

Madama Butterfly
(Madame Butterfly)

1989

Saturday, October 28, 1989 8:00 PM
Tuesday, October 31, 1989 8:00 PM
Friday, November 3, 1989 7:30 PM
Sunday, November 5, 1989 2:00 PM
Friday, November 10, 1989 7:30 PM
Wednesday, November 15, 1989 8:00 PM
Saturday, November 18, 1989 8:00 PM
Sunday, December 3, 1989 1:00 PM
Saturday, December 9, 1989 1:00 PM

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San Francisco Opera

1989 SEASON

Madama Butterfly

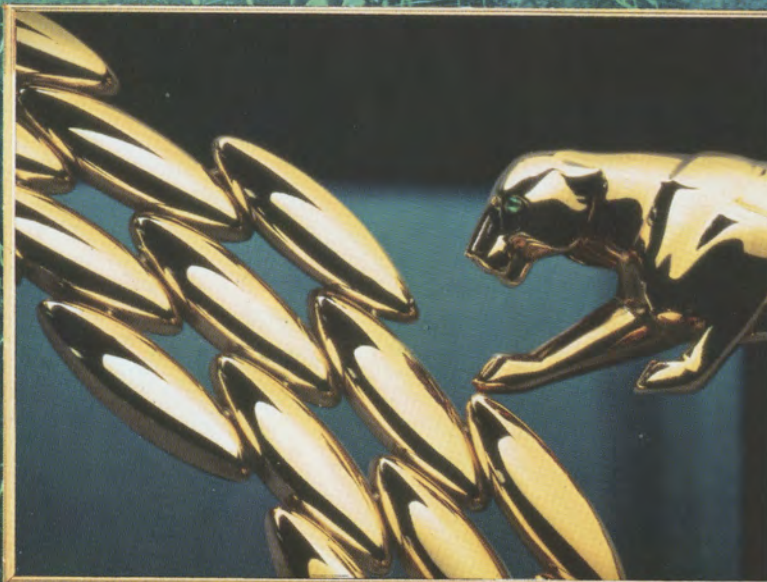
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San Francisco Opera

Lotfi Mansouri, *General Director*

Sir John Pritchard, *Music Director*

Madama Butterfly

1989 SEASON

Vol. 67, No. 9

FEATURES

- 26 **Madama Butterfly: From Fiasco to Triumph** by Julian Budden
One of the most popular works in the operatic repertoire had an unexpectedly painful beginning.
- 50 **West Goes East** by John Schauer
Following San Francisco Opera Center's most recent trip to the Orient.
- 58 **Company Profiles: Gordon Taylor** by Timothy Pfaff
Introducing San Francisco Opera's Data Processing Manager.

COVER

Ikegami Shūho, 1874-1944

Morning Glories and Butterfly

Kakemono, ink and color on silk; 77½ x 18¾ in.

The University of Michigan Museum of Art.

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Frederic R. Smith.

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DEPARTMENTS

- 10 Administration
15 1989 Season Repertoire
35 Artist Profiles
39 Cast and Credits
40 Synopsis
62 Opera Previews
63 Box Holders
64 Donor Categories
65 Corporate Council
67 Medallion Society
72 Supporting San Francisco Opera
82 Services

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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
Tully M. Friedman, President

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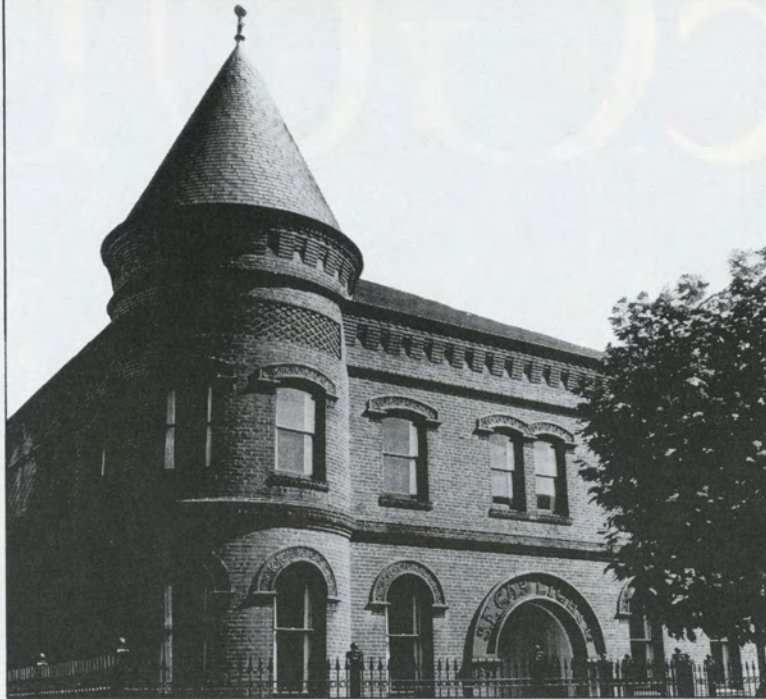
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General Director's Message

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.

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Continued on page 13



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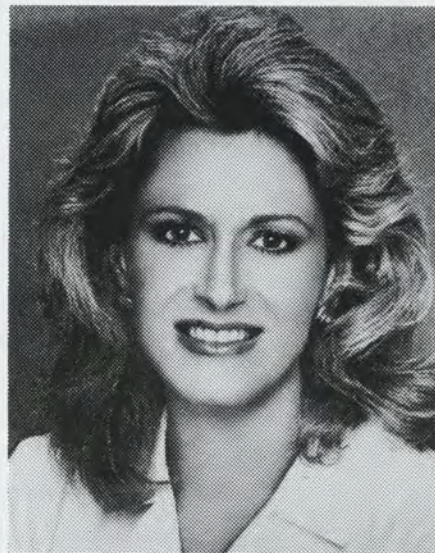
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1989 Season

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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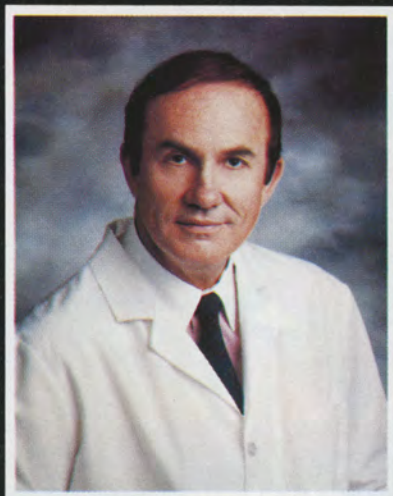
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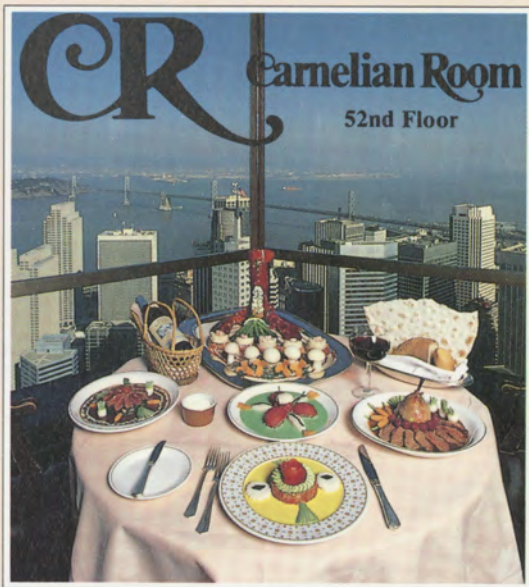
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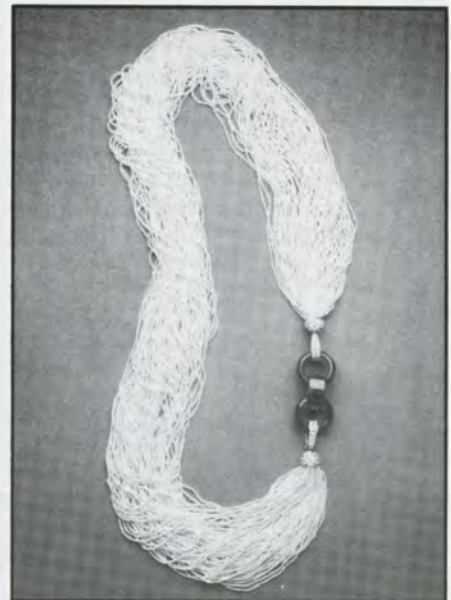
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Leonid Igudesman
Julia Skiff
Joseph Edelberg

2nd VIOLIN

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

VIOLA

Alison Avery *Acting Principal*
Patricia Wells* *Acting Associate Principal*
Jonna Hervig
Natalia Igudesman
Sergei Rakitchenkov
Thomas Heimberg
Patrick Kroboth

CELLO

David Kadarauch *Principal*
Thalia Moore *Associate Principal*
David Budd
Emil Miland
Victoria Ehrlich
Nora Pirquet
Nancy Stenzen

BASS

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

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Alan Cox *Principal*
Julie McKenzie
James Walker*

PICCOLO

James Walker

OBOE

James Matheson *Principal*
Deborah Henry* *Assistant Principal*
Robin May

ENGLISH HORN

Robin May

CLARINET

Philip Fath *Principal*
Joanne Burke Eisler*
Gregory Dufford

BASS CLARINET

Gregory Dufford

BASSOON

Rufus Olivier *Principal*
Jerry Dagg
Robin Elliott

CONTRABASSOON

Robin Elliott

HORN

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

TRUMPET

David Burkhart *Acting Principal*
William Holmes
Timothy Wilson*

TROMBONE

McDowell Kenley *Principal*
Donald Kennelly
Matthew Guilford

TUBA/CIMBASSO

Zachariah Spellman

TIMPANI

Elayne Jones

PERCUSSION

Richard Kvistad *Principal/Associate Timpami*
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HARP

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Madama Butterfly: From Fiasco to Triumph

By JULIAN BUDDEN

Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* is widely known as one of the Ugly Ducklings of opera, along with Rossini's *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Verdi's *La Traviata* and Bizet's *Carmen*; and it was surely the Ugliest of the four. "With a sorry but steadfast heart I must tell you that it was a real lynching," Puccini wrote to a friend after the first night at La Scala, Milan, February 17, 1904. His publisher, writing in the Ricordi house magazine, *Musica e Musicisti*, was still more specific. "Growls, shouts,

groans, laughter, giggling, the usual single cries of *bis* designed to excite the public still further; that sums up the reception which the audience at La Scala accorded to the new work by Maestro Giacomo Puccini." Yet, all the auguries had been favorable. The opera had been prepared with the utmost care. The cast included some of the most distinguished

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

(Below) A chorus group in the wedding scene of San Francisco Opera's 1974 staging of *Madama Butterfly*. (Right) Cio-Cio-San's vigil in 1984.



MASON JONES

artists of the day: Rosina Storchio (*Butterfly*), Giovanni Zenatello (*Pinkerton*), Giuseppe De Luca (*Sharpless*), all of whose splendid voices can still be heard on pre-electric recordings. The conductor was the experienced Cleofonte Campanini. At the dress rehearsal Puccini received a standing ovation from the orchestra. What had gone wrong? The question had puzzled Puccini's biographers as it did the composer himself. None of them doubt that the campaign was organized—but by whom? Direct evidence is lacking; but from a knowledge of Italian musical life at the time we may hazard an educated guess as to the prime mover.

"In no other country," observed D'Arcais, a critic of the 1870s, "does the publisher have such power as in Italy." By then this was certainly true. In previous years, operas had been commissioned by theatrical managements, who retained possession of the performing rights for a limited period before making them over to the composer to dispose of to a publisher of his choice. By 1870, operas were commissioned by a publisher, who then assumed the responsibility for placing them at suitable theaters and having them worthily staged. Most composers welcomed the system, especially since they were granted a handsome percentage of all subsequent hire fees. But it had dangerous consequences.

During the mid-19th century, music publishing in Italy was divided between the House of Ricordi and that of Lucca, who picked their composers as carefully as football clubs pick their players. Ricordi held the monopoly of native masters with Verdi at their head. Lucca had been

SCHERL





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When *Madama Butterfly* was in rehearsal at Milan's La Scala prior to the work's world premiere, a contemporary caricaturist recorded it for posterity: (L to r.) Giacomo Puccini, Giovanni Zenatello (Pinkerton), Rosina Storchio (Cio-Cio-San) and Giuseppe De Luca (Sharpless).

prompt in taking up the rights of foreign composers such as Gounod, Thomas and Meyerbeer, whose works were already beginning to flood the Italian market during the 1860s. Each firm had its own house magazine in which it could exalt its own products and bombard those of its rival. At every premiere, D'Arcais tells us, the agents of Lucca and Ricordi were to be seen glowering at one another. Francesco Lucca's final coup was to have secured the Italian rights for Wagner. If *Lohengrin* enjoyed a triumph in Bologna in 1871, its utter failure in Milan two years later was certainly not hindered by Giulio Ricordi, whose influence in the Lombard capital was then paramount.

In 1888 the widow Lucca sold out to her old enemy—not before time, for in the meantime, a far more formidable opponent had entered the field. Edoardo Sonzogno was one of the shrewdest operators in the theatrical world. In 1880 he had bought the rights to Bizet's *Carmen*, correctly seeing in it a pointer to the future, away from conventional grandeur to a more realistic concept of lyric drama. Soon afterwards he set up a competition for a one-act opera, the first fruits of which were gathered by Ricordi. Although *Les Willis*, as *Le Villi* was originally called, failed even to gain an honora-

ble mention, a performance of it organized by the composer's friends convinced Ricordi to buy the score; and thus young Giacomo Puccini was launched on his career. Sonzogno's moment of triumph came in 1890 when Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana*, submitted for the same competition, inaugurated a new vogue for "verismo." At once, a number of young composers—Cilea, Giordano, Leoncavallo—flocked to Sonzogno's banner, to dominate the operatic scene for the next decade. In the Mafia-like warfare that ensued between himself and Ricordi, Sonzogno possessed the advantage of total unscrupulousness. He reneged on a contract with the English composer Frederick Cowen, prompting Boito (a friend and protégé of Ricordi) to write to Cowen begging him not to judge Italians by the standard of Sonzogno. When the contents of his letter became known, Sonzogno insulted Boito in print, and a duel between them was narrowly averted. In 1895 he took over the management of La Scala and for the next two years excluded from the schedules all operas published by the rival firm. Ricordi begged Verdi to intercede on his behalf with the prime minister; but Verdi wisely held aloof.

This time, however, Sonzogno had clearly overreached himself. His manage-

ment of La Scala ended with the theater's bankruptcy. Worse still, by the end of the century it had become clear that the "verismo" vein was becoming exhausted, and that most of its exponents had already given their best work. Only Puccini was seen to be capable of constant self-renewal; and he belonged to Ricordi, who had been steadily grooming him as Verdi's successor. Even after the comparative failure of *Edgar* (1888), the publisher's faith in him remained unshaken; and he would see it vindicated with *Manon Lescaut* (1893) and *La Bohème* (1896). In 1900, the year which saw the appearance of *Tosca*, Sonzogno arranged for seven simultaneous premieres of Mascagni's *Le Maschere* to be given in various regional capitals. In the event, one of them had to be postponed; of the rest, only the one conducted by Mascagni himself at the Teatro Costanzi, Rome, succeeded. After that, Sonzogno dropped like a hot brick the composers to whom his firm owed much of its luster; nor did Mascagni return to the Casa Sonzogno until its founder had retired.

With *Tosca* pursuing a triumphant course throughout Europe, the prospect of a successor no less vital was unlikely to appeal to Sonzogno. Planned for the season of 1902-3, *Madama Butterfly* was delayed by a year due to a car accident and a slow recovery, during which it was

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London playbill for David Belasco's *Madame Butterfly*, which ran in the year 1900. One of the performances was attended by Giacomo Puccini.



Puccini and his step-granddaughter on board his yacht Cio-Cio-San, acquired from the royalties to *Madama Butterfly*.

discovered that Puccini was suffering from a mild form of diabetes. This enabled Sonzogno to slip in a final winner at his own Teatro Lirico in the winter of 1902: Cilea's *Adriana Lecouvreur*, with a cast that included Caruso and De Luca. But even this was in danger of eclipse by the latest product of Puccini's pen. Of all the reviews of the disastrous first night of *Madama Butterfly*, the most outright in its condemnation was the one that appeared in the periodical *Il Secolo*: "A second performance," wrote the critic, "would have caused a scandal that would have called for a decisive action on the part of the Milanese public who do not relish being made fun of. This opera is not one of those, like *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, which carry within them the seeds of resurrection. It shows that Maestro Puccini was in a hurry. Having to produce the work this season in a state of ill health, he was unable to find original inspiration and so had recourse to melodies from his previous operas, and even helped himself to those of other composers . . . the opera is dead." The owner of *Il Secolo* was Edoardo Sonzogno.

Puccini, however, did not lose heart. He was convinced that *Madama Butterfly* was his best work to date . . . "the most heartfelt and most expressive opera that I have conceived! I shall win in the end, you'll see—if it is given in a smaller

theater, less permeated by hate and passion." Admittedly, he made a few alterations to the score. In the first act, he cut several hundred bars from the scene where Butterfly's relations arrive for the wedding; and he softened the character of Pinkerton, making him behave less arrogantly to the Japanese and giving him a romanza ("Addio, fiorito asil") in which he expresses his remorse. The long second act he split into two parts with an interval between them. In this version, the opera was given on May 28th that same year at the Teatro Grande, Brescia. The conduc-

tor was again Campanini; Rosina Storchio was replaced by Salomea Krusceniska, Zenatello and De Luca remaining as before. Puccini's instinct had not betrayed him. The opera created a furor, five of the numbers being encored. Further modifications followed for London in 1905, where the singers were Emmy Destinn, Enrico Caruso and Antonio Scotti, and for the first Paris production at the Opéra-Comique in 1906, where the score received its definitive form. It has never left the repertory since.

Puccini, it seems, fell in love with the



Licia Albanese has performed *Cio-Cio-San* at the San Francisco Opera in a record nine seasons. This photo was taken backstage in 1941, at the time of her first local portrayal of the Puccini heroine, and she was joined in posing for the camera by baritone Lorenzo Alvary.

MORTON



Dorothy Kirsten sang the title role of *Madama Butterfly* here in eight seasons, ranging between 1948 and 1969. This photo was taken in 1950.

tradition of spoken drama. At its three theaters, the Giglio, the Pantera and the Goldoni, seasons of opera alternated throughout most of the year with straight plays given mainly by the leading touring companies of the day, whose repertory reached from Goldoni and Alfieri to the latest products of Sardou, De Musset and Dumas *faits*. At a time when the canons of spoken and lyric drama were growing ever closer, here surely lies the explanation of Puccini's unique flair for discerning the possibilities inherent in subjects which most composers and librettists would have left alone, and for realizing them in terms of song, gesture and stage movement, all combined in the most natural way imaginable. What had particularly attracted him in *Madama Butterfly* had been the heroine's vigil, a silent scene lasting fourteen minutes during which a carefully calculated series of lighting changes conveyed the passage of time from twilight to dawn of the following day. Here was meat for a tone poem!

But this was only the beginning. Belasco's play was based on a story by John Luther Long which had appeared in the American periodical *Century Magazine* in 1898; it concerned an officer of the United States Navy who married a Japanese girl while on service abroad and then deserted her after she had borne him a child. It was said to have been based on a real life incident, which is more than probable since marriages and liaisons of this kind were common enough (indeed, the present writer is descended from one

such union which took place in India in the 18th century). Long's story, however, avoids tragedy; the geisha does indeed stab herself but not fatally; and when the officer's American wife returns to Butterfly's house she finds it empty. Belasco's play, on the other hand, ends with Butterfly's suicide, after she has encountered Kate Pinkerton at the American consulate. Only the latter part of Long's story is used, beginning after Butterfly's desertion. What Belasco did retain, however, was the dreadful pidgin English in which Long's heroine expresses herself. As she dies in Pinkerton's arms her final words are "Too bad those robins didn' nes' again." Perhaps it was fortunate that Puccini had no English.

Despite Belasco's verbal assurances to the composer, nine months were to pass before Ricordi managed to secure the rights to the play on his protégé's behalf. At first Puccini had in mind a single act corresponding to what he had seen in London; but he soon abandoned this idea in favor of a larger scheme which would take in more of the events narrated by Long. There would be a preceding act set in America where Pinkerton could be shown living happily with his temporary bride. Meanwhile, he sent an Italian translation of the story to Luigi Illica, whose task it was to draft the scenario and the dialogue that Giuseppe Giacosa would turn into verse. He began to steep himself in the appropriate local atmosphere. From the wife of the Japanese ambassador he obtained a volume of Japanese folk songs,

subject after seeing David Belasco's one-act play, *Madama Butterfly* at the Duke of York's Theatre in London in the summer of 1900, while he was supervising the Covent Garden production of *Tosca*. No sooner was the performance ended than Puccini went to the green room and begged the playwright for permission to use his piece as the basis for an opera. "I agreed at once," Belasco recalled, "and told him he could do anything he liked with the play and make any kind of contract, because it is not possible to discuss business arrangements with an impulsive Italian who has tears in his eyes and both arms around your neck." That Puccini should have seized on the plot of a play given in a language of which he understood scarcely one word may seem strange, until we consider that the city of Lucca, where he spent the first 22 years of his life, possessed an unusually strong



Two Slavic sopranos, two very special artists, sang *Cio-Cio-San* in one S.F. Opera season each: Jarmila Novotná in 1939, and Sena Jurinac in 1959.



COGAN

MORTON

several of which he quoted in the course of the opera; and he obtained an introduction to the celebrated Japanese actress Sada Jacco who was appearing in Milan with her own company. From hearing her talk in her native language he was able to observe the timbre and rhythm of Japanese speech. In due course, the American act was replaced by two others, the first set, as now, outside Butterfly's house, the second in the American consulate. All seemed to be progressing smoothly when Puccini had one of his disconcerting changes of mind. "The consulate was a grave error," he wrote to Ricordi. "The drama must move to its close without interruption—rapid, effective, terrible! In planning the opera in three acts we were heading for certain disaster . . . Do not worry about the two acts. The first lasts a good hour, the second an hour and more—perhaps an hour and a half. But how much more effective! In doing this I am sure of riveting the public's attention



NORTON

Teresa Stratas at the San Francisco Opera in 1966.



Yasuko Hayashi as Cio-Cio-San at the War Memorial in 1980.

POWERS

and not sending it away disappointed. And we shall have at the same time an opera with a novel shape to it and one long enough to fill a whole evening. I am writing to Illica." Ricordi and Illica eventually agreed to this alteration, but Giacosa at first dug in his heels. "I am convinced," he wrote to Puccini, "that the curtain ought to fall between the futile night vigil and Pinkerton's reappearance. The English play has no curtain there, but then the play is compressed into a single act . . . But if we, who had the sound idea of adding a first act extraneous to the action, now fail to give the action sufficient development, we shall upset the equilibrium of the work . . . I am convinced that the result of fusing the second with the third act would be, musically, an act which would be interminable and too contrived." Later, he would raise objections to the omission of an aria for Pinkerton in the third act. Over both issues he yielded to the composer; but it may be pointed out in Giacosa's defense that in the revised version of the opera, both of his objections were by implication sustained.

Now that all controversy has long died away, we can see that *Madama Butterfly* follows up the conquests of *La Bohème* and *Tosca* with fresh ones of its

own. On the dramaturgical plane we can see the composer moving towards a scheme characteristic of his later operas whereby the principal action is preceded by an expository section made up of seemingly casual episodes. What he has not yet managed to do was to give them dramatic relevance to what follows, as in *Il Tabarro* and *Suor Angelica*—which is one reason why in successive revisions he was able to whittle them down without loss to the general effect. The scale of musical thought is greater than in any of Puccini's previous operas, as is evident most clearly in the love duet, unquestionably the finest that he ever wrote. At the same time, his musical vocabulary is immensely enriched through the assimilation of oriental features. Finally, there is the figure of Butterfly herself: a variation on the archetype of Mimi (which Tosca is certainly not), she is far more fully developed than her Parisian predecessor. Pathos, tenderness, humor, scornful irony—all form part of her armor as the action proceeds. And not even her fundamentally child-like simplicity can prevent her from rising to genuine tragic status when, without a trace of self-pity, she takes what she considers the one course which honor demands. ■



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NIKKI LI HARTLIEP

Soprano **Nikki Li Hartlieb** portrays Cio-Cio-San in *Madama Butterfly*, a role she has sung to critical acclaim in Madison, Shreveport, Atlanta, with Minnesota Opera, Austin Lyric Opera and, most recently, with Seattle Opera. Born in Okinawa, she made her San Francisco Opera debut in 1982, appearing in *Nabucco* and *Salome*, sang the title role of *Madama Butterfly* for the 1984 Family performances, and in 1985 portrayed Mistress Ford in the Family performances of *Falstaff* and sang the role of Marianne in *Der Rosenkavalier*. Last fall, she appeared as Mimì in the student/family performances of *La Bohème*, a role she sang on a national Western Opera Theater tour as well as for the 1982 Opera Center Showcase and a production for Opera Colorado. She was a 1984-85 Adler Fellow with the Opera Center and sang the title role of Handel's *Rodelinda* for the 1985 Showcase series. She was featured in that season's Schwabacher Debut Recital series, and returned for a second program last year. Miss Hartlieb's 1987-88 season included a debut with the Opera Company of Philadelphia as Ellen Orford in Britten's *Peter Grimes*, and her Carnegie Hall debut in *Jenůfa*, a performance which was recorded with the Opera Orchestra of New York conducted by Eve Queler. She was the recipient of the first place Schwabacher Award in the 1983 Merola Opera Program Grand Finals, a winner of the 1987 Metropolitan Opera National Auditions, and a recipient of the Olga Forrai Foundation grant (1987-89). Upcoming engagements include her debut with the Lyric Opera of Chicago as Micaëla in *Carmen*, and her first appearance with the Canadian Opera Company in the title role of *Suor Angelica*.



MIRIAM GAUCI

Maltese soprano **Miriam Gauci** makes her San Francisco Opera debut as Cio-Cio-San in *Madama Butterfly*, the role of her acclaimed U.S. debut in 1987 in Santa Fe. She began her vocal studies in 1979 at the Verdi Conservatory in Milan, and in 1981 studied at the Vocal Academy of Milan's La Scala where she was awarded a Special Diploma in 1983. After winning several international vocal competitions, she made her debut at Treviso in 1984 as Mimì in *La Bohème*. She made her La Scala debut in 1985 as Prosperina in the first modern performances of Rossi's *L'Orfeo* and returned there the following year for *Die Frau ohne Schatten* and *La Sonnambula*. She also performed with the Scala Orchestra, singing Pergolesi's and Rossini's *Stabat Mater* as well as Mendelssohn's *Hymne*. That same year at Bologna's Teatro Comunale she sang in Poulenc's *La Voix humaine* and Britten's *Let's Make an Opera*. During the 1986-87 season, Miss Gauci sang Violetta in *La Traviata* at Genoa's Teatro Margherita and inaugurated the season at Florence's Teatro Comunale as Dircé in the original version of Cherubini's *Medea*. She opened the Los Angeles Opera's 1987 season as Mimì in *La Bohème* opposite Plácido Domingo, and portrayed Ginevra in *La Cena delle Beffe* at the Wexford Festival. Recent engagements include Lisa in *La Sonnambula* to open the Chicago Lyric Opera's 1988-89 season; Violetta in *La Traviata* in Hamburg, Geneva and Oslo; Elisabetta in *Don Carlo* in Essen; Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* for the Opera del Teatro Municipal in Santiago, Chile; the title role of *Manon Lescaut* in Basel; and Mimì in Hamburg. Next year, she is scheduled to sing Elisabetta in Essen and Mimì at Santa Fe Opera.



ROBYNNE REDMON

Mezzo-soprano **Robynne Redmon** makes her San Francisco Opera debut as Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly*. A native of Chesapeake, Virginia, she received a bachelor's degree in music from the University of Houston and her master's degree at the Eastman School of Music. From 1983 to 1985 she was a member of the Lyric Opera of Chicago's Center for American Artists, appearing in numerous roles. She sang the role of Emilia in *Otello* to open the Lyric's 1985-86 season, and has since repeated this role in concert with the Minnesota Orchestra conducted by Leonard Slatkin. She made her Dallas Opera debut in 1986 singing the role of Sylvia in Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo*, as well as making a debut with Chicago Opera Theater as Zaide in *The Turk in Italy*. Her performances during the 1986-87 season included Cherubino in *The Marriage of Figaro* and Nicklausse in *The Tales of Hoffmann* at Wolf Trap. She returned to the Lyric Opera of Chicago for performances of *Parsifal*, and made her 1987 Opera Theatre of St. Louis debut in the American premiere of Oliver's *Beauty and the Beast*, singing the role of the Elder Sister. She then scored a success in her recital debut in Pasadena at the Ambassador Foundation's Gold Medal Series, and portrayed Sicle in Cavalli's *L'Ormindo* at Wolf Trap. Miss Redmon made her European debut in 1987 at the Wexford Festival, where she appeared as the Prince in *Cendrillon*, followed by performances of the same opera in a new production at the Netherlands Opera last year. The recipient of a 1988 Richard Tucker Foundation career study grant, Miss Redmon's recent engagements include concert performances of *Carmen* with Chicago's Grant Park Symphony under the baton of George Cleve, a debut with San Diego Opera as Suzuki, Isaura in *Tancredi* for the Chicago Lyric Opera, and Elizabeth Proctor in *The Crucible* with Pennsylvania Opera Theatre. Future assignments include Maddal-



EMILY MANHART

ena in *Rigoletto* in Chicago, and Dorabella in *Così fan tutte* for the Opera de Nice and Sarasota Opera.

Following her portrayal of Mrs. Alexander in Glass' *Satyagraha* this summer, mezzo-soprano **Emily Manhart** returns to San Francisco Opera to sing Pantalis in *Mefistofele* and Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly*. She made her Company debut in 1987 as the Page in *Salome*, and was seen here last fall as the Madrigal Singer in *Manon Lescaut* and a Flower Maiden in *Parsifal*. After earning her master of music degree from Ohio State University, she participated in San Francisco Opera Center's Merola Opera Program in 1984 and performed Tisbe and the title role in Western Opera Theater's 1984 tour of *La Cenerentola*. She returned to the Merola Program in 1986, appearing that summer as Dorabella in the Merola production of *Così fan tutte*. During the 1986-87 season she was a member of the Houston Opera Studio, appearing as Clotilde in *Norma* and Meg Page in *Falstaff*. She was a member of the Wolftrap Opera Company during the 1987-88 season, singing Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Hermia in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Melide in *L'Ormino*, and Lucretia in *The Rape of Lucretia*. In June of 1988 she made her debut at the Spoleto, USA festival as Tezeuco in Graun's *Montezuma*. Her engagements next year include Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly* for Miami Opera, and Flora in *La Traviata* for the Pittsburgh Opera. Miss Manhart was a national winner of the 1984 Metropolitan National Council Auditions. In the San Francisco Opera Center Auditions Grand Finals, she received the Jean Donnell Memorial Award in 1984 and the Cenacolo Award in 1986.



PATRICIA SPENCE

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 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*. Miss Spence has also appeared with the Portland Opera, Fresno Philharmonic, Sacramento Symphony and Sinfonia San Francisco.

After making his San Francisco Opera debut last fall as Enzo in *La Gioconda*, tenor **Vyacheslav Polozov** returns as Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly*, the role of his 1986 debut at Milan's La Scala and his Metropolitan Opera debut opposite Renata Scotto in 1987. Born in the Ukrainian city of Zhdanov, he studied voice at the Kiev Conservatory and made his operatic debut in 1977 as Alfredo in *La Traviata* at the Kiev Opera House, becoming the



VYACHESLAV POLOZOV

leading tenor of the Minsk Opera in 1980. In 1981 he was the only tenor to receive the Gold Medal at the All-Russia Glinka Competition. The following year saw his debut with the Bolshoi Opera in Moscow as Alfredo and as Turiddu in *Cavalleria Rusticana*. Other competitions he won include the Sofia Competition in 1984 for his portrayal of the Duke in *Rigoletto*, and the Fifth Worldwide Madama Butterfly Competition in Tokyo in 1986, immediately after which he announced his intention to live in the U.S. He made his American debut as Rodolfo in *La Bohème* at the Lyric Opera of Chicago in 1986, and participated in the Met's park concert performances of *La Bohème* in 1987. That same year, he portrayed Calaf in *Turandot* at the New York City Opera, repeating the same assignment in a Ponnelle/Patanè production in Munich. He returned to the Met stage last year as Macduff in *Macbeth*, and made his Carnegie Hall debut in the title role of *Andrea Chénier* with the Opera Orchestra of New York. Recent engagements include a concert tour of Japan, Alvaro in *La Forza del Destino* in Miami, Lensky in *Eugene Onegin* in Santiago, Chile, and Cavaradossi in *Tosca* for the Canadian Opera Company, a production which was televised by the CBC. Future assignments include *Madama Butterfly* in Lyons and Miami, *Luisa Miller* in Rome, *Aida* at the Baths of Caracalla in Rome, *La Gioconda* for Amsterdam's Vara Radio, *Eugene Onegin* in Chicago, and *Turandot* in Miami. Polozov has recorded the role of Dimitri in *Boris Godunov* under Mstislav Rostropovich (with whom he performed in *The Tsar's Bride* at the Rome Opera and at the Kennedy Center), and is heard on a complete recording of Rachmaninoff's *Aleko*.

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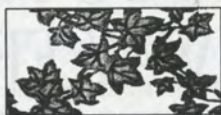


GIACOMO ARAGALL

Celebrated lyric tenor **Giacomo Aragall** returns for his tenth season with San Francisco Opera to sing the role of Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly*, a part he sang here in 1974. Born in Barcelona, he went to Italy in 1963 for vocal study and that same year won first prize in the International Vocal Competition at Busseto. He made his operatic debut in Verdi's *Gerusalemme* at Teatro La Fenice in Venice, also in 1963, scoring a success that resulted in immediate engagement at the Teatro Massimo in Palermo. Later that year his career assumed international significance with his debut at Milan's La Scala in *L'Amico Fritz* and *La Bohème*. Assignments in all of the important Italian houses quickly followed, with special recognition accorded his 1965 Verona Arena debut as the Duke in *Rigoletto*, a triumph he was to repeat with the world's great opera companies. Important debuts followed in quick succession: Vienna and Berlin in 1966; Montreal in 1967; and Covent Garden and the Metropolitan Opera in 1968. He made his 1973 San Francisco Opera debut as Verdi's Duke; subsequent Company assignments include the historic revival of Massenet's *Esclarmonde* in 1974, the title role of *Werther* in 1975, while 1976 brought him back for one of his most renowned interpretations, Cavaradossi in *Tosca*. He opened the 1977 S.F. Opera season as Maurizio in *Adriana Lecouvreur* and that same season sang the title role of *Faust*. Other Company credits include Rodolfo in *La Bohème* (1978), the title role of *Don Carlo* (1979), a reprise of *Tosca* (1982) and Gustavus/Riccardo in *Un Ballo in Maschera* (1985). An outstanding athlete as well as musician, Aragall would have been a member of the Spanish gymnastic team at the 1964 Olympics had he not received a scholarship to study in Italy. Recent engagements include *Tosca* in Vienna, Bonn, Geneva and Hamburg; *La Bohème* in Paris, Mannheim, Santiago, Vienna and Marseilles; *Don Carlos* in Rome and Lausanne; and *Un Ballo in*

continued on p.45

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Madama Butterfly

This revival of *Madama Butterfly* has been made possible by a generous gift from Mr. and Mrs. Alfred S. Wilsey.

The production was originally made possible by a grant from the San Francisco Opera Guild.

Opera in three acts by GIACOMO PUCCINI

Text by LUIGI ILLICA and GIUSEPPE GIACOSA

Based on the works of John Luther Long and David Belasco

Madama Butterfly

(in Italian)

Conductor
John Fiore

Stage Director
Matthew Farruggio

Designer
Toni Businger

Lighting Designer
Thomas J. Munn

Chorus Director
Ian Robertson

Musical Preparation
Susanna Lemberskaya
Christopher Larkin
Ernest Fredric Knell
Patrick Summers

Prompter
Susan Miller Hult

Movement Instructor
Michiya Hanayagi*

Assistant Stage Director
Claudia Zahn

Stage Manager
Jamie Call

Scenery constructed in
San Francisco Opera Scenic Studios

Costumes executed by
Goldstein Costumes, San Francisco,
and by Fred Mlejnek

First performance:
Milan, February 17, 1904

First San Francisco Opera performance:
September 26, 1924

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TUESDAY, OCTOBER 31 AT 8:00
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 3 AT 7:30
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 5 AT 2:00
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 10 AT 7:30
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 15 AT 8:00
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 18 AT 8:00†
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3 AT 1:00
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9 AT 1:00

†This performance made possible by
a generous grant from Shaklee Corporation.

CAST

(in order of appearance)

		December 3 and 9
<i>Lt. B.F. Pinkerton</i>	Vyacheslav Polozov	Giacomo Aragall
<i>Goro</i>	Douglas Perry	Hong-Shen Li
<i>Suzuki</i>	Robynne Redmon*	Emily Manhart
<i>Sharpless</i>	Gaétan Laperrière*	Brian Schexnayder*
<i>Cio-Cio-San, Madama Butterfly</i>	Nikki Li Hartliep	Miriam Gauci*
<i>The Imperial Commissioner</i>	Dale Travis	Dale Travis
<i>The Official Registrar</i>	Craig Estep	Craig Estep
<i>The Bonze</i>	Philip Skinner	Philip Skinner
<i>Prince Yamadori</i>	LeRoy Villanueva	LeRoy Villanueva
<i>Cio-Cio-San's child</i>	Maria Powers	Kirsten Konigsmark
<i>Kate Pinkerton</i>	Patricia Spence	Patricia Spence

Cio-Cio-San's relatives and friends

*San Francisco Opera debut

TIME AND PLACE: Early 20th century; Nagasaki, Japan

ACT I A house and garden overlooking the Bay of Nagasaki

INTERMISSION

ACT II Butterfly's house, three years later

INTERMISSION

ACT III Butterfly's house, the following morning

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

Supertitles by Jerry Sherk and
Francesca Zambello, 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 three hours.

Madama Butterfly/Synopsis

ACT I

The marriage broker Goro shows Lt. Pinkerton, USN, the house that Pinkerton has rented to occupy with his bride-to-be, the geisha Cio-Cio-San. They discuss the forthcoming ceremony. Soon they are joined by the US Consul at Nagasaki, Sharpless, who tries to make the jaunty lieutenant seriously consider the step he is about to take. Pinkerton asks Sharpless to join him in a series of toasts, among them one to the real American girl he will marry one day. Just then, the voice of Butterfly is heard as she and her friends ascend the hill. She is the happiest girl in Japan, she sings, coming to answer the summons of love. Butterfly prattles artlessly about herself. She tells Sharpless that she is fifteen, already an old woman. She shows Pinkerton some of her possessions, among them the dagger with which her father had committed hara-kiri at the Mikado's orders. Butterfly tells Pinkerton that she has gone to the mission and received instruction in his religion. The Imperial Commissioner and Official Registrar arrive, and the civil wedding ceremony is soon performed. Sharpless leaves with a word of caution that he believes Butterfly is seriously in love, but Pinkerton has already turned to his new relatives, urging them to celebrate his happiness. Then the angry voice of Butterfly's uncle, the Bonze, is heard. He has heard that Butterfly has renounced her religion, and he calls all her relatives to curse and renounce her. Angrily, Pinkerton orders them away and then tries to comfort the weeping Butterfly. Smiling through her tears, she tells him that although everyone else has rejected her, she is happy with Pinkerton, and she puts on her white wedding robe. Impatient, Pinkerton tells her that night is falling and his ardor carries her away as he leads her into the house.

ACT II

Pinkerton has sailed away and three years have passed. Butterfly and her maid Suzuki are still living in the house on the hill. Butterfly's faith is unwavering that Pinkerton will return to her, as he promised, but Suzuki finds it difficult to share Butterfly's certainty. Goro brings Sharpless to Butterfly to read her a letter he

has received from Pinkerton, but she insists on receiving him as an honored guest, and her hospitality interferes with his efforts to attract her attention. They are joined by Goro's client, Prince Yamadori, who hopes to marry Butterfly. She brushes aside his offer, insisting that she is already married. Yamadori leaves, and Sharpless at last produces his letter, but Butterfly is so carried away by the thought Pinkerton has written that she fails to grasp the meaning of the letter. Then Sharpless bluntly asks her what she would do if Pinkerton never came back. Become a geisha again, she answers, or better, die. Sharpless suggests she reconsider Yamadori's proposal, at which Butterfly goes out and returns with Pinkerton's child. Moved, Sharpless promises to inform Pinkerton of his son, and leaves. Suzuki is heard shouting at Goro, who has been saying that nobody knows who the child's real father is. Butterfly threatens him with a dagger and then drives him away. A cannon-shot is heard and Butterfly takes up the spyglass and recognizes Pinkerton's ship. Sure that her faith will be rewarded, she and Suzuki proceed to decorate the house with flowers. Then Butterfly puts on her wedding robe and she and Suzuki and the child watch for Pinkerton's return.

ACT III

Morning comes and still Pinkerton has not returned. When Butterfly carries the sleeping child off, Suzuki sees Sharpless and Pinkerton and a strange American lady in the garden. Sharpless tells Suzuki that this is Pinkerton's wife. Realizing too late Butterfly's real love for him, Pinkerton bids farewell to the Japanese house. He hurries off leaving Sharpless and Kate to confront Butterfly. When she enters, she soon realizes the truth: that this is Pinkerton's new wife and that they want to take the child. Butterfly sends them away, telling them she will give the child to Pinkerton in half an hour. She takes her father's dagger and is about to stab herself when Suzuki pushes the child into the room. Butterfly bids him farewell, sends him out to play and then commits suicide behind a screen. Pinkerton's voice is heard calling in the distance as Butterfly dies.

Madama Butterfly

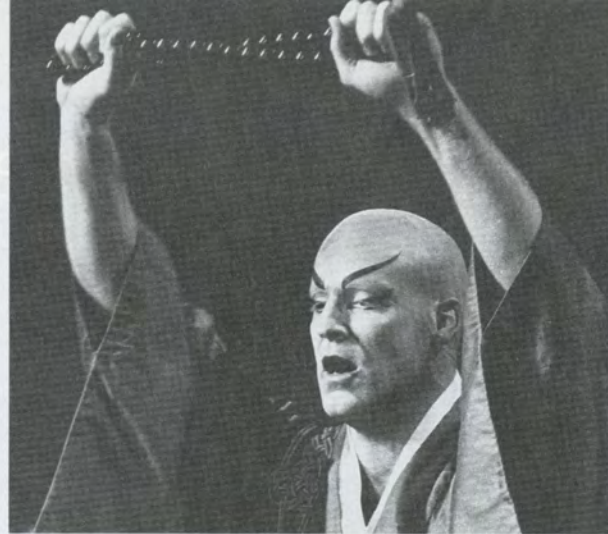
Photos taken in rehearsal by Larry Merkle



*Nikki Li Hartliep,
Women of the S.F. Opera Chorus*



Nikki Li Hartliep



Philip Skinner



Patricia Spence

(below) Maria Powers, Gaétan Laperrière



Nikki Li Hartliep, Vyacheslav Polozov





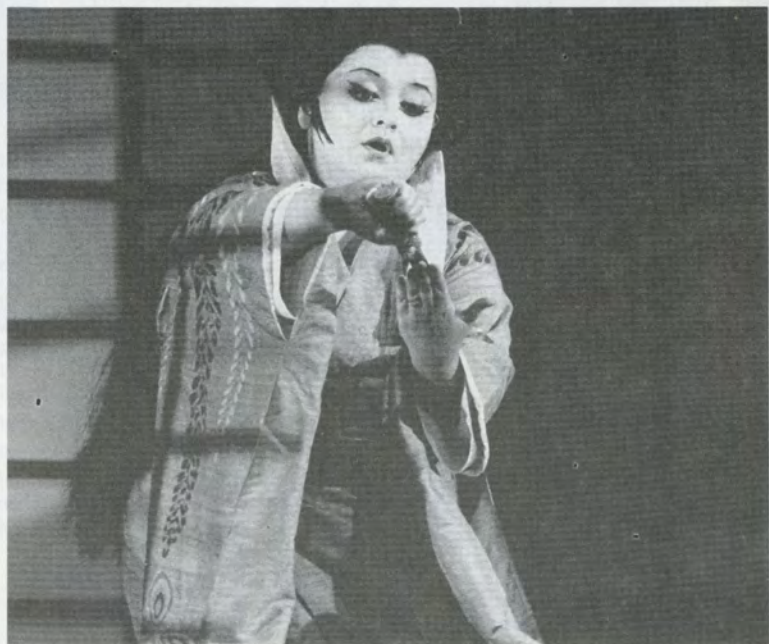
Nikki Li Hartliep, Robynne Redmon (below) Nikki Li Hartliep, Maria Powers



Nikki Li Hartliep, Vyacheslav Polozov



LeRoy Villanueva



Nikki Li Hartliep



Robynne Redmon, Nikki Li Hartliep

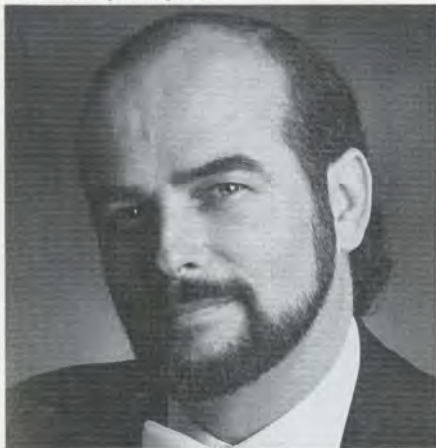


Douglas Perry, Nikki Li Hartliep



Nikki Li Hartliep, Gaétan Laperrière

continued from p.37



GAËTAN LAPERRIÈRE

Maschera at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden. Among his recordings are complete versions of *La Traviata*, *Lucrezia Borgia* and *Esclarmonde*, and an album of zarzuela arias.

Baritone **Gaétan Laperrière** makes his San Francisco Opera debut as Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly*, a role he has sung with great success in Seattle and Washington, D.C. The native of Laval, Québec, a winner of the 1984 Canadian Opera Company's Young Mozart Singers Competition, has appeared with that company in recent seasons as Valentin in *Faust*, Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte*, Macheath in *The Beggar's Opera*, the elder Germont in *La Traviata*, and Eisenstein in *Die Fledermaus*. He began his 1986-87 season with an appearance at L'Opéra de Montréal as Mercutio in *Roméo et Juliette*, and sang Enrico in *Lucia di Lammermoor* at the COC. Additional appearances that season included his Miami Opera debut in the title role of Thomas's *Hamlet*, Lescaut in *Manon* for the Boston Concert Opera, Guglielmo at the Edmonton Opera, the title role of *Le Nozze di Figaro* for Vancouver Opera, and Zurga in *Les Pêcheurs de Perles* for the Washington Concert Opera's inaugural season. Laperrière's 1987-88 season began with his European debut as Masetto in a new production of *Don Giovanni* at the Théâtre de l'Opéra in Nice, where he also portrayed Escamillo in *Carmen*. Additional engagements that season included Marcello in St. Louis, Mercutio in Winnipeg, the Forester in *The Cunning Little Vixen* in Vancouver, and his first portrayal of the Count in *The Marriage of Figaro* for the National Arts Centre in Ottawa, Canada. Recent engagements include a return to the Canadian Opera Company as Marcello and as Posa in *Don Carlo*, Belcore in *L'Elisir d'Amore* with the Edmonton Opera, Marcello at L'Opéra de Montréal, and the Count in *The Marriage of Figaro* for Miami Opera.



BRIAN SCHNEXNAYDER

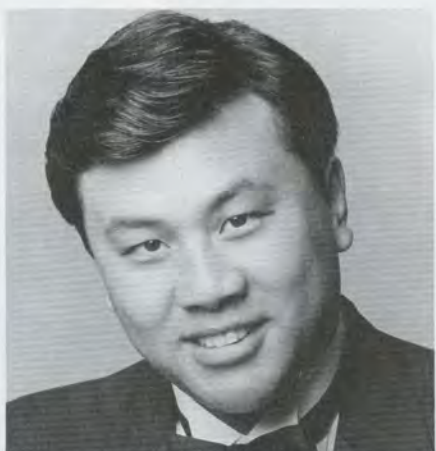
Baritone **Brian Schnexnayder** makes his San Francisco Opera debut singing the role of Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly*. He made his Metropolitan Opera debut in 1980 as Silvio in *Pagliacci*, and has been heard in many roles at the Met in subsequent seasons, including Enrico in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Marcello in *La Bohème*, Lescaut in *Manon Lescaut*, Mercutio in *Roméo et Juliette*, the Theater Director in *Les Mamelles de Tirésias*, Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte* and Ping in *Turandot*. In the 1987/88 season he sang his first performances of the elder Germont in *La Traviata* at the Met, and recently returned there for *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Pagliacci*, and for his first assumption of the role of Posa in *Don Carlo*. He made his Italian debut in Menotti's *La Loca* at the Spoleto Festival, and first appeared at the Paris Opera in the 1982-83 season as Marcello, returning to Paris in 1983 as Ford in *Falstaff* and in 1988 as Valentin in *Faust*. Schnexnayder made his Nice Opera debut in 1987 as Herod in a new production of Massenet's *Hérodiade*, and in 1988 sang Silvio in *Pagliacci* and Malatesta in *Don Pasquale* at the Hamburg State Opera. In North America, he has been heard at the New Orleans Opera, Edmonton Opera, and at the Cincinnati Opera where he sang Valentin and his first Figaro in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*. Future engagements include a return to the Metropolitan Opera as Valentin in a new production of *Faust*, Giorgio Germont in *La Traviata*, Lescaut in *Manon Lescaut* and Marcello in *La Bohème*. Next year he will also sing his first performances of the title role of *Don Giovanni* for Cincinnati Opera, and will open the Met's 1990-91 season as Marcello opposite Mirella Freni and Plácido Domingo. Born in Port Arthur, Texas, but raised in Louisiana, he earned his undergraduate degree from the University of Southwest Louisiana, and was a member of the Juilliard School of Music's American Opera Center.



DOUGLAS PERRY

Tenor **Douglas Perry**, who portrays Goro in *Madama Butterfly*, made his San Francisco Opera debut last summer in a critically acclaimed performance as Mahatma Gandhi in *Satyagraha*. A versatile singing actor with over 65 roles in his operatic repertoire, he is a frequent guest artist with the New York City Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Greater Miami Opera, Opera Company of Philadelphia and Tulsa Opera, in addition to the companies of Boston, Baltimore, Louisville, Santa Fe, St. Louis and Minnesota. In Houston, he appeared in the world premiere of Leonard Bernstein's *A Quiet Place*, also performing in revivals at La Scala and the Vienna State Opera. He was heard with the Minnesota Opera in the recent world premiere of Dominick Argento's *Casanova's Homecoming*, and was also seen in the American premieres of Menotti's *Help! Help! The Globalinks!*, Cavalli's *L'Egisto* and, this past summer, Judith Weir's *A Night at the Chinese Opera*. He has also sung with the New York Philharmonic, the Boston Symphony, the Waverly Consort and the New York Choral Society, in works ranging from those of Bach and Handel to contemporary pieces and world premieres. Perry created the role of Mahatma Gandhi for *Satyagraha*'s 1980 world premiere at the Netherlands Opera, and repeated the part for the American premiere at Artpark, at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, in Chicago and Seattle, and on the complete recording of the work. He has also recorded Bernstein's *A Quiet Place*, Glass' *Songs from Liquid Days*, and Virgil Thomson's *The Mother of Us All*.

Currently an Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, tenor **Hong-Shen Li** makes his Company debut singing four roles: a Trojan Man in *Idomeneo*, a Messenger in *Aida*, Goro in *Madama Butterfly*, and a Noble of Brabant in *Lohengrin*. A native of Beijing, China, he



HONG-SHEN LI

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 *Madame Butterfly* and, with the Opera Center Singers, sang Count Almaviva in the 1989 *Barber of Seville*.



PHILIP SKINNER

Opera Program in 1988, performing Taddeo in *The Italian Girl in Algiers*, and he won the Schwabacher Memorial First Prize Award at the Program's Grand Finals. He sang Sharpless 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 Antonio Sacchini's *Amor Soldato*, and in the world premiere of Delia 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. He is also an accomplished recitalist and has extensive experience in movie soundtrack recording. A native of Southern California, Villanueva is a national winner of the Metropolitan Opera Auditions, a first place winner of 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.

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 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*



DALE TRAVIS

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. He has sung with Kentucky Opera, Edmonton Opera, the Minnesota Orchestra, the Columbus Symphony, San Jose Symphony, Sacramento Symphony, Savannah Symphony and at the Spoleto and San Antonio festivals. In 1988 he sang Don Basilio in *The Barber of Seville* with the New York City Opera National Company, Ferrando in *Il Trovatore* with Kentucky and Nashville operas, and appeared with the Atlanta Opera. 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. Future engagements include his Honolulu Symphony debut in Handel's *Messiah*, and the four villains in *The Tales of Hoffmann* with the Baton Rouge Opera.

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



LeROY VILLANUEVA

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*, and a Watchman in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. He recently made his Company debut as Prince Arjuna in *Glass' Satyagraha*, and sang Polidarte in the Opera Center's Showcase production of Handel's *Giustino*. He was a member of the Merola



CRAIG ESTEP

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, performing in *Don Pasquale* and *La Bohème*, a production which also traveled to China. 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. His college credits include roles in *The Secret Marriage*, *Don Giovanni*, *Falstaff*, *Gianni Schicchi* and *The Love for Three Oranges*. 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, Mozart's *Coronation Mass* with the Santa Rosa Symphony, and in Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* with the Sacramento Symphony.

A 1989 Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, tenor **Craig Estep** makes his Company debut as Dr. Caius in the Family Performance of *Falstaff* and will also sing the Official Registrar in *Madama Butterfly* and a Noble of Brabant in *Lohengrin*. A 1988 and 1987 Merola Opera Program participant, Estep sang in *Madama Butterfly* on Western Opera Theater's national tour and in Japan with the Center's Pacific Rim Exchange Program. He has also toured in Western Opera Theater's production of *Don Pasquale*. The tenor traveled to Shanghai in 1988 to sing Spoletta in the first production of *Tosca* ever seen in China. He recently appeared in the Opera Center's Showcase production of Handel's *Giustino* and was a soloist in the San Francisco Symphony Pops Series this past summer.

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JOHN FIORE

The North Carolina native has a master's degree in vocal performance and has sung with the North Carolina Opera, Connecticut Grand Opera and the Charleston Opera.

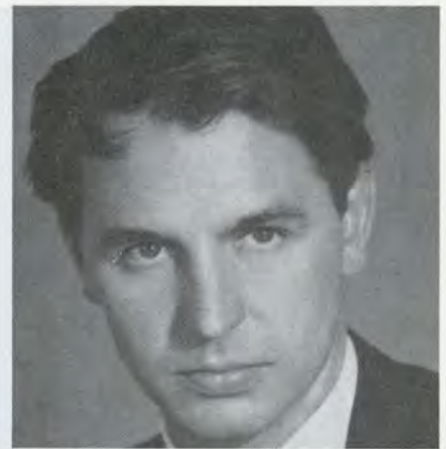
After leading performances of *La Bohème* last fall, **John Fiore** returns to the Company to conduct *Madama Butterfly*. He was a member of the San Francisco Opera music staff from 1983 to 1987, and made his War Memorial conducting debut in the Fall of 1986 with the student matinee performances of *Faust*, returning in 1987 to lead the family performances of *La Traviata*. Born in New York, the musician was raised in Seattle, where at the age of 14 he had the opportunity of becoming a coach and rehearsal pianist for Seattle Opera's annual *Ring* cycle, an engagement that continued for six years. While studying at the Eastman School of Music, he joined the music staff of the Santa Fe Opera, where he specialized in the music of Richard Strauss between 1981 and 1984. After hearing Fiore in Santa Fe, Edo de Waart brought him to San Francisco to assist him on the *Ring* (1983-85). He was an assistant conductor at the Lyric Opera of Chicago (Fall 1983) and the Metropolitan Opera (Spring 1984), where he continues to work. He has worked with a variety of conductors such as Leonard Bernstein, James Levine, Zubin Mehta, Andrew Davis, James Conlon and Marek Janowski, and from 1986 to 1988 was assistant to Daniel Barenboim at the Bayreuth Festival. Engagements from recent seasons have included the student matinee performances of *Così fan tutte* and the evening performances of *La Traviata* at the Lyric Opera of Chicago; his Chicago Symphony Orchestra debut in a Young Conductors concert with Maestro Bernstein; his conducting debut at Santa Fe Opera with *La Traviata*; *Die Fledermaus* with Sarasota Opera; a concert with the Maggio Musicale of Florence featuring



MATTHEW FARRUGGIO

the music of Richard Strauss; and *Un Ballo in Maschera* for the Canadian Opera Company. Future conducting assignments include his Cologne Opera debut with *Manon Lescaut*, a return to the Chicago Lyric Opera for *Die Fledermaus*, Handel's *Messiah* with the Seattle Symphony, and concerts with the Minnesota Orchestra and the Denver Symphony.

In his 34th year with San Francisco Opera, production supervisor **Matthew Farruggio** directs *Madama Butterfly*, a work he has staged previously for the Fall Seasons of 1968, '71, '80 and '84, for 1965 Spring Opera Theater, and for the Merola Opera Program in 1963, '73 and '78. Other directing projects here include *Tosca* (1965, '82, '85 and '87), *The Barber of Seville* (1965), *Rigoletto* (1966), *La Bohème* (1967 and '69), *Il Trovatore* (1975), *La Forza del Destino* (1976), *Faust* and *Aida* (1977), and *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Family performances 1981, and Summer 1986). He directed a number of Spring Opera productions in the War Memorial: *La Bohème* (1961 and '64); *Rigoletto* (1963 and '65); *Lucia di Lammermoor* and *Il Trovatore* (1966); *The Pearl Fishers* (1967); *The Abduction from the Seraglio* (1968), and *La Rondine* (1969). As a director of the Merola Opera Program, he coaches young professional singers in stage deportment and other aspects of opera performance, and has staged Merola productions of *Faust*, *The Tales of Hoffmann*, *Falstaff* and *Rigoletto*, in addition to directing the last-named work for Western Opera Theater. Farruggio's own performing career has included appearances on Broadway in *Lady in the Dark*, *One Touch of Venus* and *Call Me Mister*, and he has sung on the stages of the Metropolitan Opera, City Center Opera and the Lyric Opera of Chicago. A pioneer in early television opera projects, he studied production in Vienna and Salzburg. He has staged *Aida*, *Cavalleria Rusticana*, *Pagliacci* and *Girl of the Golden West* for the



TONI BUSINGER

Utah Opera, and has also directed productions in Vancouver, Houston and Honolulu.

Designer **Toni Businger** made his San Francisco Opera debut in 1966 with the production of *Madama Butterfly* seen this season and previously revived in 1968, '69, '71, '74, '80 and '84. He also created the original design for *Don Giovanni* as seen here in 1974, '78, '81 summer and '84. Other projects for the Company have included *La Traviata*, first mounted in 1969 and revived in 1973, '80 and '83; and *The Magic Flute* (1969 and '75). A designer for theater and television as well as opera, Businger made his theatrical debut at the Zurich Schauspielhaus in 1957. From 1973 to 1975, he was chief scenic designer of the Hamburg Staatsoper, and his designs have been seen in Austria, Finland, France, Holland, South Africa, Switzerland, West Germany and Yugoslavia, besides the United States. His operatic credits include *Carmen* for the Netherlands Opera, *Viva la Mamma* for the Vienna Festival and *Manon* for the Montreal Opera.



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*. As a consultant on numerous lighting projects, his most notable achievement in this area is the new Muziektheater in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, for which he was the American lighting consultant.

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West Goes East

By JOHN SCHAUER

A former geisha in turn-of-the-century Japan marries an American naval officer and, after he abandons her, kills herself. It's an accurate synopsis of the plot of *Madama Butterfly*, but conveys none of the emotional impact of Puccini's phenomenally popular opera.

The same could be said of a bare-bones description of the recent visit of members of the San Francisco Opera Center to Japan: Four singers (Patricia Racette, Reveka Mavrovitis, Craig Estep and LeRoy Villanueva) and a pianist (Kate Lewis) traveled with Center Director Christine Bullin and a video producer in March and April of this year to explore the Brescia edition of *Madama Butterfly* with Ubaldo Gardini of the University of Tokyo faculty. What they came back with, however, included a lot more than musicological insights into the variant versions of a well-known opera.

Part of that has to do with the country they were visiting; part of it has to do with the work they were studying; and much of it has to do with the fact that a so-called "cultural exchange" can sometimes teach you as much about appreciating your cultural differences as it can about your shared qualities.

Plans for the visit were first conceived when the Opera Center, at the suggestion of Company Music Director Sir John Pritchard, invited conductor/coach Ubaldo Gardini to conduct master classes in San Francisco. It was then that Bullin learned that Gardini is "the world's leading partisan of the Brescia edition of

Madama Butterfly," that is, of the version Puccini prepared shortly after the disastrous world premiere of the work in Milan in 1904. Since Western Opera Theater was planning to tour a production of *Madame Butterfly* (as they call it in English), Bullin came up with the idea of sending Opera Center singers to Tokyo to study the Brescia edition.

"The plan," according to Bullin, "had been that our boys would do the American boys, and Japanese girls would do the Japanese girls, and Patricia and Reveka would alternate Kate Pinkerton [the only American female role in the opera] and observe and learn from the Japanese." But real-life experiences are not as easily circumscribed as events in an opera libretto, and the reality ended up being quite different: "What happened was that the little troupe we went around with consisted of a Japanese mezzo doing Suzuki and a Japanese tenor doing Goro, with our boys as the Americans and Patricia as Butterfly."

Why the Japanese sopranos who were to sing the title role withdrew from the project is not clear; but Patricia Racette had just finished singing the role of Cio-Cio-San some 30-plus times on Western Opera Theater's national tour, and was a natural choice to take up the gauntlet, or perhaps we should say kimono, and sing the title role another seven times in semi-staged concert performances of scenes from the work. Being so thoroughly steeped in the now-standard, 1906 Paris version of the opera, Racette was not predisposed toward

embracing a different edition. "Maestro Gardini had an overabundance of opinions, shall we say, and he was very convinced that the Paris edition is a 'prostitution of the art form,'" Racette recalls, imitating Gardini's Italian accent. But her subsequent experiences taught her much about Cio-Cio-San, about Japanese women in general, and, surprisingly enough, about herself.

"For me, they're two different operas," she now says about the Paris and Brescia versions. "I don't look at the two of them the same way, because most of the changes are textual; you're talking about what the character has to say, what the audience gets from the character. The whole tone of her [Cio-Cio-San's] behavior in the third act is different. She's more true to her feelings in the Brescia edition. She looks at Kate when Kate's about to touch her, and she says, 'Don't touch me!' In the Paris version, she just looks at her and smiles and says, 'I hope you'll always be happy.' That's a big difference.

"Pinkerton looks more like a jerk in the Brescia. He calls the servants cows, and won't even get to know their names. And Cio-Cio-San's last aria is completely different; it's much calmer. Some things are taken down an octave.

"There were cuts that make little sense in the Paris edition. I mean, you can make sense of them, but now that I've seen the Brescia, I can't help but feel we've all ended up with an abridged version." >

John Schauer is staff writer for San Francisco Opera.

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In the pouring rain, Patricia Racette sings "Un bel di" over the grave of Japan's first great prima donna, Tamaki Miura, on the slope of Mt. Fuji. Famous for her portrayal of Madama Butterfly, Miura sang the role hundreds of times during her career. It is believed that Puccini himself heard her and expressed his admiration for her interpretation.

"The end of the Brescia edition," according to Bullin, "gives much more [emphasis] to Butterfly. It was Ubaldo's preference that the Americans don't come running out onto the stage and stand over the body as if to say, 'Well, look at this crumpled up little thing; look what we did,' so that it becomes a story about them. The way we ended it, with additional Brescia music, was so that the audience gets to see her alone, dead, having by her own principles triumphed.

"One of the themes that went through the trip for me," Bullin continues, "had to do with Japanese women. Our audiences lots of times consisted primarily of women—I don't know why, except that the men are so busy working hard that they weren't available to attend—and every one of those audiences that I watched had at least one Japanese woman, usually more than one, who was weeping copious tears and having a cathartic experience.

"I got to thinking about this Butterfly story and about these women, who have a rather lonely life, I think, because of the kind of society Japan is and because the men, who are called the 7 to 11 crowd, work intensely hard all day and then they go out and bond with other men at night,

so their women do live a kind of life on their own. And I started to wonder whether the story of Butterfly, which is essentially the story of a woman getting on alone with her friend, a woman who makes her own decisions, is somehow appealing to them. Maybe it's just [the appeal of] Puccini, and I'm reading too much into it, but I was interested to see how deeply moved many of them were. Perhaps they are more permitted to show emotion than the men are. One woman in particular, after the first performance, went up to Patricia and in the only language we tended to have in common—a few words of Italian—said, 'Mia figlia!' and adopted her for the rest of the trip."

It was another Japanese woman, Gardini's assistant and companion Reiko Sakuma, who organized the myriad daily details of the visit to Japan, including workshops at Keio University, side trips to shrines, temples, and the small village of Koromagawa (where the entire populace of 120 turned out), and a visit to the grave of Japanese prima donna Tamaki Miura near Mt. Fuji, a visit covered by five newspapers and local television stations.

Bullin calls Sakuma "one of the most wonderful and brilliant women I've ever been around," and offers a delightful

anecdote about her and Japan's fabled bullet train. "You can set your watch by it," Bullin marvels, explaining how they could "catch a train that left at 8:32 precisely to get off at 8:47, when the doors open for exactly one minute, and get on the next train that left at 8:48." In the haste of one such transfer, however, one member of the company, perhaps lost in reverie, failed to leave the train during that one minute, throwing the rest of the troupe into a mild panic. "I had already said, 'Let her go; it will only happen once,' and in Japan you just trust that people will help you get where you're going," Bullin explains of her own resigned calmness as the train was scheduled to take off again. "And then I looked over to the bullet train and I saw Reiko hanging from the window of the conductor, and the train was not moving—I mean, this was an earth-shaking event." Reiko later explained, "Well, there's a rule that the conductor of the bullet train can't move it if someone is hanging off the side, so I hung myself off the side, and the train didn't move." Ms. Sakuma is obviously an extraordinary person by any culture's standards.

"When we would do these performances," Bullin relates, "wherever they were, Reiko had arranged that the local



One of the Opera Center's last stops was a concert at Yokosuka Naval Base. Shown are tenor Craig Estep (left) and baritone LeRoy Villanueva performing one of numerous operatic excerpts presented on the program.

people would provide a kimono for Patricia, and a group of ladies would come to wrap her into it—there are 10 layers under there, which are very tight, so I would walk into the room and Patricia would be fighting a battle with them not to pull it so tight she couldn't sing. They would also be highly amused by the fact that her body is, how shall we say, not in the least bit Japanese [Miss Racette has a voluptuous, very American physique], but she was incredible through it all. And as I watched her do the performances over and over again, I could see the difference in her movement; you could see there was an attitude in her that had changed over the course of these performances. I think the Brescia edition might have aided that understanding she developed, about Japanese women being so sweet and so gentle and very strong, because they *have* to be."

"Music involves so much in a physical and an emotional sense," explains Racette, "that you end up really opening yourself up and absorbing a lot of what goes on around you, and it changes you. I just observed the way these people carried themselves. I never saw anybody Japanese—I'm speaking about the women—just blurt out and start laughing. It's always a tilt to the side, eyes down, always cover the mouth. To me at first it seemed apologetic—'Excuse me for laughing, for

being so bold as to show that much emotion.' In America you get down to the nitty gritty; if someone's upset or happy, you know it. The Japanese are gentler. Not all of them are the same; not all of them are shy. But they are always kind. And that is the one thing I learned about Cio-Cio-San: that kindness and gentleness is not weakness; it's power. Americans sort of connect vulnerability and weakness, but that is her strength; that is the power of who she is, and that was a big lesson. As soon as you look at that, the role suddenly changes shape and makes more sense."

Since *Madama Butterfly* is unique in dealing explicitly with the distinctions of American versus Japanese culture, the young singers were forced to examine their own culture as well as that of their host country. The situation was somewhat humorously complicated in that the man who was delineating the characteristics of Americans and Japanese was himself Italian. "Gardini was showing one of the Japanese women how to be Kate Pinkerton," Racette recalls, "and how to walk like an American, and he proceeded to say [again mimicking his accent], 'No, you walk deefereent because you have two beeg teets, see?' Christine and me," Racette breaks up, "we lost it. I looked at her and said, 'Do I walk differently

because I have larger breasts?' Gardini also proceeded to tell LeRoy and Craig how to be American, and finally we said, 'Excuse us; you are Italian, we are American. This is not your turf!'"

"We discovered that there are a lot of things that Americans have in common with each other that they're rather fierce about," Bullin explains, "and that was interesting to find out, because people don't think there is such a thing as an American culture or way of being. We found out that this group of four singers from very diverse backgrounds, had ways of being that they had in common and liked themselves for.

"Watching young Americans do Pinkerton, I've always noticed that they really work themselves into quite a state, because they don't want him to be bad. They really want to find every reason they can why he behaved the way he did that doesn't mean Americans are bad . . . There's a certain amount of tension about wanting these people, i.e., us, to be valued for our good qualities, which may not necessarily read the same way in Japan—you know, that we're open and we're physical and we laugh out loud and don't cover our mouths when we do, and we're overfamiliar by their standards. In trying to accommodate the aesthetic of Japanese behavior in Japanese society, you certainly



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After having sung the role of Cio-Cio-San some 30 times on a national Western Opera Theater tour, Patricia Racette found herself unexpectedly cast in the part for another seven performances when the San Francisco Opera Center visited Japan earlier this year. She is seen here at Keio University in Tokyo, wearing one of the numerous kimonos that were provided for her at each concert location.

run into a point where you realize that you are what you are, and you like being that way. We really do feel sensitive about the American behavior as represented in this opera. It's hard to divorce yourself, because there are so few American characters in opera. You can play an Italian or a Greek or a Peruvian or a pearl fisher who's a louse, but playing somebody from your own nationality who's supposed to be a rat is hard."

Considering the fact that *Madama Butterfly* is a work created by Westerners, do the Japanese have similar difficulties accepting the portrayal of Cio-Cio-San? Bullin responds, "One finds that the Japanese people, at least those we encountered, are very interested in Madame Butterfly; she's a Japanese icon. She may have been invented by Italians who never went to Japan, but she goes around the world representing Japan—this is the most common way in which Japan is represented in Western art—and to that extent, it's important to them that she do it well, and that the opera not represent Japan in a crude and vulgar and clichéd way. It certainly seems to have been

written in a way that whatever it takes to make her Japanese, can be done in the context of this opera—except that a Japanese woman wouldn't sing at the top of her lungs while about to kill herself. The story has the power to move people everywhere, and it certainly has the power to move people in Japan, where no doubt they know the story better than anyone from first-hand experience."

The Japanese experience itself is changing profoundly, however, as the Opera Center members themselves noticed. "Traditional culture seems to be disappearing under your eyes," Bullin observes. "Old houses are being torn down and new buildings are going up, and one is faced with most people wearing Western clothes. There are still women in kimonos and so forth, but we were given a lot of pause to think about how it must feel to be Japanese, with such a specialized, traditional culture, which is so different from current Western culture, and to be in the generation which really is pulling away. Early on I had been wondering why this whole Butterfly exercise was so important to Reiko, apart from her associa-

tion with Gardini, and the only conclusion I could come to was that since traditional culture is receding from daily life, it is important in this context to have it be done well and correctly and properly, because these were people to whom it mattered that traditional culture was disappearing.

"You could sense that there is a degree of confusion and pain about what's happening to Japan these days, because they will all talk to you about the new image of the Japanese of being money-mad; they don't like that, and they feel that to be a problem in their society, that the country as a whole is perceived to be in pursuit of material things and money—sort of in a way following in the footsteps of the image Americans used to have. Reiko said to me once she was uncomfortable with the idea of the Japanese owning all this property all over the world; she didn't think that was right."

That sense of loss was made apparent to Bullin the night the group drove back in their minivan from the tiny village of Koromagawa. "That day, we went backwards in time. One of the Japanese singers

who were with us was in tears the whole way back, because she had been far from her village her whole life, and it reminded her of her grandparents and of things that used to happen when she lived in her small village.

"It's sort of like people from Mars visiting people from Venus or something, in that the planets come close to each other, and you look at each other and you see that you're drastically different. That feeling was at its most profound then, a feeling that we came and we stood close and looked at each other, and then we went back to where we came from. You have to realize as you go along that true cultural exchange is hard if not impossible to achieve. We flash that idea around, that now we're going to have a cultural exchange; tell me who you are and I'll tell you—a Mimì and Rodolfo kind of thing—and we'll understand and we'll love each other. That's a very difficult thing to achieve, and it happens where you least expect it. It happens in spurts, in moments, and I think humans generally have a resistance to actually exchanging. That's a very valuable part of these things, I think—to realize that even though it's a global village, it's not so easy to meet and value each other and communicate. Music as a medium can get you further than most other media, but in the end, you are what you are."

Except that what you are must inevitably be changed by the experience. "I feel Japan's changed me," Racette admits. "It's given me a new view of what Americans are like. We really are a distinctive race; we really have our little trademark. I didn't believe that before, but it's true.

"It's a shame that their traditional Japanese ways are disappearing; I'm so happy that I've been able to see it, that I didn't have an American tour of Japan in a bunch of Holiday Inns. I think anyone gains a lot when you travel anywhere a great distance. You learn about other people, and most importantly, you learn about yourself. You know, different facets of my personality were coming out in Japan that hadn't come out here. Everyone has their little protections, and I, being bold and assertive and somewhat aggressive, felt more comfortable being gentle and soft there; I felt more comfortable being quiet." When asked about Bullin's planet metaphor, Racette adds a telling detail. "We sort of looked at them, and they looked at us" she agrees, "but we looked at each other with a smile." ■

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Company Profiles: Gordon Taylor

This on-going series of interviews introduces our readers to a cross-section of San Francisco Opera Company members who seldom get to take a curtain call, but whose activities are very important in the process of making opera happen.

When Gordon Taylor came to work for San Francisco Opera as data processing manager in 1974, the Company owned two computers, one to assist the box office subscriptions department with list management, and the other for accounting purposes. Neither was as powerful as any of the personal computers (PCs) that are now proliferating throughout the Opera House, as they are everywhere in the American workplace. Nevertheless, Taylor says with evident pride, "San Francisco Opera was among the first companies in the country to computerize. Margaret Norton, who was the head of the box office at the time, was the driving force behind it."

Today, computers are an integral part of Opera House business not only in those original areas, but also, Taylor says, "in virtually every department in one way or another." Some of the most advanced and ambitious computer applications take place in areas like the lighting and technical departments, which are largely self-sufficient, but Taylor's duties have



Gordon Taylor in his office.

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expanded to support of the box office, the development department, and the Opera Shop. From his perspective, more is clearly better.

And, as the numbers of computers and their applications have grown, so have Taylor's responsibilities. In addition to his function as data processing manager, he is now also the Company's chief programmer, its main PC administrator, and its all-around computer troubleshooter.

"Because of the peculiarities of the opera business, all of our applications are written in-house," Taylor explains with characteristic patience. "There simply are no available software packages for arts organizations. Our payroll system here is a prime example. No one standard, off-the-shelf system could meet our particular needs, since our operation depends on multiple unions and multiple pay scales. And our 'products' change every year because the operas do. We have to have a flexible system, and one that poses minimal hassles for the users—who have more important things to do than become computer experts.

"My feeling is that, ideally, computers should be invisible to their users. Some programmers want users to know how things work, to know the details of what are really difficult programming languages. But I don't think that it's important for users to know how a computer does it, as long as they know what it does. Over the years I've learned that as long as I can bring users along in a humanizing kind of way—not making computers hard to understand—we can all get more work done."

Accordingly, Taylor works with Opera employees on a person-to-person basis. "When I find out what it is that people want, then I can get on to making the translation to an appropriate computer program. Making that translation is my problem, not theirs."

Taylor still does the bulk of his work on what is known as a main frame computer, a large computational device with outputs to individual user terminals. The main frame is in operation 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, the only problem with which, Taylor reports, comes on hot days, when, to keep it cool enough to operate, people from the technical department used to have to bring in buckets of ice. Both he and Jackie Carter, a systems analyst who assists him part-time ("I



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couldn't do this job any longer without her," he says), also can operate the main computer from terminals they maintain in their homes.

Taylor does the bulk of his programming at his terminal in a cramped, airless office off the Opera House's north lobby. "To concentrate on programming," he says, "you have to be able to block everything else out. The way I know I do that is that every now and then I discover a plate of cookies that the ladies from the Opera Guild, whose offices are next door, ply me with. I'm as unaware of how and when they appear as I am of how and when they disappear—which is as I eat them, of course."

Taylor is pleased with the Company's transition to a variety of PC operations. "There are so many applications that the PC is just right for. My system, for example, doesn't handle word processing or spread sheets nearly as well as a PC does." Eliza McNutt, who works about half the year for the Company in the season ticket office, has learned programming so that she, too, can assist Taylor for the remainder of the year. "She's become a real word processing expert," Taylor says, "and she's good at configuring printers, which is a big help to me."

"Programmers tend to want to hang onto well-written programs, but there's no point in doing that once a program, however well written, is out of date." As he sees it, his job is to rethink, and rewrite, programs as the needs of the Company change. "At the moment," he says, "we're reviewing and changing the ways that we do our management reports. The point is to give our new General Director, Lotfi Mansouri, the right kind of management information—to give him the information he really needs, and not a lot of information he doesn't—to determine the directions he wants the Company to take."

Like many a professional in both areas, Taylor got into computers, and opera, largely by accident. Prior to being hired by the San Francisco Opera, he had worked at a San Francisco office of Blythe and Company, a brokerage house, where he was in charge of its confirmations department. Shortly after the firm transferred him to New York, he decided that working for a brokerage firm was not for him. After a stint as a fundraiser for the Travelers Aid Society in New York, and another brief period with Blythe and Company, he took a year off. "I went to Oregon and did nothing," he says, in a

slightly wistful tone.

Upon returning to the Bay Area, he continues, "I just fell into this. I heard they needed somebody. I was hired by Max Azinoff, who was the controller under then-General Director Kurt Herbert Adler. For some strange reason, the Company just hasn't told me to leave yet."

He interrupts himself for a humorous reflection on the Adler years. "Well, that isn't quite true," he recalls with a grin. "Mr. Adler, who was one of the last of the old-time impresarios, did fire me once—as he did so many people. It was because I had misspelled the word 'theater,' in Western Opera Theater, with an 're' instead of an 'er.' But, as was the case for so many of the other people Adler fired, for some unaccountable reason, I came to work the next day anyway—and everything was fine. Nothing more was ever said about it. So now I know how to spell 'theater,' and I'm still here, and happy to be."

When not at his terminal, in the House or at home, Taylor is fascinated with Chinese culture and history and enjoys collecting Chinese pottery and lithographs by Japanese women artists. Those avocations are as much a matter of chance, he says, as is his profession. "I just started collecting, and reading, and it all just sort of snowballed. I'm trying to learn Mandarin, but I'm finding that my tongue just doesn't want to do what it should."

The collecting has worked well with his other love, travel, and he has been to China four times. He regrets having to cancel his trip last year, in the wake of the Tian'anmen events. "I think it's sad, now, for China and the Chinese people," he reflects softly.

Working in the Opera House also affords him an insider's look at that fascinating behind-the-scenes world. "I enjoyed opera even before I worked here," he says, "but I also enjoy country and western music. What's particularly fascinating about opera are its technical aspects, the endless number of details involved in putting a show together and getting it to work. As a mere audience member, you have no idea what is involved in producing opera.

"People here probably still wonder how it is that computers work. But for my part, I still don't understand everything involved in putting an opera on stage. I know a lot more than I used to, of course. But to this day it still amazes me." ■

—Timothy Pfaff



Eliza McNutt, a vital part of San Francisco Opera's data processing team.



Gordon Taylor reviewing printouts.

1989 Opera Previews

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

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD INSIGHTS

Held in Herbst Theatre, Veterans Building, 401 Van Ness Ave., in San Francisco. All informal discussions begin at 6 p.m.; doors open at 5:30 p.m. There is no charge for Guild members. Individual tickets may be purchased at the door for \$5. For further information, please call (415) 565-6432. Programs are subject to change.

- Orlando Furioso* 10/9
With Sir John Pritchard, Music Director, and Clifford Cranna, Musical Administrator, San Francisco Opera.
- Emerging American Singers* 10/23
Sarah Billingham, Artistic Administrator, San Francisco Opera, interviews singers from the cast of *Aida*: Sharon Sweet, Dolora Zajick, and Timothy Noble.

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD PREVIEW MARIN

Previews held at United Methodist Church, 410 Sycamore Ave., Mill Valley; refreshments served at 7:30 p.m., previews at 8 p.m. Series registration is \$25 for 6 previews (\$20 for students and seniors). Single tickets are \$5 (\$4 for students and seniors). For further information, please call (415) 435-1141.

- Idomeneo* 10/5
Sandor Salgo
- Lohengrin* 11/9
Michael Mitchell
- Orlando Furioso* 11/16
Eleanor Selfridge-Field
- Die Frau ohne Schatten* 11/20
George Martin

SOUTH PENINSULA

Previews held at the Palo Alto Senior Center, 450 Bryant, at 8 p.m. Series registration is \$22 (students \$11); single tickets are \$5 (students \$3). For further information, please call (415) 941-3890 or (415) 326-1971.

- Idomeneo* 10/3
Sandor Salgo
- Lohengrin* 11/7
Michael Mitchell
- Orlando Furioso* 11/14
Eleanor Selfridge-Field
- Die Frau ohne Schatten* 11/21
George Martin

SAN JOSE OPERA GUILD

Previews held at the Los Gatos History Club, 123 Los Gatos Blvd., at 10 a.m. Series is open to the public at a cost of \$5 per lecture (free of charge to San Jose Opera Guild members). For further information, please call (408) 354-7525.

- Idomeneo* 10/3
Sandor Salgo
- Lohengrin* 11/7
Michael Mitchell
- Orlando Furioso* 11/14
Eleanor Selfridge-Field
- Die Frau ohne Schatten* 11/21
George Martin

SONOMA COUNTY CHAPTER

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

- Idomeneo* 10/2, 7:30 p.m.
Sandor Salgo 2652 Nob Hill Dr., Santa Rosa
- Lohengrin* 11/6, 7:30 p.m.
Michael Mitchell 1000 Buckeye Rd., Kenwood
- Orlando Furioso* 11/13, 6:00 p.m. (dinner)
Eleanor Selfridge-Field 7:30 p.m. (lecture)
Oakmont Chalet, 7025 Oakmont Dr., Santa Rosa
- Die Frau ohne Schatten* 11/20, 10:30 a.m.
George Martin 1229 Los Robles Dr., Sonoma

JUNIOR LEAGUE OPERA PREVIEW

Previews held in the Green Room (GR) or the Herbst Theatre (HT), Veterans Building, 401 Van Ness Ave., San Francisco. Lectures begin at noon and there is no admission charge. For further information, please call (415) 852-2220.

- Idomeneo* 10/4 (GR)
Sandor Salgo
- Lohengrin* 11/8 (GR)
Michael Mitchell
- Orlando Furioso* 11/15 (HT)
Eleanor Selfridge-Field
- Die Frau ohne Schatten* 11/22 (HT)
George Martin

EAST BAY CHAPTER

The Chapter will present a preview of *Lohengrin*, with famed tenor Jess Thomas, on Wednesday, Nov. 8 at 7:30 p.m. at the Faculty Club, University of California, Berkeley. Dinner is at 6 p.m. For further information and dinner reservations, please call (415) 465-7646.

OPERA EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL PREVIEW SERIES

Previews of the operas of the 1989 season will be given by Michael Barclay, director of Opera Education International. Lectures will be presented in the auditorium of the Cetus Corp., 1400—53rd St., in Emeryville, at 7:30 p.m. Admission to the series of 10 previews is \$65; individual admission at the door is \$8. For further information, please call (415) 526-5244.

- Aida* 10/16
- Madama Butterfly* 10/23
- Lohengrin* 11/6
- Orlando Furioso* 11/13
- Die Frau ohne Schatten* 11/20

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A free lecture entitled "Die Frau ohne Schatten: Richard Strauss' New Age Opera" will be given by Michael Barclay on November 9 at 7:30 p.m. at the Kensington Library, 61 Arlington Ave., Kensington. For further information, please call (415) 524-3043.

MERRITT COLLEGE OPERA LECTURE SERIES

Merritt College is offering an opera preview class, Introduction to Opera (Music 13A), with emphasis on the operas of the 1989 season, on Tuesday evenings at 6:30 p.m., beginning August 29 and ending December 19. The enrollment fee is \$15. Classes will be held at the College, 12500 Campus Drive, Building R, Room 125, in Oakland. For further information, please call (415) 436-2430.

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Ten classes on San Francisco Opera's season are offered, and there is a choice of three series: Mondays from August 21 to November 20 at 6:30 p.m.; Thursdays from August 31 to November 16 at 6:30 p.m.; and Saturdays from September 9 to November 18 from 10 a.m. to noon or from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Sessions are held at the Galleria Park Hotel, 191 Sutter, S.F. Cost for the series of 10 two-hour classes is \$80; individual previews are \$10. For further information, please call (415) 956-1271.

Lulu AT THE BERKELEY REP

Running concurrently with San Francisco Opera's new production of *Lulu* is the Berkeley Repertory Theatre's adaptation of Frank Wedekind's drama. Directed by Berkeley Rep's Artistic Director, Sharon Ott, this rarely-staged play is scheduled to run at the Theatre, 2025 Addison St., through October 14. Performances are Tuesday through Saturday at 8 p.m. and Sundays at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m., with additional matinees on three Thursdays and three Saturdays. Tickets are priced between \$18 and \$24. Student, senior and group discounts are available, and each Tuesday and Friday at noon a limited number of half-price tickets will be sold at the Box Office for cash-only purchase. For further information and reservations, please call (415) 845-4700.

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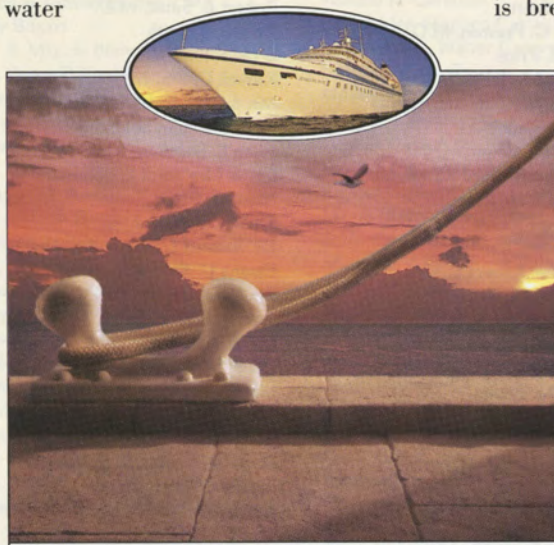
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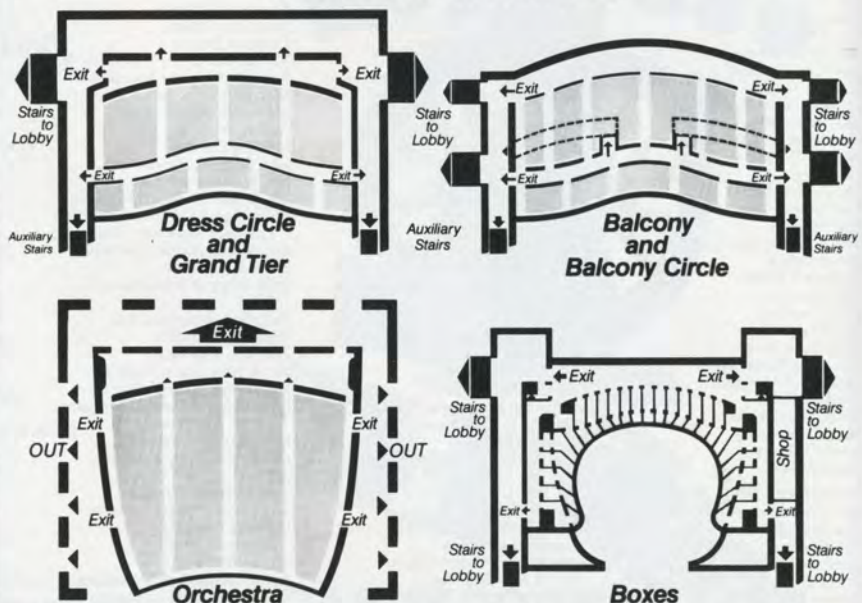
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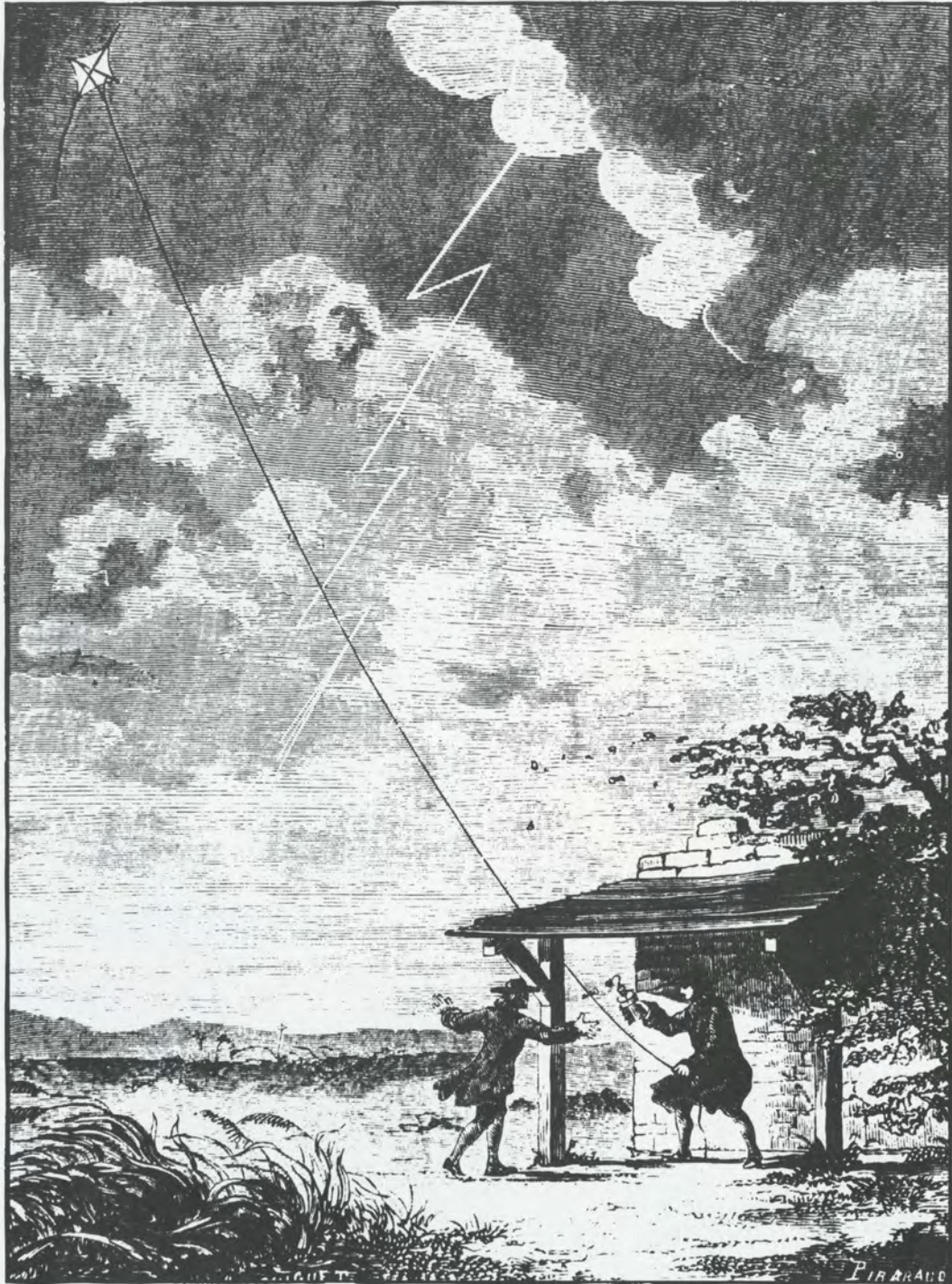
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