records alone can only show one aspect of the impression she created; next to the voice she considered the eyes the singer's greatest tool. Hers were magnetic, mirrors of every mood. The visual and aural components were in perfect harmony. Her irresistible personality filled the hall.

The essence of her art was her total identification with what she was singing, and the mastery with which she communicated her feeling to the audience.

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# 1988 Opera Previews

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

## SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD INSIGHTS

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

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

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

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

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

## SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD PREVIEWS

### MARIN

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

*Parsifal* 10/20  
James Keolker

*Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* 10/27  
Richard Taruskin

*La Gioconda* 11/17  
William Huck

### SOUTH PENINSULA

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

*Parsifal* 10/18  
James Keolker

*Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* 10/25  
Richard Taruskin

*La Gioconda* 11/15  
William Huck

## SAN JOSE OPERA GUILD

Previews held at the Los Gatos History Club, 1234 Los Gatos Blvd., at 10 a.m. Series is open to the public at a cost of \$5 per lecture; \$2 for students and senior citizens (free of charge to San Jose Opera Guild members). For further information, please call (408) 741-1331.

*Parsifal* 10/18  
James Keolker

*Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* 10/25  
Richard Taruskin

*La Gioconda* 11/15  
William Huck

## SONOMA COUNTY CHAPTER

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

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

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

*La Gioconda* 11/14, 10:30 a.m.  
William Huck Red Lion Inn  
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## JUNIOR LEAGUE OPERA PREVIEWS

All Junior League opera previews held in Herbst Theatre, Veterans Building, 401 Van Ness Ave., San Francisco. Lectures begin at noon and there is no admission charge. For further information, please call (415) 346-9772.

*Parsifal* 10/19  
James Keolker

*Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* 10/26  
Richard Taruskin

*La Gioconda* 11/16  
William Huck

## OPERA EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL PREVIEW SERIES

Previews of the operas of the 1988 season will be given by Michael Barclay, director of

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

*Così fan tutte* 10/3  
*Manon Lescaut* 10/10  
*Parsifal* 10/17  
*Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* 10/24  
*La Bohème* 10/31  
*La Gioconda* 11/14

## MERRITT COLLEGE OPERA LECTURE SERIES

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

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## ED BECKER'S PARSIFAL PREVIEW

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

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

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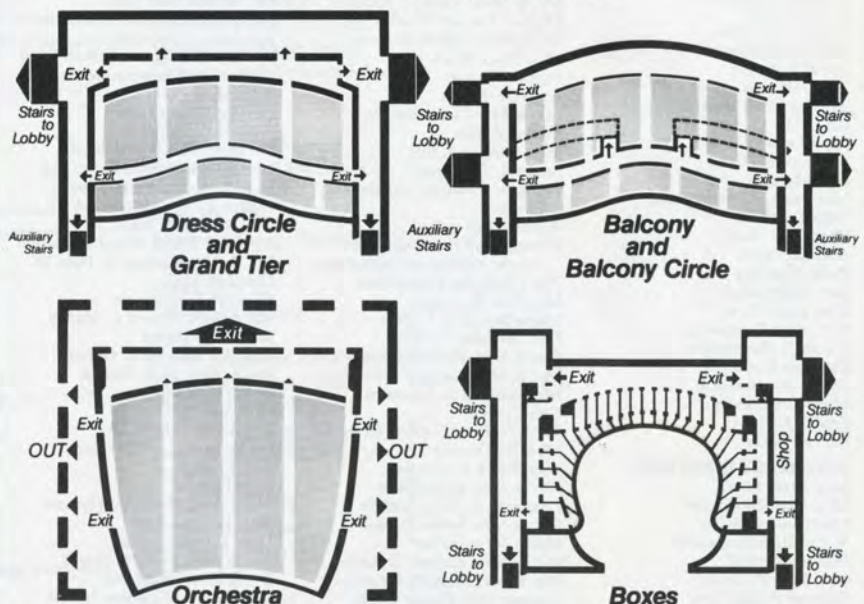
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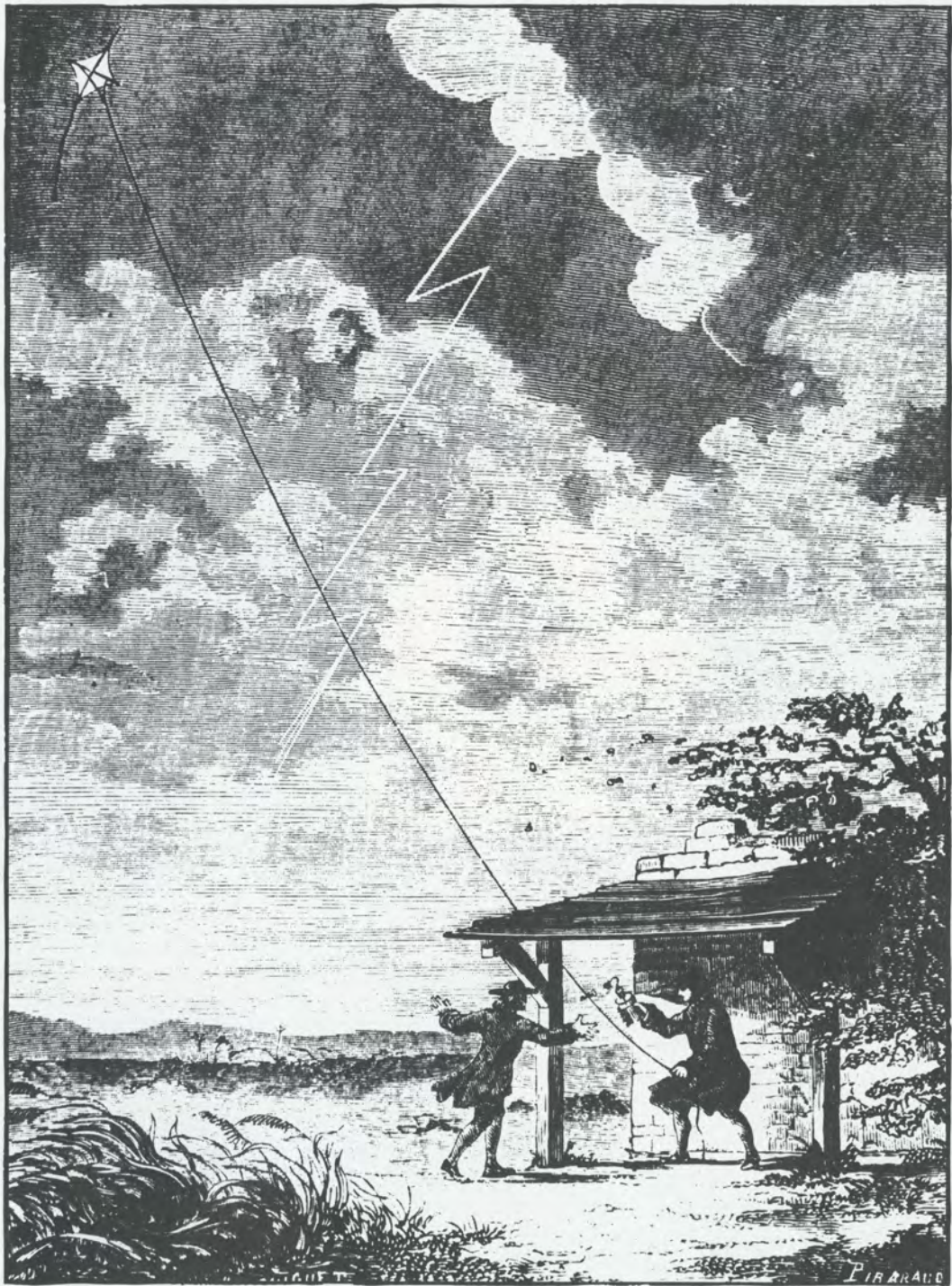
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