

Otello

1989

Saturday, September 30, 1989 8:00 PM

Tuesday, October 3, 1989 8:00 PM

Friday, October 6, 1989 8:00 PM

Thursday, October 12, 1989 7:30 PM

Sunday, October 15, 1989 2:00 PM

Tuesday, October 24, 1989 7:30 PM

SFO\_PUB\_01\_SFO\_1989\_13

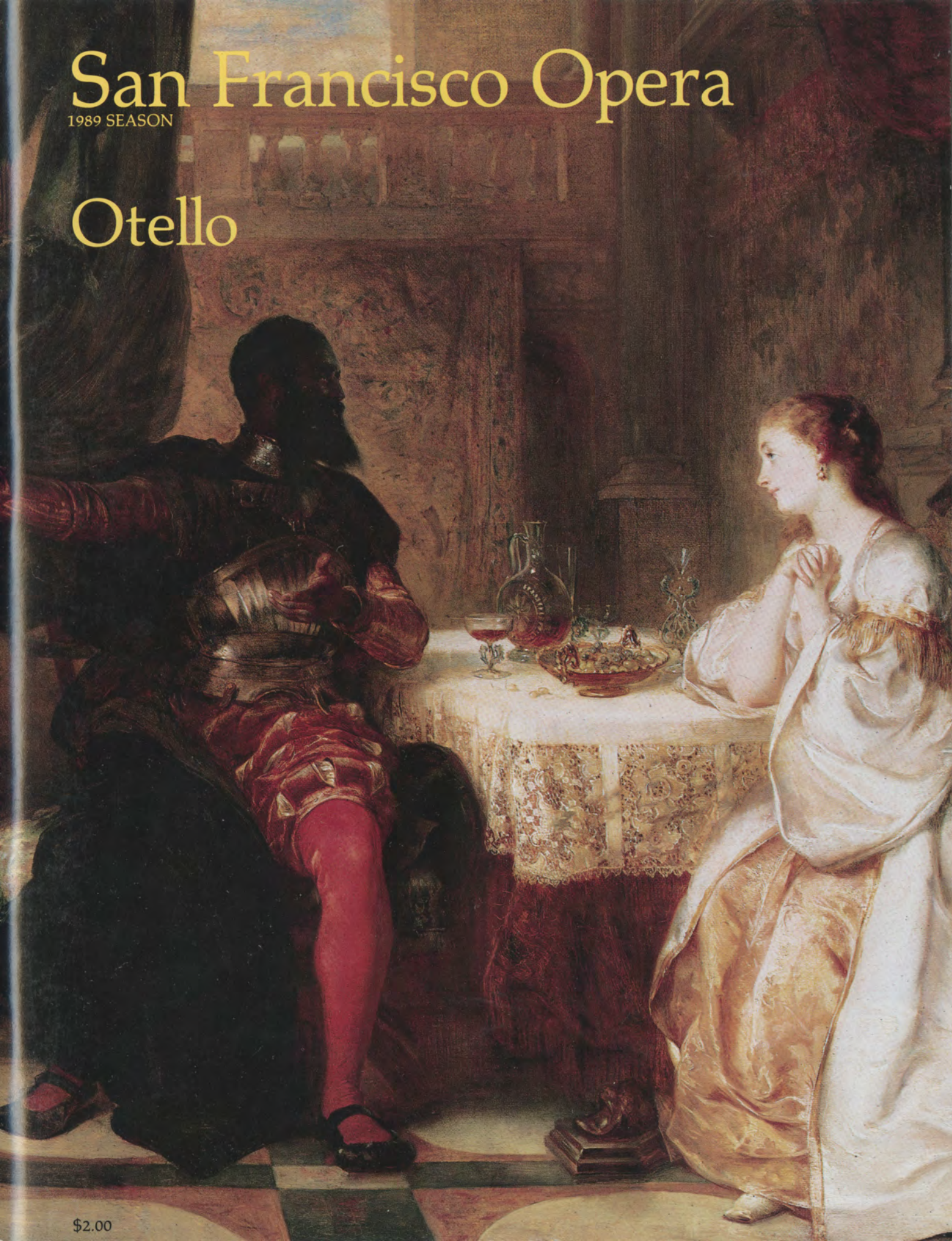
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San Francisco Opera Archives

# San Francisco Opera

1989 SEASON

## Otello

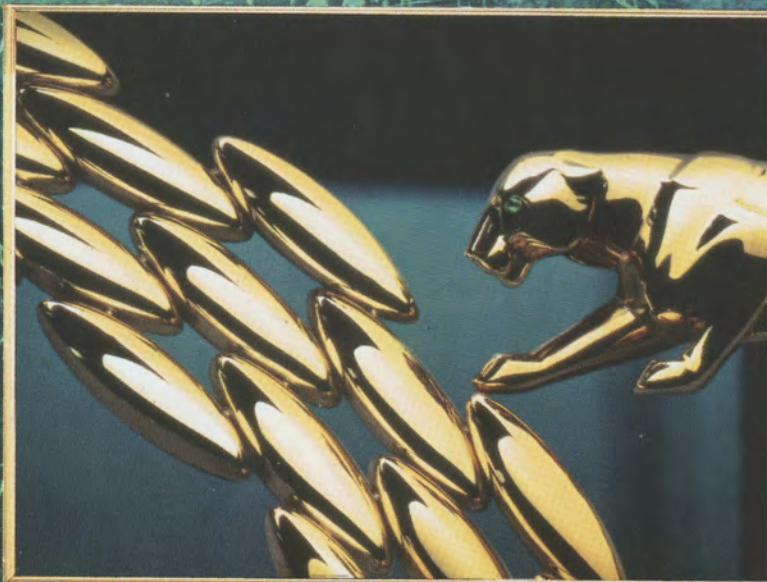


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# San Francisco Opera

Lotfi Mansouri, *General Director*

Sir John Pritchard, *Music Director*

## Otello

1989 SEASON

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### COVER

Robert Alexander Hillingford, 1825-1904  
*Othello Recounting His Adventures to Desdemona*,  
1869

Oil on canvas

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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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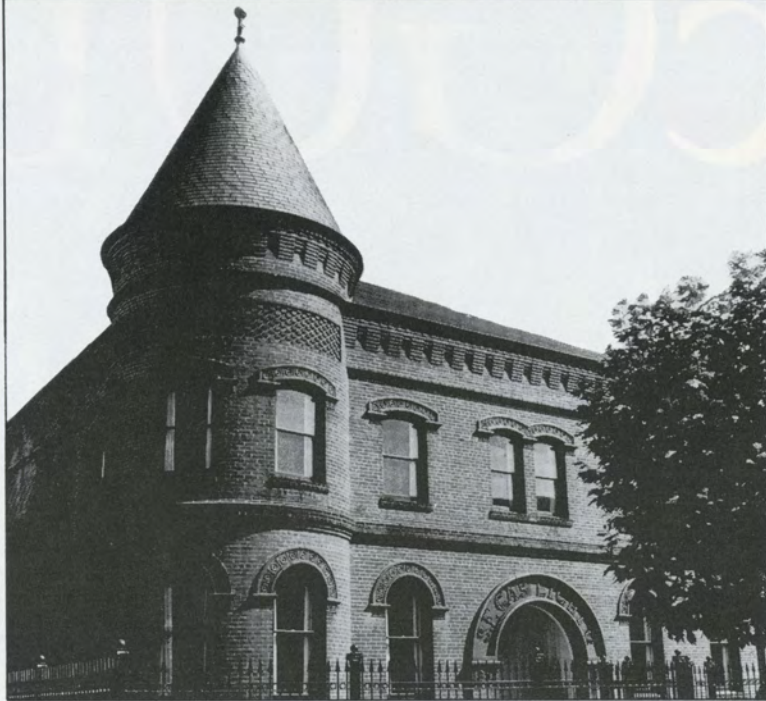
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## General Director's Message

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 Hartliep as Madama Butterfly. But they will not be carrying the Center's torch

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

# San Francisco Opera

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Sir John Pritchard, *Music Director*

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Continued on page 13



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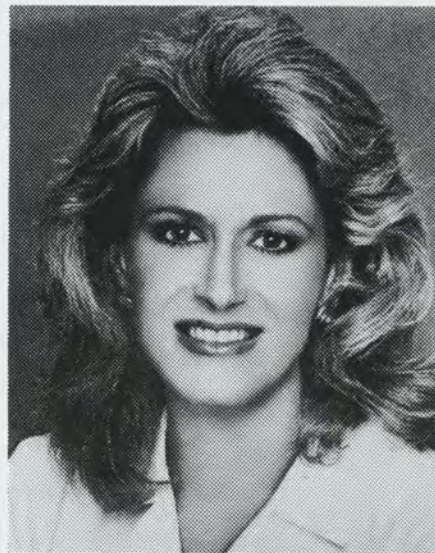
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# San Francisco Opera

Lotfi Mansouri, *General Director*

Sir John Pritchard, *Music Director*

## 1989 Season

### Opening Night

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

Saturday, September 9, 8:00  
*New Production*  
**Lulu** Berg  
 Panagulias, Lear, Harris\*, Cook, Swift\*,  
 Mills\*; Braun, McCauley, Hotter,  
 Myers\*, Cowan\*, Rideout\*, Travis,  
 Villanueva, Petersen, Irmiter, Reinhardt  
 Mauceri/Mansouri/Schneider-Siemssen/  
 Mackie\*/Whitfield\*  
*San Francisco Opera gratefully acknowledges  
 a generous grant from the Paul L. & Phyllis  
 C. Wattis Foundation to underwrite this  
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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  
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Sunday, October 29, 2:00  
**Aida** Verdi



Tuesday, October 31, 8:00 <b>Madama Butterfly</b>	Puccini	Friday, November 24, 8:00 <b>Orlando Furioso</b>	Vivaldi	Thursday, December 7, 7:30 <b>Die Frau ohne Schatten</b>	Strauss
Wednesday, November 1, 7:30 <b>Aida</b>	Verdi	Saturday, November 25, 7:30 <b>Die Frau ohne Schatten</b>	Strauss	Friday, December 8, 7:30 <b>Lohengrin</b>	Wagner
Friday, November 3, 7:30 <b>Madama Butterfly</b>	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 <b>Madama Butterfly</b> (Same cast as December 3)	Puccini
Saturday, November 4, 8:00 <b>Aida</b>	Verdi	<i>This production was originally made possible by Cynthia Wood who has also underwritten the 1989 revival.</i>		Saturday, December 9, 8:00 <b>Orlando Furioso</b>	Vivaldi
Sunday, November 5, 2:00 <b>Madama Butterfly</b>	Puccini	Sunday, November 26, 1:30 <b>Lohengrin</b>	Wagner	Sunday, December 10, 1:30 <b>Die Frau ohne Schatten</b>	Strauss
Tuesday, November 7, 8:00 <b>Aida</b>	Verdi			**United States opera debut *San Francisco Opera debut	
Friday, November 10, 7:30 <b>Madama Butterfly</b>	Puccini	Tuesday, November 28, 7:30 <b>Die Frau ohne Schatten</b>	Strauss		
Saturday, November 11, 7:30 <b>Lohengrin</b> 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 <b>Lohengrin</b>	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 <b>Aida</b>	Verdi	Thursday, November 30, 7:30 <b>Orlando Furioso</b>	Vivaldi	Repertoire, casts and dates subject to change.	
Tuesday, November 14, 8:00 <b>Aida</b>	Verdi	Friday, December 1, 7:30 <b>Die Frau ohne Schatten</b>	Strauss	Box Office and telephone sales: (415) 864-3330.	
Wednesday, November 15, 8:00 <b>Madama Butterfly</b>	Puccini	Saturday, December 2, 7:30 <b>Lohengrin</b>	Wagner		
Friday, November 17, 7:30 <b>Lohengrin</b>	Wagner	Sunday, December 3, 1:00 <b>Madama Butterfly</b> Gauci*, Manhart, Spence; Aragall, Schexnayder*, Li, Villanueva, Skinner, Travis, Estep Pritchard/Farruggio/Businger/Munn	Puccini		
Saturday, November 18, 8:00 <b>Madama Butterfly</b> <i>This performance made possible by a generous grant from Shaklee Corporation.</i>	Puccini	Sunday, December 3, 8:00 <b>Orlando Furioso</b>	Vivaldi		
Sunday, November 19, 2:00 <i>New Production</i> <b>Orlando Furioso</b>	Vivaldi	Monday, December 4, 7:30 <b>Die Frau ohne Schatten</b>	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 <b>Orlando Furioso</b>	Vivaldi		
Tuesday, November 21, 7:30 <b>Lohengrin</b>	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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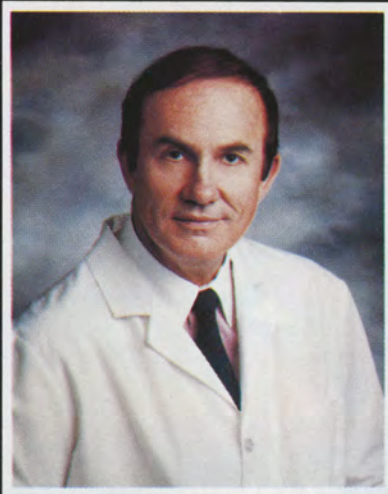
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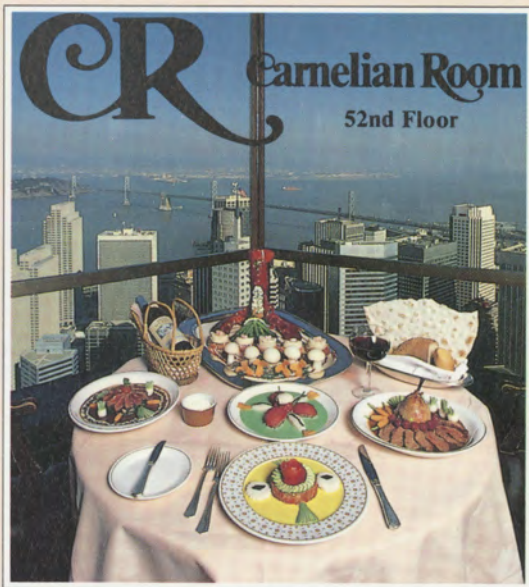
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# Notes on *Otello*

By RICHARD DYER

When Giuseppe Verdi composed *Aida*, at age 58, he felt he had "closed his accounts"; he didn't intend to compose any more operas. "I have done my duty," he would say, "now it's up to the young fellows."

There were many reasons for Verdi's feeling. His operas had become increasingly ambitious from the musical, dramatic, and theatrical point of view. There is no "progress" in art, and there are people who prefer Verdi's earlier work to his later, and those who admire the dark middle period works most of all. But the line of development from work to work is very clear, and it is obvious that over the years composing an opera took more and more out of him. He was getting older.

In addition, his energy was going into

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*Richard Dyer is music critic of The Boston Globe and Briggs-Copeland associate professor of English at Harvard.*

a domestic situation that is still little-understood, although people were gossiping about it at the time, even in print: Verdi's fascination with the soprano Teresa Stoltz, his favorite *Aida*. Even his wife, Giuseppina Strepponi, was concerned—in befriending Stoltz she behaved in an entirely uncharacteristic but also highly resourceful way. Verdi also had numerous non-compositional professional responsibilities, such as serving on committees to revise the curriculum of the conservatories, and, like Stravinsky, he was exceptionally attentive to the business aspects of his career. ("I love Verdi's letters," one of today's prominent librettists remarked recently. "They're all about money . . .")

To complicate matters further, the moment was not propitious for the kind of opera Verdi had been moving towards. His letters remained full of grumbling about the state of music, the state of singing, the state of the theater, and



operatic politics; some things never change. Wagner was the subject of heated championship and heated debate that the Italian master was wary about. Verdi was the very embodiment of the highest aspirations of Italian art, yet critics had found traces of Wagner's influence in *Aida* and he was exasperated to find himself characterized as an "imitator."

With all this, Verdi's life settled into a comfortable seasonal pattern of residences in the countryside, spa, and city, broken by occasional trips to supervise or conduct productions of his work.

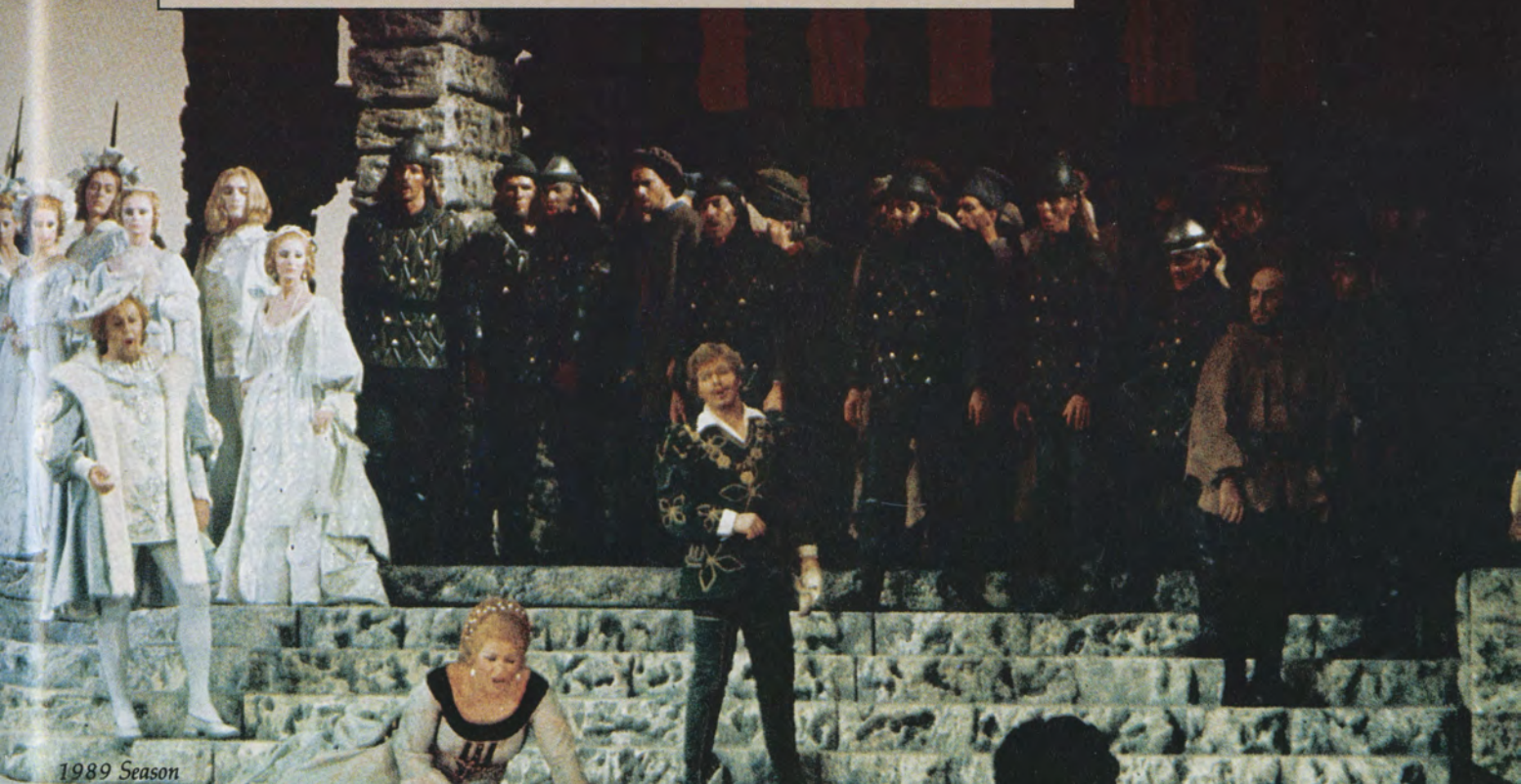
But of course Verdi never really stopped composing—in 1873 he wrote a string quartet, apparently for his own pleasure (pocket scores of the quartets of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven were the only music he kept by his bedside); in

1874/75, saddened by the death of his friend, the novelist Alessandro Manzoni, he composed one of his greatest works, the Requiem, building on music he had written 15 years earlier for a collaborative requiem in honor of Rossini. In 1880, he composed some additional ballet music for a production of *Aida* in Paris, a "Pater Noster" and an "Ave Maria."

His friends and associates, of course, never stopped suggesting operatic subjects to him; his publisher, Giulio Ricordi,

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*A scene from Act III of San Francisco Opera's 1974 production of Otello. The cast included James King in the title role, Pilar Lorengar as Desdemona, Wassili Janulako as Iago, Sheila Nadler as Emilia, John Walker as Cassio, Clifford Grant as Lodovico, and Gary Burgess as Rodrigo.* MASON JONES





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even sent him a *Hamlet* libretto by the fiery and controversial Arrigo Boito, poet, polemicist, and composer of *Mefistofele*. By 1880, however, another idea had been planted in his mind.

The first step was taken at a small private dinner in Milan in 1879 during rehearsals for a performance of the "Requiem," which Verdi with characteristic generosity had agreed to conduct for the benefit of the victims of recent floods. At the dinner, Ricordi "chanced" to turn the conversation to the subject of Shakespeare and Boito, who 17 years before had supplied Verdi with the text of the "Hymn of the Nations." "At the mention of *Othello*," Ricordi recalled later, "I saw Verdi look sharply at me, with suspicion but with interest. He had certainly understood; he had certainly reacted. I believed the time was right."

And so the next day Boito arrived at Verdi's hotel with a scenario for an opera based on Shakespeare's play; the fact that it was ready so soon suggests that it had been ready beforehand. Verdi urged Boito to go ahead and put the scenario into verse, but remained noncommittal. "It will come in handy for yourself . . . for me . . . for someone else."

The campaign that followed was the only kind that had any chance of success, and Ricordi and Boito found their most important ally in Giuseppina Verdi, who was quite explicit about the way to proceed. In a letter to Ricordi she asked that no pressure be brought to bear on Verdi. "Let the stream flow straight on its way to the sea. It is in these wide spaces that certain men are destined to meet and understand each other." Repeatedly, Giuseppina urged patience, restraint, even silence.

As it turned out, it was to be eight further years before *Otello* came to the stage of La Scala. There were many problems and delays on the project everyone concerned referred to as "the chocolate," in a vain attempt to preserve the secrecy of the project (Verdi hated publicity).

In the beginning, Boito worked slowly, despite the exhortations of Ricordi ("If I don't send off to Giulio Desdemona strangled this week, I'm afraid he may strangle me!").

Although Verdi bought the rights to the libretto as soon as he had actually seen some of it, that was no guarantee that he would ever set it: for three decades he had circled around a *King Lear* libretto that he



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*San Francisco Opera's first staging of Otello took place in 1934, and it featured Lauritz Melchior in the title role, a rare outing for the celebrated Heldentenor. Just prior to the performance, he posed backstage in his entrance costume.*



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*Lauritz Melchior and Elisabeth Rethberg in San Francisco Opera's 1934 staging of Otello.*





San Francisco Opera's 1936 presentation of *Otello* turned out to be a memorable one, because two artists were performing roles for the first time in their careers: Giovanni Martinelli as *Otello* and Lawrence Tibbett as *Iago*. Both went on to world fame in these two particular portrayals. While Mr. Tibbett posed extensively for our photographer that year (left), all we have of Signor Martinelli is a "snap" from the wings taken during the "Si, pel ciel" duet.

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had commissioned. He did work actively with Boito in refining the shape of the work and adjusting verbal detail, but he wrote no music. He was certainly mindful of the challenge of Rossini's *Otello*—he knew the work's inadequacy to Shakespeare's play but he also recognized Rossini's strokes of genius. He was even more mindful of the challenge of Shakespeare, his lifelong companion; only once before had he taken up the challenge, in *Macbeth*.

The composing Verdi did embark upon suggested he wanted to try his wings again before tackling a project as large as *Otello*—he revised his earlier opera *Simon Boccanegra*, to which he added an entirely new scene, with a text by Boito, that turned out to be one of his most stirring creations (the Council Chamber scene with its lines from Plutarch calling for peace and unity); he also prepared a revised and reduced 4-act version of his unwieldy masterpiece *Don Carlos*.

The letters Verdi and Boito exchanged about their work display their

very different personalities; the charged relationship between them may have contributed to the delay—and it certainly contributed to the ultimate achievement. At the beginning it was by no means certain that these men were "destined to meet and understand each other." They were from different generations—Boito was born in 1842, when Verdi was 29, the year of his first overwhelming success, *Nabucco*. Boito was cosmopolitan, multilingual, and given to shooting off his mouth. This had already led to problems with Verdi. Not long after the "Hymn of the Nations," Boito published a notorious ode, "All'arte Italiana," which charged that the altar of Italian art had been "befouled like the walls of a brothel," and Verdi took it personally; it was years before there was anything like a rapprochement.

Even after the actual composition of *Otello* was underway, there was a problem: a reporter wrote that Boito had remarked that the libretto was so good he wished he were composing it himself, so Verdi offered to return it to him "without a shadow of resentment." It took a while

to resolve that crisis: Boito explained that he had been misquoted, and sent a peace offering—a soliloquy for Iago that became the "Credo" that opens the second act, supplying the motive for what Coleridge famously referred to as Iago's "motiveless malignity." It also gave Boito a chance to use some powerful lines he had composed for the libretto to *La Gioconda* that Amilcare Ponchielli had decided not to keep in the final version of his opera—"Death is nothingness, and Heaven is a lie!"

The differences between Verdi and Boito, however, parallel equally remarkable similarities, not the least of them a sense of perfectionism. Both differences and similarities can be traced in the correspondence between the two and with others concerned with *Otello* (recently all of it has been conveniently collected, translated, and arranged in chronological order by Hans Busch for the Oxford University Press, with a second volume devoted to supplementary materials, especially the detailed staging manual published by Ricordi—materials that should be carefully studied by anyone intending to perform the opera).

Perhaps one incident can represent the nature of the collaboration. How to end the third act long remained a major problem. Verdi was dissatisfied with Boito's conventional ensemble closing the third act, and he wanted a spectacular curtain effect. His suggestion was for the Turks to invade again—*Otello* would "shake himself like a lion" and promise the people to lead them again to victory; Desdemona, "in the middle of the stage, isolated, immobile, gazing up at the sky, prays for *Otello*. The curtain falls."

It wasn't a good idea—and Boito had some terrible ideas too: the love duet originally ended with some sneering, snarling lines for Iago, for all the world like Mephisto under Marguerite's balcony. Boito's response to Verdi's suggestion about the third-act finale was respectful, tactful and characteristically lucid in its intelligence.

"Now if we imagine an event that must necessarily shake *Otello* and distract him from [his] gripping nightmare, then we destroy all the sinister enchantment created by Shakespeare, and we cannot logically come to the conclusion of the action. That attack of the Turks gives me the impression of a fist breaking the window of a chamber in which two people are about to die of asphyxiation. That intimate sense of death, so carefully



Ramon Vinay impersonated the Moor of Venice at San Francisco Opera twice: in 1950 and 1951. The photo shows him in his dressing room, going through the appropriate paces.

created by Shakespeare, suddenly vanishes. Life-giving air flows once again into our tragedy, and Otello and Desdemona are safe. To make them re-enter upon the road of death we must lock them up once more in that lethal chamber, recreate the nightmare, patiently lead Iago back to his prey—and we have but a single act left in which to redo the whole tragedy from the

start. In other words: *we have found the end of an act, but we have lost the effect of the final catastrophe.*"

Soon Boito had solved the problem—he moved Otello's fainting fit from its original position, after Cassio has produced the handkerchief, to the close of the act. This was the very moment Verdi had recently been in correspondence about

with his friend, the painter Domenico Morelli ("Iago with the face of a righteous man! . . . This Iago is *Shakespeare*, he is *humanity*—a part of humanity, that is, the ugly part"). "A happy find," wrote Verdi to Boito about his solution. "I just cannot find, or feel, the *ensemble piece*! We'll talk about it later . . ."

(A curious postscript to *Otello* is how Verdi continued to worry about the third act finale, long after the premiere, and even after *Falstaff*. When he composed the ballet for the Paris production of the opera in 1894, he also extensively revised and condensed the third-act ensemble in order to make Iago's plotting more clearly understood—it was the last operatic music he ever composed. The revision did not go into the published versions of the score, although in recent years it has occasionally been performed. Its American premiere was probably in Sarah Caldwell's production for the Opera Company of Boston in 1979. It made a powerful effect—even though one did miss the spaciousness of the familiar ensemble.)

Boito's remarks to Verdi about his suggestion for the finale touch directly on the headlong, inexorable force of Shakespeare's play. For generations, critics had remarked on the particularly claustrophobic atmosphere of *Othello*, particularly once the action shifts from cosmopolitan Venice to the island outpost of Cyprus. There are no subplots, and the minor characters exist only to carry out Iago's



Victoria de los Angeles and James McCracken as Desdemona and Otello, respectively, at the San Francisco Opera in 1962.

MASON JONES



Mario del Monaco as Otello at the San Francisco Opera in 1959.



Tito Gobbi was San Francisco Opera's Otello Iago in 1962 and 1964. This photo dates from 1964.

plans for the destruction of the happiness of Othello and Desdemona, a happiness that is imperfect only because it is human. The action moves according to the classical unities (thereby creating a problem for critics—just when is Cassio supposed to have established his alliance with Desdemona?).

One of Boito's first decisions in his masterly condensation (his libretto is less than a quarter the length of the play) was to cut the Venetian act, in which Desdemona defies her father to marry Othello and appears before the senate to defend her choice; these events are heard in flashback in the first act of the opera, mainly in what Otello and Desdemona sing to each other in the love duet beneath the stars.

Boito's libretto for the opera's four acts is as cunning as Iago's plot in the way it narrows and focuses the action—there is no moment when all of the three principal characters are off the stage, and only a few moments when any one of them is alone. The first act begins with one of the most stupendous effects in all of opera, the curtain rising immediately on music's mightiest storm. Otello's tremendous entrance ("Esultate!") has the effect of calming the elements. The rest of the act traces a long arc to the yearning tranquillity of the love duet; the rest of the opera is devoted to Iago's destruction of that tranquillity, its murderous consequences, and to the restoration of order in Otello's suicide and death speech, closing with the invocation of the music of the kiss from the love duet.

Verdi was quite aware that he was writing a new kind of music in this opera; he may not have been willing to admit that the new virtuosity of color and execution he was requiring from the orchestra had been made possible by what orchestras had needed to learn in order to play the operas of Wagner. Verdi dramatizes what is new in his music by developing it in the context of the old. The first act is wonderfully fluid in its construction, but it is also a succession of genre pieces—storm, bonfire chorus, drinking song, love duet; at the premiere, the bonfire chorus ("Fuoco di gioia") was encored, in the old-fashioned way. The second act opens with an aria, the Credo, but as the opera proceeds there are fewer and fewer such pieces; the lovely chorus of tribute to Desdemona is meant to sound old-fashioned as it opens a window on a less troubled past—Iago's work has already

*continued on p.48*



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KATIA RICCIARELLI

Internationally renowned soprano **Katia Ricciarelli** returns to San Francisco Opera to portray Desdemona in *Otello*, one of her signature roles, a part she performed here in 1978, and in Franco Zeffirelli's film version with Plácido Domingo. San Francisco audiences will remember her triumphant portrayals of three other Verdi heroines: the title role of *Luisa Miller* (1974), Amelia in *Un Ballo in Maschera* (1977), and Violetta in *La Traviata* (1983). After winning the coveted Giuseppe Verdi Award in 1970, the Italian singer went on to appearances at all of the world's major houses. From 1972 to '74 she made debuts in Chicago in Verdi's *I Due Foscari*, at Milan's La Scala as *Suor Angelica*, in Vienna as Liù in *Turandot*, and in Hamburg, London, Paris and New York's Metropolitan Opera as Mimì in *La Bohème*. Miss Ricciarelli has since developed one of the most extensive and varied list of roles in the soprano repertoire. She sings the soprano leads in such rarely heard works as Bellini's *La Straniera* and *Il Pirata*, Donizetti's *Maria di Rohan* and *Catarina Cornaro*, Rossini's *Elisabetta*, *Regina d'Inghilterra*, *L'Assedio di Corinto*, *Semiramide*, *Tancredi*, *La Donna del Lago* and *Bianca e Faliero*, and Verdi's *Il Corsaro*, *Giovanna d'Arco*, *I Lombardi*, *Jerusalem* and *La Battaglia di Legnano*. Highlights of recent seasons include *Don Carlos* at Covent Garden, *Tancredi* at the Gran Teatro del Liceu in Barcelona, her first Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* in Madrid, her first assumption of the title role of *Norma* in Trieste, her first *Elisabetta* in *Roberto Devereux* in Naples, and the title role of *Luisa Miller* at La Scala in Milan. This season, she added two more roles to her already large repertoire, appearing as Maddalena in *Andrea Chénier* at Versailles and singing in a new production of Rossini's *La Gazza Ladra* at the Pesaro Festival. She has also been praised internationally



CATHERINE KEEN

for her numerous appearances in concert and recital. One of the most prolific recording artists of our day, Miss Ricciarelli appears on many complete operatic recordings (including over 10 operas by Verdi alone), aria albums and recordings of sacred music.

Mezzo-soprano **Catherine Keen** sings Mistress Quickly in the Family Performance of *Falstaff* and Emilia in *Otello*. Recipient of a 1989-90 Adler Fellowship with the San Francisco Opera Center, she made her Company debut last summer as Kasturbai in Glass' *Satyagraha*, and sang Leocasta in Opera Center's 1989 Showcase production of Handel's *Giustino*. As a member of the 1987 Merola Opera Program, she sang the roles of Zita in *Gianni Schicchi* and Dolcina in *Suor Angelica*. She returned to the Merola Program in 1988 as Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly* at Villa Montalvo before taking the role on tour with Western Opera Theater. A graduate of the Cincinnati Conservatory (where she is currently completing a Doctor of Musical Arts degree), she sang numerous leading roles there including Giulietta in *The Tales of Hoffmann* and Mrs. Ma in the American premiere of *The Chalk Circle*. From 1984 to 1986 she was a member of the Young American Artist Program at the Cincinnati Opera. Miss Keen's experience includes concerts with the Columbus Symphony, the Cincinnati Symphony, and the Indianapolis Symphony. Recent engagements include Verdi's Requiem with the Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music, and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with the Cincinnati Symphony and the Los Angeles Philharmonic Institute Orchestra.



ERMANN0 MAURO

**Ermanno Mauro** returns to San Francisco Opera in the title role of *Otello*, a portrayal that has been seen to great acclaim in Dallas and Miami and with the St. Louis Symphony under Leonard Slatkin. A leading tenor with the Metropolitan Opera and a regular performer at the Vienna State Opera, the Paris Opera and the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, he made his Company debut during the 1982 Fall Season as Pollione in Bellini's *Norma* with Joan Sutherland and Marilyn Horne. He has since appeared here as Des Grieux in *Manon Lescaut* (1983); Maurizio in *Adriana Lecouvreur* (1985); Turiddu in *Cavalleria Rusticana* and Canio in *Pagliacci* (Summer 1986); and as Cavaradossi in *Tosca* (1987). Born in Trieste, he later moved to Canada and made his professional debut with the Canadian Opera Company in Toronto in *Il Trovatore*. He was then invited to join the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, where he remained as principal tenor through 1975. He made his German debut in 1972 as Rodolfo in *La Bohème* in Frankfurt, and made a number of important international debuts in quick succession. In 1975, he bowed at the Vienna State Opera as Manrico in *Il Trovatore*, in 1976 as Don Alvaro in *La Forza del Destino* at the Paris Opera, and in 1977 made his Italian debut as Don José in *Carmen* in Genoa. He made his United States debut in 1974 as Cavaradossi in San Diego and then gave his first New York performances as Calaf in *Turandot* with the New York City Opera, where he has also appeared as Rodolfo, Andrea Chénier and as Faust in *Mefistofele*. The year 1978 marked his Metropolitan Opera debut as Canio in *Pagliacci*; his La Scala debut as Manrico; and his Rome Opera debut as Radames in *Aida*. During the fall of 1985 he added the role of Paolo in Zandonai's *Francesca da Rimini* to his repertoire at the Met, and made his Lyric Opera of Chicago



BRENT ELLIS

debut as Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly*. Recent engagements have included a return to the Met as Turiddu and Canio, and in the title role of *Don Carlos*; a new production of *Andrea Chénier* at the Canadian Opera Company; *Turandot* in New Orleans; *Il Trovatore* and *Manon Lescaut* in Hamburg; and *Aida* and *Turandot* at the Bavarian State Opera in Munich. Mauro's upcoming engagements include *Il Trovatore* and *Aida* at the Metropolitan Opera, *Il Trovatore* at the Zurich Opera, *Cavalleria Rusticana/Pagliacci* in Dallas, Miami and Washington, D.C., *Otello* for the Canadian Opera Company, *Adriana Lecouvreur* for L'Opera de Montréal, *Otello* and *Manon Lescaut* at the Bavarian State Opera, *La Fanciulla del West* in Toulouse, and *Andrea Chénier* and *Turandot* in Vienna.

**Brent Ellis** sings Iago in *Otello*, a role he has sung to great acclaim in Seattle and Miami. The American baritone made his San Francisco Opera debut in 1976 as Silvio in *Pagliacci* and Figaro in the student matinee performances of *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, and returned here in 1978 as Marcello in *La Bohème*. He made his operatic debut in Ginastera's *Bomarzo* with the Opera Society of Washington during the 1966-67 season, and has since established a highly successful career in Europe and North America. Ellis made his Metropolitan Opera debut during the 1979-80 season as Silvio, and has since appeared there as Ford in *Falstaff*, the elder Germont in *La Traviata*, Riccardo in *I Puritani*, Figaro in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Belcore in *L'Elisir d'Amore* (broadcast nationwide on the "Live from the Met" series), Marcello, and numerous other roles. After appearing as Ford in the Jean-Pierre Ponnelle production of *Falstaff* at

Glyndebourne in 1977, he was invited back for the title role of *Don Giovanni*, Marcello in *La Bohème*, and the elder Germont in a new Peter Hall production of *La Traviata* which was filmed and released on video. Also in the United Kingdom, he has sung with the Welsh National Opera, and appears regularly with the Scottish Opera and with Opera North, where he sang his first Scarpia in *Tosca* and his first Macbeth. This led to his debut at the Paris Opera and at the Wiesbaden Festival as Verdi's Scottish king. He recently made his Royal Opera, Covent Garden debut as Rigoletto—a part which also served as his debut with Seattle Opera, and which was seen in a nationally televised production from the New York City Opera. A popular artist in many North American theaters, he has made many guest appearances with the opera companies of Chicago, Houston, Seattle, Miami, Washington, D.C., Fort Worth and Detroit, among others. He is a regular performer at Santa Fe Opera, where he has sung over 17 roles and appeared in the title role of the world premiere of George Rochberg's *The Confidence Man*. He has also sung with the Chicago Symphony, the San Francisco Symphony, the Minnesota Orchestra, and the symphonies of Atlanta, Baltimore, Houston and Denver, as well as at the Cincinnati May Festival, the Great Woods Festival, and the Wolf Trap and Aspen Festivals.

Tenor **John David De Haan** returns to San Francisco Opera as Fenton in *Falstaff* and Cassio in *Otello*. A native of Kansas, he participated in the 1985 Merola Opera Program and, after portraying Don Ottavio in Western Opera Theater's 1985-86 national tour of *Don Giovanni*, became a 1986 Adler Fellow, and was presented in the Schwabacher Debut Recital series. He made his first Company appearance in the summer of 1986 as Arturo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, returning that fall in the title role of *Faust* for the family performances. In 1987, he stepped in on short notice to replace an ailing colleague as Roméo in Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette*. After receiving the newly established Eleanor Steber Music Foundation Mozart Award, he has made numerous appearances with American opera companies, including Don Ottavio with the Greater Miami Opera, the Webber Requiem with Abendmusik in Lincoln, Nebraska, Eisenstein in *Die*



JOHN DAVID DE HAAN

*Fledermaus* with the Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Anatol in *Vanessa* with Opera Theater of St. Louis, and Ferrando in *Così fan tutte* in Chautauqua. His credits during the 1988 season include Alfredo in *La Traviata* with the opera companies of Indianapolis, Memphis and Syracuse, and his debut with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra in Bach's *St. John Passion*. This year, he made his European debut as Tamino in *The Magic Flute* at the Mannheim State Theatre, and sang Roméo in *Roméo et Juliette* at the Connecticut Opera, Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* for the Seattle Opera, the title role of *Werther* for the Opera Theatre of St. Louis and, for the Santa Fe Opera, Riccardo in Massenet's *Chérubin* and the Nightwatchman/Marco Polo in the American premiere of *A Night at the Chinese Opera*. Future engagements include Arbace in *Idomeneo* in Miami, Roméo for Opera Omaha, and Alfredo in Tulsa and New Orleans.

Tenor **James Schwisow**, who made his San Francisco Opera debut in 1985 as Fenton in the family performances of *Falstaff* and as the Novice in *Billy Budd*, returns to the Company to sing Roderigo in *Otello* and the Apparition of a Youth in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. While studying at Juilliard, he appeared in *Falstaff*, *The Magic Flute* and the world premiere of Hugo Weisgall's *The Hundred Nights*. He was invited to join the Opera Center of the Lyric Opera of Chicago and appeared in Lyric productions of *Andrea Chénier*, *La Bohème*, and the world premiere of Penderecki's *Paradise Lost*. Additional debuts followed at the Spoleto Festival U.S.A. in the world premiere of Conrad Susa's *Transformations*, with Washington Opera as Paris in *La Belle Hélène*, and as Romeo in *Romeo and Juliet* with the Lake George



JAMES SCHWISOW

Opera Festival. He made his European debut in 1986 as Tom Rakewell in *The Rake's Progress* with the Opera du Nord in Lille, France, and recently made his British debut as Pinkerton in a new production of *Madama Butterfly* with the Welsh National Opera. He also appeared as Pinkerton at Santa Fe Opera in 1987 and, that same year, sang Nadir in *The Pearl Fishers* with Minnesota Opera, Narraboth in *Salome* in Edmonton, Romeo in Baltimore and Dayton, and the title role of *The Tales of Hoffmann* with Long Beach Opera. During the 1988 season, Schwisow made his Dallas Opera debut as Cavaradossi in *Tosca*, performed the role of Camille in *The Merry Widow* with Manitoba Opera, and sang Alfredo in *La Traviata* with the Baltimore Opera. Recent engagements include his New York City Opera debut as Eben in the world premiere of Edward Thomas's *Desire Under the Elms*, and Hoffmann with the New Israeli Opera in Tel Aviv. Return engagements include Romeo in Edmonton and Narraboth in Manitoba.

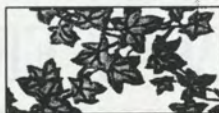
American bass **David Pittsinger** returns to San Francisco Opera as Pistola in *Falstaff*, Lodovico in *Otello* and the King of Egypt in *Aida*. He made his Company debut in four roles during the 1987 season and, after making his European debut as the Count in *Der Ferne Klang* with the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie in Brussels, returned last season as a Monk and Street Singer in *La Gioconda*. He participated in the 1986 Merola Opera Program and portrayed Colline in *La Bohème* on Western Opera Theater's 1986-87 tour as well as in WOT's historic exchange with the People's Republic of China. In this country, he has appeared at Wolf Trap, with

*continued on p.45*

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THURSDAY, OCTOBER 12 AT 7:30  
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 15 AT 2:00  
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 20 AT 8:00  
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 24 AT 7:30

# Otello

(in Italian)

## CAST

(in order of appearance)

*Montano* Philip Skinner  
*Cassio* John David De Haan  
*Iago* Brent Ellis  
*Roderigo* James Schwisow  
*Otello* Ermanno Mauro  
*Desdemona* Katia Ricciarelli  
*Emilia* Catherine Keen  
*A herald* LeRoy Villanueva  
*Lodovico* David Pittsinger  
*Soldiers, sailors, Cypriots, Venetians*

TIME AND PLACE: Late 15th century; a seaport on Cyprus

ACT I Outside Otello's castle by the sea  
INTERMISSION  
ACT II A hall and terrace of the castle  
INTERMISSION  
ACT III The great hall of the castle  
INTERMISSION  
ACT IV Desdemona's bedchamber

Supertitles for *Otello* underwritten through  
a generous grant from Merrill Lynch & Co., Inc.

Supertitles by Christopher Bergen, San Francisco Opera.

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

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

*The performance will last approximately three and one-half hours.*

# Otello/Synopsis

## ACT I

On the island of Cyprus, Venetian officers and the Cypriot populace are awaiting the arrival of the Moor Otello, the governor from Venice, whose ship is battling a violent storm. The storm subsides and Otello lands, to the joy of the crowd. Only Iago and Roderigo do not share the general happiness. Iago is bitter because Otello has named Cassio his lieutenant, instead of Iago; and Roderigo is unhappy because he is in love with Desdemona, Otello's wife.

Iago is already plotting his revenge, and when Cassio appears, Iago and Roderigo make him drunk, then provoke a duel with Montano. Otello, summoned by the brawling, dismisses Cassio from his service. Desdemona also comes out, and when all have gone, she and Otello again declare their love.

## ACT II

Iago, now Otello's confidant, continues his plotting. He advises Cassio to ask Desdemona to intercede with Otello for the disgraced officer's pardon. The Moor sees Cassio with his wife, and Iago plants the seed of jealousy, which grows as Desdemona pleads with her husband to forgive their old friend Cassio.

Iago takes a handkerchief of Desdemona's from his wife, Emilia, who is Desdemona's companion. Later he will use it as evidence. When he and Otello are alone, he tells how he heard Cassio talk

his sleep about Desdemona, as if the two of them were lovers. Otello vows vengeance, and Iago swears to assist him and to furnish him with proof.

## ACT III

Ambassadors are coming from Venice. Before they arrive, Desdemona again broaches the subject of Cassio, and Otello openly accuses her of adultery. Later he spies on a meeting between Iago and Cassio, who displays a handkerchief he has mysteriously found in his room. It is Desdemona's, placed there by Iago. Otello cannot hear the two men's words, but the sight of the handkerchief convinces him. When he receives the ambassadors, he cannot restrain his jealous fury and, in front of all, insults his wife and hurls her to the floor. Iago feels that his triumph is near.

## ACT IV

Desdemona is preparing for bed. As Emilia assists her, she sings "Willow, willow," a sad song about unhappy love. Emilia leaves; Desdemona prays, then goes to bed. Otello enters and warns her that he has come to kill her. Again she protests her innocence, but he refuses to believe her and strangles her. Emilia knocks, then bursts in to tell Otello that Roderigo, who—according to Iago's plot—was to kill Cassio, has been killed. Cassio lives.

Desdemona moans. Emilia cries out in horror, and others come in, including Iago, whose villainy is revealed. Iago flees, pursued by the others, and Otello kills himself over Desdemona's lifeless body.

# Otello

Photos taken in rehearsal  
by Marty Sohl

*Ermanno Mauro, Brent Ellis*





Katia Ricciarelli (below) Brent Ellis, John David De Haan, Ermanno Mauro

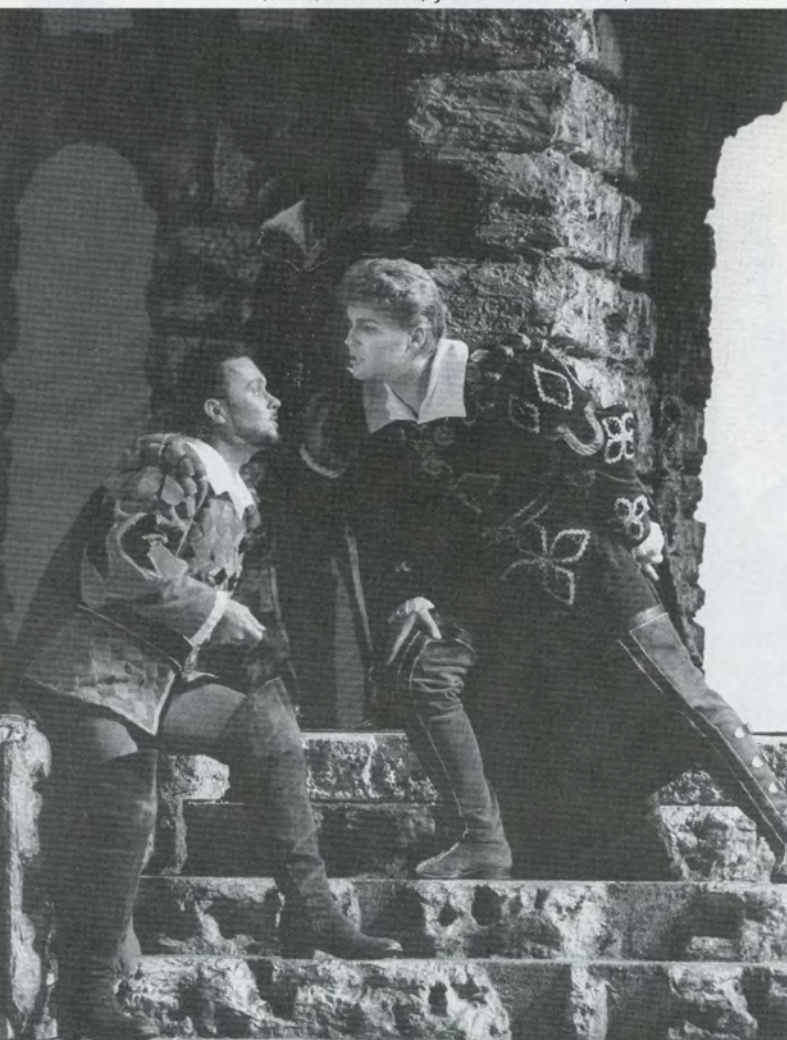


Ermanno Mauro



Brent Ellis

(below) Ermanno Mauro





*Catherine Keen, Brent Ellis*



*Philip Skinner*



*LeRoy Villanueva*



*Ermanno Mauro, Katia Ricciarelli*

*(below) Catherine Keen, Katia Ricciarelli*





*Members of the San Francisco Opera Chorus*



*Katia Ricciarelli*



*Ermanno Mauro*



*James Schwisoro, Brent Ellis*



*Brent Ellis, David Pittsinger*



DAVID PITTSINGER

Pittsburgh Opera, Anchorage Opera and Dayton Opera, and recently sang his first Figaro in *Le Nozze di Figaro* in Long Beach. He also made his Canadian debut in Toronto as Colline. Last February, Pittsinger made his Paris debut in Berlioz's *L'Enfance du Christ* with the Radio France Orchestra, and was immediately re-engaged for upcoming seasons as Cecil in *Maria Stuarda* and Assur in *Semiramide*. Other future engagements include Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte* in Nantes (France), his first Timur in *Turandot* with Opera Pacific, Fiesco in *Simon Boccanegra* in Brussels and Mozart's Figaro with L'Opéra de Nice. In 1991, he will sing Gremin in *Eugene Onegin* in Pittsburgh, in addition to the title role of *Don Giovanni* for the Lyons Opera and L'Opéra de Nice.

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 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



PHILIP SKINNER

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.

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 Poldarte in the Opera Center's Showcase production of Handel's *Giustino*. He was a member of the Merola



LeROY VILLANUEVA

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.

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KAZIMIERZ KORD

**Kazimierz Kord**, conductor of *Falstaff* and *Otello*, has held the post of music director of the Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra for 12 years. He made his San Francisco Opera debut in 1973, leading performances of *Boris Godunov* and *Rigoletto*, returning for *Macbeth* in the fall of 1986 and for *La Gioconda* last year. Since 1967, he has been engaged as guest conductor in the major music centers throughout the world, with repeated appearances in Paris, London, Rome, Berlin, Amsterdam, Stockholm, Munich, Düsseldorf, Copenhagen, Tokyo, Leningrad and Moscow. In 1972, he made his American debut at the Metropolitan Opera, conducting *The Queen of Spades*, and has since returned to the Met for productions of *Così fan tutte*, *Aida*, *Boris Godunov* and *Macbeth*. Previous positions he has held include that of music director of the Southwest German Radio Orchestra in Baden-Baden, and principal conductor of the Cincinnati Symphony from 1980 to 1982. In the U.S., he has conducted the symphony orchestras of San Francisco, Chicago and Cleveland, among others. His career also included a five-year music directorship of the Polish National Radio and Television Orchestra. Maestro Kord and the Warsaw Philharmonic made highly successful tours of the United States in 1982 and 1987, and currently plan to return to this country next year. He is also a sought-after recording artist with over 20 major albums in his discography, including Tchaikovsky's *Pathétique* Symphony with London's Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, and Massenet's *Don Quichotte* with the Suisse Romande Orchestra.



JEAN-PIERRE PONNELLE

One of the world's most noted and discussed directors and designers, the late **Jean-Pierre Ponnelle** conceived the productions of *Falstaff* (1985) and *Otello* (1970, 1974, 1978, 1983), and designed the sets and costumes for both operas. Ponnelle studied at the Sorbonne in Paris, his native city, and in 1952 created the scenery for the world premiere of *Boulevard Solitude*, Hans Werner Henze's first opera. During the 1950s, he designed for the principal German theaters, both opera and drama, and made his design debut at the Vienna State Opera, the Rome Opera, the Opéra-Comique in Paris and San Francisco where his American debut was marked by productions of Orff's *Carmina Burana* and *The Wise Maiden* in 1958. He returned to San Francisco in 1959 for the American premiere of *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. In 1968 he began to assume dual responsibility as director/designer with productions of *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and *Così fan tutte* at the Salzburg Festival, where he returned for numerous productions. The first American project both designed and directed by Ponnelle was San Francisco Opera's *La Cenerentola*, seen here for the first time in 1969 and revived for the 1974 and '82 Fall Seasons. Other Ponnelle San Francisco productions include *Der Fliegende Holländer*, *Così fan tutte*, *Lear*, *Cavalleria Rusticana*, *Pagliacci*, *Rigoletto*, *Gianni Schicchi*, *Tosca*, *Turandot*, *La Bohème*, *Il Prigioniero*, *Idomeneo* and *Carmen*. His productions have been seen in all of the world's major houses. In 1981, he staged *Tristan und Isolde* at Bayreuth, a

production that was subsequently filmed. For the Zurich Opera, he mounted a highly acclaimed Monteverdi cycle and also staged a Mozart cycle: *Mitridate*, *Idomeneo* and *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*. Other successes in past years include Wagner's *Liebesverbot* (Munich), *Così fan tutte*, *Le Nozze di Figaro* and *Don Giovanni* (Paris), *Parsifal* (Cologne), *Fidelio* (Berlin), *Aida* (Covent Garden), *La Clemenza di Tito* (Metropolitan Opera), *Cavalleria Rusticana/Pagliacci* (Vienna), and *Lulu* (1985 Munich Opera Festival). Ponnelle's production of *L'Italiana in Algeri*, created for La Scala, received rave reviews in Bologna in 1987, and his production of the world premiere of Reimann's *The Trojan Women* at Munich in July of 1986 received wide critical and popular acclaim. Television viewers have been privileged to see many of his productions including *Idomeneo* and *Le Nozze di Figaro* from the Met, *The Magic Flute* from the Salzburg Festival, as well as filmed versions of *Madama Butterfly*, *Carmina Burana*, *Rigoletto*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *La Cenerentola*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *La Clemenza di Tito*, and the three extant Monteverdi operas.



GRISCHA ASAGAROFF

Returning for his seventh season with the San Francisco Opera, German director **Grischa Asagaroff** directs Verdi's *Otello* and Strauss' *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. While studying theater science, music and art history at the University of Munich, he served as stage manager and second assistant at the Bavarian State Opera, where he worked on over 70 different operas from all periods with such directors as Rudolf Hartmann, Günther Rennert, Otto Schenk, August Everding and Jean-Pierre Ponnelle. From 1971 to 1979 he was first assistant and director for the Deutsche Oper am Rhein in Düsseldorf. His first assignment with the San Francisco Opera was assisting Ponnelle on the 1977 production of *Idomeneo* and he served director Nikolaus Lehnhoff in a similar capacity for *Die Frau ohne Schatten* in 1980 and for *Salome* during the 1982 Fall Season. Other assignments for the Company include the staging of *Manon Lescaut* (1983, 1988), and directing Ponnelle's productions of *Rigoletto* (Summer 1981), *La Cenerentola* (Fall 1982), and *Otello* (Fall 1983). From 1979 to 1986, he was principal stage director at the Zurich Opera as well as the director of the opera studio, and is currently principal stage director and production manager at the Vienna State Opera. Asagaroff's own productions include *La Cenerentola* in Athens, *L'Orfeo* at the Split Festival, *Così fan tutte* in Chicago, *Carmen* in Pittsburgh, *Simon Boccanegra* and *Tosca* in Houston, *Idomeneo* and *Turandot* in Turin, *Das Rheingold*, *Die Walküre* and *Siegfried* in Saarbrücken, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *Maria Stuarda* and *Eugene Onegin* in Vienna, and over 10 operas in Zurich, including new productions of *Fedora*, *Maria Stuarda*, *Rigoletto*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Macbeth* and *Nabucco*. Future engagements include Mozart's *Lucio Silla* in Vienna, *Don Pasquale* in London, *L'Italiana in Algeri* in Munich, and the complete Ring cycle in Saarbrücken.

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## Otello Interpreters

Francesco Tamagno still remains the most famous of *Otellos*, even among those tenors who have never actually heard the echo of his silver-trumpet voice on the multiple recordings of three principal scenes he made late in his life. After Tamagno, the royal line of *Otellos* includes Giovanni Zenatello, Leo Slezak, Giovanni Martinelli, Ramon Vinay, Mario del Monaco, Jon Vickers, James McCracken and Plácido Domingo. Among the more interesting rarities was the mighty Wagnerian Lauritz Melchior, who sang the role occasionally in German, but at the peak of his career only in one season in Italian at Covent Garden, and once at the San Francisco Opera.

Among the more celebrated Desdemonas were Nellie Melba, Emma Eames, Eide Norena, Lotte Lehmann, Elisabeth Rethberg, Renata Tebaldi, Victoria de los Angeles, Zinka Milanov, Mirella Freni, Margaret Price and Kiri Te Kanawa. Iagos of particular subtlety, malevolence or splendor after Maurel were such Italian baritones as Titta Ruffo, Mariano Stabile, and Tito Gobbi; everyone in the great line of American Verdi baritones found particular success in this part—Lawrence Tibbett, Richard Bonelli, Leonard Warren, Robert Merrill, Cornell MacNeil and Sherrill Milnes.

At the San Francisco Opera, *Otello* protagonists included, as already mentioned, Lauritz Melchior; Martinelli, who sang his first-ever Moor at the War Memorial; Set Svanholm, Vinay, Del Monaco, McCracken, Domingo, Carlo Cosutta, James King and Richard Cassilly. Among the Desdemonas were Rethberg, Licia Albanese, Tebaldi, Herva Nelli, De los Angeles, Pilar Lorengar, Raina Kabaivanska and Margaret Price. The Iagos were interpreted by, among others, Richard Bonelli, Tibbett, Warren, Giuseppe Valdengo, as well as Tito Gobbi.

R.D.



Pilar Lorengar portrayed Desdemona in 1964 and again in 1974, at which time this photo was taken.

begun.

Much of the correspondence concerns casting the opera and rehearsing the singers; it illuminates the creators' views of what they had accomplished. Verdi was particularly concerned with the choice of a soprano for the glowing music of Desdemona, and in the end he was not particularly happy with the decision to use Romilda Pantaleone. "In spite of her dramatic instinct for high-strung parts, [Pantaleone] could not feel and understand Desdemona ... the character of Desdemona, who allows herself to be mistreated, slapped, even strangled, who forgives and commends herself to God, seems a bit stupid! But Desdemona is not a woman, she is a type! She is the type of goodness, of resignation, of sacrifice! Such beings are born for others, unconscious of their *own self!* Beings that exist in part, and that Shakespeare has put into poetic form and has deified by creating Desdemona, Cordelia, Juliet, etc. etc.—these are types that perhaps can only be compared to the Antigone of the ancient

theater."

This is a very 19th-century interpretation of a figure who in Shakespeare is a much spunkier character than Verdi and Boito let her be—Shakespeare's Desdemona enjoys dirty jokes. But it is a character Verdi convincingly created in music. Nearly every phrase she sings is marked *dolce* or *dolcissimo* and her broadest-spanning and most heroic phrase, in the third act duet with Otello, expresses her bewildered wonder that she should be the innocent cause of so much grief in another (the phrase, with its octave and a half leap to high B flat derives from a line in the first-act love duet). Over and over Verdi counsels Pantaleone and her advisers that the role must be sung with sweetness, legato, entirely in head voice.

And those today who class Desdemona among Verdi's "easy" roles because her music lacks coloratura, vehemence and extremes of range, should read the letters in which the composer emphasizes the difficulties of the last-act "Willow Song," where the soprano must sing in

three voices ("like the Holy Trinity," Verdi remarks)—Desdemona's voice; the voice of her mother's maid, Barbara, who used to sing this song which now fills Desdemona with such sadness; and an undefined voice that is neither Desdemona's nor Barbara's, a voice which sighs *Salce* ("Willow"), a voice which is less heard than overheard.

Otello, of course, is a role notorious for its vocal violence; even tenors know that this is the most dangerous role in the Italian repertory. Verdi wrote that Otello must "howl"—this was the tradition of the role on the Italian stage in the famous theatrical interpretations of Ernesto Rossi and Tommaso Salvini. But he was reluctant to engage the tenor Francesco Tamagno, whose interpretation of the title role became legendary. Repeatedly, Verdi insists that Otello must *sing* as well as howl: it is singing of Otello's wide-spanning and noble phrases that makes the eruptions into violence so powerful. It is no surprise to read instructions like *terribile* and *con disperazione*. But if some famous interpreters of Otello were to refresh their memory of the score, they would find that the instruction to sing *dolce* and *legato* appears almost as often as it does in Desdemona's music; one phrase is even marked *con eleganza*.

The choice of the French baritone Victor Maurel for Iago's slithering, chromatic music was more nearly a foregone conclusion; Verdi admired Maurel's singing, acting, and, perhaps most of all, pronunciation. "In this part, one must neither *sing* nor (with few exceptions) *raise one's voice*. If I were a singing actor, for example, I would speak it all in a whisper, *mezza voce*."

The premiere at La Scala, on February 5, 1887, was an occasion of triumph and high emotion. Boito and Verdi repeatedly came to the stage, with the house on its feet, cheering and weeping. Verdi's young American admirer, the journalist Blanche Roosevelt, who wrote a book about the event, exclaimed of this new 74-year-old conqueror, "Veni, vedi, vici, Verdi!"

Verdi's own comment, after he had finished the score, is more moving. "Dear Boito," he wrote from Sant'Agata on November 1, 1886, "It's finished! Good health to us ... (and also to *Him!!!*). Goodbye."

Within two years, he and Boito were at work together again, with Shakespeare as their collaborator, and the result was *Falstaff*. ■



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# About Humanity and Music

By NINA BECKWITH

Shortly before the momentous China events of May and June 1989, the San Francisco Opera Center sent opera artists to Shanghai for the fourth time in two years.

This time only two young artists went, because their hosts had invited them for particular reasons. Their not-quite three weeks in China were as crammed with musical events and discoveries as previous Opera Center trips which had involved many more people.

Making his fourth trip was Patrick Summers who came to San Francisco in 1986 as an apprentice coach in the Merola Opera Program, one of the many training and performance programs for young artists which comprise the Opera Center. He had gone on to Western Opera Theater (WOT), the Opera Center's touring and educational branch, as assistant conductor and then as music director. He is now a member of the conducting staff of San Francisco Opera.

His companion on this China trip was soprano Cheryl Parrish who had been invited to give a recital in Shanghai. She was a Merola Program participant in 1981 and 1982, and made her San Francisco Opera debut in 1983, when she also gave the first Schwabacher Debut Recital in a series which has become part of the Opera Center and an eagerly-awaited feature of the City's musical life. In 1984 Parrish was awarded an Adler Fellowship, one of the prestigious eleven-month residencies

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*Nina Beckwith has written often about the San Francisco Opera Center's expanding series of programs for the professional preparation of young opera artists and has chronicled all of its Pacific Rim Opera Exchanges to date.*

with San Francisco Opera given each year to a small group of exceptional young artists. Since then she has performed major roles with her "home" company (most recently Papagena in the 1987 *Magic Flute*) and on opera stages all over the U.S. and Europe.

"When I accepted the offer to go to China," Parrish says, "I couldn't have imagined what was in store for me. I had seen films, read books, and interviewed others who had gone. But none of it came close to the experience of being there!



*Mme. Zhou Xiao-Yen welcomes Cheryl Parrish at the Shanghai Conservatory in March of 1989.*

"What I experienced was exhilarating," she says. "I learned so much watching the young Chinese singers while they were working very hard to absorb it all: language, musical style, performing—the process of being physically expressive, musically expressive—each aspect a tremendous challenge, but they were meeting it."

That same kind of exhilaration was

felt by all the Opera Center artists who went to China and were deeply touched and delighted at being able to share their music with people so intensely eager to possess it, so diligent and responsive.

The first Opera Center venture across the Pacific had come two years earlier, in March of 1987, when Western Opera Theater was invited to perform in Shanghai. During a brief Beijing stopover en route, the young singers of the company gave an informal concert for American Ambassador Winston Lord, his wife Bette Bao Lord, and guests from other embassies and missions in the capital.

After the Cultural Revolution ended, European opera troupes had visited mainland China, among them the Genoa Opera from Italy with Luciano Pavarotti, but the young WOT artists were the first American professional opera company to perform in the People's Republic.

In addition to the double casts of WOT's ingeniously portable production of Puccini's *La Bohème*, which had enchanted audiences on the company's just-completed American tour, that pioneering Opera Center group included seasoned opera production experts who participated in discussions and workshops with Shanghai theatrical counterparts, helping to make the trip a real mind-opening people-to-people exchange.

Shanghai audiences responded with fervor to the fresh and very believable WOT *Bohème*, conducted by music director Evan Whallon, and to the finale of that tour: a gala concert of opera arias and songs from Broadway musicals, performed by the American singers together with young singers from the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. Whallon and his assistant, 23-year-old Patrick Summers, shared coaching and conducting for the

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In Mme. Zhou Xiao-Yen's studio at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music last March: (l. to r.) Cheryl Parrish, Mme. Zhou Xiao-Yen, San Francisco Opera Center Director Christine Bullin, and coach/accompanist/conductor Patrick Summers at the piano.

concert. Unlike their American counterparts, young Chinese opera students seldom have the chance to perform in public; that joint concert was the first such international music-making to happen on a stage in China. Both the opera and the concert were shown repeatedly on Chinese television.

Two months later Summers was back in Shanghai—if only for two days—with San Francisco Opera's then General Director Terence McEwen, Opera Center Manager Christine Bullin, and six Opera Center singers who were entertaining the passengers on a Royal Viking lines Far East cruise.

McEwen, too, was exhilarated and deeply moved by his encounter with the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, its talented and dedicated students, and the indomitable spirit of its principal opera teacher, Madame Zhou Xiao-Yen, who studied and performed in Paris before World War II.

The San Francisco/Shanghai exchange fostered by McEwen sent much-needed music materials to the Conservatory and brought two students and a teacher from Shanghai to the Merola Opera Program in the summer of 1988.

In April of that year, Patrick Summers had been invited back to

Shanghai to prepare and conduct the first performances of Puccini's *Tosca* ever produced in China. After rehearsing what he calls "that treacherously difficult score" with the Shanghai Opera musicians for seven or eight hours each day, he went to the Conservatory for several hours of coaching in the evening. He was also preparing a second and much more ambitious joint concert with American singers and Zhou Xiao-Yen's young Chinese singers, all in a short span of time.

After his first fortnight in Shanghai, Summers was joined by Christine Bullin, by San Francisco Opera's Italian coach Elena Servi, who held language classes for Conservatory opera students, and by four Opera Center singers.

*Tosca* was performed three times: twice bilingually in Italian and Chinese, and once entirely in Chinese, requiring syllable-by-syllable numbering of the entire score by Summers, who does not speak Chinese—yet—so he could give the proper cues. The Shanghai Opera had welcomed the opportunity to share in the San Francisco connection and have its audiences hear and see western singers perform in the original language of the opera.

Shanghai's *Tosca* was a splendid production, "a marvelous mix of Chinese

movement imposed on a verismo opera," said Elena Servi, "and it worked miraculously." On opening night, after the opera ended with *Tosca*'s last cry and the orchestral postlude, Summers remembers "five seconds of total silence, and then this incredible roar from those 4,000 people in the theater."

Sixteen Shanghai Conservatory singers took part in the 1988 joint concert with the four Americans. In addition to ensembles from operas by Verdi, Bizet, Donizetti, and Mozart, plus music by Jerome Kern and Leonard Bernstein, the program included the final trio from *Der Rosenkavalier* by Richard Strauss—a composer previously unknown to the Chinese orchestra and audience. Summers felt "an indescribable elation in presenting that music and having people hear those glorious sonorities for the first time."

For the Opera Center Americans who went to China, the saying that music is a universal language will never sound banal. Of course, as Christine Bullin observes, it's intriguing to go to China and sing the sextet from *Lucia di Lammermoor* with people whose traditions are so very different, "but I have felt each time that this music-making together is a means to something more profound," she says. "It's not just a trip. It's about human qualities;





After their recital in Nanjing, Patrick Summers and Cheryl Parrish talk to an 82-year old admirer who spoke to them in flawless English. At left is Mme. Zhou Xiao-Yen.



Cheryl Parrish and passersby on a Shanghai street.

it's about becoming more generous as a person and as an artist, and knowing the world you live in and seeing that music has real meaning outside of oneself, one's talent, one's own career."

When Summers returned to Shanghai in the spring of 1989, to be joined by Cheryl Parrish, it was to work within a new organism: the Zhou Xiao-Yen Opera Center, founded in September of 1988 as part of the Shanghai Conservatory, and the fulfillment of hopes which Mme. Zhou had cherished for many very difficult years.

In her beautiful English, during a visit to San Francisco a few months earlier, Mme. Zhou explained that her Center was intended to "create stages, conditions for our young opera aspirants to work and make careers in China. And not only singers but also our own opera conductors, directors, and perhaps even composers."

A good many modern Chinese operas are performed by the Conservatory singers along with their studies of western music. "Vocal technique is not much different," Mme. Zhou pointed out, "but expression of feelings is utterly different in Chinese culture from that of the west. Hybrid productions? Why not? Every culture nourishes every other culture. Maybe a new creative mixture of cultures will come out of this."

Mme. Zhou credits the San Francisco Opera Center with invaluable inspiration and assistance, such as sending coaches and teachers and materials. "Maybe that will be the biggest contribution San Francisco will make," she says, "teaching our teachers and coaches."

As its first production of an entire opera, rather than the scenes and ensembles which were all Conservatory facilities would allow, the new Zhou Xiao-Yen Opera Center was preparing to present Verdi's *Rigoletto* in the fall of 1989. The opera would be performed in Nanjing, six hours away by train, where there was a good theater and an eager public, as well as in Shanghai.

Remembering the 1987 WOT *Bohème* and its simple but effective sets, designed by San Francisco Opera's chief scenic artist Jay Kotcher to travel in a 42-foot truck and function on stages of many different sizes, the Chinese had asked for the designs of the WOT touring production of *Rigoletto* so they could build it in Nanjing to travel by train to Shanghai.

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Sporting her new silk jacket, Cheryl Parrish takes a detour through a street in Shanghai.

opera and coaching Mme. Zhou's Conservatory singers were two of Patrick Summers's happy tasks on his 1989 visit. He also acted as Cheryl Parrish's recital accompanist, and found out only after arriving in China that they were to give a second recital with Conservatory singers in Nanjing. Parrish and Summers had worked out the recital program by phone; they met for the first time in China and found themselves in complete musical harmony.

On Parrish's first evening in Shanghai, she went with Summers to the Conservatory for his *Rigoletto* class. But there was to be no class that evening: the electricity was off. On their way out, two students stopped them to ask if they would like to hear some music on ancient Chinese instruments. They went with the students to an upstairs studio where a wonderful concert took place in complete darkness.

After the students played Chinese music, "they asked if we knew any Mozart," Summers recalls, "so I sang the first movement of the *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* and one girl played it back by ear on the erhu, a cello-like instrument. It was fabulous: she played it very well. Cheryl

and I walked back to the hotel talking about that music which seems old to us and yet is so much more recent than the ancient instruments they played. That's the kind of glimpse of Chinese life I never had time for on the earlier trips."

At the Conservatory while Parrish prepared her recital, she remembers that students would quietly appear in the doorway and ask if they could copy her music. She also worked on arias with a few of the students, mainly on the acting of such roles as Gilda. "They had heard me talking about how it's done," Summers says, "but that's not like hearing Cheryl who is a singing person. It was really exciting for them."

For her Shanghai recital in the Conservatory concert hall before a packed audience, Parrish's program included the Debussy *Chansons de Jeunesse*; eight songs of Richard Strauss; three by the contemporary composer John Duke to poems of e.e. cummings ("the audience really loved the humor in those," Summers says), and it closed with Ophelia's mad scene from the Ambroise Thomas opera *Hamlet*.

"My experience with Chinese audiences is that they are not quiet, so I didn't expect such absolute silence," Summers

says. He mentions a long pause in the Strauss song "Allerseelen," about All Souls Day, which calls for silence "and again I was surprised: it was the most profound silence I ever heard in my life. Cheryl and I looked at each other at that moment with tears in our eyes and realized that those people were completely with us." "Without any barriers whatsoever," Parrish adds, "we shared with them this magnificent thing called music."

There were long talks about music and life on the long train rides to and from Nanjing. Zhou Xiao-Yen traveled with Parrish and Summers, bringing along abundant delicacies as only tea was served aboard. Summers had time to tell Mme. Zhou how impressed he was by the improvement in her singers, many of whom he had worked with on previous visits. "I saw them this year as much closer to being able to join the operatic forces of the world," he said, while Mme. Zhou (whom he calls "one of the most beautiful human beings I ever hope to know") gave much credit to his coaching and insistence on unflagging attention to musical values.

They talked, too, about a project for the spring of 1990 which had been Sum-

mers's dream since he first went to China: a production of Mozart's *The Magic Flute* entirely done in Chinese opera style and sung in Chinese. "After all," he said, "Mozart conceived the opera to be a humanitarian ideal: good overcoming evil, which is the subject of nearly all Chinese operas." They agreed that it would be a fantastically wonderful undertaking, especially as there has never been a Mozart opera produced in China.

Parrish had bought a white silk Chinese coat which she wore at the Nanjing concert, to the delight of the Chinese singers and the public whose response was "electrifying," she said. "Singing for audiences who are comparing you to all their CDs is like preparing food for people who have just had a seven-course dinner. But those people in China were sharing a rapturous experience with us. I didn't feel like a foreigner: I felt a part of them. It was entirely about humanity and music."

Like the other American opera people before her, Parrish was tantalized by the question of why the young Chinese wanted so passionately to participate in western music. She had to be content with the unmistakable evidence and a few answers, ranging from "I just love it," to "It's open expression of our despair, our love, our feelings about life."

Summers, who learned and accompanied four Chinese songs for the Nanjing concert, has come to accept sharing music with the Chinese simply as his part of communicating and understanding. "It's good to be crossing several cultures—Americans performing German and French music for Chinese, and Chinese performing American music," he said soon after his return to San Francisco.

Speaking before the events of May and June 1989, he added: "It doesn't have to effect political change. It's unto itself as art. It's enough that on those occasions those people heard that music and it reached them and touched them."

In the aftermath of June 1989, there is promise and prayer in the Finale of Leonard Bernstein's *Candide*. The young Chinese singers learned it for their 1988 Shanghai joint concert and the Merola Program singers closed their Grand Finals concert with it that year in San Francisco:

"... We're neither pure nor wise nor good,  
We'll do the best we know;  
We'll build our house and chop our wood  
And make our garden grow." ■

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## Company Profiles: David Kadarrauch

*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.*

Cellist David Kadarrauch first got the opera bug when, in his late teens, he played in the Philadelphia Lyric Opera Orchestra. "It was basically a pick-up company," Kadarrauch recalls, "not on the level of the San Francisco Opera. The conductors were not interesting, but I did get my first exposure to the great singers—most memorably, Joan Sutherland, Renata Tebaldi, and Nicolai Ghiaurov.

"I really got the bug in Vienna, where I went on a Fulbright Scholarship in 1968-70, after I graduated from Curtis Institute in Philadelphia," he continues. "In Vienna, I attended an opera or a concert almost every night, often standing. I had never seen *The Magic Flute*, but I was so taken with the production at the Wiener Staatsoper that I saw it seven times my first season—along with many other operas I hadn't done in Philadelphia, including *Der Rosenkavalier* and many others. Vienna was a formative experience, in that sense and in many others.

"I had made my decision to become a professional musician when I entered Curtis, which is solely a music school. I learned to play the instrument very well, technically, at Curtis. But it was helpful for me to go off to Europe to finish off artistically. My schedule there was a cello lesson once a week and a class or two. So I had a lot of time to think about what I was doing, an important stage in a musician's development that should not be bypassed. At Curtis, I basically did what my teacher said. I was shy and did what I was told—which is not necessarily the best thing if you're going into the arts. At some point you have to break away and form your own ideas about what you're doing.

In Vienna, although I also worked with a very good teacher, I decided to teach myself."

Apart from a short, unsatisfying period studying piano, Kadarrauch has concentrated on the cello, "the only instrument I play." Born into a family in which his parents and siblings all played instruments, he was handed the cello at age 10 "because they needed one to fill out the family string quartet."



San Francisco Opera Orchestra's principal cellist David Kadarrauch and friend. MESSICK

Today, his devotion to the cello is made easier by the instrument he acquired in 1973 (just before joining the Company), a 1670 Tyrolean cello made by Jacob Stainer. A beautiful instrument that has been very little modified over the years, and then only to accommodate metal strings, it is capped not by the more usual scroll but by a carved gargoyle. "He's literally looking over my shoulder when I play," Kadarrauch says, "and I think he's there to growl if I do anything wrong."

Kadarrauch joined the San Francisco Symphony, as a section player, in 1971. He first played with the Opera Orchestra in 1974. The next year he became principal cellist, making his decision about which orchestra to remain with much easier. "Playing principal cello in an opera orchestra is very rewarding, simply because there are a large number of interesting solos—more than in either the symphonic or ballet repertoire."

Opera Orchestra musicians are not offered tenure until they have completed two years in the orchestra. Kadarrauch's trial period ended at a particularly nerve-racking time, during the 1976 season, when the world-renowned conductor Karl Böhm was leading *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. "There's a big cello solo in the second act of *Frau*, which is difficult because the range is huge—it runs all over the cello—and it begins unaccompanied. You're all alone. And I was desperately anxious for the solo to go well because my job was at stake. It must have gone alright, because Mr. Adler hired me."

Böhm, whom Kadarrauch calls "the greatest conductor I've ever worked under," was not a universal hit with

Kadarauch's colleagues in the pit. An often irascible man with a god-like persona, he conducted with his trademark "microbeat," which many players at first found hard to follow. "There was criticism of his lack of a precise, whiplash beat," Kadarauch says. "There's a feeling among some musicians that goes something like, 'Just give us a beat, and we'll supply the musicianship.' I think the opposite. I don't care how the conductor beats time. I want his knowledge, his musicianship—his spirit. There's no rational explanation for how a conductor can, with enormous economy of movement—and Böhm was very frail at the time—keep everybody together and have the orchestra sounding marvelous. It's mystical. But Böhm had it."

*Frau* is back this season, and Kadarauch is delighted that it is under the baton of Christoph von Dohnányi, "one of the greatest conductors in the world. We always look forward to his return." Kadarauch has played Strauss' *Ariadne auf Naxos* and Janáček's *Makropulos Case* and *Katya Kabanova* under Dohnányi. "He's more than a good musician, he's a great conductor. Some others are one but not the other. Orchestras tend to take advantage of conductors who are weak, so there has to be someone who, without browbeating the players, has their respect the minute he takes the podium. A great conductor like Dohnányi has everything: rhythm; a fantastic ear, for balances, pitches, and so forth; and a commanding personality. It's a matter of temperament in the largest sense."

Solo-wise, it is a big season for Kadarauch. First, there's the famous cello solo that introduces the love duet at the end of the first act of *Otello*. "Then there's a famous little cello solo in *Aida*, which is very difficult, ending in a pianissimo high note at the end. It comes at the end of 'Ritorna vincitor,' at which point the audience is often already applauding—for which principal cellists are grateful. There's also a tricky section for three cellos at the beginning of the opera."

Kadarauch also will be playing continuo in *Idomeneo*, a prospect he finds intriguing but daunting. "It's just harpsichord and cello during the recitatives, and playing those continuo parts well is both difficult and tiring. There's no beat, strictly. The words are printed above your music, and you just have to fit in with them. There's no time to relax."

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David Kadarauch in the corridor under the Opera House stage, on his way to the orchestra pit. MESSICK

ers to relax in scores like *Falstaff*, *Lulu*, and *Lohengrin*. "Many musicians develop physical, muscular problems. You have to learn to pace yourself so you don't have to stop. I have a little tendinitis condition that can flare up in my right shoulder. So if we have 12 bars of tremolo, I may lay back, tickling the strings very lightly, to save myself for the more important sections.

"The physical strain is one of the reasons we're constantly pushing for a lessening of our schedule when our contract is under negotiation. If Mr. Mansouri spreads the season throughout the year, as he has talked of doing, that would help alleviate the situation considerably."

A different kind of physical problem contributed to Kadarauch's only crisis during a cello solo. "One of the things cellists are always nervous about is the endpin slipping out from under them, sending the cello scooting. When we did *Die Walküre* in 1985, the first performance was also the broadcast performance, which gave a double whammy to my worries about my solo in the first act. Just as I was beginning it, the endpin slipped and my cello scooted. I had to continue playing while pulling the cello back up and getting it into position. The solo didn't sound quite as good as it should have, let's put it that way."

Playing in the Opera Orchestra has, Kadarauch allows, turned him into a

Wagner fan. "He's become one of my two favorite composers, Bach being the other. I find Bach a perfect fusion of emotional content and learned composing. I'm fond of his contrapuntal music—which is why I like late Wagner, too. His music got increasingly contrapuntal towards the end, and I think it shows the greatest skill in composition to be able to juggle several musical voices the way he does."

As principal cellist, Kadarauch, in addition to playing the solos, manages the section as a whole. "The hard part is to handle my fellow musicians tactfully, to get the desired results without offending anyone. As principal, I also have to sit in on auditions for all the vacancies in the orchestra. Usually, that's just two or three positions a year, but this year we are hiring a harp, an English horn, and two cellos—because we've expanded the cello section to seven players.

"Opera scores are more difficult than most symphony scores, so of course we're looking for people with good technique, people who can play all the notes. But we also look for people who can fit in. Particularly as the season progresses, it gets to be like a pressure cooker in the pit. Musicians tend to be pretty sensitive, and it adds to the pressure if you're getting on each others' nerves. So it helps if people



A Kadarauch family portrait from 1957: David Kadarauch (left), his father and brother, pausing after taking part in a string trio.

can get along with their colleagues."

In addition to the opera season, Kadarauch plays in the San Francisco Ballet orchestra, making for a busy schedule that allows little time for teaching or solo playing. But even during the season, he continues teaching two pupils on his day off. "It's not fair to tell people you want to keep that you can't see them from September through November." And there occasionally is time for solo outings in recitals and chamber music concerts.

Although he confesses to a love of an occasional game of golf, Kadarauch says his orchestra appointments and his family are the most important things in life—and allow little time for other pursuits. His wife, Anne, teaches the violin, specializing in teaching children, sometimes as young as two. The couple has two children, Sascha, 13, and Katie, 10. "They're both very gifted," says their admiring father. "At the age of 10, Katie plays four instruments. But things are unpredictable, and you never know how they're going to come out. And the music business has become so tight that I wouldn't recommend that any but the most gifted musicians go into the business.

"When I graduated from Curtis, just

about anyone who was a decent player could get a job eventually. Now, when there's an opening in the Opera Orchestra, as many as 200 people apply. It's tragic, really. American conservatories are turning out a few thousand musicians a year—with fewer than a hundred professional positions opening each year.

"Now more than ever, you need good nerves. A lot of people play very well, but in auditions, your whole future is determined in ten minutes. If you fall apart in those ten minutes, you may never get a job. And you have to be a little competitive, a little hungry. You have to want the job, practice hard, and convince yourself that you're better than the other 199 applicants. And since the job is difficult, and doesn't pay as well as professions like medicine and law, you better make sure you love music.

"Some opera musicians feel that playing in the pit, instead of on stage, keeps you out of the limelight. But I honestly don't believe that. From my point of view, the orchestra is the backbone of any opera company. It's very difficult, very challenging, and, if you play well, highly rewarding."

—Timothy Pfaff



David Kadarauch at his stand in the Opera House orchestra pit. MESSICK



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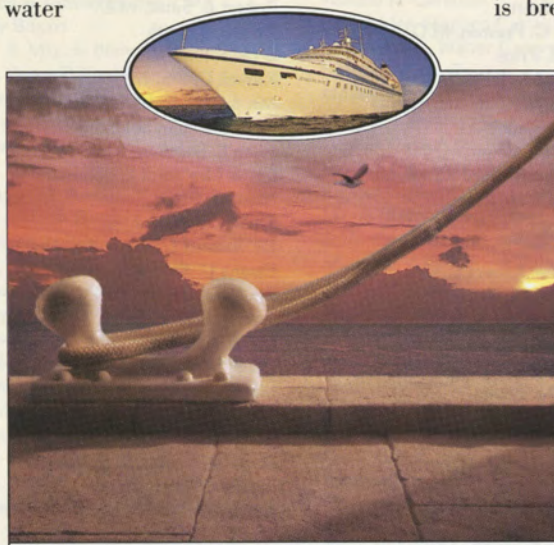
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This bus is added to Muni's north-bound 47 line following all evening performances of the Opera. The service is also provided for all Sunday matinees.

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Important Notice:** The box office in the outer lobby of the Opera House will remain open through the first intermission of every performance.

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

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

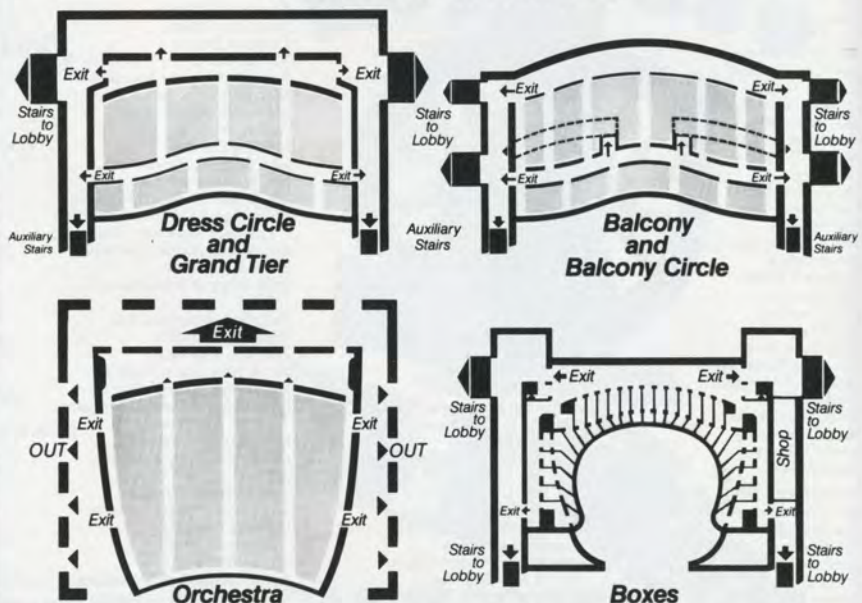
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For lost and found information, inquire at check room No. 3 or call (415) 621-6600, 8:30 A.M. to 11:30 A.M. Monday through Friday. For the safety and comfort of our audience all large parcels, backpacks, luggage, etc., must be checked at the Opera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

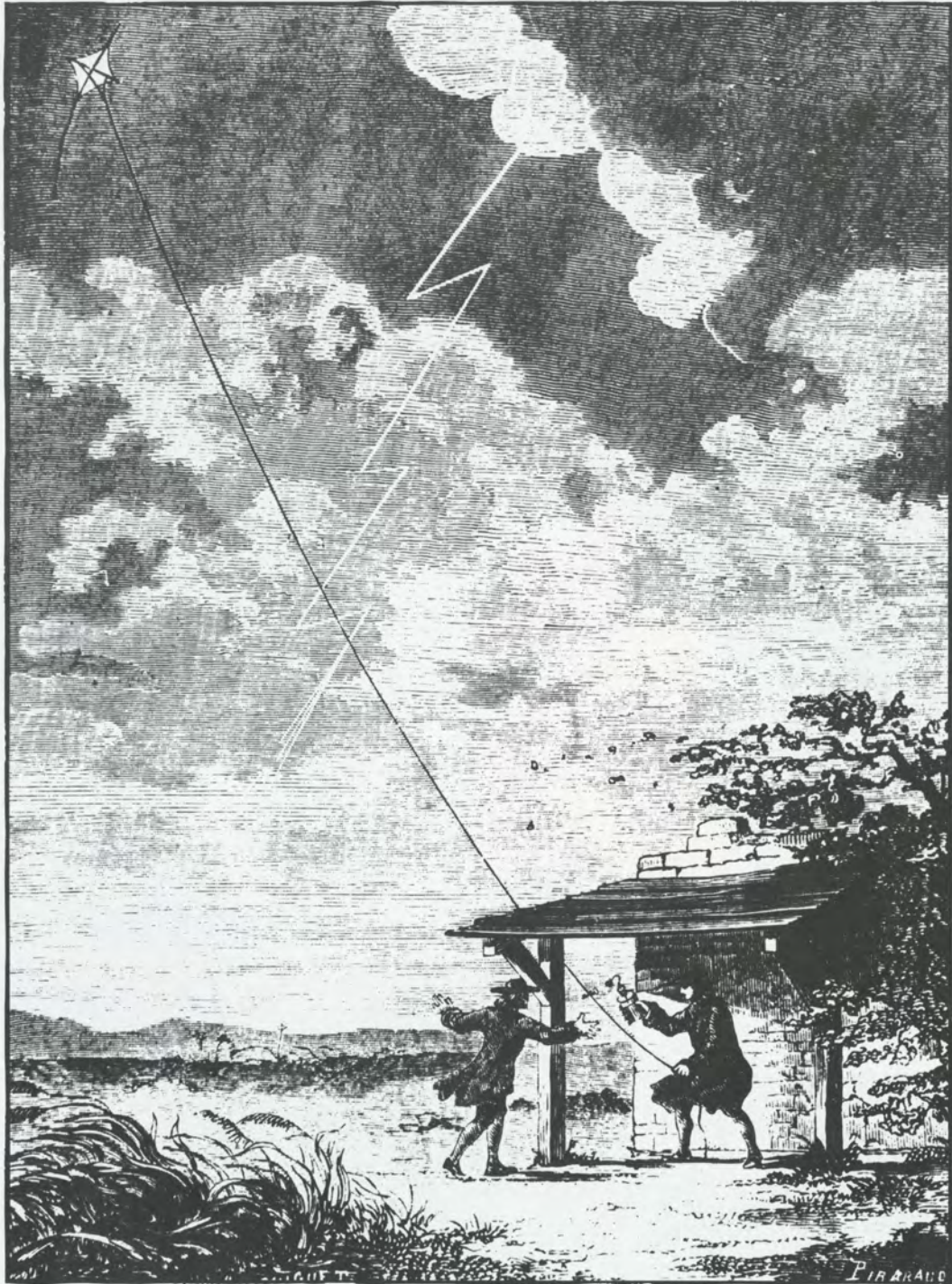
**Taxi Service** Patrons needing a cab at the end of the performance should reserve one with the doorman at the taxi entrance before the end of the final intermission.

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

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



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