

Die Frau ohne Schatten
(Woman Without a Shadow)

1989

Saturday, November 25, 1989 7:30 PM

Tuesday, November 28, 1989 7:30 PM

Friday, December 1, 1989 7:30 PM

Monday, December 4, 1989 7:30 PM

Thursday, December 7, 1989 7:30 PM

Sunday, December 10, 1989 1:30 PM

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1989 SEASON

Die Frau ohne Schatten

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San Francisco Opera

Lotfi Mansouri, *General Director*

Sir John Pritchard, *Music Director*

Die Frau ohne Schatten

1989 SEASON

Vol. 67, No. 12

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COVER

Léon Spilliaert, 1881-1946 (Belgian)

Vertigo, The Magic Staircase, 1908

Wash, ink, watercolor and colored pencil, 25¼ x 18⅞ in.

Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Oostende, Belgium

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Editor: Koraljka Lockhart
Art Director: Frank Benson
Editorial Assistant: Robert M. Robb
ISSN 0892-7189

Editorial offices: San Francisco Opera,
War Memorial Opera House,
San Francisco, CA 94102
Telephone: (415) 861-4008

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA MAGAZINE is published by THEATER PUBLICATIONS, INC.

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From the Chairman of the Board and the President

We are pleased to welcome you to the 67th annual season of the San Francisco Opera, a season distinguished by no fewer than four new productions as well as ventures into new repertoire. Our own General Director Lotfi Mansouri will lead us on the first of these journeys of discovery, when he directs the Company's first presentation of the complete three-act version of Berg's *Lulu*. Boito's *Mefistofele* has not been seen in the Opera House for 26 years; this year, it returns in a new production that is our first cooperative effort with the renowned Grand Théâtre de Genève. Mozart's *Idomeneo* returns to the Company in a new production created by the team of John Copley, director; Michael Stennett, costume designer (*Julius Caesar*, *Orlando*) and John Conklin, set designer (Wagner's *Ring* cycle). With *Orlando Furioso*, San Francisco Opera adds not only a new opera but also a new composer to its list, as we present our first work ever by Antonio Vivaldi. Pier Luigi Pizzi, responsible for the gripping 1986 *Macbeth*, returns to stage this baroque opera. Our gratitude goes to the Paul L. and Phyllis C. Wattis Foundation for underwriting our new *Lulu*; the L.J. and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation for *Idomeneo*; and Geoffrey Chambers Hughes who underwrote *Orlando Furioso* in memory of his grandfather, John William Hughes.

The return of productions seen in previous seasons is always a source of pleasure. Two of these, *Falstaff* and *Otello*, represent the heritage of Jean-Pierre Ponnelle, whose productions in the past contributed greatly to our Company's international stature. We are grateful to the L.J. and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation, the original underwriters of our *Falstaff*, and the San Francisco Opera Guild who made possible this season's revival. Two of our 1989 operas, *Aida* and *Lohengrin*, owe their existence to an anonymous friend of the San Francisco Opera, while *Die Frau ohne Schatten* was originally underwritten by Cynthia Wood, who is also making this year's staging possible. Last, but far from least, *Madama Butterfly* re-joins our repertoire in a production made possible some years ago by the San Francisco Opera Guild.

It is a privilege to be able to acknowledge our governmental funding sources, including the National Endowment for the Arts and the California Arts Council. We also extend our appreciation to the Grants for the Arts of the San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund, Mayor Art Agnos and Chief Administrative Officer Rudolf Nothenberg, whose support has always been gratifying.

As in previous years, we extend our appreciation to the San Francisco Opera

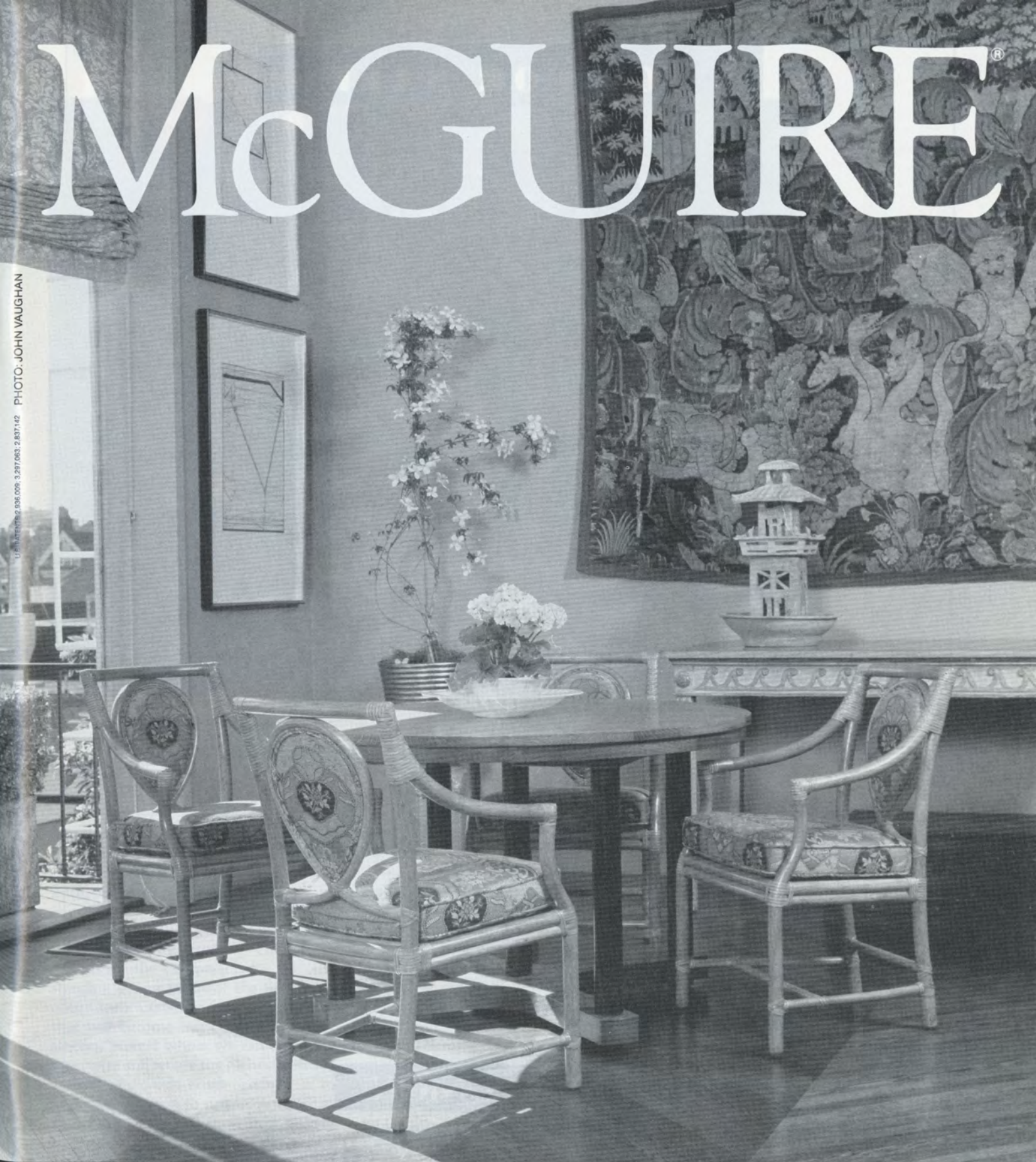
Guild and the War Memorial Board of Trustees for their ongoing support.

In the past, we have pointed out that ticket sales cover only slightly more than half of our expenses; this is no less true now than it has ever been. With the ongoing support of the individuals, foundations, corporations and government agencies already mentioned, and your own interest and financial support, we anticipate continued success and growth for our Company.

Reid W. Dennis, Chairman
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General Director's Message

The current San Francisco Opera season is special for many reasons. The repertoire spans the gamut of operatic creativity from Antonio Vivaldi to Alban Berg, with four of the works being given in exciting new productions. There is one aspect of our 67th season, however, that I find particularly heartening. One of my dreams for the Company is for the outstanding young talent of the San Francisco Opera Center to form an ensemble that will become our core company of singers, around whom we can build our repertoire and secure the highest possible artistic standards from production to production, season to season. A glance at this year's roster will show how quickly this ideal is already starting to become a reality. Two of the title roles in our fall operas belong to two brilliant young sopranos who have come through the Center's numerous training programs: Ann Panagulias as Lulu, and Nikki Li Hartlieb as Madama Butterfly. But they will not be carrying the Center's torch

alone on the Opera House stage; virtually every production is populated with alumni who have made our Opera Center the envy of every American opera company. These are the young artists we have watched together from their first appearances at Stern Grove or the Merola Opera Program Grand Finals, through their development into full-fledged artists who would be a credit to any major opera company. With such a firm artistic foundation, and with the added excitement of numerous international stars, our 1989 season should be a pleasure to follow, and a portent of wonderful developments as San Francisco Opera grows toward the 21st century. I am delighted that you will be with us as we open the next exciting chapter in the history of the San Francisco Opera.

San Francisco Opera

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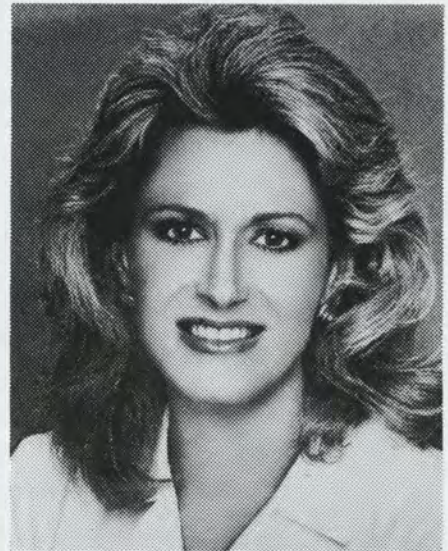
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San Francisco Opera

Lotfi Mansouri, *General Director*

Sir John Pritchard, *Music Director*

1989 Season

Opening Night

Friday, September 8, 7:30
Falstaff Verdi
 Lorengar, Horne, Swenson, Cowdrick;
 Stewart, De Haan, Raftery, Frank,
 Pittsinger, Sénéchal*
 Kord/Calábria/Ponnelle/Ponnelle/Munn
*Production originally made possible by a
 grant from the L.J. & Mary C. Skaggs
 Foundation; Revival made possible by a
 generous gift from the San Francisco Opera
 Guild.*

Saturday, September 9, 8:00
New Production
Lulu Berg
 Panagulias, Lear, Harris*, Cook, Swift*,
 Mills*; Braun, McCauley, Hotter,
 Myers*, Cowan*, Rideout*, Travis,
 Villanueva, Petersen, Irmiter, Reinhardt
 Mauceri/Mansouri/Schneider-Siemssen/
 Mackie*/Whitfield*
*San Francisco Opera gratefully acknowledges
 a generous grant from the Paul L. & Phyllis
 C. Wattis Foundation to underwrite this
 production.*

Tuesday, September 12, 8:00
Lulu Berg

Wednesday, September 13, 7:30
Falstaff Verdi

Friday, September 15, 8:00
Lulu Berg

Saturday, September 16, 8:00
 Co-production with the Grand Théâtre
 de Genève
Mefistofele Boito
 Beňáčková, Christin, Manhart; O'Neill,
 Ramey, Harper, Wunsch
 Arena/Carsen*/Levine*/Poulin**/Munn
*Production made possible, in part, by Mr. &
 Mrs. John C. McGuire and by Mr. &
 Mrs. Thomas Tilton.*

Sunday, September 17, 2:00
Falstaff Verdi

Sunday, September 17, 7:30
Family Performance
Falstaff Verdi
 Racette*, Williams, Keen, Spence; Noble,
 Boutet*, Ledbetter, Rideout, Travis,
 Estep*
 Robertson/Calábria/Ponnelle/Ponnelle/
 Munn

Tuesday, September 19, 8:00
Mefistofele Boito

Wednesday, September 20, 7:30
Lulu Berg

Thursday, September 21, 8:00
Falstaff Verdi

Friday, September 22, 8:00
Mefistofele Boito

Saturday, September 23, 1:00
Lulu Berg

Saturday, September 23, 8:00
Falstaff Verdi

Sunday, September 24, 2:00
Mefistofele Boito

Tuesday, September 26, 7:30
Falstaff Verdi

Thursday, September 28, 8:00
Mefistofele Boito

Friday, September 29, 8:00
Falstaff Verdi

Saturday, September 30, 8:00
Otello Verdi
 Ricciarelli, Keen; Mauro, Ellis, De Haan,
 Pittsinger, Schwisow, Skinner,
 Villanueva
 Kord/Asagaroff/Ponnelle/Ponnelle/
 Arhelger

Sunday, October 1, 2:00
Lulu Berg

Tuesday, October 3, 8:00
Otello Verdi

Wednesday, October 4, 7:30
Mefistofele Boito

Friday, October 6, 8:00
Otello Verdi

Saturday, October 7, 8:00
New Production
Idomeneo Mozart
 Mattila*, Gustafson, Racette, Spence;
 Ochman, Blochwitz**, Lewis, Outland*,
 Cox*, Li*, Ledbetter
 Pritchard/Copley/Conklin/Stennett/
 Munn

*San Francisco Opera gratefully acknowledges
 a generous grant from the L.J. & Mary C.
 Skaggs Foundation for partial underwriting
 of this production.*

Sunday, October 8, 2:00
Mefistofele Boito

Tuesday, October 10, 7:30
Mefistofele Boito

Wednesday, October 11, 8:00
Idomeneo Mozart

Thursday, October 12, 7:30
Otello Verdi

Saturday, October 14, 2:00
Idomeneo Mozart

Sunday, October 15, 2:00
Otello Verdi

Tuesday, October 17, 8:00
Idomeneo Mozart

Friday, October 20, 8:00
Otello Verdi

Saturday, October 21, 8:00
Aida Verdi
 Sweet*, Zajick, Racette; Popov, Noble,
 Langan, Pittsinger, Li
 Kellogg*/Donnell/Schmidt/Casey/
 Tippet*/Munn
*This production was originally made possible
 by a gift from an anonymous donor.*

Sunday, October 22, 2:00
Idomeneo Mozart

Tuesday, October 24, 7:30
Otello Verdi

Wednesday, October 25, 7:30
Idomeneo Mozart

Thursday, October 26, 8:00
Aida Verdi

Friday, October 27, 8:00
Idomeneo Mozart

Saturday, October 28, 8:00
Madama Butterfly Puccini
 Hartlieb, Redmon*, Spence; Polozov,
 Laperrière*, Perry, Villanueva, Skinner,
 Travis, Estep
 Pritchard/Farruggio/Businger/Munn
*This production was originally made possible
 by a grant from the San Francisco Opera
 Guild.*

Sunday, October 29, 2:00
Aida Verdi

Tuesday, October 31, 8:00 Madama Butterfly	Puccini	Friday, November 24, 8:00 Orlando Furioso	Vivaldi	Thursday, December 7, 7:30 Die Frau ohne Schatten	Strauss
Wednesday, November 1, 7:30 Aida	Verdi	Saturday, November 25, 7:30 Die Frau ohne Schatten	Strauss	Friday, December 8, 7:30 Lohengrin	Wagner
Friday, November 3, 7:30 Madama Butterfly	Puccini	Johnson, Jones, Silja, Racette, Spence, Fortuna*, Parks*, Friedman, Mizell*; Muff**, Johns, Pederson, Duykers, Ledbetter, Skinner, Schwisow, Villanueva, Irmiter, Travis Dohnányi/Asagaroff/Zimmermann/ Skalicky*/Munn		Saturday, December 9, 1:00 Madama Butterfly (Same cast as December 3)	Puccini
Saturday, November 4, 8:00 Aida	Verdi	<i>This production was originally made possible by Cynthia Wood who has also underwritten the 1989 revival.</i>		Saturday, December 9, 8:00 Orlando Furioso	Vivaldi
Sunday, November 5, 2:00 Madama Butterfly	Puccini	Sunday, November 26, 1:30 Lohengrin	Wagner	Sunday, December 10, 1:30 Die Frau ohne Schatten	Strauss
Tuesday, November 7, 8:00 Aida	Verdi			**United States opera debut *San Francisco Opera debut	
Friday, November 10, 7:30 Madama Butterfly	Puccini	Tuesday, November 28, 7:30 Die Frau ohne Schatten	Strauss		
Saturday, November 11, 7:30 Lohengrin Häggander*, Randová; Frey*, Leiferkus**, Vogel*, Baerg*, Estep, Li, Ledbetter, Irmiter Mackerras/Robertson (December 8)/Weber/Montresor/Munn <i>This production was originally made possible by a gift from an anonymous donor.</i>	Wagner	Wednesday, November 29, 7:30 Lohengrin	Wagner	All performances are in the original language with English Supertitles. Supertitles for <i>Falstaff</i> , <i>Lulu</i> , <i>Mefistofele</i> , <i>Idomeneo</i> , <i>Aida</i> , <i>Madama Butterfly</i> and <i>Die Frau ohne Schatten</i> provided by a generous and most appreciated gift from William and Eloise Rollnick. <i>Otello</i> supertitles underwritten through a generous grant from Merrill Lynch & Co., Inc. Supertitles for <i>Lohengrin</i> and <i>Orlando Furioso</i> provided through a grant from The Stanley S. Langendorf Foundation.	
Sunday, November 12, 2:00 Aida	Verdi	Thursday, November 30, 7:30 Orlando Furioso	Vivaldi	Repertoire, casts and dates subject to change.	
Tuesday, November 14, 8:00 Aida	Verdi	Friday, December 1, 7:30 Die Frau ohne Schatten	Strauss	Box Office and telephone sales: (415) 864-3330.	
Wednesday, November 15, 8:00 Madama Butterfly	Puccini	Saturday, December 2, 7:30 Lohengrin	Wagner		
Friday, November 17, 7:30 Lohengrin	Wagner	Sunday, December 3, 1:00 Madama Butterfly Gauci*, Manhart, Spence; Aragall, Schexnayder*, Li, Villanueva, Skinner, Travis, Estep Pritchard/Farruggio/Businger/Munn	Puccini		
Saturday, November 18, 8:00 Madama Butterfly <i>This performance made possible by a generous grant from Shaklee Corporation.</i>	Puccini	Sunday, December 3, 8:00 Orlando Furioso	Vivaldi		
Sunday, November 19, 2:00 <i>New Production</i> Orlando Furioso	Vivaldi	Monday, December 4, 7:30 Die Frau ohne Schatten	Strauss		
Horne, Patterson, Kuhlmann, Walker; Matteuzzi*, Gall, Langan Pritchard/Pizzi/Pizzi/Munn <i>San Francisco Opera gratefully acknowledges a generous gift from Geoffrey Chambers Hughes to underwrite this production. His gift is made in memory of his grandfather, John William Hughes.</i>		Wednesday, December 6, 8:00 Orlando Furioso	Vivaldi		
Tuesday, November 21, 7:30 Lohengrin	Wagner				

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The San Francisco Performing Arts Library and Museum (formerly the Archives for the Performing Arts) invites you to an exhibit of photographs taken over several years by noted Bay Area photographer Ira Nowinski. In addition to the primary subject, Maestro Kurt Herbert Adler, the exhibit will also salute San Francisco Opera Center's Adler Fellows, the young singers who are about to embark on careers on the world's opera stages. The exhibit is located in the War Memorial Opera House Museum (box level, south side) and is open to the public during Opera House performance hours, September 8 through December 10, 1989.

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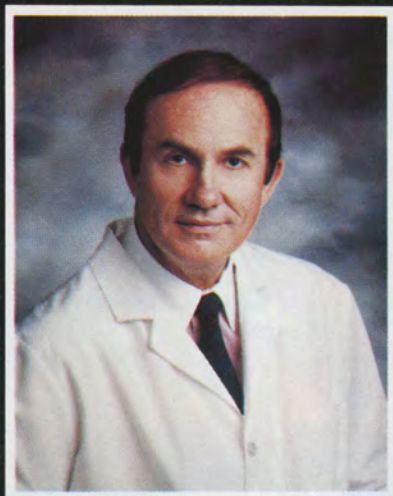
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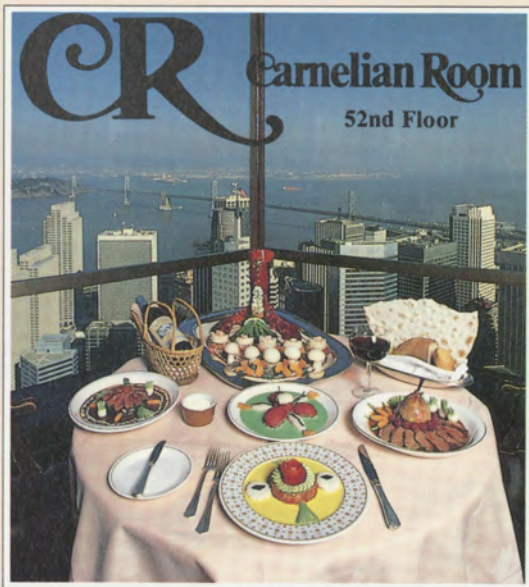
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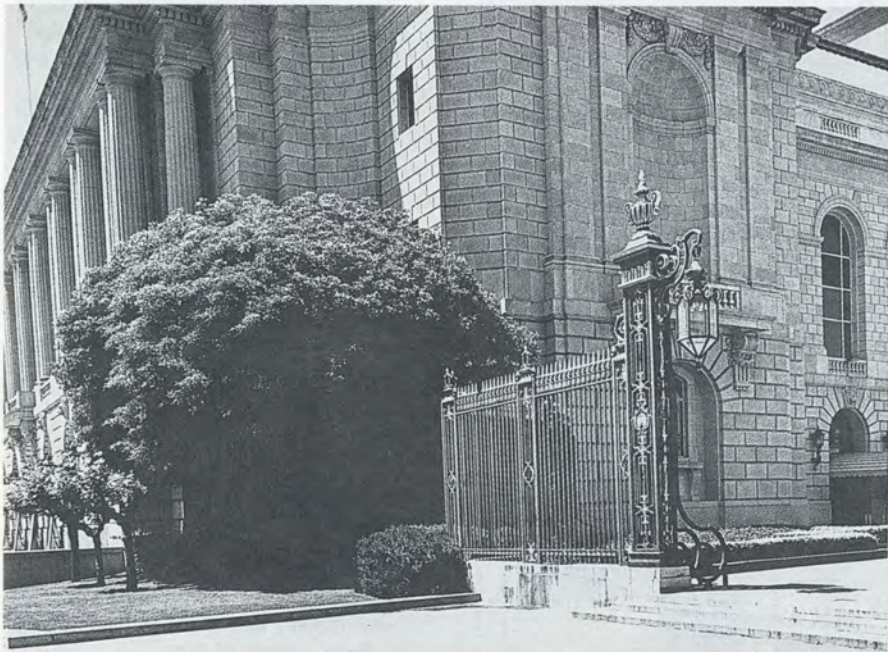
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Transcending the Conventional



Richard Strauss in a portrait made by Eugen Spiro in 1910. (Facing page) Leonie Rysanek as the Empress in San Francisco Opera's 1976 staging of *Die Frau ohne Schatten*.

By WILLIAM MANN

After the immediate, overwhelming success of *Der Rosenkavalier* in January of 1911, Richard Strauss was quick to implore his librettist, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, for a successor. After toying with other ideas, the poet made the following entry in a notebook dated February 26, 1911:

The woman without a shadow, a fantastic play. The Empress, a fairy's daughter, is childless. She obtains a stranger's child. In the end she gives it back to its real mother ("whoever rises above himself"). The second pair (as against Emperor and Empress) are Harlequin and Esmeralda. She wants to remain pretty. He clumsy and good. She gives up her child to a wicked fairy, disguised as a fishwife: the shadow as a bonus.

The quotation in parentheses is taken from Goethe: it says that "Man liberates himself by transcending the law that governs all creation."

Hofmannsthal's immediate source was the play "The Emperor and the Witch" (*Der Kaiser und die Hexe*) which he had written in 1897: here already is an Emperor devoted to hunting, who obtains his bride by throwing his dagger at a pigeon which falls to earth as a woman; here, too, the Emperor's selfishness condemns him to a living death.

Hofmannsthal met Strauss in Vienna on March 31, 1911 to discuss *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, as it was called from the start. Harlequin and Esmeralda soon became a Viennese tailor and his pretty, discontented wife, talking in comic Viennese dialect. Then the linguistic foible was dropped when the scene became fixed in

William Mann, a frequent contributor to San Francisco Opera Magazine, passed away in September after a brief illness. He is the author of books on the operas of Richard Strauss and Mozart. His career included 34 years on the staff of The Times, London, 22 of them as chief music critic.





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The U.S. premiere of *Die Frau ohne Schatten* took place at the San Francisco Opera in 1959 in a production designed by Jean-Pierre Ponnelle. The photo shows a scene from Barak's world.

the fairytale Orient of *The Arabian Nights*, on which Hofmannsthal had written an essay in 1907: instead, the tailor became a dyer, named Barak after a character in Schiller's version of Gozzi's *Turandot*. The Emperor Porphyrogenitus of Byzantium lost his "born-in-the-purple" name and was made Emperor of the "Southeastern Islands." The only other named character in the final *Frau ohne Schatten* is Keikobad, ruler of the spirits, who presides over the whole action, but is neither seen nor heard.

At a more distant remove, Hofmannsthal admitted *The Magic Flute* as a source of inspiration for *Die Frau ohne Schatten*: "it stands, in general terms, to *Die Zauberflöte* as *Rosenkavalier* does to *Figaro*," he told Strauss. Summer was approaching, Strauss' most fruitful time for composition, and he had as yet no work for the summer of 1911. Hofmannsthal was not yet ready to write *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. On May 15th he told Strauss: "With a beautiful subject, such as *Die Frau ohne Schatten* is, the rich gift of a fortunate hour, with such a subject so capable of becoming the vehicle for beautiful poetry and beautiful music, with such a subject it would be a crime were one to make haste, to force oneself. All the detail in it must stand in the forefront of my imagination, firm and immovable, terse, exact and true:

the relationship of the characters to one another must be formulated in quietness, below the threshold of consciousness, and acquire new, unforced life in colorful action of unforced symbolical meaning. Depths have to come to the surface, nothing can be left empty, or abstract, or merely wilful; mere ideas. Then it will be ready for music . . ."

Fortunately, Hofmannsthal could give Strauss another work for the summer, the adaptation of Molière's *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* with its pendant *Ariadne auf Naxos*. When that was done (in its first version) Hofmannsthal was able to occupy his composer with the ballet *Josephslegende* for Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, in which Strauss' collaborator was Hofmannsthal's formerly close friend Count Harry Kessler, who had participated significantly in elaborating the scenario of *Der Rosenkavalier* and, in doing so, shown Hofmannsthal how to assemble an opera libretto that appeared to be quite original. That of *Die Frau ohne Schatten* is a further example: it is extremely rich in detail, and its action spans the superhuman as well as the human world. The necessary elaboration kept Hofmannsthal busy (he too had good and bad periods of creativity, his favorite time for work being the autumn, just as Strauss' muse was ready to hibernate for

the winter!) until on September 8, 1912 he was able to tell the composer "that *Die Frau ohne Schatten* has now taken powerful hold on my mind. At long last I have taken ownership of this subject, moment by moment, scene by scene, every transaction, every build-up, all as an entity and yet in detail, to a point where I can really tell myself 'this is safe'." He was still not ready to put the text on paper. During March and April of 1913, Strauss and Hofmannsthal spent several days together (a rare occurrence) driving in Italy and discussing *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. This will have been not so much to fix details of the libretto needed by Strauss' music, as to impress upon him the seriousness and exact impact of the text as it now "stood in the forefront" of Hofmannsthal's imagination.

Hofmannsthal wrote the libretto of the first act during the winter of 1913-14 (he told Strauss on October 25th that it was, "I believe, definitely finished," but only sent the first scene after Christmas and the second in April). By that time he had a complete scenario to work from. After finding that there was not enough room in a libretto meant for music to explain everything, he began to write *Die Frau ohne Schatten* as a literary short story. He did not finish it until 1919, long after Strauss had completed the music: it had

become a long short story, what is nowadays called a *novella*, and it is required reading for anybody who wants to understand the whole of the opera. In the latter we see the Emperor, as part of his wife's dream, enter the cave where he is later discovered turned to stone, all but his eyes. The *novella* shows how he entered the cave and was entertained at dinner by his unborn children who conversed with him, waited in vain for him to ask what they were to him, and how he could rescue them, and finally, since he would not ask, left him alone on his chair to turn to stone. The short story explains quite clearly how the Empress and her nurse, Barak and his wife are transported from his hovel into the spirit world where we find them in the third act. It also clarifies to some extent the ambivalent nature of the Nurse: at first sight she appears entirely malevolent; yet she is a slave of Keikobad, father of the Empress, and ruler of the universe, a manifestation of God. As such, she will recall Monostatos in *Die Zauberflöte*, and he is never satisfactorily explained. Hofmannsthal told Strauss that she "veers between the demonic and the grotesque."

He delivered the text of the opera's second act in July of 1914, and Strauss had set it to music by October. Neither collaborator expected the First World War to last long, and Strauss prepared to spend the winter scoring his recent *Alpine Symphony* and the first two acts of *Die Frau*; he would not need the third act until the following March. Hofmannsthal, however, was called up, spared the trenches, but instead given a diplomatic post which involved traveling about (though alas never to anywhere near Strauss at Garmisch in the Bavarian Alps) and absorbed the best part of his mental energy. The third-act text, when it reached Strauss in April of 1915, proved too brief for the composer's purposes. He was prepared to accept the poet's declaration that this was "the most important and promising work we have ever undertaken together" (February 6, 1915), and that the principal character of the Empress, the "woman without a shadow" of the title, must grow to full heroic stature in the last act: he would need extra words for this, and for the first scene in which Barak's wife fully repents and shows her finer spiritual qualities. He also needed a big solo for the Nurse.

By September, Hofmannsthal was able to supply a revised third act which he

had to send via diplomatic bag, the public postal service being so uncertain in wartime. Strauss had to put it aside while the new prologue for *Ariadne auf Naxos* was brought into being. The music for the third act of *Die Frau ohne Schatten* (he humorously abbreviated it to *Fr-o-Sch*, the German word for "frog") was composed by September 1916, and scored by the following June. He was worried at the time about his son's ill-health and likely conscription into military service. His wife, when he played the music to her, pronounced it "note-spinning," and said it lacked ideal warmth, for which Strauss tended to blame the cerebral nature of the drama: he admitted that at that moment, he had no idea what was likely to come off and what would fail in effect. Fortunately there was no question yet of a stage production: both authors realized that such a spectacular and grand opera could not be adequately staged and performed in wartime, and accordingly agreed to postpone the premiere.

Strauss was relieved to find, when he brought out the score in June of 1918 to play to a musician-friend, that they both "liked it very much indeed—though it is probably above the heads of the present-day cultural audience." Hofmannsthal thought that it would only be understood in Munich, but Strauss was already negotiating to become artistic director of the Vienna Opera, and so the Austrian capital won the honor of presenting the great new work to the world on October 10, 1919. The cast was a starry one, with Maria Jeritza as the Empress, Lotte Lehmann the Dyer's Wife, Lucie Weidt the Nurse, Karl Aagard Oestvig the Emperor, and Richard Mayr as Barak. Franz Schalk, the composer's co-director, conducted. For once, the music critics were all favorably impressed. The authors, however, expressed disappointment at the staging, and in particular the lack of stage-magic in the settings by Alfred Roller who was completely out of sympathy with what he called "machine-opera," and made no effort to observe Hofmannsthal's fantastic stage directions. They were, however, much more loyally reproduced by Panos Aravatinos in the Berlin premiere. The Dresden production, although splendidly conducted by Fritz Reiner, was especially unhappy in cast as well as staging, and almost brought about a rift in the long-established relationship of Strauss and Dresden.

There were productions in the main

German operatic centers during the 1920s and '30s, but those were decades unfavorable to colorful or bravura stage-illusion, and a legend began to grow that *Die Frau ohne Schatten* was an operatic white elephant; pretentious symbolism inflated to Wagnerian proportions, immensely expensive to cast and stage. Strauss continued to regard it as a favorite "child of sorrows," and was deeply grateful when his young disciple Clemens Krauss mounted a new production in 1931, at Salzburg and Vienna, later renewed in Munich, and really took pains to reproduce, visually as well as in music, precisely what the authors had prescribed. It was in Munich, as Hofmannsthal had predicted, that *Die Frau ohne Schatten* was best appreciated. Productions since 1945 have sustained the tradition that Krauss first assured for the work, after its premiere there under Bruno Walter: they have drawn international attention to the piece and led to convincing productions in Vienna, Salzburg, Paris, San Francisco and London.

Most fairy stories are enjoyed without complete understanding. When *Die Frau ohne Schatten* is sympathetically staged today, for every diehard who repeats the white elephant reaction, there is a new convert to the brightly colored magic of the drama and its music.

"We have missed lightness of touch" was Hofmannsthal's post mortem on *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. He wanted Strauss' music to be as light as thistledown, close to Mozart's for *Die Zauberflöte*: Strauss' score was the most Wagnerian of all his operas. Hofmannsthal had urged him to remember the profound human impact of the story, the relative weight of the various roles, the poet's bizarre ideas about how the music should sound (the countertenor Guardian of the Threshold was as much ahead of its time as the Voices of Unborn Children which must sound like "snakes singing"—he was imagining something impossible until the advent of electronic music). Strauss is supposed, by the opera's detractors, to have failed to rise to the sublimity of Hofmannsthal's text, if only because so down-to-earth a musician could not be expected to understand completely a text of such sophisticated mysticism. The musical evidence is that Strauss did appreciate the drama in full, since his thematic material is consistently inventive and exact in expression.

The action involves a spirit world, Fairyland if you like, to which the Spirit-



Irene Dalis as the Nurse and Gladys Kuchta as Barak's wife in San Francisco Opera's 1964 staging of *Die Frau ohne Schatten*.

Messenger and the other characters supervising the ordeals of the last two acts belong; the world of humans represented by the Dyer and his entourage; and a midway world, neither the one nor the other, in which the Emperor keeps his fairy-wife, and to which Keikobad has condemned the Nurse, who can perform conjuring tricks but is prevented from interfering with the grand designs of the creator and ruler spirit, Keikobad. She can transform Barak's broom into a phantom lover for his would-be-beautiful wife, and materialize a sword from thin air, when Barak is encouraged to kill his wife: but the lover is a hallucination, and the sword would not have cut, even if Keikobad had not spirited it away at once.

Strauss at first proposed to use the chamber orchestra of his *Ariadne auf Naxos* for the spirit world, soloists from the full orchestra for intermediary persons, and *tutti* for mankind. Eventually, he rejected the plan, though the coloration of the orchestral music here and there suggests how he might have carried it out. He did evolve his characteristic themes according to musical logic: the interval of a third emphasizes human nature, most obviously in Barak's brothers; fourths emphasize the supernatural. Strauss, in his days as a symphonic tone-poet, had boasted that he could set anything to music recognizably. The musical vocabu-

lary of *Die Frau ohne Schatten* is deployed just as precisely, sometimes with virtuoso multiplicity of implication and suggestion. (I have not enough space here to catalogue these themes and show how they are developed: books about Strauss' operas, one of them by me, have done this, and can be consulted if wished.)

I should perhaps emphasize some particular points in the story. Fairy law insists that the human being who wins a fairy bride must convert her to humanity, by giving her a child, within a year, or suffer the penalty of petrification for failing to justify his act of rape as meaningful love-making. Spirit-beings cast no shadow: towards the end of Act Two the Dyer's Wife is shown not to do so, nor may she thereafter until the final scene of Act Three. The Empress must be seen to cast a shadow only after the survival of the ordeal in the temple scene (lighting designers in opera houses hate *Die Frau ohne Schatten* until they have discovered how to control shadows on stage, not at all easy even nowadays).

The ability to cast a shadow signifies the ability, a reward from Keikobad for decent human behavior, to procreate children and so ensure personal immortality. The Empress, as a fairy, used her talisman to transform herself into any form of life. She lost it when the Emperor caught her, disguised as a gazelle. When

the red falcon returns it to her, she reads on it, for the first time, its inscription, which tells her that her marriage is doomed unless she can render her body fruitful, for which the transforming power of the talisman is useless. The Nurse can perform conjuring tricks, but the Empress will only get a shadow by showing Keikobad that she deserves one. The Empress does earn it by recognizing that Barak, whose name denotes saintliness, is as much worth saving as her own husband, who has never treated her as other than a chattel and a sexual plaything. Barak himself should look fairly unattractive; the Empress is drawn to him, in the second act, entirely by his goodness to others (just the opposite of her husband). Barak's wife has borne no children in two and a half years of married life because her husband worked so hard to support her that he had no energy remaining for his role as husband-lover: saintly as he might be, he had not deserved to beget children until Keikobad gave him a nasty shock and brought him back to his real responsibilities.

Strauss and Hofmannsthal had a protracted conference about the identity of the Unborn Children with the fried fish for Barak's supper at the end of the first act. Hofmannsthal denied the identity—the fish, whether five or seven, were not actually Barak's potential offspring, and could be eaten by him and enjoyed (as in the story) without incurring any tabu. It is interesting to read, in Hofmannsthal's first sketch, that the Nurse is "disguised as a fishwife," when we see her conjure fish out of the blue into the frying pan of Mrs. Barak.

Misunderstanding of the simple, inspiring message behind *Die Frau ohne Schatten* can remain until we listen to Hofmannsthal's text intelligently, as well as to Strauss' music which explains it so naturally and lucidly. Both author's knew, at the bottom of their hearts, that they were creating a music-drama potentially as great and inspiring for fellow human-beings as *Fidelio* and *Parsifal*, or any artistic document about earthly life and the "divinity that shapes our ends." I believe that both realized their intention with a superhuman mastery which others can appreciate fully and, even without trying hard, recognize as a work of art to be enjoyed at once and explored with enhanced delight and spiritual advantage for ever and a day. ■

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Herr von Words and Doctor Music

By DAVID LITTLEJOHN

The very salutations of their letters are a clue. For almost 30 years, through more than 500 surviving letters, they most commonly addressed one another as "My dear Dr. Strauss" or "Dear Herr von Hofmannsthal."

Ten years into their correspondence, Strauss begins using "My dear friend"—an intimacy the poet permitted himself only ten times in his 304 letters. Only once in the entire published correspondence does one of their first names appear. For two men who worked so productively together for so long, their celebrated correspondence is astonishingly cool, formal, and distant—and, very often, frankly hostile.

One may argue that the words-and-music collaboration of Da Ponte and Mozart (three operas) or Boito and Verdi (two operas) actually produced a more substantial and enduring body of work than the six operas created by team Hofmannsthal-Strauss, between 1909 and 1929.

Whatever the qualitative sum, the numbers are impressive. No other composer/librettist pair in the history of opera managed to write so many works that have remained in the international standard repertory, and seem likely to remain there. In addition to the first and the last, they collaborated on three other enduring works—*Der Rosenkavalier* (1911), *Ariadne auf Naxos* (1912, revised 1916), and *Die Frau ohne Schatten* (1919); and one flop, *Die Ägyptische Helena* (1928).

But despite their frequent, formal professions of admiration if not for one another, at least for each other's talent; and despite the poet's everlasting agonizing over the fragility of their "relationship"—"I beg of you, do not inflict on me this injury; do not injure us both, do not injure our relationship!"—they were never, as far as one can tell, friends; scarcely even friendly.

Their motor trip together through

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Northern Italy in March of 1913 comes to the reader of the correspondence as something of a shock; it was one of their rare face-to-face encounters. Strauss, typically, raised objections. "Your kind, attractive proposal that I might accompany you on a car journey. . . . was altogether unexpected, and not easy to fit in with everything I had planned. But . . . this personal contact (which we have never before had over anything we have done before) might greatly benefit our chief joint work"—i.e., *Die Frau ohne Schatten*.

During most of their acquaintance, Strauss lived at Garmisch, near Munich, Hofmannsthal in a village near Vienna. But even when cars and chauffeurs were available, they almost never made the effort to meet. When Strauss accepted the post of co-director of the Vienna State Opera in 1919 (an appointment his "dear friend" had bitterly opposed), which obliged him to spend a few months of each year in the city, Hofmannsthal still found excuses not to visit or receive him. "It is most kind of you to offer to come out here, but please don't think of it under any circumstances; the tram journey of one and three-quarter hours each way is torture, and I do not enjoy visitors."

Although he occasionally traveled about Europe on literary and theatrical business, Hugo von Hofmannsthal preferred either to stay home at Rodaun, tending his fragile nerves and coddling his genius; move to Salzburg for the international theater festival, which he and Max Reinhardt had essentially created; or venture from time to time out to Alpine spas or sunny Italy, in a quest for calm and mental health. The more robust Richard Strauss, meanwhile (ten years older than the poet, he outlived him by 20 years), toured all of Europe, including Russia, virtually nonstop, conducting and promoting his (and their) works, spreading his (and their) reputation, enjoying the rewards of an international celebrity. (He also traveled twice to the United States, and twice to South America.) It was he who oversaw the premieres and new

productions of their joint works, reporting dutifully on them back to Hofmannsthal:

"I have just concluded a magnificent triumphal progress with your works: first *Rosenkavalier* at the Hague and in Amsterdam . . . full houses at unheard-of prices; a Strauss Week in Mannheim, with *Salome*, *Rosenkavalier*, and *Ariadne*, staged very prettily and wittily by Dr. Hagemann . . . Finally *Ariadne* and *Elektra* in Switzerland, with a downright triumphal success." "On Monday the one hundredth *Rosenkavalier* came off gloriously in Dresden, with a full house and an impeccable performance. Afterwards, in cheerful company, we thought of you gratefully with much admiration." "I believe that *Ariadne* has inaugurated a new theatrical era in Italy. A pity you weren't there!"

* * *

One result of this willed separation is the fact that they had to do much, perhaps most of their collaboration by mail. This is a godsend for us, since a by-product was one of the most revealing and provocative correspondences in the history of art.

To musicians and musicologists, what is most fascinating about the Strauss-Hofmannsthal letters is the detailed image they provide of the collaborative-creative process, of the conception and slow growth of important works of art. We can, through the letters (and the many surviving draft texts and scores), trace in close detail the means and steps by which their six operas came into being.

Reading the earliest letters in a sequence can be quite exciting, since the reader feels himself "in at the birth" of a new opera. Strauss asks Hofmannsthal for a particular kind of plot or libretto. Hofmannsthal replies that he can't possibly provide *that*, but sends him instead a sketch of some of his own new-forming notions. Strauss, ever desperate for material, usually accepts the poet's ideas, and sets to work.

In May of 1916 (to follow the case of *Arabella*), Strauss writes that he'd like to

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ARTIST PROFILES



MARY JANE JOHNSON

In her fifth season with San Francisco Opera, soprano **Mary Jane Johnson** portrays the Empress in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* for the first time in her career. She made her Company debut as Freia in *Das Rheingold* in 1983, when she also performed Musetta in *La Bohème*. The Texas native returned in the fall of 1983 to create the role of Jenifer in the American premiere of Tippett's *The Midsummer Marriage* and sang Elvira in *Ernani* in 1984. She sang her first Marguerite in *Faust* for the Company in 1986, and was most recently seen here in 1987 as Giulietta in *The Tales of Hoffmann*. A winner of the first Luciano Pavarotti International Voice Competition, she appeared with the Opera Company of Philadelphia in 1982 as Musetta opposite Pavarotti in a production of *La Bohème* that was telecast nationally by PBS. She has since performed the title role of *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* in Toronto, Alice Ford in *Falstaff* in Houston, Violetta in *La Traviata* in Fort Worth, Leonora in *Il Trovatore* in Cincinnati, and the title role of *The Merry Widow* in Washington, D.C., Milwaukee, and at the Spoleto Festival USA. She has appeared for four consecutive summers at Santa Fe Opera, appearing in the title role of Korngold's *Violanta*, as Miss Jessel in *The Turn of the Screw*, the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, and as Rosalinda in *Die Fledermaus*. Her debut as Minnie in *La Fanciulla del West* with Opera North in Leeds, England, led to an invitation to perform *Fanciulla* at the Puccini Festival at Torre del Lago, at the Baths of Caracalla in Rome, and at the Teatro Comunale in Bologna. She also made her Netherlands Opera debut as the Duchess of Parma in Busoni's *Doktor Faustus*. Recent assignments include her first assumption of the title role of *Tosca* in Leeds; the title roles of *Ariadne auf Naxos* (Vancouver and Wales) and *Salome* (Calgary); Chrysothemis in *Elektra* (Toronto); Leonore in *Fidelio* (Venice); and Elena in *Mefistofele* (Geneva). A popular concert artist, she made her Chicago Symphony debut under Georg Solti as Freia in concert performances of *Das Rheingold* both in Chicago and at Carnegie Hall. She has also appeared as soloist with many symphony orchestras, and has presented solo recitals in over 60 North American cities.

Internationally renowned as an interpreter of the operas of Richard Strauss, Welsh soprano **Gwyneth Jones** returns to the San Francisco Opera as Barak's Wife in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*,



GWYNETH JONES

her first portrayal of that role in the U.S.. Her most recent appearance with the Company was in the title role of Strauss' *Salome*. Prior to that, she was here for another specialty of hers, the music of Wagner, singing Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre* in 1983 and again in 1985, as part of the complete *Ring* cycle. She also sang the first Isolde of her career here in the 1980 *Tristan und Isolde*. Other parts she portrayed at the War Memorial are: the title roles of *Fidelio* (1969 and 1978), *Aida* (1969) and *Tosca* (1978 and 1982), as well as Elisabetta in *Don Carlo* in 1973. Hailed as a consummate interpreter of any role she undertakes, Gwyneth Jones is a regular performer with all of the world's major opera houses, appearing with leading conductors and at most international opera festivals. Born in Pontnewydd, Wales, she started her career as a mezzo-soprano and sang Orpheus in *Orpheus und Euridice* in Zurich and Octavian in *Der Rosenkavalier* at Covent Garden. Her international career took off soon after she switched to the soprano range and returned to the Royal Opera in a new production of *Il Trovatore* directed by Luchino Visconti and conducted by Carlo Maria Giulini. A long list of important international debuts followed, mostly in roles from the Italian dramatic soprano repertory. Gradually, she moved towards the heaviest of roles in opera with her first *Götterdämmerung* Brünnhilde at Bayreuth in 1974, followed by all three Brünnhildes in 1975. Her first *Ariadne auf Naxos* occurred in Munich in 1977, Barak's Wife in Cologne in 1979, *Elektra*'s Chrysothemis in London in 1977, and the title role of *Elektra* in Cologne in 1983. Los Angeles was the site of her first *Turandot* in 1984, and she has since appeared in the role at London, Vienna, Rome, Paris, Moscow, etc. A Kammersängerin and Honorary Member (a rare honor) of the Vienna State Opera, Dame Gwyneth is also a Kammersängerin with the Bavarian State Opera in Munich. She was awarded the prestigious Shakespeare Award in Hamburg in 1978, and was given the title of Dame of the British Empire in Queen Elizabeth II's 1986 honors. She was most recently granted the Commander's Cross of the Order of Merit by the Federal Republic of Germany. Her long list of recordings includes most of her celebrated Strauss and Wagner roles, and also extends from the standard works such as Verdi's *Otello* to rarities such as the recent recording of Franz Schmidt's complete *Notre Dame*. The artist can be seen on

DIE FRAU OHNE SCHATTEN



ANJA SILJA

a number of video recordings, notably the Bayreuth *Ring*, directed by Chéreau. Next summer, the soprano returns to the Bay Area as Brünnhilde in Wagner's *Ring* cycle.

Internationally acclaimed singing actress **Anja Silja** portrays the Nurse in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. She made her American debut with San Francisco Opera in 1968 as Salome and returned in that role in 1970. She has since been applauded here as Lulu (1971), Emilia Marty in *The Makropulos Case* (1976), in the title roles of *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* (1981) and *Katya Kabanova* (1983), and as Regan in *Reimann's Lear* (1985). Born in Berlin, Miss Silja was singing publicly by the age of 10 and five years later made her operatic debut at Braunschweig as Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*. Appearances at Stuttgart preceded her discovery by Wieland Wagner in the 1960 Bayreuth auditions. She became the focus for many of the famed director's most important productions, portraying Senta in *Der Fliegende Holländer* (1960), *Salome* (1962) and Lulu (1966); in these roles and the lead female roles of *Fidelio*, *Elektra* and *Tannhäuser*, she has been acclaimed by audiences throughout her native land as well as in Geneva, Amsterdam, Barcelona, London, Vienna, Brussels, Paris, Hamburg and other operatic capitals of the world. Her repertoire ranges from the standard operas, including *Turandot*, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, *La Forza del Destino*, *Les Troyens*, *Otello* and *Eugene Onegin*, to such 20th-century works as *The Fiery Angel*, *Wozzeck*, *Erwartung* and *Mahagonny*. She made her Chicago Lyric Opera debut in 1970 as Senta and in 1972 bowed at the Metropolitan Opera in *Fidelio*, returning to both houses for subsequent assignments. Miss Silja is a regular guest artist with the major orchestras of the world, and often appears at major European festivals. In 1987, she created a sensation in Brussels when she stepped in on short notice for an ailing colleague as Verdi's *Lady Macbeth*. Highlights of recent seasons include appearances with the Cleveland Orchestra in Cleveland's Severance Hall and New York's Carnegie Hall in performances of Schoenberg's *Erwartung* and *Six Songs, Op. 8*; *The Merry Widow* with the Cleveland Orchestra at the Blossom Festival; and Emilia Marty in *The Makropulos Case* with the Opera Company of Boston. Her most recent portrayal was that of the Kostelnička in *Jenůfa* at this summer's Glyndebourne Festival



PATRICIA RACETTE

Opera. She has recorded numerous complete operas, including *Lulu*, *Wozzeck*, *Erwartung*, *Lohengrin*, *Der Fliegende Holländer* and *Tannhäuser*.

Soprano **Patricia Racette** makes her San Francisco Opera debut as Mistress Ford in the Family Performance of *Falstaff*, and performs the High Priestess in *Aida*, a Cretan Maiden in *Idomeneo* and the Voice of the Falcon in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. A member of the Merola Opera Program in 1988 and currently an Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, she sang the title role of *Madame Butterfly* on Western Opera Theater's 1988-89 national tour, and recently traveled to Japan with the Center's Pacific Rim Exchange program. A native of New Hampshire, she received a Bachelor of Music degree in Voice from North Texas State University, where she sang the title role of *Suor Angelica*, Diana in *Orpheus in the Underworld* and Laura in *Luisa Miller*. She also sang the title role of Carlisle Floyd's *Susannah* at the Metro Opera Works in Fort Worth, and appeared throughout Texas in oratorio. Miss Racette was a National Finalist in the 1988 Metropolitan Opera National Auditions, First Place winner in the New York region of the 1988 San Francisco Opera Center Auditions, and received the Mr. & Mrs. Bernhardt N. Poetz Memorial Award at the 1988 Grand Finals. She recently appeared as Anastasio in the 1989 Opera Center Showcase production of Handel's *Giustino*.



MARIA FORTUNA

In her Company debut, soprano **Maria Fortuna** is heard as a servant, a child, the Guardian of the Temple and a solo voice in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. A 1989 member of S.F. Opera Center's Merola Opera Program, she received her



KAREN PARKS

Bachelor of Music degree from the Eastman School of Music, where she studied with Marcia Baldwin and Jan DeGaetani. The Niagara Falls native received her Master of Music Degree from the Curtis Institute of Music, where she began her studies with her present teacher, Marlena Malas. Roles she has performed include: Pamina in *The Magic Flute*, Anne Trulove in *The Rake's Progress*, Amelia in *Amelia Goes to the Ball*, Susanna in *Il Segreto di Susanna*, Lauretta in *Gianni Schicchi*, and the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro*. She made her debut with the Opera Theatre of St. Louis as the Mermaid in Weber's *Oberon*, and most recently sang with Arkansas Opera Theatre in Argento's *Postcard from Morocco*. Miss Fortuna has been a soloist with Riccardo Muti and the Philadelphia Orchestra in Bruckner's *Te Deum* and Verdi's *Quattro Pezzi Sacri*. Recent appearances include Anna in Verdi's *Nabucco*, and the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro* with Long Beach Opera.

Soprano **Karen Parks** makes her San Francisco Opera debut as a servant, a child and a solo voice in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. As a member of the 1988 Merola Opera Program, she appeared as Kate Pinkerton in *Madame Butterfly*, and is currently singing Micaëla and Frasquita in Western Opera Theater's touring production of *Carmen*. The native of Greenville, South Carolina received a bachelor's degree in music from Furman University, a Master of Music degree from the University of Texas at Austin, and is currently pursuing a Doctorate of Musical Arts degree from UC/Santa Barbara. Under the direction of Joachim Herz at the Dresden Opera Program she performed the roles of Gilda in *Rigoletto*, Susanna in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*, and Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte*. Recent engagements include the Fauré Requiem and *Dona Nobis Pacem* by Ralph Vaughan Williams with the Sacramento Symphony, and the role of Bess in a European concert tour of *Porgy and Bess*. Miss Parks has won numerous awards including the Dresden Opera Program's Joachim Herz Scholarship, Regional Finalist in the Metropolitan Opera Auditions, and the Golden State Opera Association Award.

A 1988-89 Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, mezzo-soprano **Patricia Spence** sings Meg Page in the Family Performance of *Falstaff*, Kate Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly*, and is heard as a servant and solo voice in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. She made her Company debut last fall as Anna in *L'Africaine* and also appeared in *Parsifal*. A native of Oregon, Miss Spence was a participant in the 1987 Merola



PATRICIA SPENCE

Opera Program, during which she sang the role of the Princess Bouillon in *Suor Angelica*. For the Opera Center's 1988 Showcase, she portrayed Pilar in the West Coast premiere of Hiram Titus's *Rosina*, and sang Isabella in the 1988 Merola Opera Program production of *The Italian Girl in Algiers* at Stern Grove. She made her professional operatic debut in 1984 with the Eugene Opera and has performed regularly with that company in such roles as Madame Flora in *The Medium*, the Marquise of Birkenfeld in *The Daughter of the Regiment*, and Elmire in *Tartuffe*. Recent engagements include Rosina on the Opera Center Singers winter tour of *The Barber of Seville* (a role she sang for her New York City Opera debut this summer), Mistress Quickly in *Falstaff* for Opera Colorado, and the title role in the Opera Center's 1989 Showcase production of Handel's *Giustino*.



MEREDITH MIZELL

Soprano **Meredith Mizell** makes her San Francisco Opera debut as a child and a solo voice in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. The native of Missouri is a graduate of the School of the Ozarks who continued her studies at the University of Illinois and at Oklahoma City University. She has appeared at the university's Illinois Opera Theater in the title role of *Suor Angelica*, the First Lady in *The Magic Flute*, and Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*, while at Oklahoma City she sang Antonia in *The Tales of Hoffmann*, Micaëla in *Carmen*, and Rosina in *The Barber of Seville*. She has performed extensively at Inspiration Point Fine Arts Colony, and was also featured with Central City Opera and Des Moines Metro Opera. Concert engagements include Beethoven's *Choral Fantasy* and Mass in C Major, Vaughan Williams's *Serenade to Music*, the Brahms Requiem and Michael Haydn's

San Francisco Opera



CARLA COOK

Requiem with such organizations as the Oklahoma Symphony and the Oklahoma Choral Society. Miss Mizell's numerous awards include national semi-finalist in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions; winner of the Oklahoma Symphony Young Artists Auditions; and winner of the Naftzger Young Artist Auditions in Wichita, Kansas.

Mezzo-soprano **Carla Cook** is the Arts Patroness in *Lulu* and a Voice in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. Most recently seen with San Francisco Opera in the 1986 *Eugene Onegin*, she also portrayed Annina in *Der Rosenkavalier* in 1985. She appeared as Rossweisse in the 1985 Ring cycle production of *Die Walküre*, and sang Wagner's *Wesendonklieder* in a chamber concert in the Veterans Building. She made her Company debut during the 1983 Fall Season, when she performed in *Katya Kabanova*, *La Grande Duchesse de Gêrolstein* and *La Traviata*. A member of the 1982 Merola Opera Program, Miss Cook won the Jean Donnell Memorial Award in that year's Audition Finals. The following year she was a winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Auditions and the Munich International Vocal Competition, and appeared in the Opera Center's Showcase productions of *L'Ormindo* and *The Rape of Lucretia*. She made her Metropolitan Opera debut in 1984 in *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* and as Waltraute in *Die Walküre*, and that same year made her Seattle Opera debut as Waltraute, and sang her first Venus in a new production of *Tannhäuser*. Recent engagements include Venus in *Tannhäuser* at the Bremen Opera, and Verdi's Requiem with the Schola Cantorum.

In her San Francisco Opera debut, mezzo-soprano **Stephanie Friedman** is heard as a solo voice in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. She made her Spring Opera Theater debut in 1979 in *Death in Venice*, and returned the following year for performances of *The Good Soldier Schweik*. A noted interpreter of early opera, she made her professional opera debut as Amore in *L'incoronazione di Poppea*. She has appeared in the operas of Gluck, Cesti and Handel in Bologna, Innsbruck, Venice and Turin, and has sung with several U.S. opera companies. She is also a frequent guest at the San Francisco Pocket Opera. Her performances of contemporary music include the premiere of Roger Sessions's *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*; Andrew Imbrie's *Roethke Songs*; and the West Coast premiere of Cambodian composer Chinary Ung's *Mohori*. Vivian Fine's *Canticles for*

continued on p.45

1989 Season

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This production was originally made possible by Cynthia Wood who has also underwritten the 1989 revival.

Opera in three acts by RICHARD STRAUSS

Text by HUGO VON HOFMANNSTHAL

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Die Frau ohne Schatten

(in German)

Conductor

Christoph von Dohnányi

Stage Director

Grischa Asagaroff

Set Designer

Jörg Zimmermann

Costume Designer

Jan Skalicky*

Lighting Designer

Thomas J. Munn

Chorus Director

Ian Robertson

Musical Preparation

Patrick Summers

David Triestram

Susanna Lemberskaya

Kathryn Cathcart

Philip Eisenberg

Prompter

Philip Eisenberg

Movement Instructor

Victoria Morgan

Sound Designer

Roger Gans

Assistant Stage Directors

Laurie Feldman

Claudia Zahn

Stage Manager

Jerry Sherk

San Francisco Girls Chorus

Elizabeth Appling, Director

San Francisco Boys Chorus

Philip Hahn, Director

Scenery constructed in

San Francisco Opera Scenic Studios

Costumes executed by

San Francisco Opera Costume Shop

Galanti organ provided courtesy of

Colton Piano & Organ, Santa Clara

First performance:

Vienna, October 10, 1919

First San Francisco Opera performance:

September 18, 1959 (U.S. premiere)

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 25 AT 7:30

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 28 AT 7:30

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 1 AT 7:30

MONDAY, DECEMBER 4 AT 7:30

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7 AT 7:30

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10 AT 1:30

1989 Season

CAST

(in order of appearance)

<i>The Nurse</i>	Anja Silja
<i>The Spirit Messenger</i>	Monte Pederson
<i>The Emperor</i>	William Johns
<i>The Empress</i>	Mary Jane Johnson
<i>The Voice of the Falcon</i>	Patricia Racette
<i>The One-armed man</i>	Philip Skinner
<i>The One-eyed man</i>	Victor Ledbetter
<i>The Hunchback</i>	John Duykers
<i>Barak's Wife</i>	Gwyneth Jones
<i>Barak</i>	Alfred Muff**
<i>Three Servants</i>	Maria Fortuna*, Karen Parks*, Patricia Spence
<i>The Voice of a Youth</i>	Hong-Shen Li
<i>Three Watchmen</i>	LeRoy Villanueva, Kristopher Irmiter, Dale Travis
<i>Children's Voices</i>	Maria Fortuna, Karen Parks, Meredith Mizell*, Patricia Spence, Carla Cook
<i>An Alto Voice</i>	Patricia Spence
<i>The Guardian of the temple gates</i>	Maria Fortuna
<i>Solo Voices</i>	Maria Fortuna, Karen Parks, Meredith Mizell, Patricia Spence, Stephanie Friedman*, Carla Cook

Peasants, guards, huntsmen, servants, apparitions

**U.S. opera debut

*San Francisco Opera debut

TIME AND PLACE: Legendary

ACT I *Scene 1:* In the gardens of the Imperial Palace
Scene 2: Barak's hovel, under a city wall

INTERMISSION

ACT II *Scene 1:* Barak's hovel, the next day
Scene 2: Outside the Emperor's hunting lodge
Scene 3: Barak's hovel
Scene 4: Inside the hunting lodge
Scene 5: Barak's hovel

INTERMISSION

ACT III *Scene 1:* Mystic caverns near Keikobad's realm
Scene 2: At the entrance to Keikobad's temple
Scene 3: In the temple
Scene 4: The beginning of a new life

Supertitles for *Die Frau ohne Schatten* 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, cellular phones and any kind of recording equipment is strictly forbidden.

The performance will last approximately four hours.

Die Frau ohne Schatten/Synopsis

(Out hunting with his favorite falcon, the Emperor of the Southeastern Islands captured a gazelle; she turned into a woman, whom he married. Daughter of Keikobad, king of the spirits, she is a woman without a shadow—that is, unable to bear children. According to Keikobad's decree, unless the Empress gains a shadow before the end of the twelfth moon she will be reclaimed by her father and the Emperor turned to stone.)

ACT I

Scene 1—On a terrace overlooking the Emperor's palace, the Empress' Nurse, adept in black magic, hears the Messenger of Keikobad warn that the Empress, still barren, has only three days left. As he disappears, the love-struck Emperor enters on his way to the hunt in hopes of recapturing the Falcon, whom he wounded for attacking the gazelle; he leaves his wife in the Nurse's care. The Empress now appears, lamenting the loss of a talisman that enabled her to change her form. When the voice of the Falcon is heard reiterating the doom that threatens her husband, she implores the Nurse to help her find a shadow. They descend to the human world.

Scene 2—In the humble house of Barak the Dyer, his three misshapen brothers fight among themselves and threaten the Dyer's Wife as she curses them; the men leave when Barak enters. The kindly Dyer longs for children, but his wife is reluctant, wary of motherhood without having experienced it. As Barak goes out, the Nurse and Empress enter the hut in disguise, intent on capturing a shadow for the Empress. Gradually, the Dyer's Wife weakens before the Nurse's visions of luxury, agreeing to deny Barak during the three days that the visitors will act as her servants. As the Nurse and Empress disappear, the Dyer's Wife hears the voices of Unborn Children bewail their fate. Barak returns to find the marriage bed divided; outside, watchmen sing the praises of conjugal love.

ACT II

Scene 1—In Barak's dwelling, the Empress, now a servant, helps the Dyer as he leaves for work. The Nurse conjures up the apparition of a young man to whom the Dyer's Wife is attracted; the Empress, however, is troubled. The vision fades as Barak returns with his hungry brothers and a group of beggar children.

Scene 2—At the Emperor's hunting lodge, the Emperor seeks his wife, who has vowed to remain in three days' seclusion; he is filled

with anger, then misgivings when he sees her and the Nurse entering the lodge.

Scene 3—Back at the Dyer's house, Barak succumbs to a potion as the Nurse again causes the young man to appear to the Dyer's Wife. Increasingly anxious, she rouses her husband.

Scene 4—In the hunting lodge, the sleeping Empress is in torment at her sin against Barak; as the Falcon repeats that she is childless, she seems to see the Emperor knock at and enter a great temple door. The Empress, awakening, is torn between love for her husband and sorrow for Barak.

Scene 5—Darkness overcomes Barak's hut. As the Dyer and his family express fear and the Nurse confidence, the Empress begins to realize her budding humanity; the Dyer's Wife, on the other hand, resolves to relinquish her shadow. In the flickering fire, she fails to cast a shadow, enraging Barak. A sword materializes in Barak's hand, but before he can strike her, he and his wife—who suddenly sees the value of her shadow, which she has not lost irrevocably—are torn apart by unseen forces.

ACT III

Scene 1—In an underground grotto in the realm of Keikobad, the Dyer's Wife, who has become separated from her husband, tries to still the voices of the Unborn Children, crying that she has never ceased to love Barak. He, in turn, is filled with remorse for his murderous thoughts. A voice urges the couple to ascend a winding staircase.

Scene 2—On rocky steps leading to the great temple door, the Messenger of Keikobad awaits a boat that brings the Empress and Nurse; despite the Nurse's warnings, the Empress enters the temple in search of her husband. The Messenger of Keikobad emerges from the temple and dooms the Nurse to wander in the mortal world.

Scene 3—As the cries of Barak and his wife are heard in the distance, the Empress, prostrate before the fountain of life, sees the Emperor turned to stone. Though in an agony to save him, she will not do so at the expense of Barak's happiness—whereupon she casts a shadow and the Emperor is freed.

Scene 4—The Emperor and Empress, Barak and his wife (who has regained her shadow), sing of their humanity, to the praises of the Unborn.

Die Frau ohne Schatten

Photos taken in rehearsal by Marty Sohl

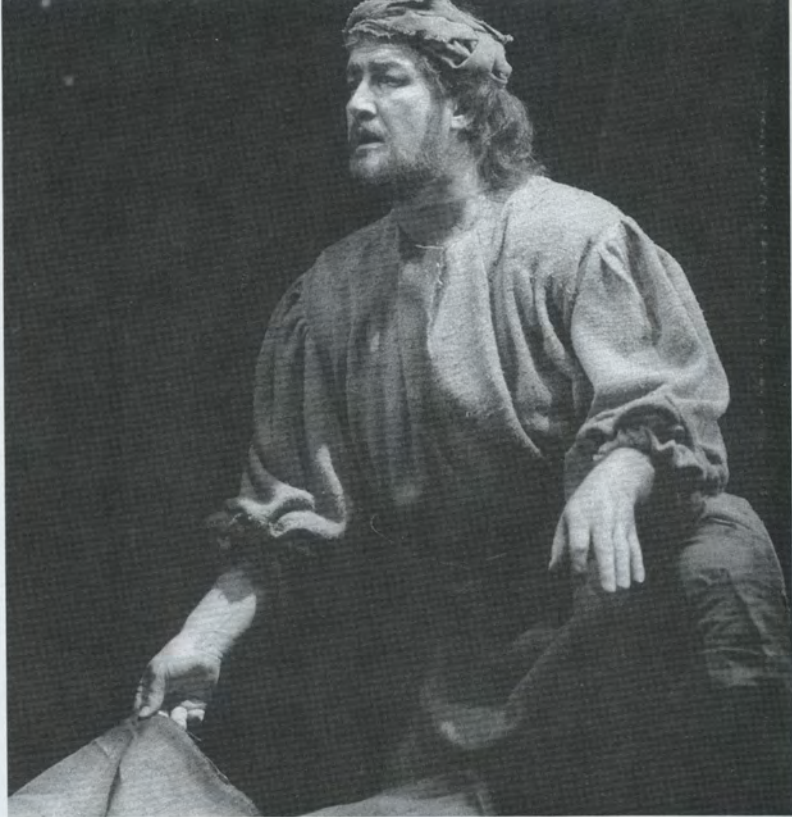


*Mary Jane Johnson, Anja Silja;
(Inset) Gwyneth Jones*





Anja Silja



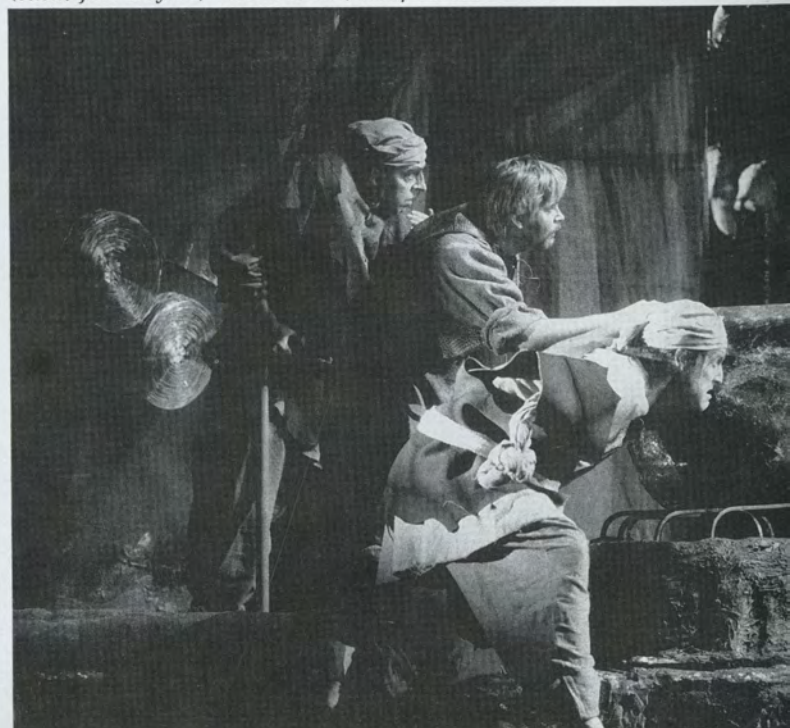
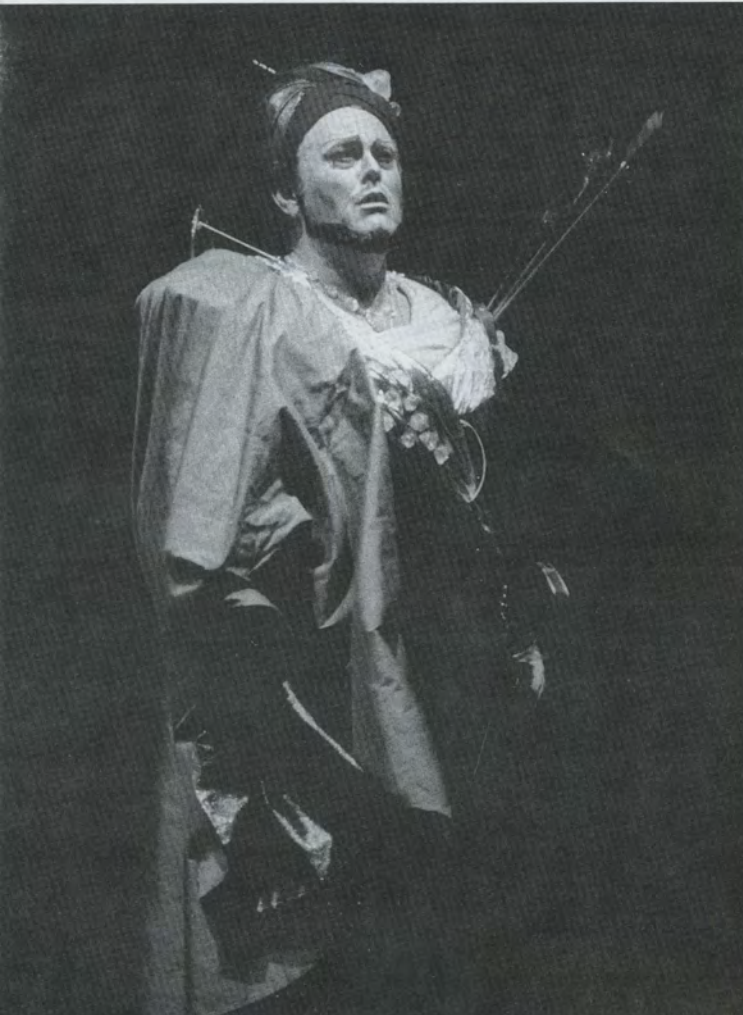
Alfred Muff

(below) William Johns



Mary Jane Johnson

(below) John Duykers, Victor Ledbetter, Philip Skinner





Alfred Muff, Gwyneth Jones

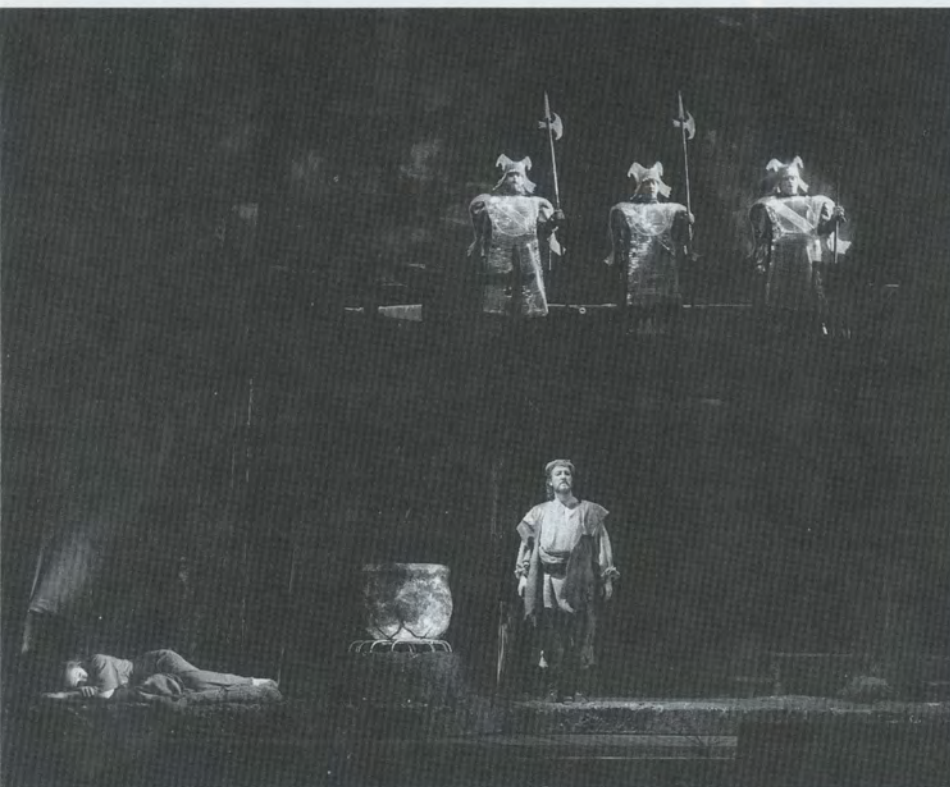


Mary Jane Johnson

(below) Mary Jane Johnson, Anja Silja



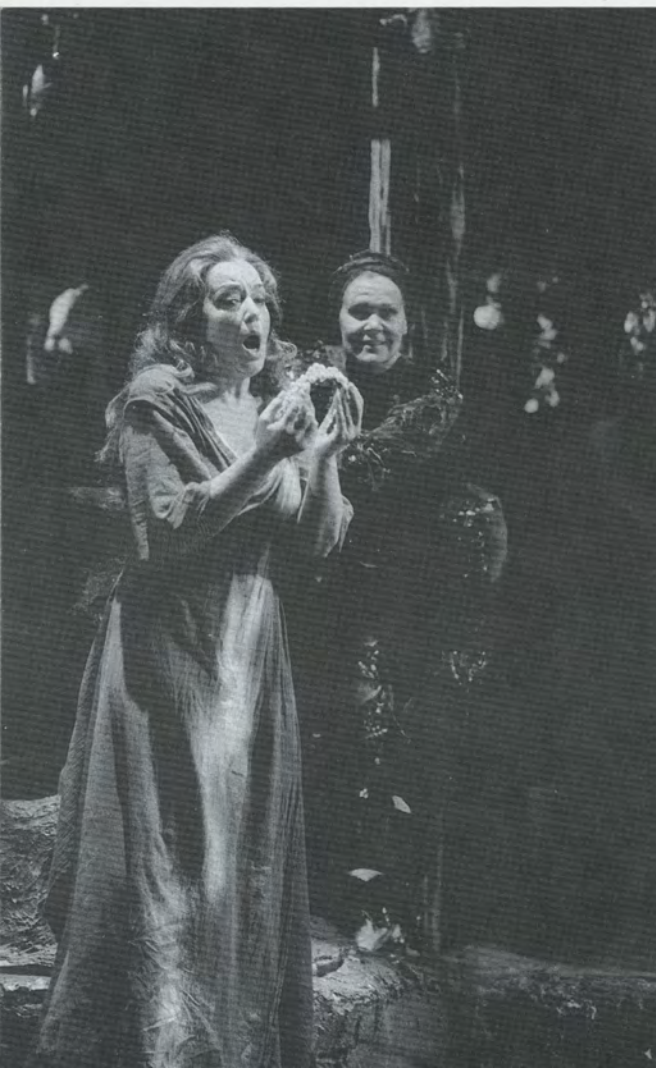
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(Top, l. to r.) Kristopher Irmiter, LeRoy Villanueva, Dale Travis;
 (Bottom) Gwyneth Jones, Alfred Muff



Anja Silja



Gwyneth Jones, Members of the S.F. Opera Chorus, S.F. Boys Chorus

Gwyneth Jones, Anja Silja



STEPHANIE FRIEDMAN

Jerusalem was composed for and dedicated to Miss Friedman. In 1987 she created the role of Mao Tse Tung's 2nd Secretary in the world premiere of John Adams's *Nixon in China*, a portrayal she repeated at the Kennedy Center, the Brooklyn Academy of Music, the Netherlands Opera and the Edinburgh Festival. Most recently she made her Nevada Opera debut as Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly*, her Opera Company of Philadelphia debut as the Turnspit in Dvořák's *Rusalka*, and created the role of Ruth Lehmann in Paul Dresher's *Power Failure* at the American Music Theater Festival in Philadelphia. Miss Friedman has also appeared as soloist with most of California's symphony orchestras.



WILLIAM JOHNS

Internationally acclaimed tenor **William Johns** is heard as the Emperor in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. He has been heard here as Walther in *Die Meistersinger* (1981), Don José in *Carmen* (1983), Bacchus in *Ariadne auf Naxos* (1983) and sang his first Max in *Der Freischütz* for the Company in 1985. The Oklahoma-born artist's 1973 operatic debut as Rodolfo in *La Bohème* in Bremen was followed by appearances in other major European opera houses. He made his American debut in the same role in 1975 with Pittsburgh Opera. He has since appeared as a regular guest artist at the leading opera houses of the world, including the Metropolitan Opera, Vienna State Opera, Paris Opera, Milan's La Scala, the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, Hamburg State Opera, and the Lyric Opera of Chicago. Highlights of his 1986-87 season include his La Scala debut as the Emperor in a new production of *Die Frau ohne Schatten*; his first staged *Tannhäuser* at the Metropolitan Opera; his first Siegfried in *Siegfried and Götterdämmerung* in Paris; the first 1989 Season



ALFRED MUFF

Tristan of his career opposite Gwyneth Jones at the Paris Opera; his Covent Garden debut as Bacchus; *Die Meistersinger* and *Otello* at the Lyric Opera of Chicago; *Götterdämmerung* in Barcelona; and *Die Meistersinger* at the Bayreuth Festival. Johns was heard in three new productions of *Tristan und Isolde* during the 1987-88 season: at the Hamburg State Opera, the Canadian Opera Company and at the Los Angeles Opera. That same season he sang Siegfried at the Orange Festival, in addition to Bacchus in Toronto and the title role of *Otello* in Marseilles and Frankfurt. Most recently he appeared in *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung* at the Met; *Lohengrin*, *Rienzi* and *Tristan und Isolde* in Hamburg; *Tannhäuser* in Bonn; *Lohengrin* in Cologne; *La Damnation de Faust* at Verona; and *Fidelio* with the Philadelphia Opera. Future engagements include Siegfried in San Francisco Opera's Ring cycle next summer; new productions of *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung* at the Cologne Opera; *Tannhäuser* at the Hamburg State Opera and Vienna State Opera; and performances of several roles at the Metropolitan Opera. Johns also frequently appears with orchestras in the United States and Europe in repertoire including Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* and Eighth Symphony, Schoenberg's *Gurrelieder*, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, and Berlioz's *La Damnation de Faust*. He recently received special recognition from Oklahoma City University and was conferred with an honorary doctorate degree.

Bass-baritone **Alfred Muff** makes his U.S. opera debut with San Francisco Opera as Barak in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, a role he has recorded under the baton of Wolfgang Sawallisch and sung to critical acclaim for his 1986 debut at Milan's La Scala in a new Ponnelle/Sawallisch production. Born in Lucerne, Switzerland, he became a member of the ensemble of the Landestheater in Linz, Austria, in 1980 where he sang Philip II in *Don Carlo*, Orest in *Elektra*, Leporello in *Don Giovanni*, the title roles of *Boris Godunov* and *Falstaff*, as well as a critically praised portrayal of Hans Sachs in *Die Meistersinger*. He was a member of the National-theater of Mannheim from 1984 to 1986, and appeared with that company as Barak, Hans Sachs, and in the title role of *Der Fliegende Holländer*. Subsequent guest appearances in concert and in opera included performances at the state operas of Hamburg and Munich, the Vienna State Opera, the Grand Théâtre de Genève, Rome's St. Cecilia Academy, and the festivals of Lucerne, Zurich, Granada and Madrid. In 1986, he became a member of the Zurich Opera, where he sang his first Wotan and Wanderer in a new production of the *Ring*



MONTE PEDERSON

cycle, in addition to the roles of Barak, Sachs, the Dutchman, and Jokanaan in *Salome*. He made his Paris Opera debut in 1986 as Philip II in the original French version of *Don Carlos*, and returned to that house in 1987 for *Der Fliegende Holländer*. Additional engagements during the 1986-87 season included Orest in Geneva, *Holländer* in Hamburg, Gurnemann in *Parsifal* in Karlsruhe, and Philip II in Brussels. He made his American orchestral debut last year with the Chicago Symphony under the baton of Georg Solti in performances of the *German Requiem*. Most recently, Muff appeared in *Der Fliegende Holländer* at La Scala and in Barcelona, *Die Walküre* at the Zurich Opera and in Cologne, *Die Meistersinger* and *Parsifal* in Mannheim, *Oedipus Rex* in Geneva, and *Die Frau ohne Schatten* at the International Strauss Festival in Munich. His busy schedule this year included the Landgrave in a new production of *Tannhäuser* in Bonn; the Wanderer in *Siegfried* and *Zaccaria* in *Nabucco* at Zurich; and the Speaker in *Die Zauberflöte* at the Aix-en-Provence Festival. Next year's schedule includes Wotan and the Wanderer in Zurich's Ring cycle, in addition to the title role of *Mefistofele*, also at the Zurich Opera. The newest addition to Muff's discography is the Aix-en-Provence production of *Die Zauberflöte*.

Bass-baritone **Monte Pederson** portrays the Spirit Messenger in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. The young artist has been seen in over 15 roles with San Francisco Opera since his 1985 debut, most recently last fall when he stepped in for an ailing colleague in the title role of *Der Fliegende Holländer*. This was also the vehicle of his European debut last year in Montpellier, in Limoges, and for his debut at the Deutsche Oper Berlin. He participated in the 1983 and '84 Merola Opera Programs and went on to become a 1985-86 Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center. Pederson has many California credits, including Wagner's Dutchman for West Bay Opera; leading roles in Pocket Opera performances of *La Cenerentola*, *Imeneo* and *Maria Stuarda*; and *Lucrezia Borgia* and *La Vestale* with the Concert Opera Association of San Francisco. Highlights of his 1988-89 season include his debut with Miami Opera as the four villains in *The Tales of Hoffmann*; the title role of *King Roger* in Bremen; Jokanaan in *Salome* in Winnipeg, Cologne, Montpellier and Basel; *Der Fliegende Holländer* at the Breznitz Festival; a concert performance of Schreker's *Irrelohe* in Vienna; and Kurwenal in a concert performance of Act III of *Tristan und Isolde* in Paris. Upcoming engagements include his Chicago Lyric Opera debut as Claudius in Thomas's *Hamlet* and a debut with the Seattle



JOHN DUYSKERS

Opera in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*. He will make his Covent Garden debut next year as Pizarro in *Fidelio* and will bow at the Zurich Opera in the title role of *Eugene Onegin*. In 1991, Pederson will join the ensemble of the Vienna State Opera as principal bass-baritone, and will sing such roles as Pizarro, Orest in *Elektra*, Jokanaan, and Rangoni in *Boris Godunov*. Among his awards are the first prize in the 1987 Baltimore Opera International Vocal Competition, as well as awards from the Richard Tucker Music Foundation and the Wagner Society. He was also the recipient of a special study grant from the S.F. Opera which enabled him to travel to Munich to study with Hans Hotter. He will return for the Company's Ring cycle next summer as Donner in *Das Rheingold*.

Tenor **John Duykers** portrays the Hunchback in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. A graduate of the 1968 Merola Opera Program, he was heard in several Spring Opera Theater productions and made his San Francisco Opera debut in 1972 as Normanno in *Lucia di Lammermoor* and Ill's son in *The Visit of the Old Lady*. He has since appeared in over 10 additional productions here, most recently in the 1986 *Meistersinger*. Highlights of the tenor's recent seasons include his debut with the Lyric Opera of Philadelphia as Shuisky in *Boris Godunov*; his first appearance with the Greater Miami Opera in *The Postman Always Rings Twice*; the Neurologist in Michael Nyman's *The Man Who Mistook His Wife For A Hat* for Lincoln Center's Serious Fun Festival (a production which also toured to Barcelona); and his acclaimed Lyric Opera of Chicago debut in the title role of this year's Peter Sellars production of *Tannhäuser*. Also this year, he bowed at the Opera Theatre of St. Louis in the world premiere of Anthony Davis's *Under the Double Moon*. Duykers created the role of Mao Tse Tung in the world premiere of John Adams's *Nixon in China* at Houston Grand Opera, a portrayal that was also seen in Washington, D.C., at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, the Netherlands Opera, the Edinburgh Festival and on national television. A noted interpreter of contemporary music, Duykers has received critical acclaim for his portrayals of George III in Peter Maxwell Davies's *Eight Songs for a Mad King*; Henze's *El Cimarron*; Garza's *La Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe* and in numerous George Coates Performance Works productions: *Duykers The First, Are/Are, See/Hear and Rare Area*. He recently created the role of the CEO in Paul Dresher's *Power Failure*, which received its premiere in Philadelphia last May, and which will be presented in the Bay Area this winter.



VICTOR LEDBETTER

A 1988-89 Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, baritone **Victor Ledbetter** portrays Ford in the Family Performance of *Falstaff*, a Trojan Man in *Idomeneo*, and the One-Eyed Man in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. He made his Company debut in the 1987 season as Baron Douphol in the family performances of *La Traviata*, and as Paris in *Roméo et Juliette*, and returned last fall as an Esquire in *Parsifal* and as Marcello in the student/family performances of *La Bohème*. For the Opera Center's 1988 Showcase series, he sang Count Almaviva in Hiram Titus's *Rosina*, and was most recently seen here in Glass' *Satyagraha* and Handel's *Giustino*. A participant in the 1986 Merola Opera Program, he sang Marcello at Villa Montalvo, repeating the role on Western Opera Theater's 1986-87 tour which included performances in China. In April of 1988, Ledbetter returned to Shanghai as Scarpia in China's first *Tosca*. The native of Georgia is a graduate of Mercer University and has studied at Indiana University with Nicola Rossi Lemeni. He was a Schwabacher Debut recitalist last January, and recently performed with the Vancouver Opera in *The Cunning Little Vixen* and made his San Diego Opera debut in *Don Pasquale*.



PHILIP SKINNER

Bass-baritone **Philip Skinner** sings Montano in *Otello*, the Bonze in *Madama Butterfly*, and the One-Armed Man in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. He made his San Francisco Opera debut as Quinault in the 1985 Fall Season production of *Adriana Lecouvreur*, and has since appeared here in over 15 different operas in such roles as Ferrando in *Il Trovatore*, Méphistophélès in the student/family performances of *Faust*, Colline in the Family Performance of *La Bohème* last fall



HONG-SHEN LI

and, most recently, Parsi Rustomji in Glass' *Satyagraha*. He participated in the 1985 Merola Opera Program and went on to tour with Western Opera Theater in the title role of *Don Giovanni*. He was appointed an Adler Fellow in 1986, and appeared in the Opera Center's Showcase performances of Hindemith's *There and Back* and *The Long Christmas Dinner*, and in 1987 he portrayed the Colonel in the Showcase production of *Le Plumet du Colonel*. A graduate of Northwestern University, Skinner received his master's degree from Indiana University, where he performed in several productions. Earlier this year, he made his Carnegie Hall debut in the Verdi Requiem and his Hollywood Bowl debut with the Los Angeles Philharmonic in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. Additional debuts this year include performances with the Canadian Opera Company, Arkansas Opera Theater, and the San Francisco Symphony.

Currently an Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, tenor **Hong-Shen Li** makes his Company debut singing five roles: a Trojan Man in *Idomeneo*, a Messenger in *Aida*, Goro in *Madama Butterfly*, a Noble of Brabant in *Lohengrin* and the Voice of a Youth in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. A native of Beijing, China, he received his initial musical training while studying under a five-year Highest Fellowship Scholarship at the Central Conservatory there and performing with the Art Ensemble of Beijing. He was a member of the American Opera Center at the Juilliard School of Music, where he appeared as Benedict in Berlioz's *Beatrice and Benedict*. As a member of the 1987 Merola Opera Program, he performed the role of Rinuccio in *Gianni Schicchi*, and returned to the Merola Program in 1988 to sing Lindoro in *The Italian Girl in Algiers*. During Western Opera Theater's 1988-89 tour he portrayed Goro in *Madama Butterfly* and, with the Opera Center Singers, sang Count Almaviva in the 1989 *Barber of Seville*.

A 1989 Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, baritone **LeRoy Villanueva** appears this fall as a Journalist in *Lulu*, the Herald in *Otello*, Prince Yamadori in *Madama Butterfly*, a Noble of Brabant in *Lohengrin*, and a Watchman in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. He recently made his Company debut in Glass' *Satyagraha*, and sang in the Showcase production of Handel's *Giustino*. He was a member of the Merola Opera Program in 1988, performing Taddeo in *The Italian Girl in Algiers*, and winning the Schwabacher Memorial Award at the Program's Grand Finals. He sang Sharpless
San Francisco Opera



LeROY VILLANUEVA

in Western Opera Theater's 1988-89 tour of *Madame Butterfly*, and completed a trip to Japan with the Opera Center Singers. In 1987 he took part in Italy's Festa Musicale Stiana, where he performed in Sacchini's *Amor Soldato*, and in the world premiere of Robotti's *La Pentola*. Additional credits include a joint performance with Ned Rorem in the composer's *War Scenes*, a solo role in the West Coast premiere of Harbison's *Flight into Egypt* at the Ojai Festival, and appearances with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Los Angeles Master Chorale, and the S.F. Symphony Pops Series. A native of Southern California, Villanueva is a national winner of the Metropolitan Opera Auditions, the National Opera Association Auditions, and the recipient of a 1988 Richard Tucker Foundation Study Grant. He has been chosen to perform in the 1989-90 Schwabacher Debut Recital Series.



KRISTOPHER IRMITER

Bass-baritone **Kristopher Irmiter** sings three roles for the Company this fall: a Waiter in *Lulu*, a Noble of Brabant in *Lohengrin*, and a Watchman in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. A member of San Francisco Opera Center's Merola Opera Program in 1987 and 1988, he made his Company debut last fall as Zuane in *La Gioconda*. He sang the title role of *Don Pasquale* on Western Opera Theater's 1987-88 tour, and appeared as Sharpless, the Bonze and Yamadori on WOT's 1988 tour of *Madame Butterfly*. Recent appearances include Colline in *La Bohème* with South Carolina Opera, Simone in *Gianni Schicchi* with Charlotte Opera, Leporello in *Don Giovanni*, and Blich in Carlisle Floyd's *Susannah* (directed by the composer) with Florida State Opera. He made his Wolf Trap Opera debut this summer as Dandini in *La Cenerentola*. He has also appeared as soloist *1989 Season*

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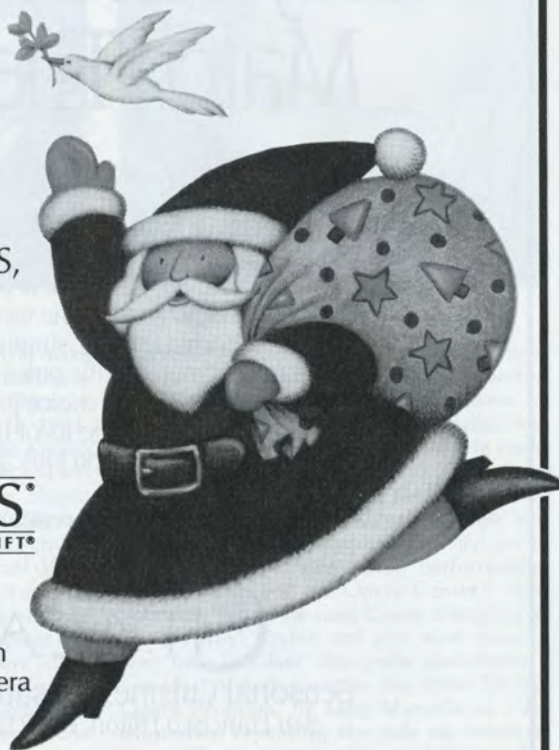
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DALE TRAVIS

in Handel's *Messiah* and Haydn's *The Creation*. A native of South Carolina, Irmiter was a Regional Finalist in the Metropolitan Opera Auditions and was named the Leonardo da Vinci Society Award winner at the Merola Opera Program Grand Finals.

In his second year as an Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, bass **Dale Travis** sings Pistola in the Family Performance of *Falstaff*, The Theater Manager and The Banker in *Lulu*, the Imperial Commissioner in *Madama Butterfly*, and a Watchman in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. He made his Company debut last fall as the Warden in *The Rake's Progress*, and also appeared in *Manon Lescaut*, *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, and in the Student/Family production of *La Bohème* as Benoit and Alcindoro. This summer, he sang Lord Krishna in Glass' *Satyagraha*. As a member of the 1986 and '87 Merola Opera Program, he sang Don Alfonso in *Così fan tutte* and the title role of *Don Pasquale* and toured with Western Opera Theater for two seasons. A native of New Jersey, Travis received his bachelor's degree from Susquehanna University and both a master's degree and an Artist Diploma in Opera from the University of Cincinnati's College Conservatory of Music. The recipient of numerous awards and scholarships, he was heard locally in the title role of *Don Pasquale* and as Dr. Bartolo in *The Barber of Seville* with Opera San Jose, as Méphistophélès in *Faust* with Marin Opera, and as soloist in Mozart's Mass in C Minor with the San Francisco Symphony.

In his sixth season as music director of the Cleveland Orchestra, **Christoph von Dohnányi** is on the podium for *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. The grandson of famed Hungarian composer Ernst von Dohnányi, the maestro made his San Francisco Opera debut in 1971 conducting Berg's *Lulu*, returning in 1976 for Janáček's *The Makropulos Case* and in 1983 for *Ariadne auf Naxos* and *Katya Kabanova*. Internationally renowned as one of the most prominent conductors of our day, Dohnányi began to study piano in his native Berlin at the age of five. Later, he studied law and music in Munich, abandoning the former after winning the Richard Strauss prize for composition and conducting. His musical studies continued with his grandfather and at Tanglewood, and in 1952 he joined the music staff at the Frankfurt Opera, where he was subsequently named artistic and musical director. He was also appointed director of the West German Radio Symphony at Cologne and, from 1978 to 1984, was artistic director and principal conductor of the Hamburg Opera. Today, the maestro is a

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CHRISTOPH VON DOHNÁNYI

sought-after guest conductor at the world's major opera houses, such as La Scala, Covent Garden, Vienna State Opera, Berlin Deutsche Oper and the Salzburg Festival, as well as symphony orchestras, including the Berlin Philharmonic, the Vienna Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony, and the Orchestre de Paris. His list of accomplishments includes leading premieres of Henze's *Der Junge Lord* in Berlin and *The Bassarids* at Salzburg, as well as the 1983 premiere of Cerha's *Baal* in Vienna. In the United States, he conducted *Falstaff* and *Der Rosenkavalier* at the Metropolitan Opera, as well as *Salome*, *Così fan tutte*, *Der Fliegende Holländer*, *Der Rosenkavalier* and *Un Ballo in Maschera* at the Lyric Opera of Chicago. At Ohio's Blossom Music Center, he led *The Magic Flute* and *The Merry Widow*, and in 1987 conducted acclaimed performances of *Die Frau ohne Schatten* and *Salome* at Covent Garden. Forthcoming engagements include *Die Meistersinger* and *Fidelio* (1990) and *Moses und Aron* (1992) at Covent Garden, and Wagner's complete *Ring* at the Vienna State Opera in 1992-93. Under his direction, the Cleveland Orchestra became the most recorded American orchestra during the past several seasons, and he has also made a number of recordings with major European ensembles, notably the Vienna Philharmonic, many of which have won major international awards. Dohnányi is the recipient of numerous international honors, including this year's Commander's Cross of the Order of Merit by the Federal Republic of Germany, Hungary's Bartók Prize, the Goethe Medal of the City of Frankfurt, the Arts and Sciences Prize of the City of Hamburg, and honorary doctorates from Oberlin College and the Cleveland Institute of Music. In addition, he is a Commandeur de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres of the Republic of France, the highest French decoration in the cultural field.

Returning for his seventh season with the San Francisco Opera, German director **Grischa Asagaroff** directs Verdi's *Otello* and Strauss' *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. While studying theater science, music and art history at the University of Munich, he served as stage manager and second assistant at the Bavarian State Opera, where he worked on over 70 different operas from all periods with such directors as Rudolf Hartmann, Günther Rennert, Otto Schenk, August Everding and Jean-Pierre Ponnelle. From 1971 to 1979 he was first assistant and director for the Deutsche Oper am Rhein in Düsseldorf. His first assignment with the San Francisco Opera was assisting Ponnelle on the 1977 production of *Idomeneo* and he served director Nikolaus Lehnhoff in a similar capacity

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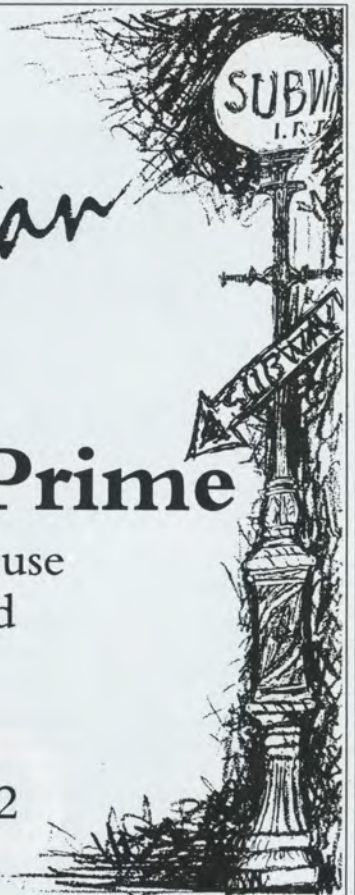
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GRISCHA ASAGAROFF

ity for *Die Frau ohne Schatten* in 1980 and for *Salome* during the 1982 Fall Season. Other assignments for the Company include the staging of *Manon Lescaut* (1983, 1988), and directing Ponnelle's productions of *Rigoletto* (Summer 1981), *La Cenerentola* (Fall 1982), and *Otello* (Fall 1983). From 1979 to 1986, he was principal stage director at the Zurich Opera as well as the director of the opera studio, and is currently principal stage director and production manager at the Vienna State Opera. Asagaroff's own productions include *La Cenerentola* in Athens, *L'Orfeo* at the Split Festival, *Così fan tutte* in Chicago, *Carmen* in Pittsburgh, *Simon Boccanegra* and *Tosca* in Houston, *Idomeneo* and *Turandot* in Turin, *Das Rheingold*, *Die Walküre* and *Siegfried* in Saarbrücken, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *Maria Stuarda* and *Eugene Onegin* in Vienna, and over 10 operas in Zurich, including new productions of *Fedora*, *Maria Stuarda*, *Rigoletto*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Macbeth* and *Nabucco*. Future engagements include Mozart's *Lucio Silla* in Vienna, *Don Pasquale* in London, *L'Italiana in Algeri* in Munich, and the complete *Ring* cycle in Saarbrücken.



JÖRG ZIMMERMANN

Swiss designer **Jörg Zimmermann** created the set designs for *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, a production first seen at San Francisco Opera in 1976 and revived here in 1980. His designs for this opera have also been seen in Paris, Stockholm, Düsseldorf and at the Munich Festival. He studied scenic design with Theo Otto in Zurich and was associated with the Hamburg Schauspielhaus for 19 years. He has designed for theater companies in Berlin, Munich, Stuttgart and Vienna, in addition to his work for ballet and television. His operatic credits



JAN SKALICKY

include productions for the Vienna Staatsoper, the Zurich Opera, the Paris Opera, Milan's La Scala, the Cologne Opera and the festivals of Aix-en-Provence, Salzburg, Edinburgh and Bayreuth. His projects in recent seasons include designs for *Salome* and *Die Aegyptische Helena* for the Strauss cycle at the Munich Festival. Zimmermann also designed sets and costumes for *Die Zauberflöte* to open the Lyric Opera of Chicago's 1986 season, and created the sets for *The Merry Widow* in Düsseldorf in 1987.

Making his San Francisco Opera debut is **Jan Skalicky**, who created the new costumes for *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. The American-born designer was educated in London and attended the School of Commercial Art in Prague. He began his career in Czechoslovakia, working for the National Theater, Municipal Theater, the Magic Lantern and for television. His major debut was with the costume designs for *Salome* at the Komische Oper in Berlin, and his work has since been seen in Europe at Milan's La Scala, the Royal Opera at Covent Garden, the English National Opera, Deutsche Oper Berlin, the Comédie Française, and in Vienna, Munich, Salzburg, Copenhagen, Stockholm and Hamburg. He was designer for the Cologne Theater from 1969 to 1974, and has been resident costume designer for the Zurich Opera since 1975. He has created the costumes for over 40 productions in Zurich, including *Fidelio*, *Simon Boccanegra*, *Il Trovatore*, *Arabella*, *Macbeth* and *Lucia di Lammermoor*, in addition to many productions for the Zurich Ballet. His operatic television credits include *The Makropulos Case*, *Così fan tutte*, *Martinů's Julietta*, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, and *Salome* with Teresa Stratas, conducted by Karl Böhm. Assignments in the United States include *I Vespri Siciliani* and *The Bartered Bride* for the Metropolitan Opera, *The Barber of Seville* for New York City Opera, and *Otello* for Los Angeles Opera. His future plans include Henze's *Das Verrätene Meer* for the Deutsche Oper Berlin, and Schnitzler's *Das Weite Land* for the National Theater in Helsinki.



THOMAS J. MUNN

Thomas J. Munn is lighting designer for *Falstaff*, *Mefistofele*, *Idomeneo*, *Aida*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Lohengrin*, *Orlando Furioso* and *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. Last fall, he was responsible for *L'Africaine*, *Parsifal*, *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, *La Bohème* and *La Gioconda*. In his 14th 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*, *Billy Budd* and *Nabucco*. 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*, *Aida*, *L'Africaine* and *La Bohème*. 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*. His most notable achievement as a lighting consultant is the new Muziektheater in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

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do another "love opera." Six years later, when *Die Frau ohne Schatten* (an idea of Hofmannsthal's) is finally finished, Strauss returns to the theme: "I feel like doing another *Rosenkavalier* just now." Trying to be helpful, his collaborator writes that he is steeping himself in Stendhal, Scribe, and Musset, looking for ideas for something "light and conversational." Strauss continues to insist that he wants "a second *Rosenkavalier*, without its mistakes and longueurs." By September 1923, the poet has decided to set the new work in Vienna of 1840. A year later, he decides to shift the action forward to the seedy 1880s, and digs out of his drawer the scenario of "a bourgeois comedy of the Scribe sort" he had sketched two years before. By November '27, he had reworked it into the notes and character sketches for a "lighter *Der Rosenkavalier*," which he happily sends to Strauss.

Then the arguments, the rewrites, the refinements begin. In the case of each opera, the evolving work keeps changing its shape and direction under pressure first from one man, then the other. In the process, each "invades" the other's field: Strauss tells Hofmannsthal how to create his characters and plots; Hofmannsthal tells Strauss how to write music.

Much of this is simply two craftsmen exchanging requests or suggestions. Here I need eight more words, Strauss says. Please write me a short scene for Orestes; what I want here is something more passionate; I must have a great musical conclusion in the form of a trio. Hofmannsthal takes issue with Strauss' musical characterization of one of his literary creations: "[Ochs] must whisper, not bawl, for God's sake! It cut me to the quick to hear him shout the word 'Hay' at *fortissimo*."

It was Hofmannsthal who first proposed that "an old-fashioned Viennese waltz, sweet and yet saucy," pervade the last act of *Der Rosenkavalier*. He warned Strauss away from "a Wagnerian kind of erotic screaming" in the love duets. The complex, elusive, creatively frustrating conception of *Ariadne auf Naxos* (rewritten Molière comedy-plus-musical *divertissement*) was from the start 100% Hofmannsthal's idea. To his first proposals, Strauss sent back a list of the vocal ranges, set numbers, and orchestration he had in mind, for the poet to keep in mind as he drafted his text.

"That was a brilliant idea you had in the moonlight between San Michele and Bozen," Hofmannsthal wrote of their *Die Frau ohne Schatten* discussions on the 1913

Italian tour—"of accompanying the upper world with the *Ariadne* orchestra, and the denser, more colorful world with the full orchestra"; and he altered his poetic diction to suit. Sometimes the poet—who could not read music—indicated the *sort* of music he heard in his mind's ear by evocative descriptions or vivid metaphors. For Helena, he wanted something "diabolic and at the same time amusing." "When I mention 'gurgling' I have in mind the noise of water 'speaking' in a pipe."

"This is the only way to collaborate," wrote Hofmannsthal of their early work on *Ariadne I*. "There will be other occasions when I shall ask you to comply with requests of mine; where, in certain episodes, a given text requires a more subordinate attitude from the music, as was the case in the Marschallin's scene. Here, on the contrary, the whole thing is to be simply a framework on which to hang the music, well and prettily. We must not merely work together, but actually *into each other's hands*."

* * *

And yet how often, and how radically, did these two men work at cross-purposes, rather than together. Each developed formal epistolary conventions to defer or blunt the edge of his attacks. But the attacks came all the same; and when they came, they could be devastating.

The formulas of civility, the veneer of false friendship are kept in place right up to the brink. "I know you will take what I am about to say in the right spirit." "Don't get angry if I venture to come forward as a critic of your music." "Forgive me if I use very harsh and unduly strong language."

And then it breaks, it erupts, explodes, pours out in a brutal or bitter or venom-filled stream.

On receiving a libretto into which Hofmannsthal insists he has poured his whole soul, resulting in the best thing he has ever done, Strauss often replies with a blunt, unfeeling list of all its radical flaws. On the first *Ariadne* idea, he wrote, "Personally, I am not particularly interested by the whole thing." Of a proposed text for the second *Ariadne*, he wrote, "To be quite frank, I have so far not found it to my liking at all. Indeed, it contains certain things that are downright distasteful to me."

He doesn't basically like the libretto for *Die Frau ohne Schatten* either, he tells the poet. It has no real people in it, he can't get inspired, the musical result is cold, all his friends find it too obscure. "The characters [of *Arabella*] are not interesting . . . and so far I've been unable to warm to

any of them . . . The thing doesn't even begin to come to music."

If Strauss can be abrupt and unfeeling, Hofmannsthal's outbursts can be petulant, aggrieved, extravagant, and vicious. He will label Strauss' most innocent actions as treason, his least compromise (on a singer, or stage production) as a diabolical betrayal—or as evidence of the composer's crude crowd-pleasing instincts. In many of his letters, he comes very close to calling Strauss a vulgar, tasteless Bavarian clod.

He regards the composer's idea of a female Composer for *Ariadne II* as "a travesty" that "smacks of operetta." "This strikes me, forgive my plain speaking, as odious." Some of the composer's more radical ideas for revising the plot of *Ariadne* he calls "rubbish . . . nonsense . . . a stylistic absurdity . . . Truly horrid!" "I feel quite faint." "Your proposals I consider, if you will forgive me, beneath discussion. They demonstrate to me that your taste and mine are miles apart." He icily dismisses *Intermezzo*, for which Strauss had written his own libretto.

In June of 1916, piqued over another matter, he wrote an unusually nasty letter, in which he declared that he had never liked much of the music for *Der Rosenkavalier* either—but then decided not to mail the letter. Two months before he died, in 1929, he returned to scratch that sore open again. His friend, the playwright Arthur Schnitzler, he wrote Strauss, had never liked the "lapse into farce" of Act III. "As a matter of fact it is you alone who must take the blame for that 'lapse into farce.' You wrote me incessantly, letter after letter, saying that there was nothing in it to make one laugh, that in a comic opera one ought to laugh, and so on, and yet I believe to this day that the third act without this trend would have become far more beautiful still."

In some ways, Hofmannsthal's letter of August 1, 1918, opposing Strauss' candidacy as co-director of the postwar Vienna State Opera, shows most clearly the breadth of the chasm that lay between them. In it, the poet comes flat out and says that he regards Strauss as too much of a manipulative egotist, too neglectful of higher standards to be the right man for the job: as a man whose music, for some reason, was more valuable and civilized than Strauss was himself.

Strauss' response was a masterpiece of tact and restraint, and Hofmannsthal eventually came around. Later, he wrote, "What touched me profoundly on this occasion was the infinite kindness and forbearance with which you reacted to my opposition against your coming to

Vienna."

In general, Strauss can rise above the poet's temperamental outbursts. He either ignores them, coolly refutes them, or, occasionally, concedes a point in order to keep the peace. "Why do you always turn so poisonous [he wrote in 1927] the moment artistic questions have to be discussed in a business-like manner and you don't share my opinion?"

Hofmannsthal's typical reaction to criticism (even to what he regards as insufficient praise) is a fit of old-fashioned pique. He is hurt, wounded, cut to the quick, sensitive to slights real or imagined; so easily offended, so ready to offend: "I have sacrificed everything for you!" More than once he proposes breaking off all contact forever. Yet in these "fits," he sometimes reaches a plateau of lucidity, from which he sees clearly what irreconcilably and absolutely different men they are.

There is something wrong between the two of us (you and me) which in the end *will have to be* brought out in the open . . .

Although we have known each other for so long and mean so well by each other . . . I do not think there is anyone who knows me so little.

I am a much more bizarre kind of person than you can suspect; what you know is only a small part of me, the surface; the factors which govern me you cannot see.

* * *

The poet seems to be right: the union of these two talents and temperaments does look like a *mésalliance*. But it would be pointless to ask whether either man would have been able to create "better" operas with another collaborator, since no one acceptable appeared. Hans Pfitzner, a popular German composer of the 1920s, kept hinting to Hofmannsthal that he would like a libretto. ("I told him," he wrote Strauss, "that, if I did have an idea for an opera, I would write it for you.") Famous writers like Gerhart Hauptmann and Gabriele d'Annunzio let it be known that they would also like to work with Strauss. For better or worse—as long as both were alive—neither man could comfortably conceive of collaborating on an opera with anyone else. "If you now estrange me from yourself," Hofmannsthal wrote after the first *Ariadne* fiasco, "you can find in Germany and abroad men of talent and rank who will write opera libretti for you, but it won't be the same."

Hofmannsthal's defense of their embattled partnership (which he once compared to a tired old marriage) was, in



Hugo von Hofmannsthal and Richard Strauss in a silhouette drawn in 1914 by W. Bithorn.

effect, that he drove Strauss to do his best work, *in spite of* the composer's own "baser," crowd-pleasing tastes and instincts. He was especially certain that this had taken place with *Die Frau ohne Schatten*—a play that Strauss never fully understood, made up of characters and ideas with which he was often unsympathetic. At the very time Strauss was begging the poet to help him become "the Offenbach of the 20th century," Hofmannsthal was writing, "You have every reason to be grateful to me for bringing you . . . that element which is sure to bewilder people and to provoke a certain amount of antagonism . . . This 'incomprehensibility,' it is a mortgage to be redeemed by the next generation."

Which, in effect, turned out to be true. Ignored or resisted during Strauss' lifetime, *Die Frau ohne Schatten* only began to attain universal acceptance ten years after his death, with the U.S. premiere (at San Francisco) in 1959.

* * *

These ill-matched collaborators were separated by fundamental differences of temperament, background, intellect, and taste. But what set them most strenuously at odds were two other issues.

Strauss believed that music was more important than words, and Hofmannsthal believed the reverse; and each man regarded himself as an artist in no way inferior to the other.

Long after his first partner had died, Strauss wrote (with Clemens Krauss) an opera called *Capriccio*, in which he staged a

debate on the question: "Which comes first—words or music?" *Wort oder Ton?* "Prima le parole, dopo la musica" (First the words, then the music) may express a good working rule for the collaborative process. But does de Casti's phrase, around which *Capriccio* was built, also express a hierarchy of artistic values?

Hofmannsthal thought it did. For all his profound frustration with the ultimate inadequacy of words to say all that man needs to express, he was a European Man of Letters to the core. He hated having his sublime (or clever) texts swamped out of recognition by Strauss' often voluptuous music, his profound symbols and ideas "cancelled out" by an unsympathetic score. And for all his conscientious concern to make clear and audible the lyrics of his operas, Strauss obviously believed in the superior expressiveness of music.

Don't all composers care more for music, all librettists more for words?

Perhaps. But either they are somehow able to collaborate as a sort of Siamese twins, composing *together*, four hands to the task, each anticipating the other's instincts and style (Brecht and Weill, Rodgers and Hart, Gilbert and Sullivan); or—and this is certainly the case with almost all enduring operas—the *composer* is, without question, acknowledged by both as the leader of the team: *prima la musica, dopo le parole*.

Hofmannsthal would have none of that. Alone among the composers of operas regularly and consistently per-

formed, Strauss worked most often with a librettist who regarded himself as his artistic equal or better. "History knows of no other instance of an author of the highest rank acting unaided as the librettist to a great composer." (Norman Del Mar)

Actually, history knows of a few one-shot instances—Maeterlinck and Debussy, Auden and Stravinsky. A number of serious and respected 20th century writers (Apollinaire, Claudel, Cocteau, Collete, E.M. Forster) have written performable opera libretti.

But I cannot imagine any of them (or Da Ponte, or Scribe, or Boito) writing to his composer-partner, as Hofmannsthal did to Strauss, "I know the worth of my work; I know that for many generations past no distinguished poet of the rank with which I may credit myself amongst the living, has dedicated himself willingly and devotedly to the task of writing for a musician."

Hofmannsthal insisted that for a producer to alter one syllable of his final text would be as vandalistic as to alter a note of Strauss' score. He saw to it that his dramas were published as he wrote them, not as revised for performance. He kept trying to push Strauss towards forms of composition in which the *word* would take command, towards a conscious decision "to entrust the *decisive role* to the voices."

"Once a melody seeks to dominate the scene . . . that is invariably the beginning of the end." "If only it were possible to . . . reach a 'less-of-music,' to reach a point where the lead, the melody would be given rather more to the voice, where the orchestra . . . would be subordinated to the singers." In the case of *Ariadne auf Naxos*, in particular—the occasion of their most bitter conflicts—he insisted that Strauss regard his role as nothing more than a "decorator" of his lines, as the author "not of the substance, but of the trimmings."

Hugo von Hofmannsthal was an important poet and playwright, if not perhaps the reborn Goethe he sometimes seemed to think himself—important, at least, in the context of German literature. He was a more important writer than most of the "men of letters" who have collaborated on operas. But his artistic arrogance, his adamant refusal (or inability) to understand the nature of his co-creator, or of opera as most of us experience it—which is to say, through the music and singing first—probably did as much to set limits to Strauss' achievements as an opera composer as the latter's own uncertain taste and antimodern instincts. ■

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Schwabacher Debut Recitals

By TIMOTHY PFAFF

If the song recital is an endangered species, James Schwabacher is its David Brower. Like the Bay Area-based, internationally renowned environmentalist, Schwabacher, the scion of several of San Francisco's most illustrious families, a well-known tenor, a major patron of many of the city's most important musical organizations, and an internationally renowned vocal teacher, coach, and judge, has made it his lifelong personal mission to make the world safe for the art form he loves above all. His success in that campaign is the product of the very qualities that have underwritten Brower's: extensive experience and consummate expertise in the subject, artistic vision and imagination, courageous and unwavering commitment, and tireless day-to-day work—as practitioner, teacher, administrator, and charismatic leader.

Although anyone involved in San Francisco music life knows who the West Coast's "Jimmy" is, surprisingly few of Schwabacher's many benefactions to San Francisco's musical arts actually bear his name. It's altogether fitting that local audiences now associate his name with the Schwabacher Debut Recitals. Now recognized as one of the area's most adventurous recital venues, the series opens its seventh season in the Vorpall Gallery at 5:30 p.m. on December 10. The time marks, nearly to the minute, the end of the 1989 San Francisco Opera season, which is hardly accidental and entirely appropriate. Now one of the most vital programs of the San Francisco Opera Center, the Schwabacher Debut Recitals

have been created not to compete with the parent company but, rather, to balance its fare, develop its young artists, and extend its community outreach.

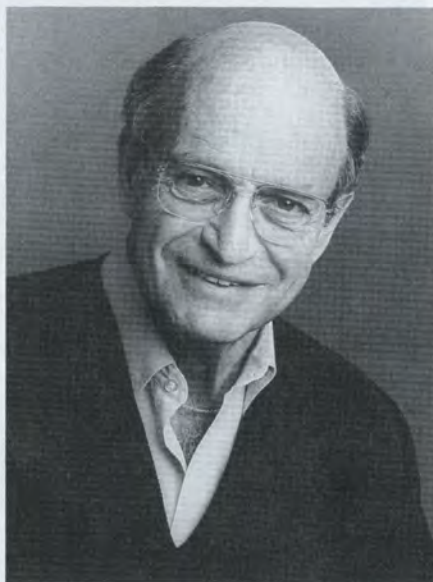
Ironically, Schwabacher's recital series began life as a fledgling program of the San Francisco Symphony. "Realizing that song recitals were going down the drain,

around the world, a home away from home for many a singer Schwabacher has taught or in other ways supported and encouraged, and the site of many an important private recital.

"Edo wanted to present artists that the Symphony was bringing out for major works," Schwabacher continues, "and he wanted a recital space that was close to the symphony hall. But he didn't want it to be a stage. He was interested in something more along the lines of the Schubertiad, songs performed in an intimate room rather than a concert hall, however small. With that in mind, the management and I looked around and came up with the idea of using the Vorpall Gallery, which was close to Davies Hall and was, indeed, a room and not a concert hall. I was happy with the concept, and the Symphony asked me if I would underwrite it for a year. So I did."

In 1983, its inaugural year, the Schwabacher Recital Series presented four singers, soprano Kathleen Battle, baritone John Shirley-Quirk, and mezzo-sopranos Susan Quittmeyer and Claudine Carlson. Although the first two hardly qualified as debutants—the seasoned and renowned Shirley-Quirk, who was singing Britten's *War Requiem* with the Symphony that season, performed Schubert's *Die Winterreise* in his recital—the recital format did help pave the way for Carlson's debut with the Symphony last season, in

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James Schwabacher.

KOHLER

the San Francisco Symphony and Edo de Waart wanted to be the first major symphony orchestra to start a major recital series," Schwabacher recalls from the spectacular Pacific Heights Victorian that is, in addition to his home, a studio, and a gathering place for musicians from

Ravel's *Sheherazade*. "Claudine and I had been friends since the days when she was a soprano and we both coached with Alden Gilchrist," Schwabacher explains. "The Symphony regarded her recital as a good opportunity to hear her before she performed with them.

"After a year," he continues, "the Symphony decided that the series was too expensive, and that it took too much of manager Deborah Borda's time away from Edo—and Edo suggested that I work with younger singers instead. When I came to [former S.F. Opera General Director] Terry McEwen with the idea, he was very pleased—adding that I should have come to him in the first place. It turns out that all parties involved were right.

"I'm much happier doing this sort of thing, helping to launch young singers and to find those among them who are qualified to be recitalists. That's the real catch. As more and more people are coming to realize, there's quite a difference between singing opera and doing a successful song recital. I've been lucky in finding young singers who are able to do both. It's been a great pleasure—and quite a surprise, actually."

The Schwabacher Debut Recitals, which began on December 4, 1983, now present singers who are participating or have participated in one of the Company's affiliate programs, which include the Merola Opera Program, Brown Bag Opera, Western Opera Theater, and the Adler Fellows. Those boundaries have allowed Schwabacher to present young artists who have gone on to international careers, like bass Kevin Langan, baritone Thomas Hampson, tenor John David De Haan, and sopranos Cheryl Parrish and Nikki Li Hartlieb as well as those on the threshold of such careers, like mezzo-soprano Reveka Mavrovitis, the Grand Prize winner of this year's Merola Opera Program Finals, who makes her Schwabacher Recital debut in January.

Having endowed the recital series in perpetuity, Schwabacher also assumes what he calls "a very hands-on" level of participation in the program. He chooses the singers for each of the series, with input from San Francisco Opera Center Director Christine Bullin, among others. He then works closely with each of them to help plan and develop their programs. In addition to paying the fees for the singers and their accompanists and the costs of the Vorpál, the printing of the

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James Schwabacher during a coaching session with tenor Dennis Petersen. CUNNINGHAM

Although I had sung many Hahn songs, he didn't know them. He tried them, and he loved them—and he performed them very well, I thought. That was very gratifying."

Schwabacher's main interest, "the artistic excellence of each program," is, he says, the product of his own work as a young singer with the renowned Danish recitalist Povla Frijsh, "the person responsible for my own recital career." The singer, whose recorded legacy is small but still important enough to have earned a major citation in a recent Andrew Porter column in *The New Yorker*, clearly was one of the central figures in Schwabacher's professional growth. Having heard her in a recital at the Music and Arts Institute in 1947, Schwabacher undertook an intense period of study with her. "There were 11 of us in that class, and we worked three hours a day, five days a week for eight weeks with her. I went through 50 songs in that time," he recalls.

"She didn't have much of a voice," he continues, "and when she walked onto stage, you thought, 'I can't stand to look at



Photo from the Schwabacher archives: James Schwabacher at work with the late San Francisco Opera Musical Supervisor Otto Guth, seated at the piano, and mezzo-soprano Claramae Turner.

programs, and the publicity, the endowment pays for the commission of a new work each season. When necessary, Schwabacher provides additional funds for added instruments, such as a viola for the Brahms songs that require one.

Schwabacher is the first to admit that one of the attendant pleasures is the vicarious continuation of his own singing career through the young artists he now presents. Although his 35-year career as tenor included many operatic assignments, including 14 roles with San Francisco Opera between 1948 and 1952, he still claims to have had his greatest satisfactions as an oratorio singer (he was a noted Evangelist in the Bach *St. Matthew* and *St. John Passions*) and song recitalist.

"I realize that I get sentimental about my own career," he confides. "The constructive way I can use that sentimentality is by suggesting repertoire that I've found sympathetic. When Jeffrey Thomas was planning his recital, for example, I suggested a group of Reynaldo Hahn songs.



James Schwabacher (far right) applauds Dolora Zajic (now, Zajick), winner of the Merola Opera Program 1983 Grand Finals. (L. to r.) Terence McEwen, former General Director of the San Francisco Opera, Miss Zajick, Christine Bullin, S.F. Opera Center Manager, and conductor Evan Whallon.

this woman for the next hour.' And when she opened her mouth, you thought, 'My God, I won't be able to listen to her for an hour.' Ten minutes later, you were so overwhelmed by her musicianship and charisma, that she looked like a queen, and her performances were positively riveting.

"When I first went to sing for her, I brought the aria of Asaël from Debussy's *L'Enfant Prodigue*. Her response was terse: 'Mr. Schwabacher, in New York we call that aria "As I Yell." Get something else.' Fortunately, I lived just down the hill, so I left, and came back with some Schubert.

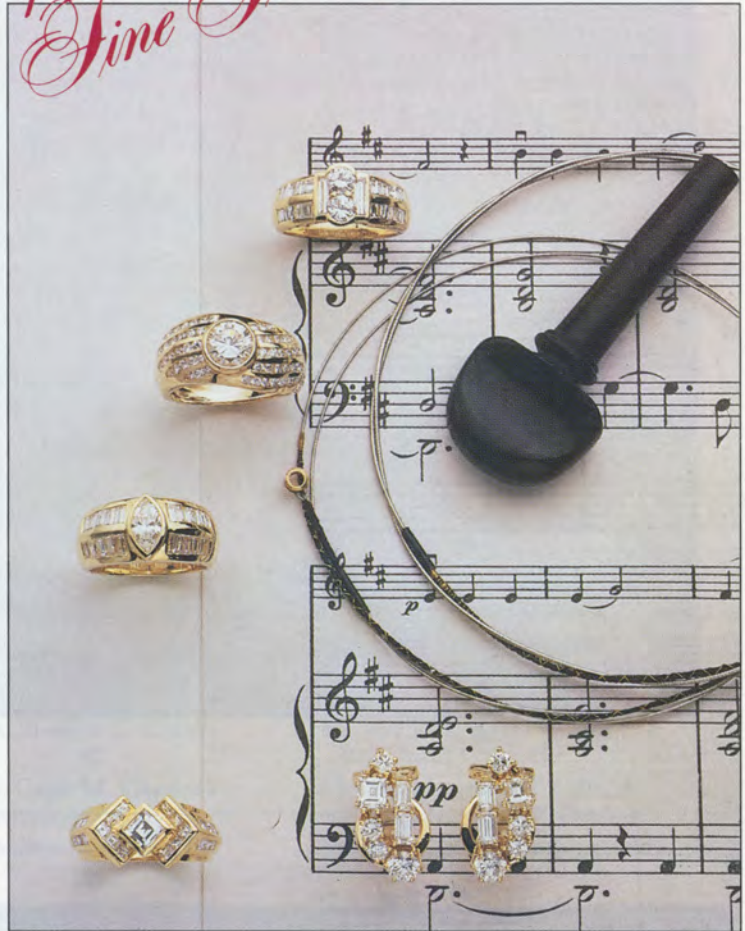
"For those of us who really wanted to work, she was fantastic. She herself was a wonderful pianist, and her sense of rhythm and the frame for each piece was quite remarkable. She loved the poetry especially, claiming that she memorized the poem first to make it a part of her; the music came later. Sometimes she chose songs that weren't the greatest musically, but they had great dramatic impact.

"And she was unsurpassed in her ability to build a program. That's the hardest thing of all, like building a series of sets for an opera to make a whole. She felt that there should be a happy song, a sad song, and a dramatic song in each group, and that the groups had to fit together into a whole program. I think that's the single most important thing she passed on to me."

A hallmark of the Schwabacher Debut Recital series is that the programs, in addition to being superbly balanced within themselves, are both reflective of and responsive to the tastes, abilities, backgrounds, and goals of the particular singers. Soprano Ann Panagulias's recital last December, for example, with adeptly chosen groups of songs by Debussy, Schubert, Sibelius, and Schwantner, showcased her ability to communicate effectively in four languages. Then, the inclusion of four songs from Schoenberg's *Brentli-Lieder* gave audiences a foretaste of the musical language with which she was to score an international triumph as the star of this fall's new production of Alban Berg's *Lulu*.

Kevin Langan's 1987 recital included a rare traversal of Hugo Wolf's *Michelangelo-Lieder*. The songs had particular resonance because Langan, who was one of the last protégés of the late Walter Legge, the great record producer, coach, and Hugo Wolf champion, had first sung them at a memorial service for Legge in

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London. In the forthcoming December 10 recital, soprano Tracy Dahl, who had a huge success as Olympia in the Company's production of *The Tales of Hoffmann* two seasons ago, will present songs by a variety of Canadian composers—because both Dahl and her accompanist, Mark Morash, are native Canadians. In his March 11 recital, baritone LeRoy Villanueva will perform this year's commission, a group of "Portuguese Folksongs" by Frederick Myron, one of the singer's personal friends.

Some of the singers' repertoires have reflected Schwabacher's own career in ways that have surprised even him. "When Deborah Voigt and I were planning her recital, she told me she had some limericks she wanted to sing. I couldn't believe my ears, and I asked her who had written the songs. The answer, of course, was Wallace Berry, a very good friend of mine. Although Marni Nixon sang the premiere of those songs, I had sung them more than anybody else. They're charming songs, and I was pleased that Deborah wanted to sing them on her own initiative."

Schwabacher also has particularly fond memories of a 1987 all-Brahms recital featuring soprano Sara Ganz, mezzo-soprano Donna Bruno, and bass-baritone Monte Pederson, with Alden Gilchrist at the piano and Thomas Heimberg on viola. "It was a wonderful program, and one that I think Alden had tucked under his mattress for years. When he came to me with it, he said, 'I'm not even going to show it to you if I can't play for these wonderful singers.' He did, and I consider that one of the most exciting recitals we've offered."

It's a reflection both of the importance the recital series has attained and the respect and affection with which singers regard its founder that now-established singers return to appear on the series—often at their own request. A prime example is soprano Barbara Kilduff, a former Merola Opera Program participant who has gone on to win important competitions in Europe and who has triumphed as Zerbinetta (in *Ariadne auf Naxos*) and Cleopatra (in Handel's *Giulio Cesare*) at the Metropolitan Opera. Her recital last March was critically acclaimed as one of the peak musical events of the year.

"When Barbara was with Merola," Schwabacher recalls, "she was considered a very good coloratura soprano. Period. A

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good little bird. She had fabulous technique but a rather deadpan presentation. When she came back from Europe, and her successes at the Met, she seemed like a different person. She was singing even better, looked wonderful, and was full of life and sparkle. I'm sure the approbation she received played a part in it, but some people just grow—and she is clearly one of them."

Although it is the responsibility of Schwabacher and his colleagues to know when the time is right to present a singer in a debut recital, he claims that "it's obvious from the beginning if a singer has that particular kind of talent—the intimacy of presentation, the capacity to sustain a mood, the ability to build a sensitive program. But basically what you look for is a care for the poetry, that special ability to express poetry in song. Words, that's what we're talking about, the ability to sing words—not just clearly but meaningfully."

Schwabacher realizes that the Vorpál Gallery is not acoustically ideal, that its high resonance can at times seem, in his word, "bathtubby." Still, he says, "I'd rather have an overly bright room than a dead one. The room may not be 100 percent satisfactory, but somehow, by the second half of the recital if not well before it, the singer and the room seem to fit. We enjoy a good relationship with the Vorpál, and for the time being it meets our needs handsomely. We have a standard audience of about 150 people, and we'd have to double that before we could seriously consider another venue."

"For me, an intimate room is the ideal place to enjoy and savor a voice—more than an opera house, frankly. It's a delightful thing to hear young singers in an intimate atmosphere, where they aren't tempted to oversing and don't have to do anything that might hurt their voices—and, more to the point, where they can communicate directly to their audience, in words as well as in music." ■

Dates for the 1989-90 Schwabacher Debut Recitals are: December 10, Tracy Dahl, soprano; January 21, Reveka Mavrovitis, mezzo-soprano; February 11, Philip Skinner, bass-baritone; and March 11, LeRoy Villanueva, baritone. The recitals begin at 5:30 p.m. at the Vorpál Gallery, 393 Grove Street, San Francisco. Tickets are \$8, with an optional Schwabacher Supper, to meet the artists, at Kimball's, at the corner of Grove and Franklin Streets, at a cost of \$30 per person.

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1989 San Francisco Opera Company (Continued)

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

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

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- San Francisco Opera Magazine (preview issue)
- Advance notice of special events and ticket availability

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The Medallion Society, the premier support group of the San Francisco Opera family, plays a vital role in maintaining the company's stature as one of the world's leading opera companies. The generosity of Medallion Society members helps to ensure the fiscal stability necessary for the production of world-class opera, season after season.

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- Highest priority in all patron privileges and benefits, subject to availability

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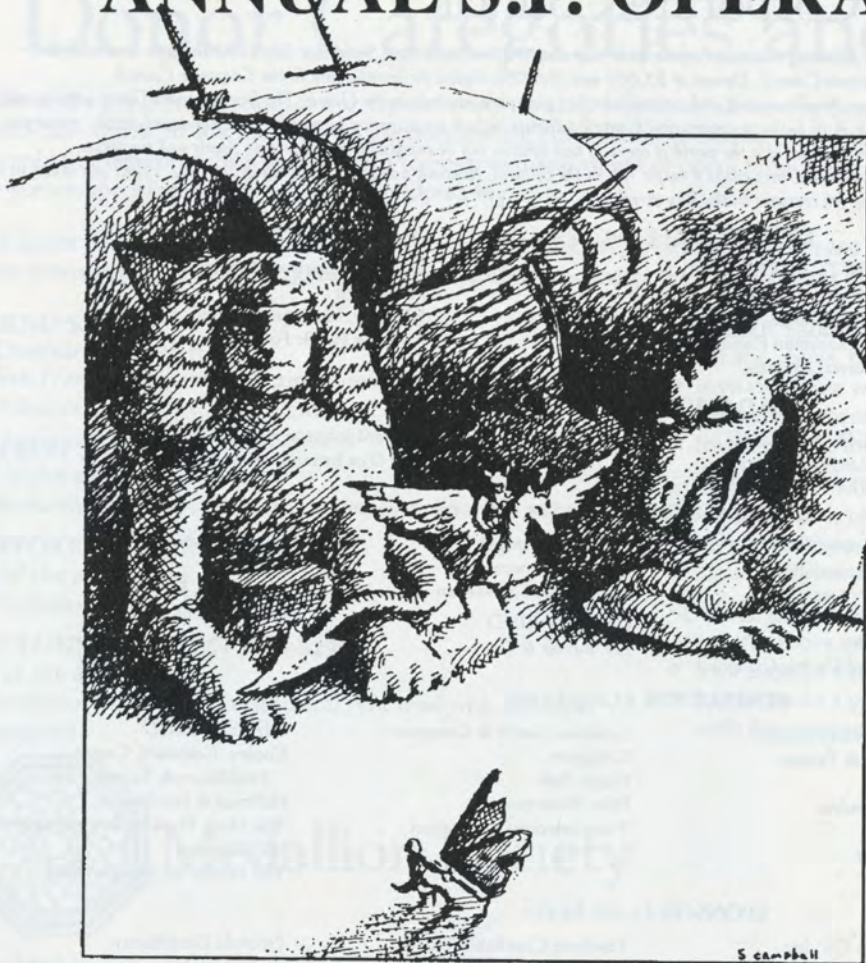
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San Francisco Opera gratefully acknowledges members of the Medallion Society who have made contributions from September 30, 1988 through September 30, 1989. This premier group of donors plays a vital role in maintaining the Company's stature as one of the world's leading opera companies. The generosity of Medallion Society members helps to ensure the fiscal stability necessary for the production of world-class opera, season after season.

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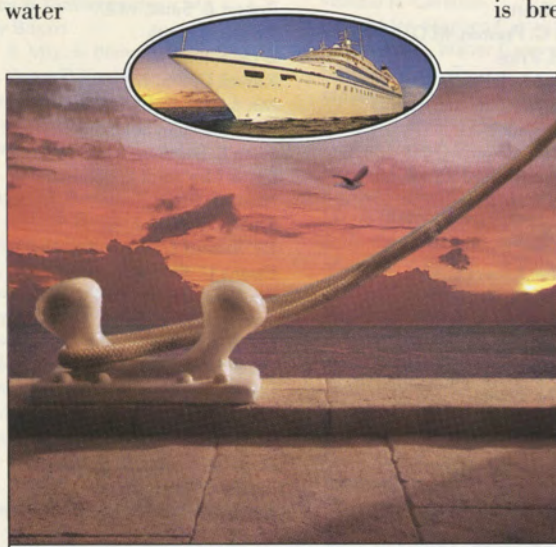
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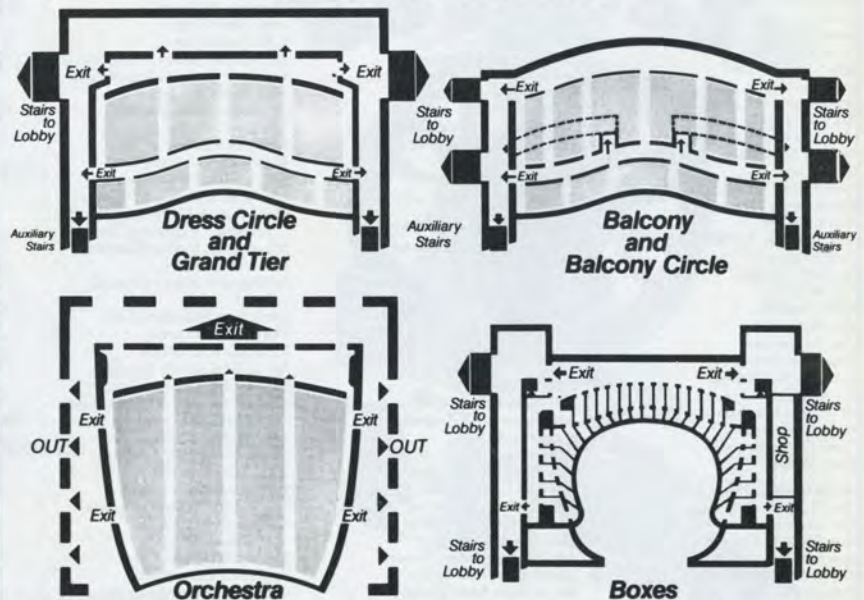
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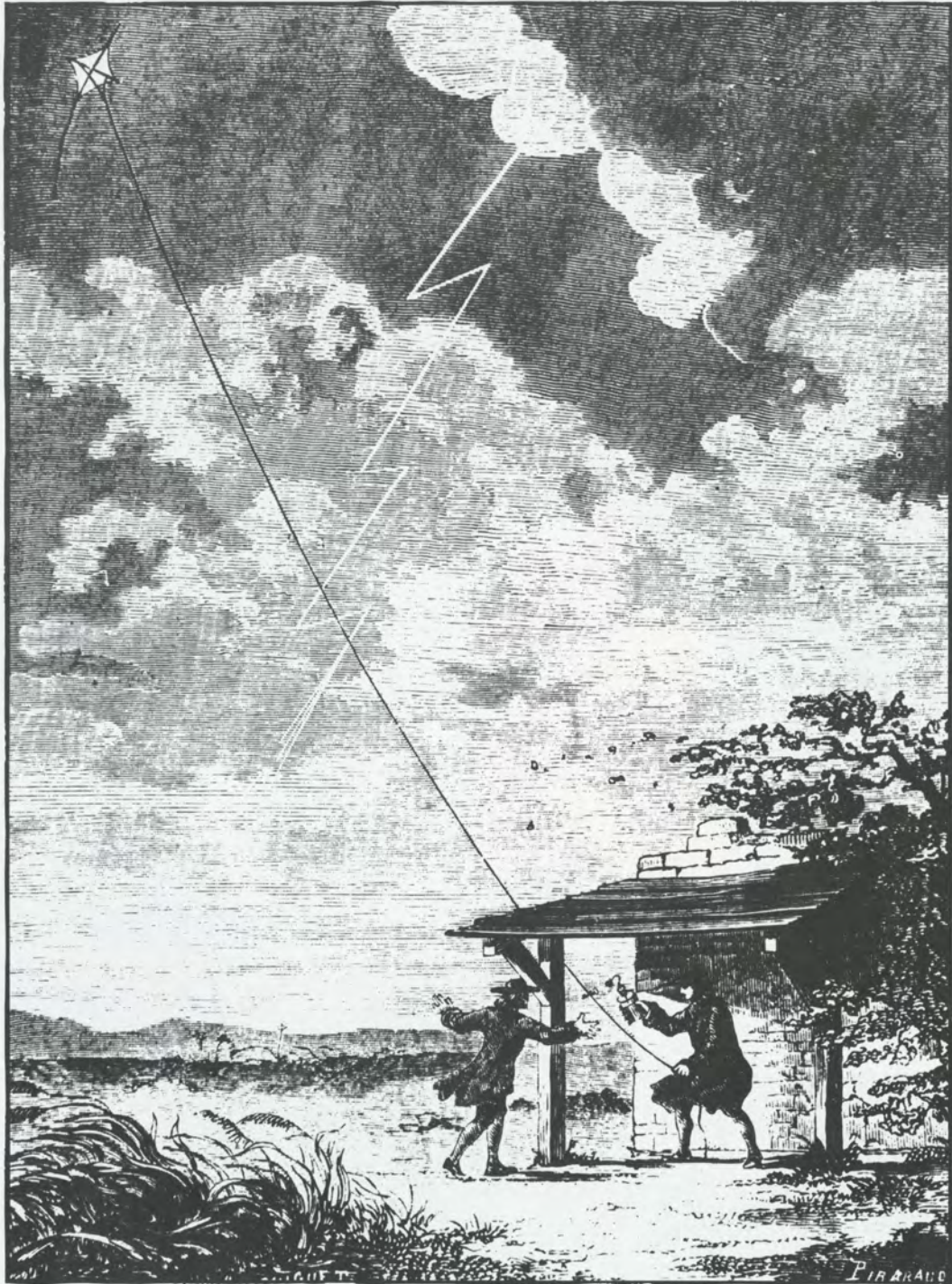
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