

Parcifal

1988

Saturday, October 22, 1988 7:00 PM

Tuesday, October 25, 1988 7:00 PM

Friday, October 28, 1988 7:00 PM

Wednesday, November 2, 1988 7:00 PM

Sunday, November 6, 1988 1:00 PM

Tuesday, November 8, 1988 7:00 PM

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Publications Collection

San Francisco Opera Archives



San
Francisco
Opera
1988 SEASON

Parsifal

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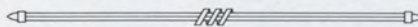
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San Francisco Opera

Lotfi Mansouri, *General Director*

Sir John Pritchard, *Music Director*

Parsifal

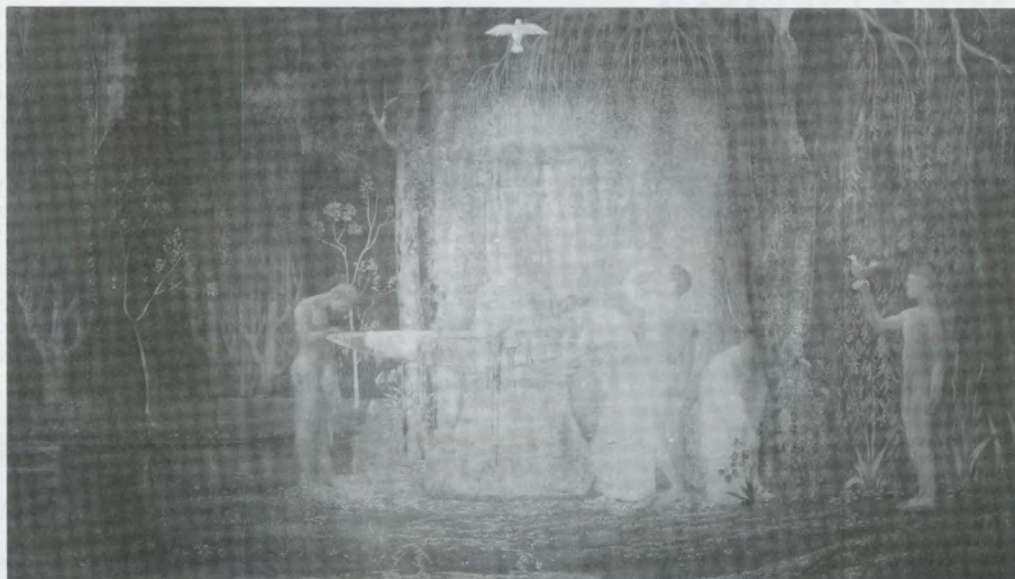
1988 SEASON

FEATURES

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Thoughts on Richard Wagner's towering masterpiece.
- 43 ***Getting Ready for Parsifal*** by Timothy Pfaff
During preparations for San Francisco Opera's new production of *Parsifal*, conductor John Pritchard and stage director Nicolas Joël share some thoughts on the Wagner work.
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Getting acquainted with San Francisco Opera's exuberant costume director.

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COVER

Segment of a backdrop for Act III of *Parsifal*, based on the work of Puvis de Chavannes by production designer Pet Halmen.

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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
Tully M. Friedman, President

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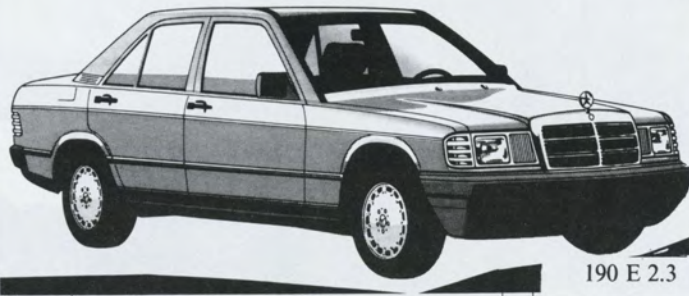
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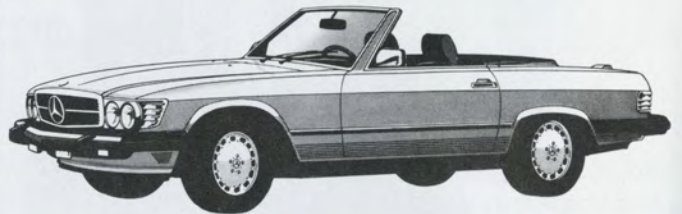
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General Director's Message

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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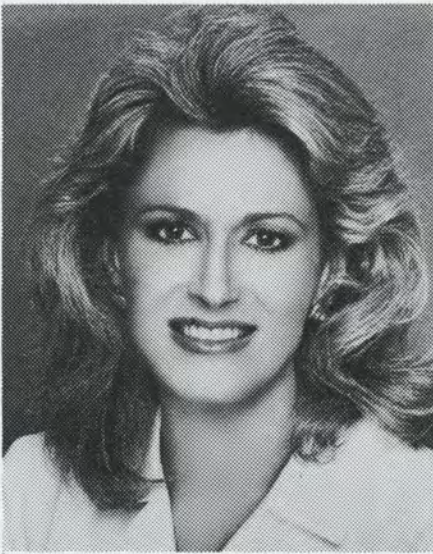
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San Francisco Opera

Lotfi Mansouri, *General Director*

Sir John Pritchard, *Music Director*

1988 Season

Opening Night

Friday, September 9, 7:00

L'Africaine Meyerbeer
Verrett, Swenson, Spence*; Domingo,
Díaz, Devlin, Anderson, Delavan,
Skinner, Rouleau
Arena/Mansouri/W. Skalicki/A. Skalicki/
Munn/Ray*

*1988 production underwritten through a
generous gift from the Sells Foundation.*

Saturday, September 10, 8:00

The Rake's Progress Stravinsky
S. Patterson, Christin, Vergara; Hadley*
Shimell**, J. Patterson, Green, Travis*
Mauceri/Cox/Hockney/Sullivan

*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.*

Tuesday, September 13, 7:30

L'Africaine Meyerbeer

Thursday, September 15, 7:30

The Rake's Progress Stravinsky

Friday, September 16, 8:00

L'Africaine Meyerbeer

Saturday, September 17, 8:00

American Premiere

Maometto II Rossini
Horne, Anderson*; Alaimo*, Merritt*,
Tate, Wunsch
Zedda/Frisell/Benois/Arhelger
*Production underwritten by the generous
grant from the L.J. and Mary C. Skaggs
Foundation.*

Sunday, September 18, 2:00

L'Africaine Meyerbeer

Monday, September 19, 8:00

Maometto II Rossini

Wednesday, September 21, 7:30

L'Africaine Meyerbeer

Friday, September 23, 8:00

The Rake's Progress Stravinsky

Saturday, September 24, 8:00

L'Africaine Meyerbeer

Sunday, September 25, 2:00

Maometto II Rossini

Tuesday, September 27, 8:00

L'Africaine Meyerbeer

Wednesday, September 28, 7:30

The Rake's Progress Stravinsky

Thursday, September 29, 7:30

Der Fliegende Holländer Wagner

Polaski**, Young; Van Dam, Ochman,
Koptchak*
Kaltenbach/Calábria/Ponnelle/ Halmen/
Munn

*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.*

Friday, September 30, 8:00

Maometto II Rossini

Saturday, October 1, 8:00

Der Fliegende Holländer Wagner

Sunday, October 2, 2:00

The Rake's Progress Stravinsky

Tuesday, October 4, 8:00

The Rake's Progress Stravinsky

Wednesday, October 5, 8:00

Der Fliegende Holländer Wagner

Thursday, October 6, 7:30

Maometto II Rossini

Friday, October 7, 8:00

Der Fliegende Holländer Wagner

Saturday, October 8, 8:00

Così fan tutte Mozart

Csavlek, Montague*, Rolandi; Gulyás,
Dickson, Krause
Bradshaw/Gleue*/Ponnelle/Munn

*Production originally made possible by a
grant from Crocker National Bank; revival
made possible by a grant from the San
Francisco Opera Guild.*

Sunday, October 9, 2:00

Maometto II Rossini

Tuesday, October 11, 8:00

Der Fliegende Holländer Wagner

Thursday, October 13, 8:00

Così fan tutte Mozart

Saturday, October 15, 7:30

Der Fliegende Holländer Wagner

Sunday, October 16, 2:00

Manon Lescaut Puccini

Lorengar, Manhart; Dvorský, Vanaud*,
Capecchi, Wunsch, Travis, Petersen,
Skinner, Anderson, Potter
Pritchard/Asagaroff/Klein/Mahoney/
Arhelger

Tuesday, October 18, 8:00

Così fan tutte Mozart

Wednesday, October 19, 7:30

Manon Lescaut Puccini

Friday, October 21, 8:00

Così fan tutte Mozart

Saturday, October 22, 7:00

New Production

Parsifal Wagner

W. Meier*, S. Patterson, Panagulias*,
Williams*, Manhart, Hoffman*, Spence;
Kollo, Moll, Hynninen*, Berry,
J. Patterson, Wunsch, Potter, Anderson,
Ledbetter

Pritchard/Joël/Halmen/Munn

*Production made possible by a generous gift
from a friend of San Francisco Opera.*

Sunday, October 23, 2:00

Der Fliegende Holländer Wagner

Tuesday, October 25, 7:00

Parsifal Wagner

Wednesday, October 26, 8:00

Manon Lescaut Puccini

Thursday, October 27, 7:30

Così fan tutte Mozart

Friday, October 28, 7:00

Parsifal Wagner

Saturday, October 29, 8:00

Manon Lescaut Puccini

Sunday, October 30, 2:00

Così fan tutte Mozart

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

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La Bohème

Puccini/in Italian with English Supertitles

Tuesday, November 22 at 1:00

Friday, December 2 at 1:00

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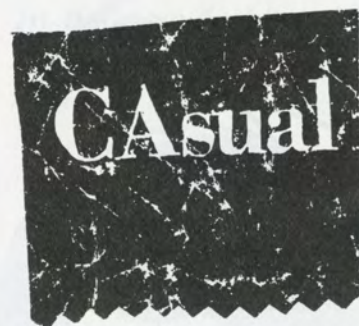


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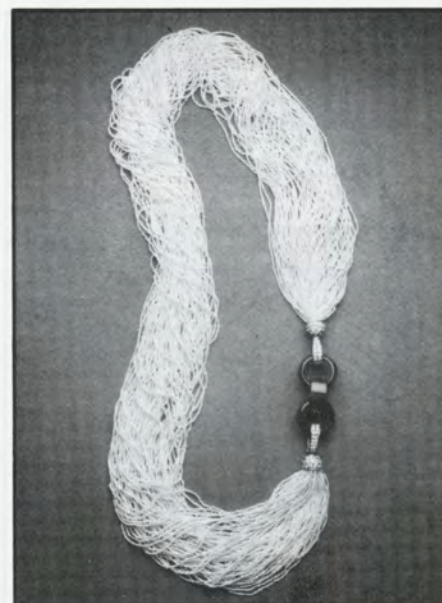
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Parsifal—More Than Music

By JOHN ARDOIN

On Christmas morning, 1881, Cosima Wagner's 44th birthday, she was awakened by her husband's voice. " 'Gratel, gratel,' I hear in the morning beside me," she wrote in her diary, "and his mighty head appears to me like the head of a child as he merrily wishes me many happy returns. But soon things get serious, he calls me in, and with the children hands to me all my fair gifts—*Polonia*, the *Parsifal* sketches, the talisman ring, and—*pia fraus!* [pious deception]—the completed score!"

Polonia was an early (1836) overture written before Cosima was born, and the score was long thought to have been lost. But it was found and returned to Wagner by the French conductor Jules Pasdeloup.

Pet Halmen's initial sketches for San Francisco Opera's new production of Parsifal: (Left) Act I, Scene 2; (Right) Act II, Scene 2.

Like the manuscript of another early work, the *Symphony in C*, it was given to Cosima as a birthday gift. But the gift of gifts was the score of *Parsifal*.

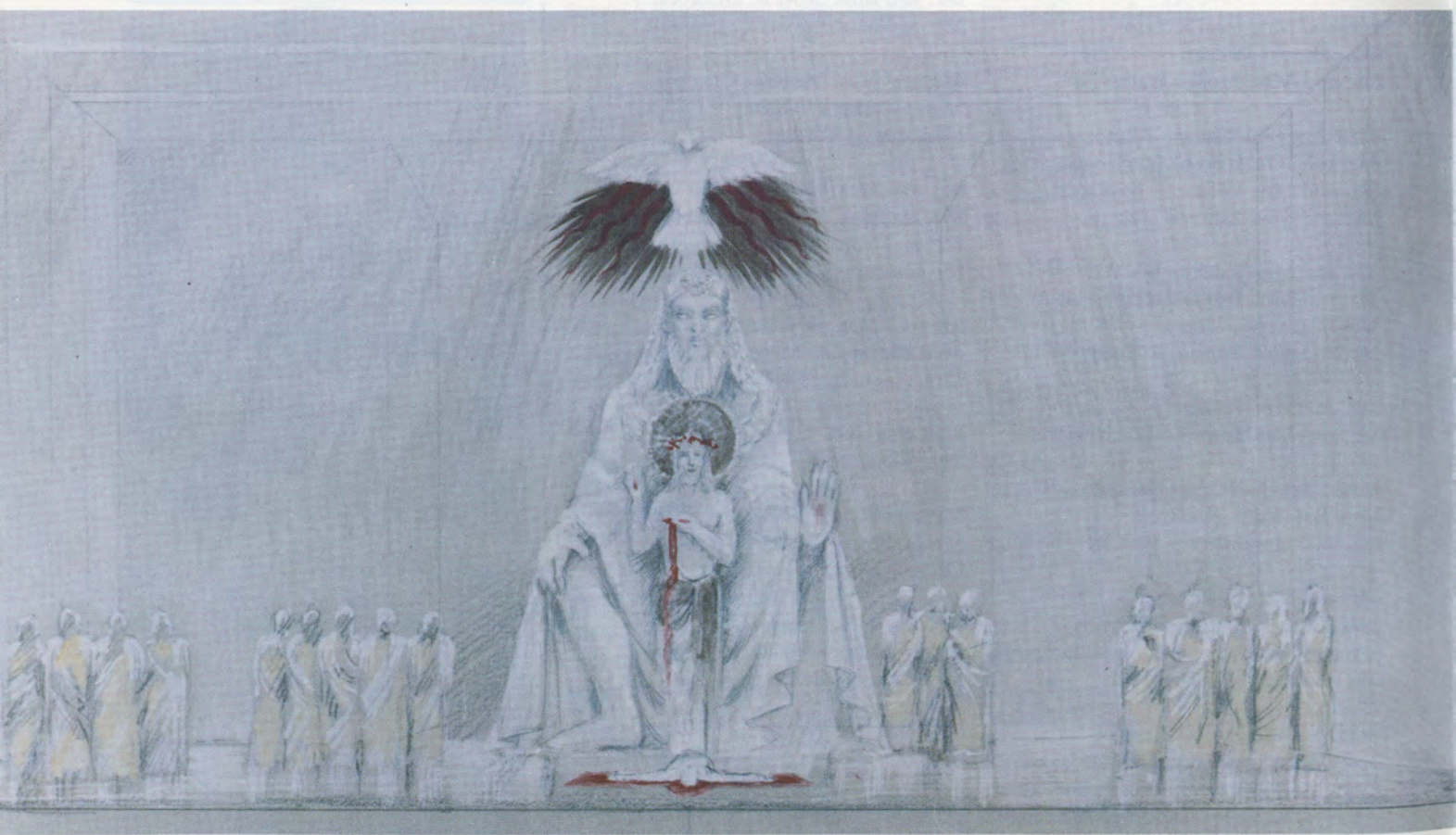
To understand Cosima's seemingly cryptic "*pia fraus!*" we must remember that Wagner presented *Parsifal* to her as a *fait accompli*, but the opera was not entirely finished. That fall, he had been suffering from an intestinal attack that had prevented him from writing for days on end, and there were a number of pages still not orchestrated.

But Wagner had promised *Parsifal* for Cosima's birthday—"it is for you and for you alone"—and he could not bear to disappoint his extraordinary and long-suffering helpmate. So, with loving deception, he penned, on the last page of the score following several blank folios, "Für dich"—"For you." It would be another 19 days before he could truly call this, his final creation for the stage, finished.

He knew what he had wrought was exceptional. He had told Cosima earlier that with *Parsifal* he was trying something new, eschewing "all polyphonic tricks" and "laying aside his old 'paint pot.'" He was fearful that he would not live to complete the opera, for the years following the opening of the Bayreuth Theater and the premiere of the *Ring of the Nibelung* had brought an ebbing of his strength.

But it was as if *Parsifal* willed itself into being, as if the inspiration behind it provided the stamina to continue and bring this visionary musical drama into being. With *Parsifal* Wagner did more than merely create one of the towering works of the repertory; he brought his career and life to a sort of meaningful summing up that every creator must dream of, but few attain.

Either a life is cut short before it has come to a full close—Mozart, Schubert,



Gershwin—or it ends with unfinished business—Mahler, Berg, Bartók. Few composers manage to tie up their earthly loose ends as neatly as did Wagner, by the creation of a work of art that transcends everything that they had previously done, that focuses and brings together the expressive elements of a lifetime into a final, towering legacy.

The gods permitted Wagner to do more than dream a dream; they allowed him to bring it to fruition. It is no exaggeration to say that his entire life can be seen as a road leading to *Parsifal*, that each step he took as a composer was a step towards the maturity needed to forge this unique work, to achieve this stupendous end. For *Parsifal* is an opera like no other. Where Wagner labeled the *Ring* a “Bühnenfestspiel” (a stage festival play), *Parsifal* was to his mind something more—a “Bühnenweihfestspiel,” which perhaps best translates as “a sacred scenic action.” It is a sort of theatrical ceremony, an operatic liturgy. As Alan David Aberbach points out in his comprehensive book “The Ideas of Richard Wagner” (University Press of America), “*Parsifal* offered a sublime dilemma and a unique opportunity. Like

Hans Sachs, Wagner would try to lead man toward a nobler conception of human nature, or in this case, a greater understanding of brotherhood, spirituality and God.

“But he knew there would be problems. A music-drama attacking Christianity for failing to follow the ideals of Jesus would be unthinkable. Yet by subtly manipulating the religious metaphor, Wagner might offer spiritual insights that were capable of transcending Christianity without being hostile to any denomination. To succeed he would use familiar Christian symbols while underneath the surface could be found a non-institutional religious allegory . . .

“*Parsifal* was to be a dramatically-artistic philosophical presentation of spiritual metaphors, not a theological set of dogmas set to music . . . [It] would be set in an obviously Christian milieu, complete with the sublime dogma of the Holy Eucharist. Underpinning the action, but perceivable to all who were spiritually inclined, would be the larger and more universal theme: God’s love for mankind—a message of greater import than the narrowly-restricted doctrines and

dogmas of institutional Christianity.”

It appears that Wagner first became aware of the *Parsifal* legend while fashioning the poem of *Lohengrin*. When the idea of an opera on the subject of *Parsifal* started to crowd his imagination, he saw at once that the hurdles in bringing it to the stage would be awesome. In large measure for this reason, *Parsifal* was to be part of Wagner’s imagination and consciousness for over 30 years before it was finally committed to paper. During that time he more than once threatened to abandon the project. From our vantage point in time, it seems odd that a man who was otherwise so certain of the role destiny had called on him to play, should have entertained such black doubts concerning his ability to bring into being the work that would seal this destiny. But even for a dreamer of mighty dreams, *Parsifal* was an enormous mouthful to bite

John Ardoin is music critic of The Dallas Morning News and author of the recently published book Callas at Juilliard—The Master Classes (Alfred Knopf, New York). He is currently completing a study of the art of German conductor Wilhelm Furtwängler.



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San Francisco Opera's first *Kundry* was Kirsten Flagstad, who sang the role in 1950. No production photographs survive; she is shown above on the *Tristan und Isolde* set during a *Standard Hour* broadcast, chatting with Company founder Gaetano Merola.

off.

In 1858, four years after the premiere of *Lohengrin*, the opera in which the Swan Knight identifies himself as the son of Parsifal, we find evidence in Wagner's letters that the *Parsifal* idea is becoming an obsession, one deeply ingrained in his imagination. In fact, he planned an episode in the last act of *Tristan und Isolde* where the dying hero is visited by Parsifal in search of the Grail. A letter to Mathilde Wesendonck written that year shows that he had abandoned Parsifal's appearance in *Tristan*, but that he was still very much in the grip of the story:

"Parzival [Wagner had still not settled on the definitive spelling of the name] has preoccupied me very much: in particular, there is a curious creature, a strangely world-demonic woman (the messenger of the Grail) who strikes me with increasing vitality and fascination. If I ever manage to write this poem, I am sure to produce something very original."

By the time this letter was penned,

Wagner was deep into the composition of *Tristan*, for which Mathilde had been the muse, an opera that was to take him far afield in his exploration of the potential of chromaticism. But equally important were *Tristan's* concern with love, death and redemption through pity, all dramatic elements that would eventually flower more fully in *Parsifal*, as would Wagner's fascination with Schopenhauer, Celtic legends, the trappings of Christianity, Buddhism and the Orient in general.

On May 30, 1859, with the second act of *Tristan* finished and work begun on the third, Wagner goes into his developing concept of *Parsifal* in another letter to Mathilde. It is acutely clear how vise-like the grip of the *Parsifal* idea had become, and to what degree Wagner was now wrestling with the dramatic problems the story posed.

"The last act [of *Tristan*] is now a real intermittent fever—the deepest and the most unprecedented suffering and yearning, and, immediately afterwards, the

most unprecedented triumph and jubilation . . . It is this thought that has most recently turned me against Parzival again. You see, it has dawned upon me of late that this would be a fundamentally evil task.

"Looked at closely, it is Anfortas [whose name was also in transition] who is the center of attention and the principal subject . . . It is my third-act *Tristan* inconceivably intensified. With the spear-wound and perhaps another wound, too—in his heart—the wretched man knows of no other longing in his terrible pain than the longing to die; in order to attain this supreme solace, he demands repeatedly to be allowed a glimpse of the Grail in the hope that it might at least close his wounds, for everything else is useless, nothing—nothing can help him—but the Grail can give him one thing only, which is precisely that he *cannot* die; its very sight increases his torment by conferring immortality upon them.

"The Grail, according to my *own*

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Irene Dalis as Kundry at the San Francisco Opera in 1964.

PETERS

interpretation, is the goblet used at the Last Supper in which Joseph of Arimathea caught the Savior's blood on the cross. What terrible significance the connection between Anfortas and this miraculous chalice now acquires; *he*, infected by the same wound as was dealt him by a rival's spear in a passionate love intrigue,—his only solace lies in the benediction of the blood that once flowed from the Savior's own, similar, spear-wound as he languished upon the cross, world-renouncing, world-redeeming and world-suffering!

"Blood for blood, wound for wound—but what a gulf between the blood of the one and that of the other, between one wound and the other . . ." [It is fascinating to remember that at this point Wagner had still not identified the spear used to wound Amfortas as the same spear with which the Roman soldier Longinus had pierced Christ's side; that concept and the resulting Longinus motive came much later.]

Wagner had also come to see Parsifal

as "indispensably necessary as the redeemer whom Anfortas longs for: but if Anfortas is to be placed in his true and appropriate light, he will become of such immense tragic interest that it will be almost impossible to introduce a second focus of attention, and yet this focus of attention must center on Parsifal if this latter is simply not to enter at the end as a *deus ex machina* who leaves us completely cold. Thus Parsifal's development and the profound sublimity of his purification, although entirely predestined by his thoughtful and deeply compassionate nature, must again be brought into the foreground . . .

"But I cannot choose to work on such a broad scale as Wolfram was able to do [it was the epic poem of the German poet Wolfram von Eschenbach, c. 1170-c. 1220, that provided the primary source for Wagner's retelling of the Parsifal legend]. I have to compress everything into *three* climactic situations of violent intensity, so that the work's profound and ramified content emerges clearly and distinctly; for

my *art* consists in working and representing things this way. And—am I to undertake such a task? God forbid! Today I take leave of this insane project . . . Liszt can compose it! When my old friend Brünnhilde leaps into the funeral pyre, I shall plunge in after her and hope to die a Christian! So be it! Amen!”

Wagner’s despair in molding his vision of Parsifal into a workable stage piece was greatly complicated by the Wolfram poem, as he complained to Mathilde: “Our poet took only the inferior French chivalric romances as his subject-matter and repeated them like a parrot! . . . Only individual descriptions are in any way attractive, but this is the forte of all medieval poets, for whom the predominant mood is a finely felt pictoriality. But each work *as a whole* always remains confused and silly. I would have to make a completely fresh start with Parzival! For Wolfram hasn’t the first idea of what he is doing.”

But protest as he might, the *Parsifal* idea would not go away. In August of

1860 he writes to Mathilde that it “has been stirring within me a good deal; I can see more and more in it, and with ever-increasing clarity . . . Did I not tell you once before that the fabulously wild messenger of the Grail is to be one and the same person as the enchantress of the second act. Since this dawned on me, almost everything else has become clear to me . . . This strangely horrifying creature who, slave-like, serves the Knights of the Grail with untiring eagerness, who carries out the most unheard-of tasks, and who lies in a corner waiting only until such time as she is given some unusual and arduous task to perform—and who at times disappears completely, no one knows how or where?”

“Then all at once we meet her again, fearfully tired, wretched, pale and an object of horror: but once again untiring in her devotion, while all the time revealing a secret contempt for its knights: her eye seems always to be seeking the right one . . . but not even she herself knows what she is seeking; it is purely intuitive.

When Parzival, the foolish lad, arrives in the land, she cannot avert her eyes from him: strange are the things that must go on inside her; she does not know why, but she clings to him. He is appalled—but he, too, feels drawn to her: he understands nothing.”

It is hardly surprising that Wagner’s patron-savior, Ludwig II of Bavaria, would be swept up in the hopes and plans for an opera on *Parsifal*. After all, he had come to love Wagner’s music through *Lohengrin* and had shared intimately, vicariously, each step along the path that led to the creation of *Tristan*, *Die Meistersinger* and the *Ring*. *Parsifal* brought out a more ardent response in the Dream King than any of these previous operas, however. Wagner had referred to the King as “Parsifal” a year after their friendship began, and Ludwig soon began using the name for himself and demanded his courtiers do the same. A letter from him to Wagner survives in which the King writes:

“I permit myself only one question,



Eberhard Wächter as Amfortas in San Francisco Opera’s 1964 *Parsifal*. Behind him is Giorgio Tozzi, who was singing the first Gurnemanz of his career.

PETERS



San Francisco Opera's 1964 *Parsifal* was Sandor Konya, who is about to be surrounded by women of the San Francisco Opera Chorus.

adored friend, about Parzival: why is our hero touched by grace only through Kundry's kiss? Why is it that this kiss reveals to him his divine mission? Why is it only from this moment that he can penetrate Anfortas's soul, grasp and feel his wretchedness without a name?"

In answering the King, Wagner baited his hook carefully: "What is the significance of Kundry's kiss? That, my beloved, is a terrible secret. You know, of course, the serpent in Paradise and his tempting promise: 'eritis sicut Deus, scientes bonum et malum' ('Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil'). Adam and Eve became 'knowing.' They became conscious of sin. The human race had to atone for that consciousness by suffering shame and misery until redeemed by Christ who took upon himself the sins of mankind. My dearest friend, how can I speak of such profound matters except in a simile . . . Adam-Eve: Christ.

"How would it be if we were now to

add to them Anfortas-Kundry: Parzival? . . . The kiss which causes Anfortas to fall into sin awakens in Parzival a full awareness of that sin, not as his own sin but as that of the grievously afflicted Anfortas whose lamentations he had previously heard only dully, but the cause of which now dawns on him in all its brightness, through his sharing the feeling of sin: with the speed of lightning he said to himself, as it were, 'Ah! that is the poison that causes him to sicken whose grief I did not understand until now!' Thus he knows more than all the others, more, especially, than the assembled Knights of the Grail who continued to think that Anfortas was complaining merely of the spear-wound. Parzival now sees deeper. Thus, he, too, sees deeper who does not believe what the whole world believes . . ."

It was not until January of 1877 that Wagner, with the *Ring* at last finished and mounted, could begin actual work on the *Parsifal* poem. "I am beginning *Parzival*," he declared to Cosima, "and I will not let

go until I have finished." It was shortly thereafter that the name became finally set as *Parsifal*. Wagner explained: "This name is Arabic. *Parsifal* means: 'parsif,' think of the 'pure' Parsi fire worshippers; 'fal' is for 'fool.' In a higher sense, it is a man without learning, but of genius."

The libretto was completed on April 20, 1877; the music took two more years, and it was only on January 13, 1882, that the orchestration and thus the score was completed. The road had been an arduous and exhausting one, but Wagner could no more fight against the creation of *Parsifal* than man can stem a force of nature. On July 26, 1882, the opera had its premiere in the Bayreuth Theater (surprisingly, without Ludwig in attendance) for which it had been specially crafted. Almost from the beginning it proved to be an alluring creation that seduced not only readily susceptible Wagnerians but the world at large.

How could it have been otherwise? First there is the extraordinary structuring of its three acts, which play them-

ARTIST PROFILE

San Francisco Opera's 1974 Parsifal featured the U.S. stage debut of Kurt Moll in the role of Gurnemanz. Jess Thomas was Parsifal; Eva Randova, Kundry.

selves out on three concordant levels of feeling: metaphysical and interrogatory, supernatural and revelatory, mystical and redemptive. Then, dotting the dramatic landscape of the work, like Stations of the Cross, are its powerful symbols: the Grail, the blood, the spear, the wound, Kundry's kiss and the multi-layered use of the circle as a metaphor. But towering above all, outstripping the dramatic planes, the thematic development, the wonder we experience at Wagner's deployment of his chorus and orchestra and his unerring ability to clothe a character in a revealing musical garb, is the magnetism of the score itself.

Like *Tristan* and the best pages in the *Ring*, *Parsifal* is more than music. It is a spell that permeates one's consciousness to speak that which is unspeakable. It is a disease without a cure. Or, should you prefer it, there is the cynicism of Nietzsche: "Wagner is a neurosis, and *Parsifal* is one of its chief symptoms." ■



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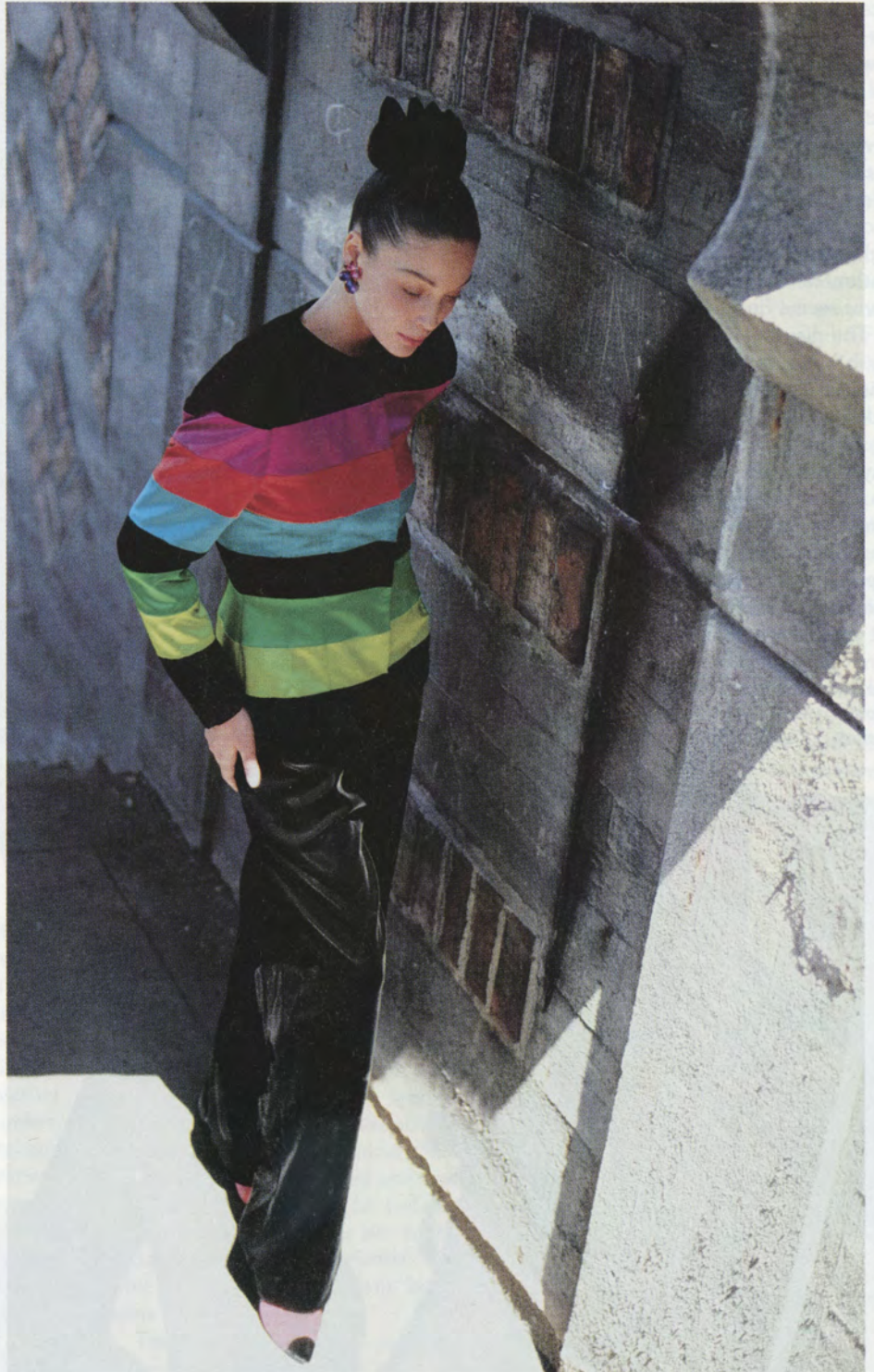
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ARTIST PROFILES



WALTRAUD MEIER

German mezzo-soprano **Waltraud Meier** makes her San Francisco Opera debut as Kundry in *Parsifal*. One of the leading mezzos of our day, she made her professional debut with the Stadttheater Würzburg and was subsequently engaged by the opera houses of Dortmund and Mannheim where she developed her repertoire. She came to international attention after her acclaimed performance of Kundry at the Cologne Opera in 1983. She was subsequently invited to make her debut at the Bayreuth Festival in the same role in 1983, and has returned to Bayreuth each season for further performances of *Parsifal*. She made her Paris Opera debut as Brangäne in a new production of *Tristan und Isolde*, and sang the same role in the new Cologne production in 1986, followed by performances of *Tristan* at the 1986 Bayreuth Festival. Miss Meier made her Royal Opera Covent Garden debut as Eboli in Verdi's *Don Carlos* in 1985 and also sang the first Dalila of her career in Nice where she was partnered by Plácido Domingo. Her American stage debut was in 1985 when she appeared as Waltraute in *Götterdämmerung* at the Dallas Opera. She has also performed Kundry at the Hamburg State Opera and the Munich Opera, and made her Vienna State Opera debut in the role in 1987. A member of the Stuttgart Opera for many seasons, her roles there included Santuzza in *Cavalleria Rusticana*, Octavian in *Der Rosenkavalier* and the title role of *Carmen*. She made her Metropolitan Opera debut last fall as Fricka in *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*, and recently returned to Covent Garden for a new production of *Parsifal*. She also returned to Bayreuth this past summer as



SUSAN PATTERSON

Kundry, and as Waltraute in a new production of *Götterdämmerung*. Miss Meier has also won high praise for her appearances as soloist with symphony orchestras throughout Europe and Japan. Her orchestral repertoire includes Mozart's Requiem, Verdi's Requiem, and Brahms's *Alto Rhapsody*. She can be heard on complete recordings of *Parsifal*, *Tannhäuser* and the Mozart Requiem, in addition to her performance of the Brahms *Alto Rhapsody*. She will soon be heard as Fricka on a new recording of *Die Walküre* conducted by Bernard Haitink.

Soprano **Susan Patterson** sings Anne Trulove in *The Rake's Progress* and the First Flower Maiden in *Parsifal*. She was most recently seen here as Chloe in the 1987 production of *The Queen of Spades*. A 1986-87 Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, Miss Patterson has performed a number of roles with the parent Company, including Inez in *Il Trovatore* (Summer, 1986), her debut; Mrs. Gobeau in *The Medium* (Summer, 1986), Thibault in *Don Carlos* (Fall 1986); Javotte in *Manon* (Fall 1986); Marguerite in the Student Matinee performances of *Faust* (Fall 1986); and Violetta in one Student Matinee performance of *La Traviata* (1987). Her roles in the Opera Center's 1987 Showcase series included Marie in Henri Sauguet's *Le Plumet du Colonel* and Helen in *Three Sisters Who Are Not Sisters* by Ned Rorem. For the 1986 Showcase series, she sang Helen in *There and Back* and Lucia I/Lucia II in *The Long Christmas Dinner*, both by Hindemith. She is a graduate of the universities of Samford and Florida State, and is currently working toward a doctorate at Indiana Univer-

PARSIFAL



JANET WILLIAMS

sity. As a member of the 1985 Merola Opera Program, she appeared as Marguerite in *Faust* at Stern Grove and for Western Opera Theater's 1985-86 national tour she portrayed Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni*. Miss Patterson is a frequent concert soloist and has performed Handel's *Jephtha* and *Messiah*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Poulenc's Gloria, Rossini's *Stabat Mater* and Beethoven's *Egmont*. Recently, Miss Patterson has performed Musetta in *La Bohème* with Atlanta Civic Opera, Rosalinda in *Die Fledermaus* with Marin Opera, and all three soprano roles in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* in Palm Beach and scored a major success as Violetta in *La Traviata* with the Welsh National Opera. Future engagements include her Lyric Opera of Chicago debut as Violetta; her initial appearance with the Vancouver Opera as Gilda in *Rigoletto*; and her Minnesota Orchestra debut in performances of Handel's *Messiah*.

Detroit native **Janet Williams** makes her San Francisco Opera debut this season as a Flower Maiden in *Parsifal* and will also portray Musetta in the student/family performances of *La Bohème*. In 1987, the young soprano became the first recipient of the Merola Advanced Training Program study grant and is currently an Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center. Miss Williams was a participant in the 1987 Merola Opera Program and performed Lauretta in *Gianni Schicchi* at Stern Grove that year. The Indiana University graduate recently sang the role



PATRICIA SPENCE

of Susanna in *Le Nozze di Figaro* for Eugene Opera. Her recent Bay Area appearances have included Bach's B Minor Mass with the San Francisco Chamber Orchestra, Handel's *Messiah* with the Oakland Chamber Orchestra, a concert at Stern Grove as soprano soloist in *Carmina Burana*, the San Francisco Opera Radio Marathon Davies Hall concert and the role of Madame Silverpeal in Mozart's *The Impresario* with the San Francisco Opera Center.

A native of Oregon, mezzo-soprano **Patricia Spence** makes her San Francisco Opera debut this fall as Anna in *L'Africaine* and also appears as a Flower Maiden in *Parsifal*. She was a participant in the 1987 Merola Opera Program, during which she sang the role of the Princess Bouillon in *Suor Angelica*. Currently an Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, Miss Spence has recently performed Isabella in the Merola Opera Program production of *The Italian Girl in Algiers* and Pilar in *Rosina*, presented by the Opera Center Showcase series. She made her professional debut in 1984 with the Eugene Opera and has performed several roles with that company including Madame Flora in *The Medium*, the Marquise of Birkenfeld in *The Daughter of the Regiment* and Elmire in *Tartuffe*.



ANN PANAGULIAS

Soprano **Ann Panagulias** makes her San Francisco Opera debut as a Flower Maiden in *Parsifal*. A Pittsburgh native, she completed two tours with Western Opera Theater before returning this season as a 1988 Adler Fellow. A 1986 Merola Opera Program participant, she performed the role of Mimi in *La Bohème*, repeating the part for Western Opera Theater's tour of *La Bohème*, which culminated with three performances in China and a special concert with the Shanghai Opera Orchestra. For the 1987-88 tour she sang Norina in *Don Pasquale*. As a member of the 1987 Wolf Trap Opera Company she performed Erisbe in Cavalli's *L'Ormindo* and Helena in Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Miss Panagulias received a Bachelor of Music degree from the Oberlin College Conservatory and a Master of Music degree with the New England Conservatory. Her recent performances include the title role of Hiram Titus's *Rosina*, which was given its premiere in the Opera Center Showcase last June. Future engagements include Handel's *Messiah* with the Honolulu Symphony, a "Night in Old Vienna" concert with the San Francisco Symphony, and her Schwabacher recital debut at the Vorpal Gallery.



EMILY MANHART

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 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 Dorabella 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'Ormindo* 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*.



WENDY HOFFMAN

Mezzo-soprano **Wendy Hoffman** makes her San Francisco Opera debut as a Flower Maiden in *Parsifal*. The winner of the 1988 Metropolitan Opera Auditions, she appeared as Amparo in *Rosina* by Hiram Titus at the work's West Coast premiere last spring in the Opera Center Showcase series. She also sang in the San Francisco Opera Marathon concert in Davies Symphony Hall last June, a concert which was broadcast on KKHI. Miss Hoffman has been an apprentice with Santa Fe Opera for two seasons and she made her debut with that company as the Third Elf in Strauss' *Egyptian Helen* and portrayed the Third Spirit in *The Magic Flute* as well as Cherubino in *The Marriage of Figaro*. Other recent credits include Pasatieri's *The Trial of Mary Todd Lincoln* and a recording of *Peer Gynt* with Herbert Blomstedt and the San Francisco Symphony. In December, Miss Hoffman will make her debut with Houston Grand Opera as Hansel in *Hansel and Gretel*.

Tenor **René Kollo** sings the title role of *Parsifal*, a role he first sang at Bayreuth and recorded under Solti. He made his San Francisco Opera debut in the title role of *Siegfried* during the 1984 Summer Season, returning to repeat that portrayal as well as *Siegfried* in *Götterdämmerung* for the 1985 Ring cycle. Kollo made his Bayreuth debut in 1969 as the Steersman in *Der Fliegende Holländer* and in 1970 sang the role of Erik. He sang the title role of *Lohengrin* for the first time in his career at Bayreuth in 1971, and made his Metropolitan Opera debut in 1976 in the same role. In subsequent years at Bayreuth he appeared as *Siegfried* and *Parsifal*, making him the youngest singer to undertake those roles in Bayreuth history. Other Wagnerian credits include *Tristan* at

continued on p.37

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San Francisco Opera Scenic Studios
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San Francisco Opera Costume Shop
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First performance:
Bayreuth, July 26, 1882

First San Francisco Opera performance:
October 27, 1950

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 22 AT 7:00
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 25 AT 7:00
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 28 AT 7:00
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 2 AT 7:00
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 6 AT 1:00
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8 AT 7:00

CAST

<i>Gurnemanz</i>	Kurt Moll
<i>First Knight of the Grail</i>	Douglas Wunsch
<i>Second Knight of the Grail</i>	Thomas Potter
<i>Four Esquires</i>	Susan Patterson Emily Manhart Kevin Anderson Victor Ledbetter
<i>Kundry</i>	Waltraud Meier*
<i>Amfortas</i>	Jorma Hynninen*
<i>Parsifal</i>	René Kollo
<i>Titurel</i>	James Patterson
<i>A Voice</i>	Patricia Spence
<i>Klingsor</i>	Walter Berry
<i>Klingsor's Flower Maidens</i>	Susan Patterson Janet Williams* Patricia Spence Ann Panagulias* Emily Manhart Wendy Hoffman*

*Knights of the Grail, Flower Maidens,
Servants of the Grail, Klingsor's guards*

*San Francisco Opera debut

San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus
Gregg Tallman, Musical Director

TIME AND PLACE: *Legendary*

ACT I *Scene 1:* A forest
Scene 2: The Temple of the Grail

INTERMISSION

ACT II *Scene 1:* Klingsor's kingdom
Scene 2: The magic garden

INTERMISSION

ACT III *Scene 1:* A forest
Scene 2: The Temple of the Grail

Supertitles for *Parsifal* 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 five hours.

Parsifal/Synopsis

ACT I

Scene 1—It is dawn in a forest near the Temple of the Grail, where the Knights of the Holy Grail guard the chalice which once held the blood shed by Christ at the crucifixion. Gurnemanz, the oldest of the Knights, tells the story of King Amfortas, who lies sick at the Temple: The King and several Knights went to fight the demonic Klingsor, who was a long-time threat to the Grail. In Klingsor's magic garden, the King was beguiled by a "woman of fearsome beauty" (later identified as Kundry), and lost possession of the sacred spear, with which Christ's side was pierced at the cross. Klingsor used the spear on Amfortas, causing a wound which could only be healed, according to a prophecy, by "the innocent fool, enlightened by compassion." Kundry, who now serves the Knights from time to time, thereby attempting to atone for her previous sins, offers some balsam to Amfortas, but it fails to heal his wound. Suddenly, a swan falls to the ground, followed by the young Parsifal in search of his catch. The angry Gurnemanz tells Parsifal that in the land of the Grail even animals are sacred, and no hunting is allowed. He asks the young man where he comes from, then about his father's name and even his own, but Parsifal can only reply that he doesn't know. Kundry explains that Parsifal cannot be blamed for ignoring the rules, since he was brought up by his mother Herzeleide (Heart's Sorrow) as an innocent fool so as to escape the fate of his father Gamuret, who was killed in battle. Gurnemanz starts hoping Parsifal might turn out to be the man who can save Amfortas, and invites the young man to the Temple to take part in the Knights' love-feast (Liebesmahl).

Scene 2—In the Temple of the Grail, Amfortas, at the urging of his father Titurel, once again uncovers the Grail, in whose radiance the customary ritual takes place. Parsifal, however, understands none of it, or of the anguish of Amfortas, who only longs for death. Since Parsifal does not experience any sense of compassion, the disappointed Gurnemanz drives him out of the Temple.

ACT II

Scene 1—Parsifal has found the domain of Klingsor, who has re-established his power over Kundry. She lies in a trance while Klingsor commands her to seduce Parsifal as she has once seduced Amfortas. He also reminds her that only the man who would resist her temptations can save her and release her from Klingsor's spell.

Scene 2—In Klingsor's magic garden, flower maidens try to trap Parsifal, but without success. Their enticements are interrupted by the entrance of Kundry, from whom Parsifal learns his name. She then tells him about the death of his mother, blaming it on his foolishness. She promises consolation to the grief-stricken Parsifal and offers him knowledge through the power of love's first kiss. Kundry's embrace, however, which was to bring the youth into her power, produces a surprising effect: Parsifal suddenly understands the suffering of Amfortas, and rejects Kundry's attempt at seduction. She curses Parsifal in a rage. Klingsor appears and throws the sacred spear at Parsifal, but the young man miraculously catches it, at which Klingsor's magic kingdom falls in ruins, leaving only a wasteland. The spell which was cast on Kundry is also broken. "You know where you can find me again," Parsifal tells her before leaving, proceeding on his way to heal Amfortas.

ACT III

Scene 1—Many years have passed. Gurnemanz, who lives in the domain of the Grail as a hermit, hears someone groaning: it is Kundry, who lies in a deathlike trance. Revived by Gurnemanz, she only says: "Let me serve . . . serve." A stranger enters: Parsifal. Kundry's curse has made him wander for years, unable to find his way, until this spring day when he came to the land of the Grail. Gurnemanz tells him about the sad fate of the Knights of the Grail: Titurel is dead, and Amfortas, in agony from his continued suffering, refuses to uncover the Grail, hoping that would lead to his death. Parsifal, in possession of the sacred spear, is now looked upon as a successor to Amfortas, and is anointed by Gurnemanz as a Knight of the Grail. Parsifal then baptizes Kundry, thus removing from her the centuries-old curse. She sets out with Gurnemanz and Parsifal towards the Temple, while around them nature is filled with the magic of Good Friday.

Scene 2—In the Temple of the Grail, the Knights have gathered for their love-feast, but Amfortas once again refuses to uncover the Grail, asking instead to be killed. At the moment of his greatest despair, Parsifal enters, steps within the circle of the Knights and touches Amfortas's wound with the spear. The wound immediately heals. While the Knights honor Parsifal as their new King, choirs extol the miracle of supreme salvation.



RENÉ KOLLO

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Bayreuth and in Cologne, Vienna and Paris; *Die Meistersinger* in Munich and Hamburg; *Tannhäuser* in Geneva and at Covent Garden; and *Rienzi* as well as the *Ring* cycle in Munich. He made his operatic debut at the Braunschweiger Staatstheater in a Stravinsky triple bill of *Mavra*, *Renard* and *Oedipus Rex*, and he became a regular member of that company. For six years, starting in 1967, he was a member of the Deutsche Oper am Rhein in Düsseldorf, and made numerous guest appearances in Munich, Frankfurt, Milan and Lisbon. Today he is acknowledged as one of the leading Wagnerian tenors in the world's major opera houses. Kollo's repertoire embraces many styles and composers. His recordings include operetta as well as such works as *Tannhäuser* under Solti, and *Missa Solemnis* and *Fidelio* under Bernstein, with whom he also performed Florestan in a 1978 Vienna State Opera production of *Fidelio* that was televised worldwide. In 1986 he made his American recital debut in San Francisco at Herbst Theatre, and in 1984 he sang the role of Parsifal in a San Francisco Symphony concert performance of the opera's third act. *Parsifal* was also the first opera he directed, when he undertook a production at Darmstadt in 1986.

Renowned German bass **Kurt Moll** returns to San Francisco Opera as Gurnemann in *Parsifal*, the role in which he made his United States stage debut here in 1974. He also sang King Marke in *Tristan und Isolde* that same year, and returned during the 1985 Fall Season as Baron Ochs in *Der Rosenkavalier*. He began his career with the Cologne Opera, of which he became a member at the age of 20. He was next invited to Aachen, where he added such roles to his repertoire as



KURT MOLL

Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte* and Daland in *Der Fliegende Holländer*. He sang his first King Marke and Ramfis in *Aida* in Mainz, where he stayed for one year before becoming a member of the Wuppertal Opera for five years. His career took on international dimensions after he bowed with the Hamburg Staatsoper in 1969, followed by debuts at Paris, Munich, Vienna, Salzburg and Bayreuth. Moll made his La Scala debut in Milan as Osmin in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* in 1972 and the following year made his first appearance at Covent Garden, where he sang Kaspar in *Der Freischütz*. Today, he sings in all of the world's major opera houses as well as with the major orchestras as a concert soloist. He makes his home with his wife and three children in Hamburg, where his recent performances have included *Boris Godunov*, *Fidelio*, *Turandot*, *Die Meistersinger*, *La Bohème*, *Wozzeck*, *Lohengrin*, *Lucia di Lammermoor* and *Don Giovanni*. Other recent engagements include *Parsifal*, *Die Zauberflöte*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Daphne*, *Guntram* and the *Ring* cycle in Munich, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* at Covent Garden, *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Die Walküre* and *Tannhäuser* in Vienna, and *Le Nozze di Figaro* in Salzburg. An acclaimed recitalist in Europe, he made his North American recital debut in 1984 at Carnegie Hall and has appeared at Herbst Theatre as part of the San Francisco Performances series. His astounding discography, which includes well over 75 recordings, includes *Parsifal*, *Der Fliegende Holländer*, *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, *Die Walküre*, *Tannhäuser*, *Tristan und Isolde*, *Der Rosenkavalier* and *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, under such conductors as Herbert von Karajan, Georg Solti, Carlos Kleiber, Leonard Bernstein, Rafael Kubelik, Bernard Haitink, Colin Davis, James Levine and Karl Böhm.



JORMA HYNNINEN

Finnish baritone **Jorma Hynninen** makes his San Francisco Opera debut singing the role of Amfortas in *Parsifal* for the first time in his career. One of Finland's foremost artists, he has been a leading soloist with the Finnish National Opera since 1970 and in 1984 was named Artistic Director of that company. He first gained widespread notice in the United States when he starred with the Finnish National Opera at the Metropolitan Opera House in 1983 as Topi in *The Red Line* by Aulis Sallinen. Hynninen's Met debut was the following year as Rodrigo in *Don Carlo* and during the same season he made his debut with the Boston Symphony Orchestra as soloist in Mahler's *Das Klagende Leid* under Seiji Ozawa. Other assignments at the Met have included Count Almaviva in *Le Nozze di Figaro* during the 1985-86 season and Wolfram in *Tannhäuser* in 1986-87. Hynninen is a regular guest artist at the Vienna State Opera, La Scala in Milan, the Bavarian State Opera in Munich and the opera companies of Paris, Hamburg, Madrid, and Bonn. Recent engagements have included the title role of *Don Giovanni* in Helsinki and Wolfram in Barcelona. He is scheduled to perform the title role of *Eugene Onegin* at the Met in 1989. Hynninen is well known as a concert artist and has performed recitals in New York's Metropolitan Museum and Carnegie Hall, as well as in Washington, D.C., Chicago, London, Amsterdam and Cologne. He has returned to Boston for performances of the Brahms Requiem with the Boston Symphony in February of 1988. Hynninen's discography includes recordings of *Die Winterreise*, *Die Schöne Müllerin* and



WALTER BERRY

Dichterliebe, the Brahms Requiem with Jessye Norman, Mahler's Eighth Symphony, a complete *Le Nozze di Figaro* under Riccardo Muti and several discs of classical works by Finnish composers as well as recordings of Finnish folk songs. Immediately following *Parsifal* performances, Hynninen is scheduled to appear as Orest in *Elektra* with the Boston Symphony conducted by Seiji Ozawa.

Viennese bass-baritone **Walter Berry** portrays Klingsor in San Francisco Opera's new production of *Parsifal*. His 1976 Company debut was as Barak in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, and he also sang two of his renowned comic roles here in 1978: Leporello in *Don Giovanni* and Baron Ochs in *Der Rosenkavalier*. He sang Alberich in *Das Rheingold* for the first time in his distinguished career during the 1983 San Francisco Opera Summer Festival, and that fall appeared here as the Music Master in *Ariadne auf Naxos*. During the Company's 1985 Ring Festival, he sang Alberich in *Das Rheingold*, *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung*. He portrayed Barak at the opera's Metropolitan Opera premiere in 1967, and repeated the role there in 1971 and 1978. It was also his debut role at Covent Garden in the 1975-76 season, and he has sung it at the Salzburg Festival where he made his debut in 1952 under Wilhelm Furtwängler, and at the Hamburg, Paris and Vienna Operas. Under his mentor, Karl Böhm, Berry sang the title role in *Wozzeck* at the re-opening of the Vienna Staatsoper in 1955 and has performed there regularly ever since. Renowned as a Mozart interpreter, he has frequently sung the roles of Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte*, Figaro, and both Guglielmo and Alfonso in *Così fan tutte*. In addition to



JAMES PATTERSON

appearing in leading roles in all of the world's great opera houses, he is an illustrious lieder and oratorio singer. His film credits include *Don Giovanni*, *Così fan tutte* and *Tosca* and his extensive discography includes three versions of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* and of *Die Zauberflöte*, two each of *Don Giovanni* and *Die Fledermaus*, and many other works ranging from Haydn's *The Seasons* and Bartók's *Bluebeard's Castle* to such light rarities as "The Comic Schubert" and "The Comic Beethoven." New roles in his Wagnerian repertoire include Wotan in *Die Walküre*, Kurwenal in *Tristan und Isolde*, Hans Sachs in *Die Meistersinger*, and Telramund in *Lohengrin*. Recent performances include the title roles of *Falstaff* and *Gianni Schicchi* in Salzburg. The recipient of numerous awards, Berry is a Member of Honor of the Vienna State Opera, and has won the Science and Art Medal from the governments of Sweden and Austria.

Bass **James Patterson** sings Trulove in *The Rake's Progress*, Titirel in *Parsifal*, and the Old Convict in *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*. He was last seen as the Marchese di Calatrava in *La Forza del Destino* and Hans Schwarz in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* during the 1986 Fall Season. During the 1985 Fall Season, Patterson performed four roles: The King of France in *Lear*, Johann in *Werther*, Tommaso in *Un Ballo in Maschera* and the Police Commissioner in *Der Rosenkavalier*. A graduate of the 1982 Merola Opera Program and a 1983-



KEVIN ANDERSON

84 Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, he appeared in productions of *Rigoletto* and *The Magic Flute*, and went on to portray Sparafucile in Western Opera Theater's 1982 touring production of *Rigoletto*. He was heard in Opera Center Showcase productions of *L'Ormino* and *The Rape of Lucretia* in 1983, and for the 1984 Showcase was Osmin in *The Abduction from the Seraglio*. Since his Company debut as a Customhouse Guard in the 1983 Summer Season production of *La Bohème*, he has sung nearly 20 roles here, including Fafner in *Das Rheingold* and *Siegfried* during the 1985 Ring Festival. During the 1986-87 season, Patterson sang the role of Rocco in concert performances of *Fidelio* with the New Jersey Symphony and appeared with the San Jose Symphony in the Beethoven *Missa Solemnis*. He also portrayed Sarastro in *The Magic Flute* with the New Orleans Opera, Dr. Bartolo in *Le Nozze di Figaro* with the Vancouver Opera and appeared in *Aida* and *Hamlet* with the Greater Miami Opera. Last January, he made his Lyric Opera of Chicago debut in *Tosca*. Other recent appearances include the world premiere of David Diamond's *A Song of Hope* in New York, Sarastro with Seattle Opera and Colline in *La Bohème* with Opera Hamilton.

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

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Parsifal

Photos taken in rehearsal by Marty Sohl

Waltraud Meier, René Kollo





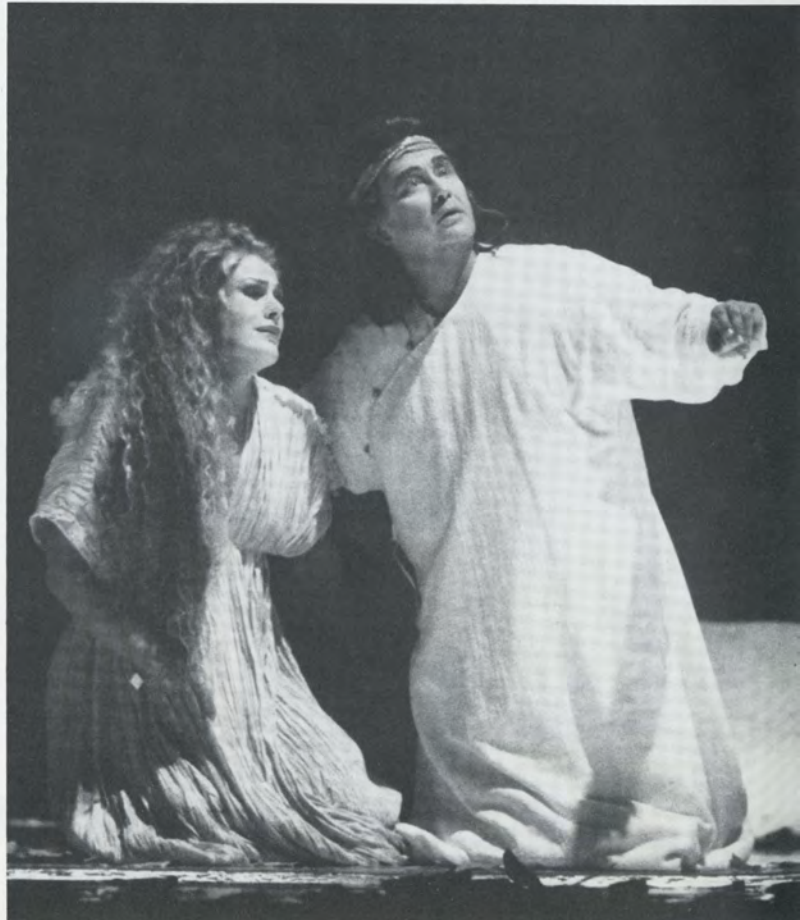
Kurt Moll

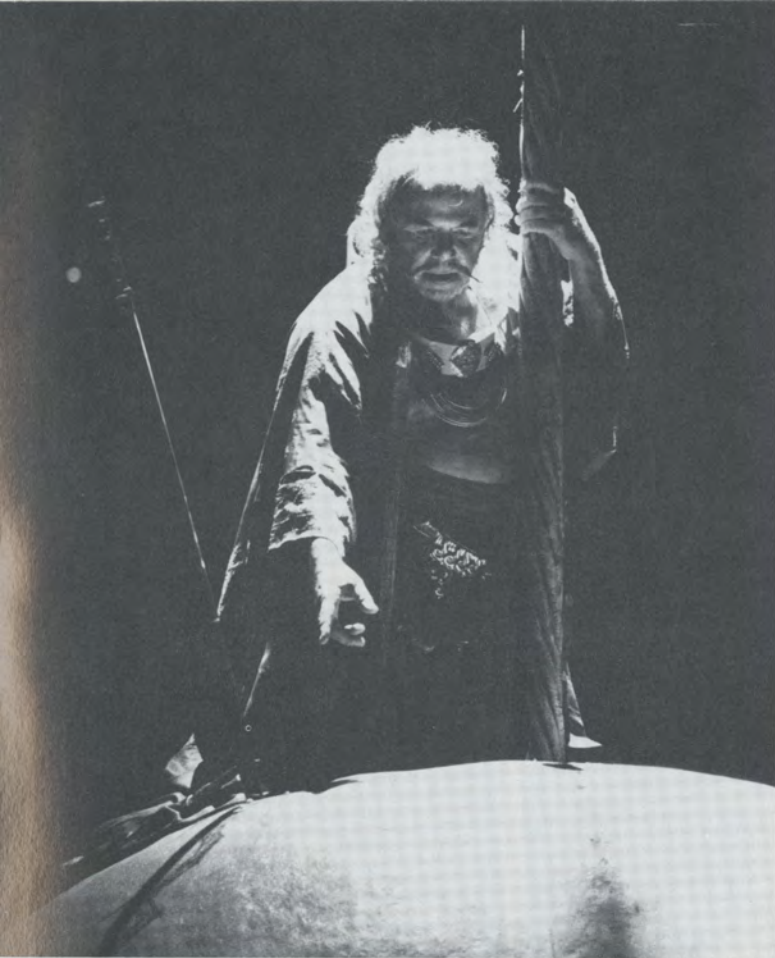
(below) Waltraud Meier, René Kollo



Kurt Moll, René Kollo

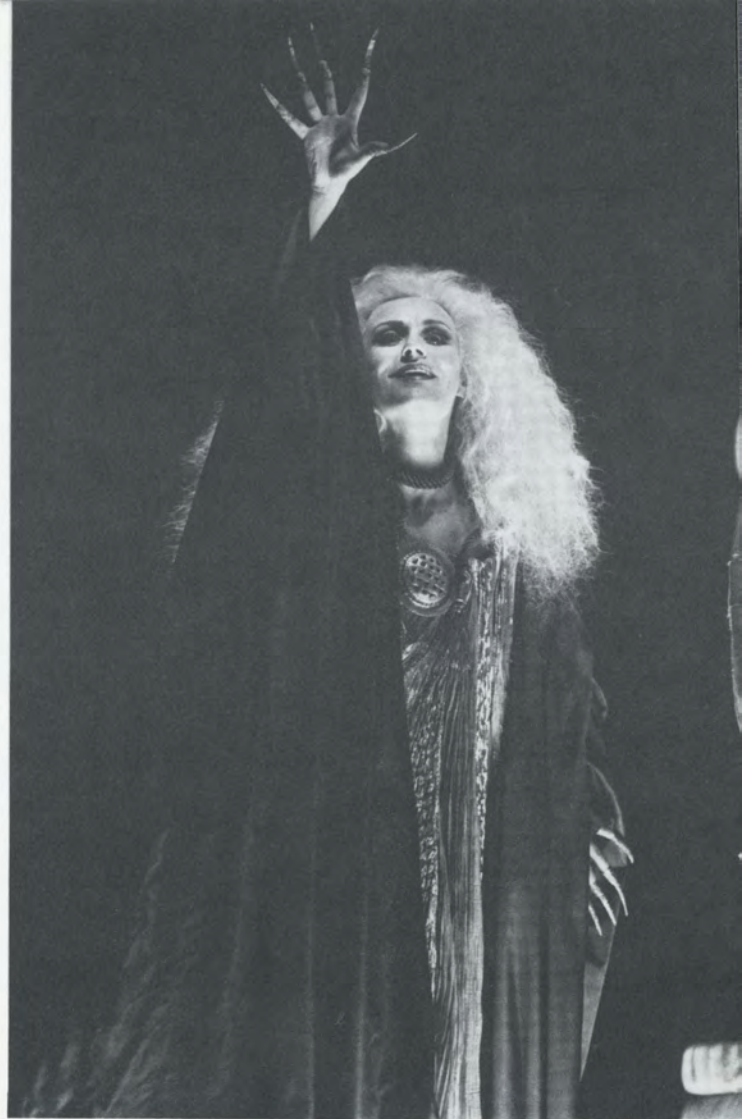
(below) Waltraud Meier, René Kollo





Walter Berry

(below) René Kollo



Waltraud Meier

(below) Jorma Hynninen

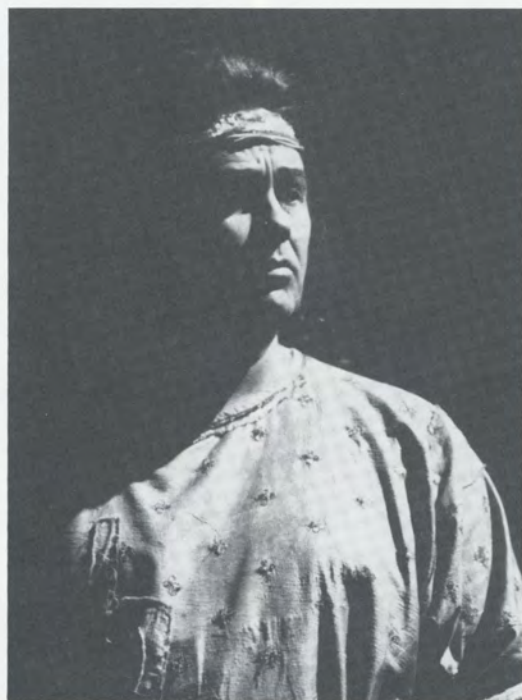




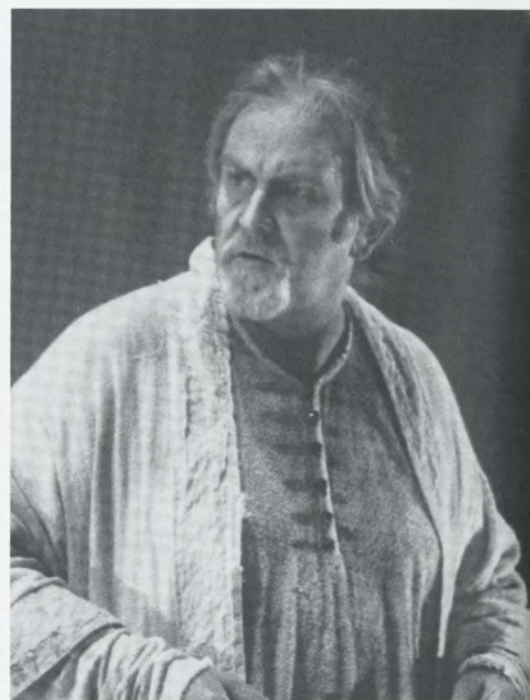
Men of the San Francisco Opera Chorus



Kurt Moll



René Kollo



Kurt Moll

(below) René Kollo and the Flower Maidens





DOUGLAS WUNSCH



VICTOR LEDBETTER

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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 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.

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 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.

Baritone **Victor Ledbetter** returns this season as an Esquire in *Parsifal*, and as Marcello in the student/family performances of *La Bohème*. A 1988 Adler Fellow, he made his San Francisco Opera debut in the 1987 Fall Season as Baron Douphol in the family performances of *La Traviata*, and as Paris in *Roméo et Juliette*. He was a participant in the 1986 Merola Opera Program and sang Marcello in the Company's production of *La Bohème* at Villa Montalvo. During the 1986-87 season he sang Marcello with Western Opera Theater, including appearances on tour in China. In April of 1988, Ledbetter returned to Shanghai for two weeks to sing Scarpia in China's first *Tosca*, and participate in a joint concert with the Shanghai Opera and the Shanghai Conservatory. A native of Georgia, the baritone is a graduate of Mercer University and has studied for two years at Indiana University with Nicola Rossi-Lemeni, and taught there as an Associate Instructor of Voice. He has appeared in several productions with the Phoenix Opera of Atlanta, including *Le Comte Ory* and *The Yeomen of the Guard*. A choir director for several years, he is also a frequent oratorio soloist, and is a recent prize winner in the Baltimore Opera Competition. He has performed with the Vancouver Opera in *The Cunning Little Vixen* and recently appeared as a soloist in San Francisco's Stern Grove. For Opera Center's 1988 Showcase production of Hiram Titus's *Rosina*, Ledbetter portrayed Count Almaviva. He will make his debut with the San Diego Opera next season in *Don Pasquale*.



THOMAS POTTER

Baritone **Thomas Potter** returns this season to portray the Innkeeper in *Manon Lescaut*, the second Knight of the Grail in *Parsifal*, the Sentry in *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, and Schaunard in the family performances of *La Bohème*. He made his San Francisco Opera debut in the 1985 production of *Der Rosenkavalier*, and returned in 1986 for *Die Meistersinger* and *Macbeth*. A 1987-88 Adler Fellow, he performed in *Salome* and sang Germont in the family performances of *La Traviata*. For the Opera Center's 1987 Showcase he sang Sylvester in 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.



SIR JOHN PRITCHARD

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

Festival, of which he became music director in 1969. In 1978 he relinquished his Glyndebourne post to become chief conductor at the Cologne Opera, a position he continues to hold. In 1980 he became principal guest conductor with the BBC Symphony and since 1982 has been chief conductor of that organization. At the beginning of the 1981-82 season he was named music director of the National 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.



NICOLAS JOËL

French director **Nicolas Joël** returns for his seventh season with San Francisco Opera to direct the new production of *Parsifal*. His first assignment here was in 1977 as assistant to the late Jean-Pierre Ponnelle on the highly-acclaimed production of *Turandot* with Luciano Pavarotti and Montserrat Caballé. He returned to the Company in 1979 to direct the new production of *La Voix humaine*. He also directed the new production of *Samson et Dalila* in 1980 (which was seen in a national telecast), and directed the revival here in 1983. For three years he assisted Patrice Chéreau in mounting the centennial production of Wagner's *Ring* cycle at Bayreuth, a production that was telecast nationally in 1983 in the United States. Joël has also staged his own *Ring* cycle in Lyons and Strasbourg, and his busy schedule has been occupied with productions of Verdi and Wagner operas for the Netherlands Opera in Amsterdam, the Royal Theatre in Copenhagen, the opera company of Göteborg, Sweden, the Vienna Staatsoper and the Zurich Opera, to mention only a few. He won great acclaim for his production of *Aida* that opened the 1983 season at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, and was recipient that year of the coveted Critics Award in France for his production of Gounod's *Faust* in Toulouse, which was also taped for French television. Recent projects include *Dido and Aeneas* at the Paris Opera, a new *Ring* cycle in Wiesbaden, and *Lohengrin* in Copenhagen. He also directed two new works by Marcel Landowski: *Montségur* for the Toulouse Opera and the Paris Opera, a production



PET HALMEN

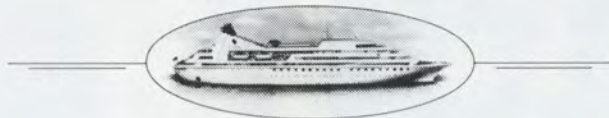
that also won the French Critics Award and which was taped for French television; and *La Vieille Maison* in Nantes, a production which will be mounted throughout France in 1989. Joël's future engagements include *Aida* in Chicago, *Andrea Chénier* in Strasbourg, a new production of *Nabucco* for the Orange Festival and, to celebrate the bicentennial of the French Revolution, the world premiere in Lyons of Antoine Duhamel's *1793*, based on the novel by Victor Hugo.

Romanian-born designer **Pet Halmen** created the costumes for *Der Fliegende Holländer*, and the sets and costumes for San Francisco Opera's new production of *Parsifal*. He was the costume designer for Reimann's *Lear* for the 1978 Munich world premiere and the 1981 San Francisco first U.S. staging (which was repeated here during the 1985 Fall Season). He was responsible for both sets and costumes for the 1979 San Francisco Opera productions of Dallapiccola's *Il Prigioniero* and Poulenc's *La Voix humaine*, and the costume designs for the Company's 1977 presentation of *Turandot*. Following an apprenticeship as a theater painter in West Berlin, Halmen collaborated with the late designer-director Jean-Pierre Ponnelle, designing the costumes for Ponnelle productions of *Carmina Burana* and *Salome* in Cologne, *L'Elisir d'Amore* in Hamburg, *La Traviata* in Houston, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* in Salzburg and cycles of Mozart and Monteverdi operas in Zurich, the Monteverdi works being filmed and televised internationally. With Nicolas Joël (director of this new production of *Parsifal*), he has collaborated on a *Ring* cycle co-production for Strasbourg and Lyons, *La Traviata* for Göteborg,

Lohengrin in Copenhagen, and *Dido and Aeneas* in Paris. Other design commissions include *L'Enfant et les sortilèges* for the Deutsche Oper Berlin, *Norma* and *Lulu* in Munich, *Tannhäuser* in Bern, a Mozart and Molière cycle in Zurich, a film version of *Elektra* directed by Götz Friedrich, and Reimann's *The Trojan Women* (co-designed with Ponnelle) for the Munich Festival. Halmen has also worked with Gian Carlo Menotti, Oscar Fritz Schuh and August Everding, among other directors, and in ballet with choreographers John Cranko and Erich Walter. He directed his first production in 1986: *La Clemenza di Tito* in Wuppertal. Last year he staged *Tristan und Isolde* and *Lohengrin* in Düsseldorf and, most recently, *Der Fliegende Holländer* in Nice. Future productions as designer/director include Paer's *Achille* in Bologna, *Eugene Onegin* in Salzburg, *Nabucco* in Munich, the *Ring* cycle in Dortmund, and *Lohengrin* at the Acropolis Theater in Nice. In honor of his outstanding work in design, he was recently named Official Designer for the major Mozart Bicentennial Exhibition which will take place in Salzburg in 1991. He designs record covers, posters and special magazine illustrations, many of which were seen in a major exhibition in New York in 1978 and, most recently, in Munich.

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THOMAS J. MUNN

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

Getting Ready for *Parsifal*

By TIMOTHY PFAFF

"The day Pet Halmen's first sketches for our new *Parsifal* arrived," recalls Thomas Munn, San Francisco Opera's lighting director and design consultant and a central member of the Company's production team, "we all got very excited about them. They're gorgeous pieces of art. But the longer we studied them, the more another question began to come into each of our minds: 'But what do they mean?'"

Welcome, if you will, to the magical world of *Parsifal*, Richard Wagner's last (some maintain supreme) creation for the operatic stage—and a work that has a way of casting spells beyond the celebrated Good Friday one. For economic as well as artistic reasons, the composer decreed that the work (which he first called, in a rather abstruse German compound noun, a "stage-consecrating festival play") be staged only at Bayreuth, the theater he himself created for the premiere of *Der Ring des Nibelungen* in 1876. For the most understandable of reasons—the opera's uncontested greatness—every opera company of stature has, since *Parsifal*'s premiere in 1882, wanted—indeed, needed—to mount it. Yet it's hard to imagine the company that has not, at some point in that process, felt the composer's and his wife Cosima's "curse" on

productions elsewhere—and assented, however secretly, to the wisdom of restricting the

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

Pet Halmen's drawing for one of the Parsifal Act I columns, and (inset) a photo of one of the column segments, cast in fiberglass and waiting to be assembled in the San Francisco Opera Scenic Shop.





Jay Kotcher, Company head scenic artist, pauses by a remarkable object that emerged out of his department. The skull, which will dominate the Klingsor scene of *Parsifal*, was first sculpted out of styrofoam, then coated with fiberglass. After the styrofoam was removed, the resulting shape was finished, outfitted with "stitches" and readied for its translucent debut on stage.

piece to the Wagner shrine.

For a work with only six principal (which is to say, named) characters, two main locales, and an easily synopsisized plot, *Parsifal* bristles with a myriad of details in both poem and score that have left generations of conductors, directors, singers, translators, commentators, scholars, and audience members—including the most perfect of Wagnerites—wondering, "What does that mean?" For few other operas does it hold as true that to produce it at all is to interpret it. In the case of *Parsifal*, the supreme challenge is to hazard an interpretation—to take stabs at what it means—while leaving its mysteries intact.

"I don't think that *Parsifal* has just one meaning," declares Nicolas Joël, the director of San Francisco Opera's new production. "It has been forced, many times, to have one, or to have just one." He adds that, despite superficial appearances (and the interpretive overlays of generations of directors), "*Parsifal* does not have a narrowly religious or sacred meaning. That I'm confident about. Wagner's religious interests varied throughout his life; for a time he even planned to compose an opera on a Buddhist subject. If you look closely at the way religion is depicted in *Parsifal*, it's not as anything pleasant or helpful. It's a burden. But I don't think the piece is making a statement about religion."

Joël's opinion (shared, by the way, with his colleagues on the production team) can no longer be counted as heretical. A close reading of Wagner's poem reveals that, for all the Christian trappings in the story, there's little writing that could be called catechistic—and no mention of Jesus by name. And, as many a commentator has pointed out, Wagner's conviction in depicting the temptations of the flesh is hardly the stuff to comfort the souls of Christians of any stripe.

"In approaching this new production," Joël continues, "the one thing we all agreed on was to take out the dust, the heavy, dark, German dust that has settled on it. One thing I try to remember is that Wagner wrote most of the music in Venice. It's hard not to think that the lagoon, and the special light and beauty of Venice, have had an effect on it. We felt that the music is crystal-clear, or at least translucent."

"We" in this case includes designer Pet Halmen (familiar to San Francisco audiences this season for his costumes for *Der*

Fliegende Holländer), with whom Joël has collaborated on more than 25 opera productions and related enterprises in Europe and beyond, and conductor Sir John Pritchard, San Francisco Opera's music director. When the new production, the Company's first *Parsifal* in 15 years—and only the third physical setting of the work in its history—was conceived more than two years ago, "[Then-general director] Terry [McEwen] and I had very long talks about how to present this work," Pritchard explains. "Above all, we wanted to avoid any sense of heaviness, which this work has lent itself to.

"Even Jean-Pierre Ponnelle, whose *Parsifal* production I conducted in Cologne, designed sets with great Gothic columns receding into the distance—using the whole depth of the stage. Terry and I were delighted to find a director and a designer who are in sympathy with what I consider the great transparency of the score—and particularly the feeling of light, which infuses the music generally. Our production has columns, too, but they're translucent, emitting various shades of light throughout the course of the work. Together we've set our eyes on a production with no annoying 'period' touches in it—one that could play without changes until the year 2000—at least."

Although the production is Joël's first *Parsifal*, he arrives as a seasoned Wagnerian, having directed *Lohengrin* and *Der Fliegende Holländer*, assisted Patrice Chéreau in the celebrated Bayreuth centenary *Ring*, and twice directed his own *Ring* cycles, in Wiesbaden and Lyons. "We knew from the outset that playing *Parsifal* as a mocked-up Catholic mass was too reductive. And we were not interested in a 'realistic' *Parsifal*," Joël proceeds. "What would that mean? Not much. And we weren't interested in making stage events; we didn't want a post-nuclear-holocaust *Parsifal*."

What the team *did* want was a production that made the most of the work's symbolic and psychological content. "Thomas Mann called Wagner the finest psychologist of his century," Joël reminds. "And in addition to focusing on the psychological elements, which is what I generally do as a director, what we are striving for is a scenic realization of the music."

In contrast to the great cathedral spaces that have characterized the outer acts of innumerable *Parsifal* productions (includ-

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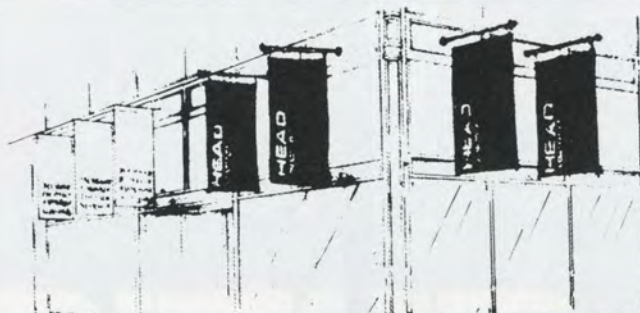
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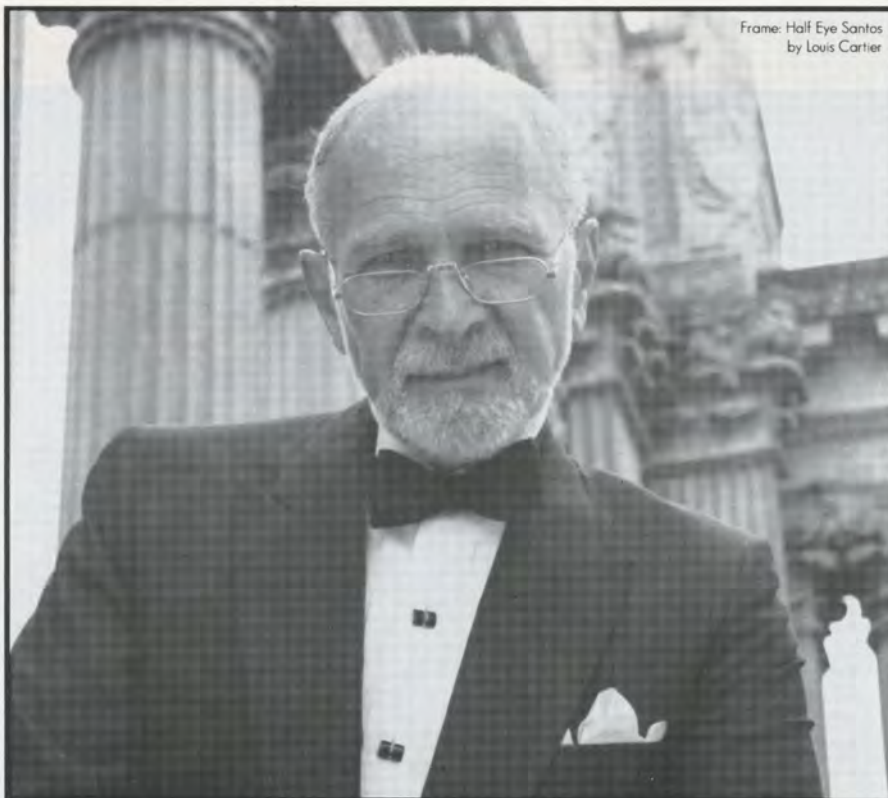
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ing the very first, by Paul von Joukowsky, which emulated the great Siena Cathedral, whose beauty had moved Wagner so deeply in 1880), the new San Francisco Grail "temple" is the product of what Joël calls "a pantheistic world." It is dominated by a huge sculpture: a readily identifiable Christ figure incorporated into the larger form of a more Eastern-looking god figure. "Our conviction that *Parsifal* is not a church celebration has led us to devise a more synthetic religious ceremony," Joël explains, "which is closer to the spirit of the music."

The visually arresting second act of this new *Parsifal* may prove yet more controversial. Were it not enough that Kundry makes her second entrance, for the seduction of Parsifal, on an enormous peacock bed ("Let's face it," Joël says matter-of-factly, "she's there on business"), the evil magician Klingsor makes an even more spectacular entrance—perched atop a huge skull flown in from above the stage (and anchored from below by ropes held by two forbidding-looking angel figures, one black, one white). "Wagner presents Klingsor as a fairly straightforward evil magician-type," Joël comments, "so we wanted a potent symbol for him—more than just the Faust cabinet done over in an Oriental style. Klingsor is bad—and he's enjoying it. He's in a world of excitement, having a kind of one-man Witches' Sabbath. Maybe the Flower Maidens are witches—who knows?"

If they are, they're the best-dressed coven this side of the fashion runways of Milan. In addition to their extravagant floral headdresses, the Flower Maidens are clad in exquisite, hand-pleated crimson burnouses which, when removed, reveal even more beautiful, one-of-a-kind dresses sewn from the finest sari silks by the costume builders in the new San Francisco Opera Costume Shop. Halmen's costume designs—with which he first captured the opera world's attention, before firmly establishing himself as the "complete" designer, of film as well as stage sets and costumes—make characteristically strong, and strongly characterful, visual statements. Kundry, of course, gets the most spectacular dress of all for the seduction scene of Act II—but she makes her first-act entrance dressed as a man. "In the outer acts, she's the only woman in a world of men," Joël explains, "and despised as such."

Halmen's set designs brilliantly realized



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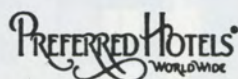
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McEwen's wish for "simple, elegant" decors that captured the "ethereal" nature of Wagner's music. The Monsalvat Grail Castle and Temple scenes of the outer acts feature set pieces every bit as commanding as those of Act II, if in strong contrast to them. Halmen has evoked the Grail Forest, for example, with five "trees"—huge, 30-foot-high fiberglass columns, each individually sculpted with images of animals and plants. They have been designed and fabricated to give the feeling of turn-of-the-century Lalique crystal when illuminated from within. "A turn-of-the-century aesthetic is right for *Parsifal*," comments Joël.

The process from preliminary designs to finished sets has followed what Joël calls "the same pattern you find in every opera house in the world. Three weeks after you submit the first sketches, you get a telex saying it's too expensive." Munn adds that the process of "whittling down" the first designs was one of the most arduous in the Company's history—but that hard work, ingenious problem solving, and some "emotional ups and downs" resulted in a production the Scene Shop could build, the Company could afford, and that the production team was satisfied with. More *Parsifal* magic.

Perhaps the prime example of the scaling back of a design feature was the production's main floor element: a decagon, or ten-sided structure vaguely reminiscent of Wieland Wagner's famous Bayreuth "disk." Halmen first envisioned a 30-foot tank to be filled with water one foot deep, a stunning idea both visually and symbolically, but one that proved more than a little impractical for the War Memorial Opera House. A "swimming pool" that required deconstruction after each performance was deemed too labor-intensive for a repertory company—and too potentially disastrous for the War Memorial's recently resurfaced stage. An effect similar to the one first intended has been achieved by lighting the decagon from beneath.

Halmen also had planned for hard, fiberglass "surrounds," the wall-like surfaces that delimit the edges of the set at the wings. Impractical for a variety of reasons, the fiberglass surfaces were supplanted by soft surfaces, cotton in the outer acts and pongee silk in the second. The billowing of the silk produces a sensuous effect entirely in keeping with



Matthew Nash, San Francisco Opera Costume Shop senior men's draper, holds one of the armor outfits for the *Knights of the Holy Grail*, to be worn on stage by a member of the S.F. Opera Chorus.



S.F. Opera Costume Director Jenny Green (whose profile starts on page 54) handles one of the *Parsifal* Flower Maidens' costumes, made from antique sari material.

the atmosphere of Act II, and sensitive lighting has made the cotton surrounds just as effective in those scenes.

In all, lighting has proved to be the key to making the ambitious production both practical and affordable. "From the start," Company lighting director Munn recalls, "we all decided that we wanted the outer acts to be pure white—whiter than white—to reflect the purity of *Parsifal*. For me the question immediately became, what is white? When you use conventional light sources, every time you dim them, the light becomes more yellow. The answer turned out to be fluorescent light, which doesn't yellow when dimmed. It's almost like daylight; you can vary its

intensity in keeping with the music's changing intensity—and all without losing its purity."

The new *Parsifal* is illuminated by some 600 fluorescent tubes, in themselves by no means problem-free. In addition to being more fragile than more conventional stage lights ("I had awful visions of shards of glass raining down backstage," Munn allows, "and we had to rethink some of the lighting purely for reasons of safety"), they make noise, which Munn had to devise ways to filter out. "And because they have no filament," Munn continues, "you can only dim them about 80 percent before they start to flicker. And when they go out—or first come

on—they flash. But that provided us with at least one happy accident. When we were lighting Kundry's first entrance during the technical rehearsals last summer and turned those lights on, they wavered—and then flashed. We knew the instant we saw it that it was perfect for Kundry's arrival."

Another quality of fluorescent light—that it is not hot—proved advantageous for the lighting of Act II. "Wagner calls for dark blue light," Munn explains, "and Pet was after a color he called 'ultraviolet'—a very dark blue. Because fluorescents don't burn the gelatin filters, we were able to achieve a deep, saturated blue light with a gel called 'Congo blue,' which we other-

wise can't use that often because it's so dark. In the same way, we were able to get a 'hot pink,' or 'passion pink'—a very pink pink—for Kundry's entrance on the peacock bed in Act II."

The possibilities afforded by the imaginative lighting cheer *Parsifal's* conductor at least as much as they do the rest of the production team. "The kaleidoscopic effects of the continual changes in lighting are certainly dramatic," Pritchard says, "and the variety in the visual scene complements the music perfectly. It certainly won't go against it."

"I regard *Parsifal* with special veneration," he continues, "because I think it has the most remarkable orchestration in the whole output of Wagner. There's nothing to equal the refinement of *Parsifal* in the treatment of the orchestra. It's even better than *Tristan und Isolde*. As a musician, I react to his wonderful handling of the score. When I conduct *Die Meistersinger*, I come to the last act thinking, 'Even if we hadn't had the first and second acts, what we hear in Act III would be a complete musical experience.' I apply that attitude to the whole of *Parsifal* without any exception."

Although conflicting summer festivals have generally prevented Pritchard from visiting Bayreuth, he cherishes a memory of hearing Hans Knappertsbusch conduct *Parsifal* there "when I was youngish," he says. "Besides the experience of the hard seats in the Festspielhaus, I've never forgotten the feeling of line in Knappertsbusch's performance. It was one cantilena from start to finish. Time literally stood still."

Now, having himself conducted the work in Cologne, Pritchard adds that he relishes the conductor's "rare opportunity of not having to watch the passage of time. At least in Germany, where the musicians and the public reserve a super-respectful attitude towards *Parsifal*, the orchestra players don't look at their watches. I admit that I myself would at times like Gurnemanz to get on with it—but there's always the compensation of a beautiful voice in the part, such as we have in San Francisco."

"In *Parsifal*, you're walking down endless paths of beauty," he concludes. "I always encourage people to cherish the whole Flower Maidens scene. The sound Wagner achieves by using only female voices in interweaving melodies is a wonder. But everyone finds something in

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particular to love in *Parsifal*. Wagner was a superb craftsman, and his imagination must have been fired all along the way."

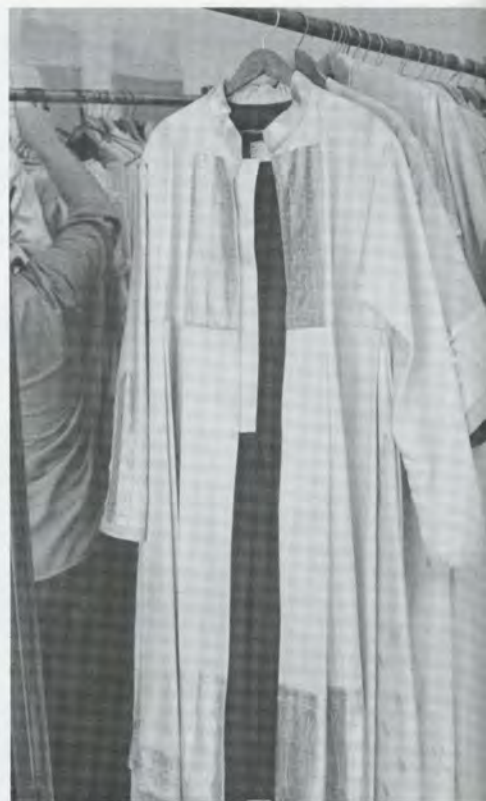
Music and staging intersect in *Parsifal* as they do in few other operas. All three acts include important scenic transformations that take place over continuous, uninterrupted music—ideally in full view of the audience. It fascinates Joël that Wagner was, at one and the same time, years ahead of the technicians in terms of his theatrical imagination and, in another sense, a theatrical naive. Taking their cues from the master himself, the San Francisco production team is approaching the transformation scenes as the theatrical realities they are: *a vista* (that is, in full view of the audience) scene changes. "It has partly to do with trusting the audience," Joël allows, "which I like to do."

For the first-act transformation, the "trees" of the Grail forest are simply "flown" out as the huge temple sculpture is flown in from above. The famous Good Friday transformation in the final act takes place behind two painted scrim—but not as an attempt at sleight-of-hand. The scrim are painted in the symbolist style of Puvis de Chavannes, a contemporary of Klimt's, and are intended as an enhancement of the production's total aesthetic.

Like Pritchard, Joël regards *Parsifal* with an attitude which, if it stops short of reverential, clearly does not preclude awe. "I've always felt *Parsifal* was the most moving of Wagner's operas," he says, "although it's hard to tell why. I suppose it's partly because it's not just about Parsifal—or about Gurnemanz, or Amfortas, or Kundry. You could say it's about individuation. It's about everyone; it's everybody's story. Except for Klingsor, the characters are all trying to move in some direction, to go somewhere. One of the opera's main themes is this desperate fight to free oneself—from oneself. The thing about Amfortas, for example, is not that he's a victim of the evil elements Klingsor represents. He's a victim of himself.

"Or take Kundry, one of Wagner's most fascinating creations. Amfortas may be wounded, but she herself is a wound—nothing but. Her whole being is damaged and distressed. The amazing thing about her is that, unlike the rest, she knows why. Why does she go through it all? She could get away, but she doesn't.

"Then there's Parsifal himself. He's the



A row of Knights of the Holy Grail coats is readied at the San Francisco Opera Costume Shop.



Three basic peacocks, sculpted and painted in the S.F. Opera Scenic Shop, await their transformation into some of Kundry's furnishings.

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one the knights of the Grail have been waiting for—but that's their problem! He enters like James Dean, having killed the swan, full of anger and rage. Free he's not. It's a very Wagnerian touch to show people who have this illusion of freedom and power. Yet in many respects Parsifal is the easiest of the characters to follow. We see his natural psychological development from a lack of experience to the experience he attains through misery.

"To tell the truth," Joël confides, "I've never been too happy with the ending of the opera, with Parsifal ending up as the Führer of the Grail. Somehow it seems too easy. After this enormous psychological journey, Amfortas is relieved of his suffering, Kundry is free to die in peace, Parsifal gets the job—the *Amt*—and everybody is happy. I'm not saying that that's the statement Wagner is trying to make—but it does seem that there's something that we're not being told. For that matter, I'm not sure that Wagner himself knew what it was."

What he is sure of is that Wagner's last opera is a tale of many meanings—but a story without a moral. Joël firmly rejects any suggestion that work's "moral" is *Durch Mitleid wissend* (roughly translated as "made wise through pity, or compassion"), a phrase that recurs in a kind of halo of sound throughout the opera. "It's a very normal, very touching human feeling," he says. "We learn through experience—and through accepting that experience. It's quite realistic. But it's *not* the moral of *Parsifal*. Wagner was, among the many other things he was, a great poet. And as such, his poem, his opera, is full of symbols. Our hope for this production is not to explain those symbols, to send the audience away with an easy, turnkey answer."

If San Francisco Opera's new *Parsifal* has an identifiable goal, it is to confront its audience with one of the supreme manifestations of the human creative spirit in all its complexity and perplexity. The producers will have done the work they set out to do if the audience achieves an inner experience—having, like the opera's producers, grappled with one of mankind's great stories, a parable of the journey of the soul on the path of individuation—and transcendence.

And, like the production team—and Parsifal himself—become *Durch Mitleid wissend*. The wiser for having suffered along. ■

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Company Profiles: Jenny Green

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

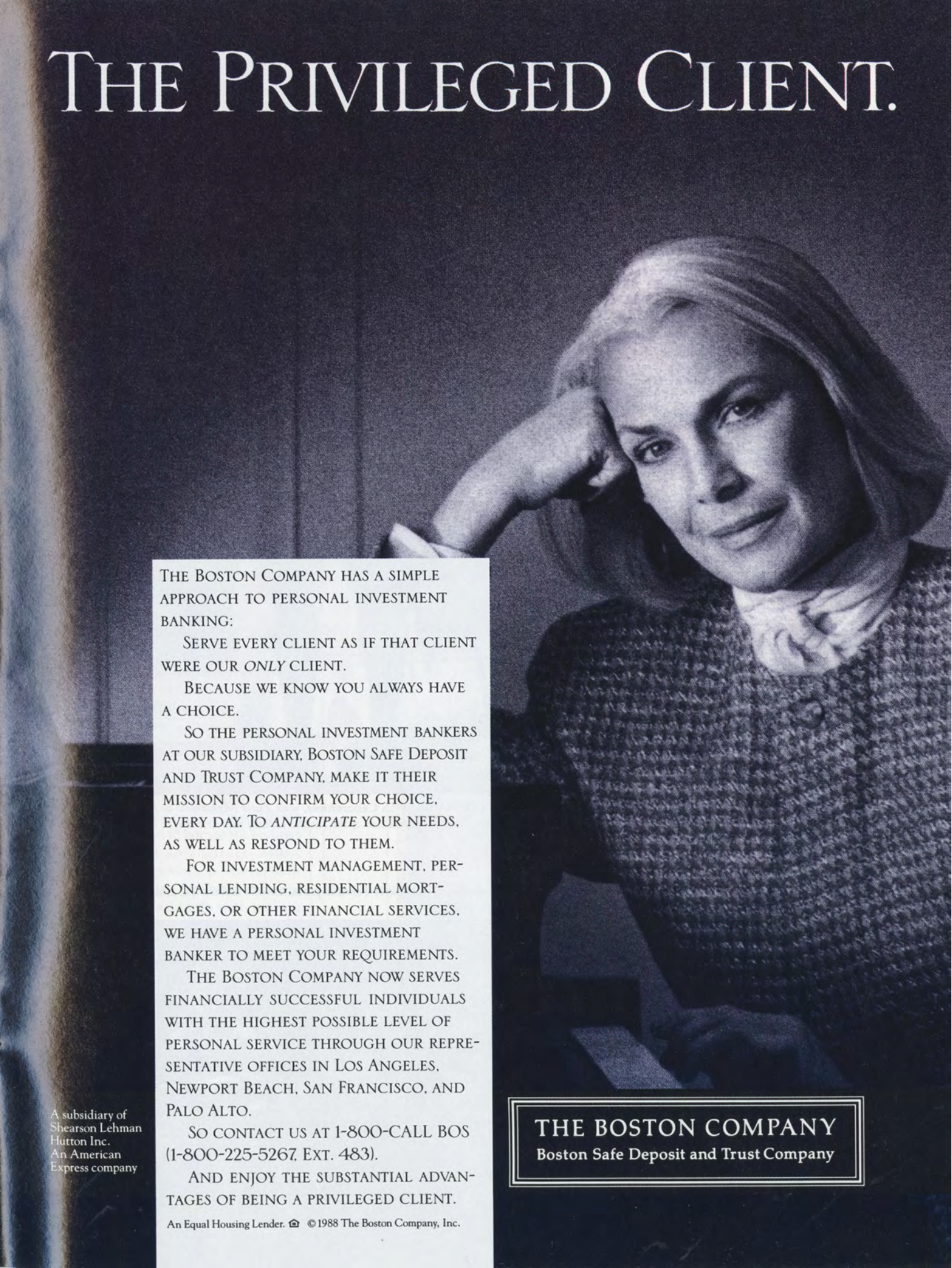
Photos by Robert Messick

San Francisco Opera Costume Director Jenny Green, talking in her office in the Costume Shop's spacious new quarters on Ninth Street, exudes an aura of theatricality and professional satisfaction. Casually dressed in bohemian fashion, she takes time during a tight schedule of costume fittings to discuss a subject that has dominated the last two decades of her life. "I always wanted to be a costumer,"

she says, her accent veering from the North Country tones of her native Lancashire to the cockney she picked up from spending long periods in London. "I've always wanted to do exactly what I do. I don't think I've ever wanted to do anything different, though there are times after rehearsals at midnight when I wonder—as we all do, dear, we all do." As she lights a cigarette (even though it's her



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Jenny Green in the new San Francisco Opera Costume Shop.

own office, she asks her guest before lighting up), one cannot help noticing the two metallic blue fake fingernails she wears on one hand, something she borrowed from her six-year-old daughter that morning on impulse.

It was three months after the birth of her daughter in 1982 that Jenny began working as Costume Director for San Francisco Opera. She had studied at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts before taking a succession of jobs with small theatrical companies. "I took a road show out from the Citizen's Theater in Glasgow. You can't imagine what it's like washing things in bathroom sinks at midnight and hoping the heating is going to work so they'll be dry for the next performance. It's a nightmare." She progressed to a series of shows in London's West End before joining Royal Opera at Covent Garden, where she worked for ten years.

From Covent Garden, Jenny came to Los Angeles, where she "learned the art of quick and dirty" in various Los Angeles showgirl shops. I did a lot of TV specials and movies—grade C movies, not even grade B." After a stint in Denver, where she established a costume shop for a new theater complex, she moved to San Francisco, "because my husband was born here and wanted to come home." Her first job in the Bay Area was with Lucasfilm, where she ran the costume shop for

Return of the Jedi, but her first love remained opera, and after the birth of her daughter, Jenny became part of the San Francisco Opera family.

She explained how the role of a costumer differs from a costume designer. "They're totally different. A designer works on a concept with the director and produces pretty pictures. It is my job with my crew to interpret the pictures into wearable garments. Many designers tend to imagine the perfect body, and in opera, *it don't happen often*. All performers have their own little quirks and needs, color dislikes, fabric dislikes, movement needs, and what we do here in the shop is create the vision the designer has."

Creating that vision requires as much interpersonal tact as mechanical skill: "You get to know the singers, and their individual needs. Every new singer that comes in, you have to take time to know. It's very important that the singers learn to trust you. If they don't, you're really in trouble, because a singer can't see in a fitting room what they look like on the stage; we can't duplicate the lights and the distance. So we try to get the trust of the singer, and explain the clothes within the production as seen by the director and designer. There are times you need to make adjustments that will make singers look their best in the total concept, and that often requires different colors, different fabric, slightly different styles, while

maintaining the integrity of the original design."

Bits of jargon from the costumer's profession began to filter in. Unlike the fashion industry, where they make or create a dress or shirt, in the theater they *build* costumes. "It's a terminology that comes because costumes are always far more structured than regular clothes. A lot of our methods are different. We can't stack-cut; we never have 60 of anything the same in one size. Everything we do tends to be different. We're doing *Parsifal* this year in which all the knights are identical, and yet we have seven different patterns for them because of the sizes, and even within those sizes, we'll adjust them when we fit them, because no two bodies are the same."

Other conditions of the theater dictate specific approaches not required in the fashion world. "You'll find that most performers prefer natural fabrics. Natural fibers breathe; polyester does not breathe, and it's hotter than hell under those lights. We keep them as cool, lightweight and comfortable as possible."

The many different style-periods in which various operas are set require that Green and her crew be knowledgeable in historic construction methods. "Unless you use those techniques, you're not going to get an authentic look. If you need to have boned bodices, you use bones, albeit aluminum covered with plastic as opposed to whalebones. They're still bones, and the placing of them can dictate what the period garment is going to look like."

Common wisdom would tell us that one of the problems Jenny faces is the ample dimensions of full-figured singers, but that is only partly correct. "It's not so much slenderizing; it's getting the proportions and the shape right. We have secrets that we use. We have what we call 'soprano spray,' which is a slight shading on the sides to slenderize the waist. It's also known as 'tenor spray'—happens to both of them, and it's not necessarily used just because somebody's overweight or big. It can be used to help create an effect within the shape of the garment."

"One of the problems you have, particularly with the slender ladies, is the rib expansion. If you have an 18th-century corsetted dress and you pull it in real tight to fit and get the chest right, they can't breathe. So in that instance you put elastic panels in the seams, so when



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One of the costumes for a Knight of the Holy Grail is checked by Jenny Green before she pauses to share a laugh.

they breathe, the garment will stretch with them. You can't leave it loose, because then you lose the period shape."

When asked which singers are the most difficult to please, Jenny thinks before responding, "I would say that tenors are probably the most problematic. Sopranos aren't far behind, but I think tenors generally have the most difficult consciousness about the way they look."

The process of making a singer look right often continues through the first couple of performances. "On the first performance of *L'Africaine*, Shirley Verrett's drape was too long. She wasn't imagining it; it was too long. Two dress rehearsals is not enough time to iron out the problems, and so when she was going up the stairs for the last act, I was right behind, stitching it up."

The position Jenny occupies in the production scheme of things is relatively new in America. "About 15 years ago, all principals took their own clothes everywhere they went, and produced some fairly horrendous visuals. It's my belief

that there needs to be one person answerable for the whole visual look. Of course I have the cooperation of an exceptionally talented crew and team, both here and in the wardrobes, people who have trained for years and are experts in their fields. Our milliner, for instance, is probably the best milliner in the country. We have drapers whose capabilities far exceed those of drapers on the New York market." Jenny's dedicated crew includes 20 people in the Wardrobe Department (wardrobe heads, their assistants, dressers, day crew and laundry people) in addition to about 60 who now enjoy the vastly improved conditions of their new shop, which occupies half again as much space—24,000 square feet—as their old quarters. Final touches are still being put on the new facilities; the door buzzer hasn't been installed yet, for instance, and several times during the interview, Jenny had to climb up onto a platform so she could lean out the second-story window and lower a key on a long cord to someone seeking admission below.

But the new location represents a quantum leap in comfort, convenience and safety. Now, as she confidently asserts, "there's no end to what we can do. We make all the armor, all the jewelry, all the headdresses. We dye all the fabric, we paint the fabric, we decorate fabric, we cut all the patterns, we sew everything together, all the hats are made here. We don't make gloves or footwear; we do alterations on them."

Asked what she would most like to tell our audiences, Jenny doesn't hesitate. "I don't think opera audiences are really aware of how much it costs. They tend to think that the costumes come from a retail outlet—I've had people ask me if we bought bits of jewelry at Macy's—and fighting that myth is the greatest thing. We spend a lot of time and energy and effort to make things so they will last—we build them to last at least 15 years [although many costumes last much longer]. When we do jewelry, we solder it together, because we can't afford a broken bead on the stage that somebody may tread on." She estimates the cost for an average period man's costume to be \$1,800 and that for a lady about \$2,200, although some exceptional pieces can run as high as \$4,500. Multiply that by the number of performers on the stage, and add in the cost of storage, maintenance and restoration, and you quickly realize the incredible budget required to dress opera singers in the style to which San Francisco audiences have become accustomed. "Some people say, 'Oh, just find anything and put it on—nobody will notice.' But I think our audiences notice. They can tell when it's good and when it's bad, and they want to see good. Some of the old garbage that could be tossed on, audiences are no longer happy to settle for. They pay their money and they want a good show, and that includes the costumes. I believe costumes are very important not only for the artists who wear them, to help create their character, but for the audience to get a true visual sense of what the overall period and feel for the opera is."

Duty calls, and Jenny Green is off for another fitting. Before dashing off, however, she is asked if she ever builds any of her own clothes, and breaks into laughter at her own admission:

She buys them at Macy's. ■

—John Schauer

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

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD INSIGHTS

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

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

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

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

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

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD PREVIEWS

MARIN

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

Parsifal 10/20
James Keolker

Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk 10/27
Richard Taruskin

La Gioconda 11/17
William Huck

SOUTH PENINSULA

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

Parsifal 10/18
James Keolker

Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk 10/25
Richard Taruskin

La Gioconda 11/15
William Huck

SAN JOSE OPERA GUILD

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

Parsifal 10/18
James Keolker

Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk 10/25
Richard Taruskin

La Gioconda 11/15
William Huck

SONOMA COUNTY CHAPTER

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

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

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

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

JUNIOR LEAGUE OPERA PREVIEWS

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

Parsifal 10/19
James Keolker

Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk 10/26
Richard Taruskin

La Gioconda 11/16
William Huck

OPERA EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL PREVIEW SERIES

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

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

MERRITT COLLEGE OPERA LECTURE SERIES

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

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ED BECKER'S PARSIFAL PREVIEW

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

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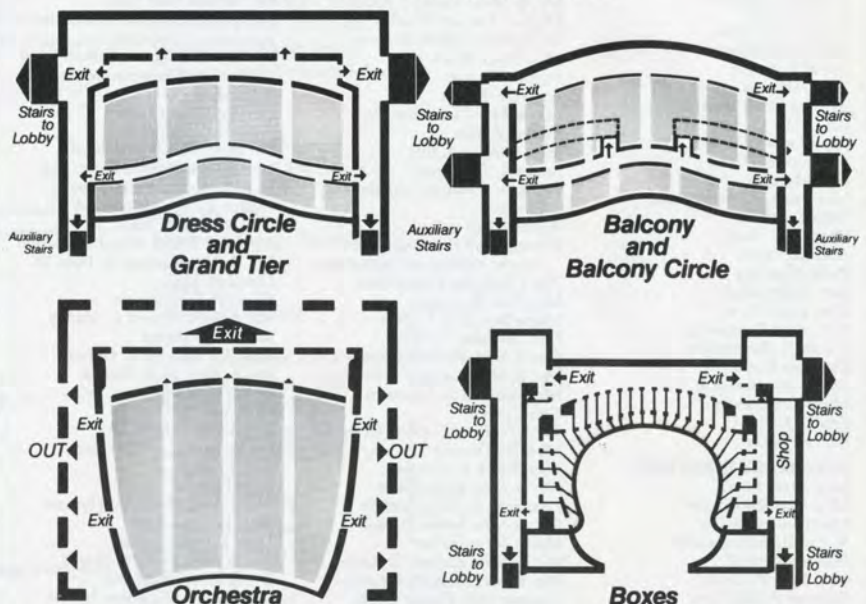
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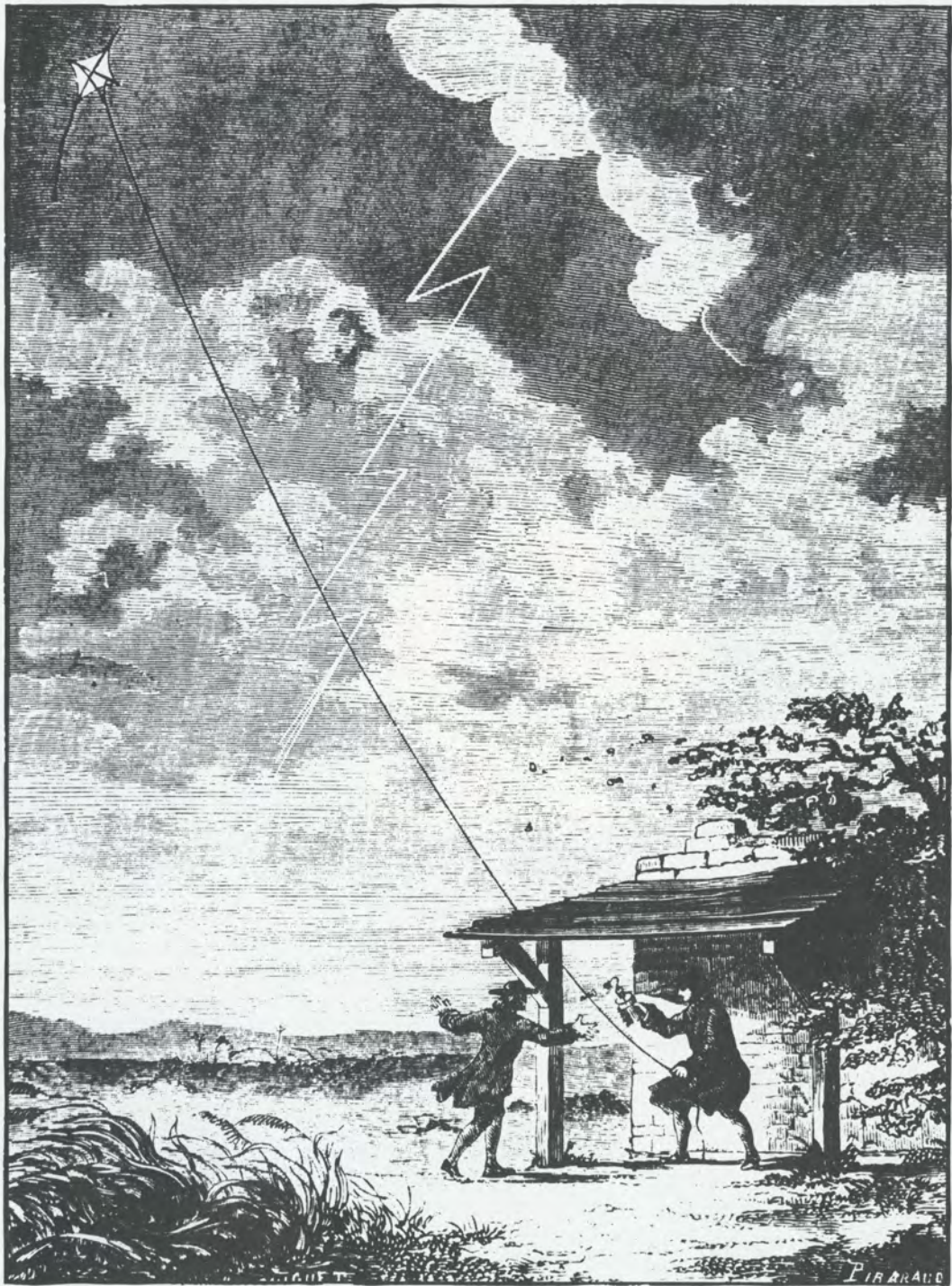
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