

Un Ballo in Maschera
(A Masked Ball)

1990

Sunday, October 28, 1990 2:00 PM
Wednesday, October 31, 1990 7:30 PM
Saturday, November 3, 1990 8:00 PM
Tuesday, November 6, 1990 8:00 PM
Friday, November 9, 1990 8:00 PM
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Sunday, November 18, 1990 2:00 PM

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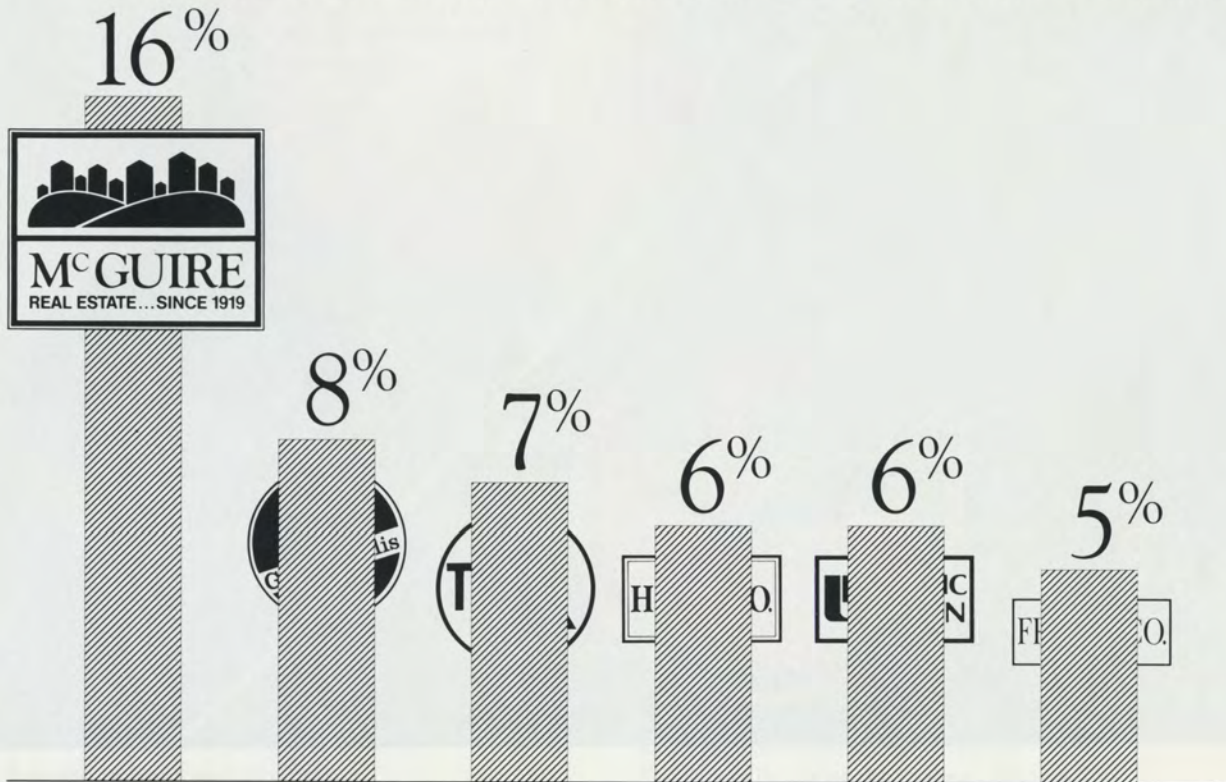


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San Francisco Opera

Lotfi Mansouri, *General Director*

Un Ballo in Maschera

1990 SEASON
Vol. 68, No. 9

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Shedding light on some well- and lesser-known facts about *Un Ballo in Maschera*.
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Longhi, Alessandro, 1733-1813
Bal masqué

Oil on canvas; 33x39 in.

Gift of the late Lily Carstairs, Paris

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SOHL

From the President and the Chairman of the Board

Welcome to the 68th Fall Season of San Francisco Opera. Our first season of opera in the 1990s offers much that is new, including a new president of the Opera Association Board of Directors. Both of us have served on the board for a number of years, and it is most exciting to be involved as this great Company reassesses its past and prepares for a promising future.

We on the board are not always highly visible to our audiences. What appears on our stage, however, is; and this year, there is an unusually high number of productions new to San Francisco Opera audiences: seven of our eleven fall season productions have not been seen here before. The economics of opera production being what they are, we could never have such an abundance of new productions without some very creative planning on the part of our administration. Opera is the most labor-intensive, and therefore expensive, of all the performing arts; no American opera company could possibly afford to build seven new productions in one year in today's fiscal climate.

We have built three new productions in our San Francisco Opera shops this year, which in itself is an impressive

figure, and two of them have been made possible through deeply appreciated donations. Our new production of Mozart's *The Abduction from the Seraglio* was underwritten by a generous grant from the L.J. and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation, and San Francisco Opera gratefully acknowledges the generous gift from Mr. and Mrs. Gorham B. Knowles and The Edward E. Hills Fund to underwrite our new *Die Fledermaus*.

Opera companies can save considerable amounts of money by creating a new production together, and that is what we have done with Berg's *Wozzeck*, in tandem with the Canadian Opera Company in Toronto. For helping us cover our end of the costs of this joint venture, San Francisco Opera extends its heartfelt gratitude to the Paul L. and Phyllis C. Wattis Foundation.

Even our own productions that we revive do not come free; the costs in refurbishing a production are surprisingly high, and San Francisco Opera gratefully acknowledges a generous gift from Maria Manetti Farrow to underwrite our revival of *Pagliacci*. Our other revived productions owe their original creation to the generosity of previous donations: *Rigoletto* was made possible by

a gift from James D. Robertson, *Khovanshchina* by a gift from the L.J. and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation, and *Un Ballo in Maschera* by a gift from an anonymous friend of San Francisco Opera. To all of the benefactors whose generosity made this bright new season possible, our deepest and warmest thanks!

In addition, we 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. The continued support of Mayor Art Agnos and Chief Administrative Officer Rudolf Nothenberg has been extremely gratifying. And of course, we extend our appreciation to the San Francisco Opera Guild and the War Memorial Board of Trustees for their ongoing support.

With the continuing support of the above-mentioned individuals, foundations, corporations and governmental agencies, we anticipate an exciting operatic experience as we explore the treasures of our repertoire in the 1990s.

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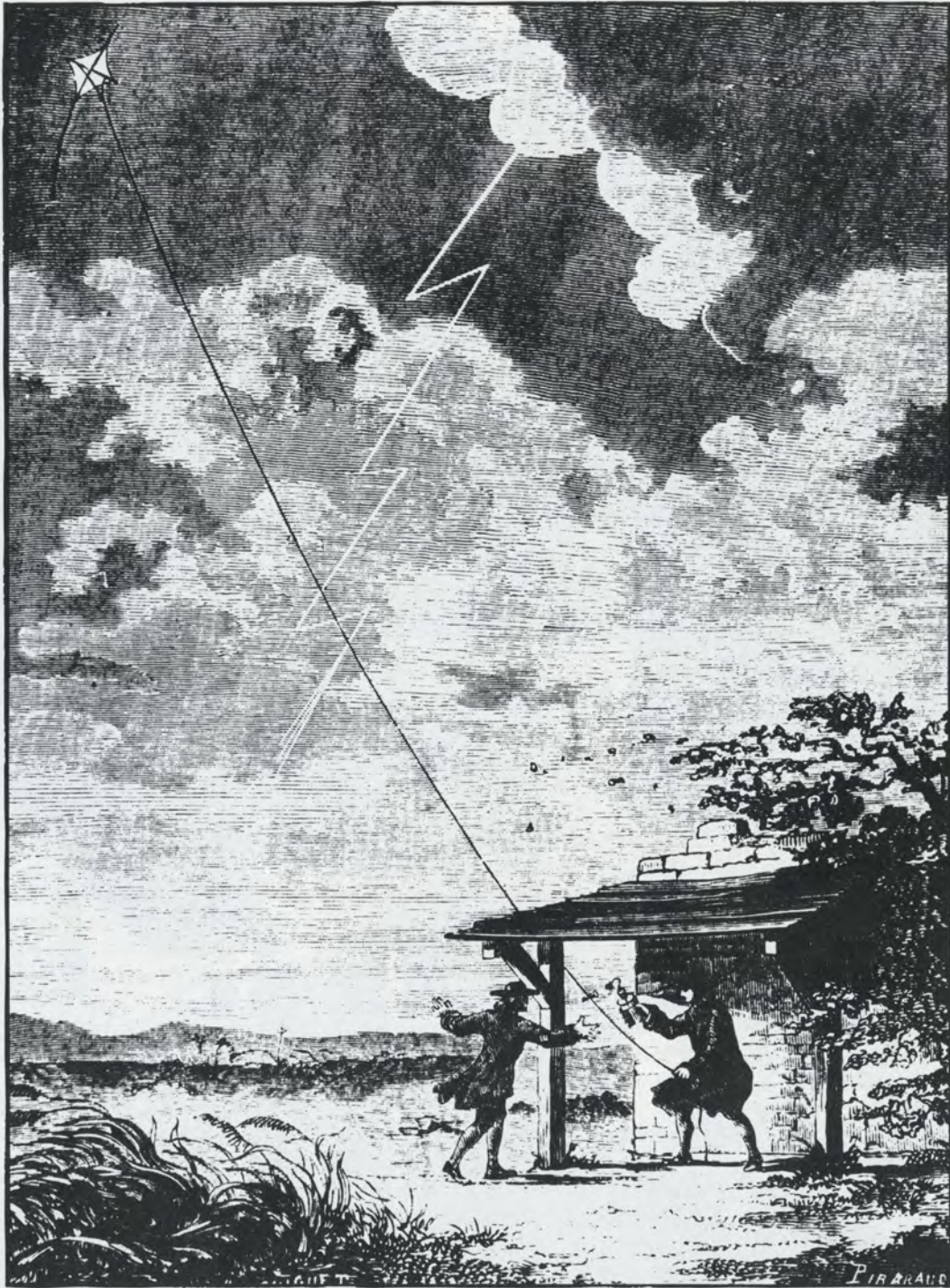


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General Director's Message

Another fall season is upon us, and once again I take delight in welcoming you back to San Francisco Opera. There are many new elements to this fall season, many more than usual, and our regular subscribers as well as our new audience members will find themselves on an adventurous exploration of new repertoire, new productions of familiar repertoire, and exciting debuts by a number of artists.

To begin with, an amazing seven of our eleven productions are new to San Francisco. Three of them represent Company premieres: Mozart's *The Abduction from the Seraglio* (previously staged by Spring Opera, but never before a part of our regular fall season), Mas-

senet's *Don Quichotte* and Monteverdi's *The Return of Ulysses to his Homeland*. Another opera receiving a new production, *Suor Angelica*, hasn't been performed in the War Memorial Opera House since 1952, while *Capriccio*, also new, has been part of only one previous fall season, in 1963. *Khovanshchina* has also been seen only once before, when the current production was unveiled in 1984.

The number of artists joining us for the first time this season is also impressive—so much so that it would be impossible to list everyone here: five conductors, two directors, five designers and nearly 20 singers will be making their San Francisco Opera debuts this fall,

while several returning artists will be undertaking new roles for the first time.

In short, there are many wonderful discoveries to be made this season, and I am extremely pleased that you will be here to make them along with us. The art form we call opera is nearly 400 years young, and it grows fresher, more vital and exciting every year. San Francisco Opera welcomes you as together we celebrate the liveliest of the performing arts.

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Lotfi Mansouri, *General Director*

1990 Season

Opening Night (CANCELLED) Friday, September 7, 7:30 <i>New Production</i> Suor Angelica Puccini Mitchell, Obratsova, Begg, Petersen, Keen, Williams, Racette, Randell*, Jepson*, Fortuna, Guo*, Claycomb*, Mills, Mavrovitis* Santi*/Copley/Perdziola*/Munn and Pagliacci Leoncavallo Mims*; Atlantov**, Manuguerra, G. Quilico, Gordon Santi/Calábria/Ponnelle/Munn <i>San Francisco Opera gratefully acknowledges a generous gift from Maria Manetti Farrow to underwrite the revival of this production of Pagliacci.</i>	Tuesday, Sept. 18, 8:00 (CANCELLED) Wozzeck Berg	Wednesday, September 19, 7:30 Suor Angelica Puccini and Pagliacci Leoncavallo	Wednesday, October 3, 7:30 Die Entführung aus dem Serail Mozart
Saturday, Sept. 8, 8 p.m. (CANCELLED) <i>New production, co-produced with the Canadian Opera Company</i> Wozzeck Berg Forst, Golden; Monk, Ellsworth, Kale**, Vogel, De Haan, Travis, Ledbetter, Frank Layer/Mansouri/Levine/Whitfield <i>San Francisco Opera gratefully acknowledges a generous grant from the Paul L. and Phyllis C. Wattis Foundation to underwrite this production.</i>	Tuesday, September 25, 8:00 Rigoletto Verdi	Thursday, September 20, 8:00 Rigoletto Verdi	Friday, October 5, 8:00 Rigoletto Verdi
Wednesday, Sept. 12, 7:30 (CANCELLED) Suor Angelica Puccini and Pagliacci Leoncavallo	Wednesday, September 26, 7:30 Wozzeck Berg	Friday, September 21, 8:00† Wozzeck Berg	Sunday, October 7, 2:00 Die Entführung aus dem Serail Mozart
Friday, Sept. 14, 8:00 (CANCELLED) Wozzeck Berg	Thursday, September 27, 7:30 <i>New Production</i> Die Entführung aus dem Serail Mozart Patterson, Parrish, Fortuna, Guo; Moll, Streit*, Magnusson*, Hoffmann*, Li, Graber Michael*/Wadsworth*/Lynch*/Long*/ Arhelger <i>San Francisco Opera gratefully acknowledges a generous grant from the L.J. and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation to underwrite this production.</i>	Saturday, September 22, 8:00 Suor Angelica Puccini and Pagliacci Leoncavallo	Tuesday, October 9, 8:00 Die Entführung aus dem Serail Mozart
Saturday, September 15, 8:00 Rigoletto Verdi Swenson, Powell**, Petersen, Fortuna, Mills; Fondary, Leech* Langan, Skinner, Estep, Villanueva, Ledbetter, Graber* Fiore/Asagaroff/Ponnelle/Munn <i>This production was originally made possible by a gift from James D. Robertson.</i>	Friday, September 28, 8:00 Suor Angelica Puccini and Pagliacci Leoncavallo	Sunday, September 23, 2:00 Wozzeck Berg	Wednesday, October 10, 7:30 Rigoletto Verdi
Sunday, September 16, 2:00 Suor Angelica Puccini and Pagliacci Leoncavallo	Saturday, September 29, 2:00 Wozzeck Berg	Tuesday, September 25, 8:00 Rigoletto Verdi	Thursday, October 11, 8:00 <i>San Francisco Opera Premiere</i> Don Quichotte Massenet Ciesinski, Mills, Cowdrick; Ramey, Tremont, Petersen, Wilborn*, Travis Rudel/Roubaud**/Morgan/Arhelger <i>This production is owned by the Lyric Opera of Chicago.</i>
	Sunday, September 30, 2:00 Rigoletto Verdi	Wednesday, September 26, 7:30 Wozzeck Berg	Friday, October 12, 7:30 Rigoletto Verdi
	Tuesday, October 2, 8:00 Suor Angelica Puccini and Pagliacci Leoncavallo (Tonio: Timothy Noble)	Thursday, September 27, 7:30 <i>New Production</i> Die Entführung aus dem Serail Mozart Patterson, Parrish, Fortuna, Guo; Moll, Streit*, Magnusson*, Hoffmann*, Li, Graber Michael*/Wadsworth*/Lynch*/Long*/ Arhelger <i>San Francisco Opera gratefully acknowledges a generous grant from the L.J. and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation to underwrite this production.</i>	Saturday, October 13, 8:00 Die Entführung aus dem Serail Mozart
	†ADDED PERFORMANCE	Friday, September 21, 8:00† Wozzeck Berg	Sunday, October 14, 2:00 Don Quichotte Massenet
		Saturday, September 22, 8:00 Suor Angelica Puccini and Pagliacci Leoncavallo	Tuesday, October 16, 8:00 Die Entführung aus dem Serail Mozart
		Sunday, September 23, 2:00 Wozzeck Berg	Thursday, October 18, 7:30 Don Quichotte Massenet
		Tuesday, September 25, 8:00 Rigoletto Verdi	Friday, October 19, 8:00 Die Entführung aus dem Serail Mozart
		Wednesday, September 26, 7:30 Wozzeck Berg	Saturday, October 20, 8:00 Don Quichotte Massenet
		Thursday, September 27, 7:30 <i>New Production</i> Die Entführung aus dem Serail Mozart Patterson, Parrish, Fortuna, Guo; Moll, Streit*, Magnusson*, Hoffmann*, Li, Graber Michael*/Wadsworth*/Lynch*/Long*/ Arhelger <i>San Francisco Opera gratefully acknowledges a generous grant from the L.J. and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation to underwrite this production.</i>	Sunday, October 21, 2:00 <i>Production new to San Francisco Co-produced with the Royal Opera, Covent Garden</i> Capriccio R. Strauss Te Kanawa, Schwarz, Grist; Olsen*, Shimell, Hagegård, Braun, Sénéchal, Estep, Travis Barlow**/Cox/Pagano/Versace**/ Caniparoli/Munn <i>Sets from Théâtre de la Monnaie, Brussels</i>

Tuesday, October 23, 8:00
Don Quichotte Massenet

Wednesday, October 24, 7:30
Capriccio R. Strauss

Friday, October 26, 8:00
Don Quichotte Massenet

Saturday, October 27, 8:00
Capriccio R. Strauss

Sunday, October 28, 2:00
Un Ballo in Maschera Verdi
Dunn*, Dahl, Curry*; Mauro, Fondary,
Storojev*, Skinner, Ledbetter, Petersen
Arena/Ewers/Conklin/Morgan/Munn
*This production was originally made
possible by a gift from an anonymous
friend.*

Tuesday, October 30, 8:00
Capriccio R. Strauss

Wednesday, October 31, 7:30
Un Ballo in Maschera Verdi

Friday, November 2, 8:00
Capriccio R. Strauss

Saturday, November 3, 8:00
Un Ballo in Maschera Verdi

Sunday, November 4, 2:00
New Production
Die Fledermaus J. Strauss, Jr.
Holleque* (November 4, 8, 10, 16),
Gustafson (November 24, 25, 27, 30),
Kilduff, TBA, Mills; Lopez-Yañez*,
Hagegård (November 4, 8, 25, 27),
Baerg (November 10, 16, 24, 30), Nolen,
Adams*, Rideout, TBA
Rudel (November 4, 8, 10, 16)/
Summers (November 24, 25, 27, 30)/
Mansouri/Skalicki/Bosquet*/
Tomasson*/Munn
*San Francisco Opera gratefully
acknowledges the generous gifts from Mr.
and Mrs. Gorham B. Knowles and The
Edward E. Hills Fund to underwrite this
production.*

Tuesday, November 6, 8:00
Un Ballo in Maschera Verdi

Wednesday, November 7, 8:00
Capriccio R. Strauss

Thursday, November 8, 7:30
Die Fledermaus J. Strauss, Jr.

Friday, November 9, 8:00
Un Ballo in Maschera Verdi

Saturday, November 10, 1:00
Family Matinee
Die Fledermaus J. Strauss, Jr.
Racette, Williams, Keen, Mills; Estep,
McNeil, Villanueva, Travis, Rideout
Summers*/Mansouri/Skalicki/Bosquet/
Tomasson/Munn
*San Francisco Opera gratefully
acknowledges a generous gift from the
Opera Guild to underwrite this Family
Matinee performance.*

Saturday, November 10, 8:00
Die Fledermaus J. Strauss, Jr.

Sunday, November 11, 2:00
Capriccio R. Strauss

Wednesday, November 14, 7:30
Un Ballo in Maschera Verdi

Friday, November 16, 8:00
Die Fledermaus J. Strauss, Jr.

Saturday, November 17, 8:00
Khovanshchina Mussorgsky
Zajick, Fortuna; Ghiaurov, Myers,
Treleaven*, Howell, Noble, S. Cole,
Ledbetter, Skinner, Villanueva
Simonov*/Frisell/Benois/Carvajal/Munn
*This production was originally made
possible by a gift from the L.J. and Mary
C. Skaggs Foundation.*

Sunday, November 18, 2:00
Un Ballo in Maschera Verdi

Tuesday, November 20, 8:00
Khovanshchina Mussorgsky

Friday, November 23, 8:00
San Francisco Opera Premiere
Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria Monteverdi
von Stade, Graham*, Bower*,
Cowdrick, Williams, Mills; Hampson*,
V. Cole, Lewis, Patterson, Cox, Estep,
Rayam*, West*, Wilborn, Petersen
Bernardi/Hampe/Pagano/Munn
*This production is owned by the
Cologne Opera.*

Saturday, November 24, 1:00
Die Fledermaus J. Strauss, Jr.

Saturday, November 24, 8:00
Khovanshchina Mussorgsky

Sunday, November 25, 1:00
Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria Monteverdi

Sunday, November 25, 8:00
Die Fledermaus J. Strauss, Jr.

Tuesday, November 27, 8:00
Die Fledermaus J. Strauss, Jr.

Wednesday, November 28, 7:30
Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria Monteverdi

Thursday, November 29, 8:00
Khovanshchina Mussorgsky

Friday, November 30, 7:30
Die Fledermaus J. Strauss, Jr.

Saturday, December 1, 1:00
Rigoletto Verdi
Hong*, Keen, Petersen, Fortuna, Mills;
Pons, Li, Doss*, Skinner, Estep,
Villanueva, Ledbetter, Graber
Robertson/Asagaroff/Ponnelle/Munn

Saturday, December 1, 8:00
Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria Monteverdi

Sunday, December 2, 2:00
Khovanshchina Mussorgsky

Tuesday, December 4, 8:00
Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria Monteverdi

Wednesday, December 5, 7:30
Khovanshchina Mussorgsky

Thursday, December 6, 7:30
Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria Monteverdi

Friday, December 7, 7:30
Rigoletto Verdi
(Same cast as December 1)

Saturday, December 8, 8:00
Khovanshchina Mussorgsky

Sunday, December 9, 1:00
Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria Monteverdi

**United States opera debut
*San Francisco Opera debut

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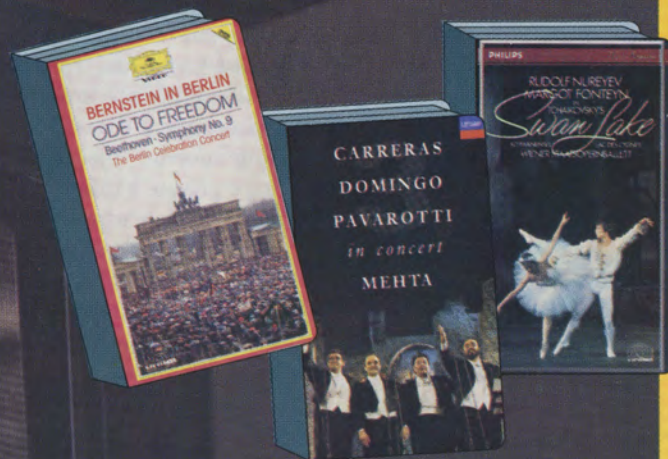
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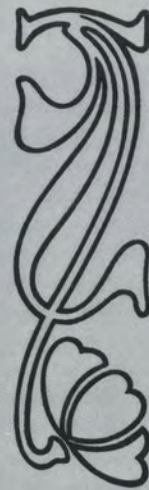
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**Mirella Freni,
 soprano**

**Sunday, November 4,
 3 pm, Zellerbach Hall;
 \$35, \$27, \$20**

Thirty-five years after her operatic debut, this incomparable artist is hailed for the suppleness of her lyric soprano voice, and for the innocence and passion with which she portrays opera's great young heroines. She will open the 1990-91 season as Mimi in Puccini's *La Boheme*.

**Dawn Upshaw,
 soprano**

**Friday, February 8, 8 pm,
 Hertz Hall; \$22**

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**Cecilia Bartoli,
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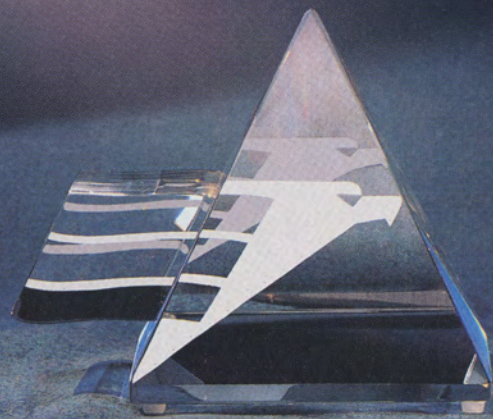
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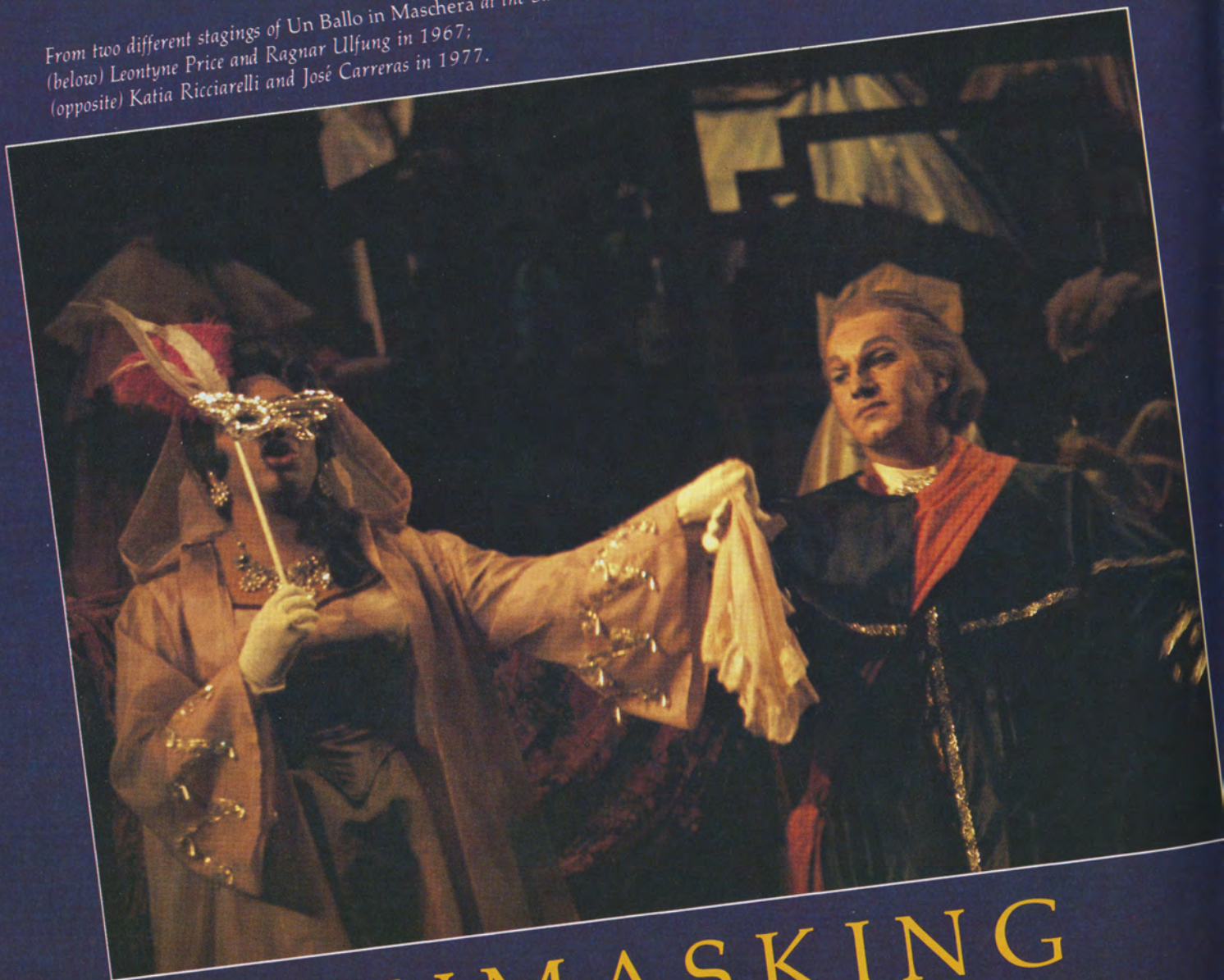
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From two different stagings of *Un Ballo in Maschera* at the San Francisco Opera:
(below) Leontyne Price and Ragnar Ulfung in 1967;
(opposite) Katia Ricciarelli and José Carreras in 1977.



UNMASKING Ballo

By ANDREW PORTER

Un Ballo in Maschera is an opera that has inspired divergent comment. Verdi's biographer Julian Budden wrote, "Throughout, danger appears not only when least expected but in an utterly unexpected form . . . In a word, *Un Ballo in Maschera* is Verdi's *Don Giovanni*." The Verdi scholar Massimo Mila wrote, "Even more than *La Traviata*, *Un Ballo in Maschera* is a pure, exclusive poem of love . . . it is Verdi's *Tristan und Isolde*." Gabriele Baldini, the author of *The Story of Giuseppe Verdi*, considered it quite simply Verdi's masterpiece. Camillo Boito (the brother of the composer and librettist, the architect of extensions to Verdi's villa and of the Casa del Riposo that the



SCHERL

composer founded) called it "Verdi's worst opera." It is an exceptional work in more than one way. Here it is considered in three close-linked aspects: *Ballo* is the only opera for which Verdi adopted and adapted the libretto of a work still current; it is one of the few Verdi operas—his only post-*Rigoletto* opera—for which no alternative music exists; and it enshrines in concise and direct form dramatic themes that run through his work.

Andrew Porter is the music critic of *The New Yorker*, the author of "Verdi" in *New Grove*, and the co-editor, with David Rosen, of *Verdi's Macbeth: A Sourcebook*. He has translated eight of Verdi's operas for performance in English—*Macbeth*, *Forza*, *Don Carlos*, *Otello*, and *Falstaff* in both the original and revised versions. Five volumes of his collected *New Yorker* reviews have been published so far.

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Un Giorno di Regno, it is true, had been composed to a 22-year-old libretto, and *Nabucco* to a libretto originally intended for Otto Nicolai. (In both cases, Verdi introduced changes.) *Les Vêpres siciliennes* was composed to an adaptation, on which Scribe and Verdi collaborated, of a *Duc d'Albe* libretto that Scribe had written for Donizetti and includes unaltered passages of it. But *Le Duc d'Albe* had not been brought to the stage, had not been finished. The *Ballo* libretto, on the other hand, is a reworking, without Scribe's participation, of the *Gustave III, ou Le Bal masqué* that Scribe had written for Auber. Auber's opera appeared at the Paris Opéra in 1833, reached its hundredth performance in 1837, and continued to be played until 1839. Abroad, it was also successful: it was popular in Germany; it reached New York in 1834; a London production ran for 235 performances in the 1834-35 season alone. Scribe's drama was one of proved efficacy, and Verdi was not the first composer to have recourse to it. Vincenzo Gabussi's *Cle-*

menza di Valois transferred the action to a French setting; first heard in Venice in 1841, it played at La Scala the following year, in the season that saw the premiere of *Nabucco*. Mercadante's *Il Reggente*, with a libretto by Cammarano (Verdi's collaborator on *Il Trovatore* and three other operas), gave the drama a Scottish setting; first heard in Turin in 1843, it survived on Italian stages until 1879. And in the 1846 Scala season, which included revivals of *Nabucco* and *Ernani*, there was a five-act ballet based on Scribe's libretto, *Gustavo III, Re di Svezia*.

The composer's preference was usually for fresh, strong subjects that had not been worked over operatically many times before: *Macbeth*, *Stiffelio*, *Rigoletto*, *La Traviata*, *La Forza del Destino*. Not invariably, however: there were several *Don Carlos* operas before his, and there was a very famous *Otello*, Rossini's. But *Don Carlos* and the Verdi-Boito *Otello* are very different in dramaturgical construction from their predecessors, whereas *Ballo* follows the Scribe-Auber *Gustave*

At San Francisco Opera's first staging of Ballo, in 1931: the mortally wounded Riccardo (Giovanni Martinelli) falls among the confused courtiers; Oscar (Audrey Farncroft) is on the left.



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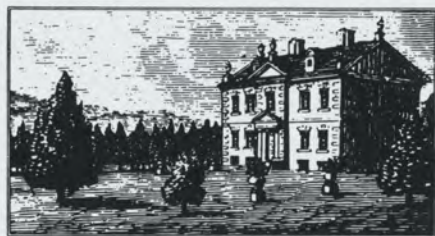
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III scene by scene, often number by number: palace, fortune-teller's dwelling, gallows, Anckarström's study, King's cabinet, masked ball. Many lines are translations of or close to Scribe. (Compare—two small examples among many—the very start, "Repose en paix/ Posa in pace"; and Oscar's first air, "Aux cieux elle sait lire . . . Elle est de concert avec Lucifer/Volta la terrea fronte alle stelle . . . E con Lucifero d'accordo.") One may well wonder what Scribe, that jealous guarder of his properties, made of it; *Ballo* had its first Paris performance in 1861, a few weeks before his death.

This close dependence on another libretto is surprising but not inexplicable. As with most decisions in life, there were evidently mingled reasons behind it. The simplest and most practical was that Verdi needed a libretto in a hurry. He was under contract to provide a new piece for Naples for the 1857-58 season. For years, he had been in correspondence with the playwright Antonio Somma about the *King Lear* that he so often contemplated but never composed; the letters between him and Somma form a correspondence course in libretto writing. And a resultant *Lear* libretto, partly in Somma's hand, partly in Verdi's, survives, but it was never composed—again, I think, for mingled reasons. (Verdi declared that the Naples cast available was inadequate for the great tragedy, as he had earlier when working on a *Lear* with Cammarano; on other occasions, when a *Lear* was in prospect for Paris, he declared that the matter was insufficiently spectacular for the Opéra; and when Boito, after *Falstaff*, proposed a *Lear* collaboration, it was too late.) Verdi had tried in vain to draw from Somma, in addition to *Lear*, "a quiet, simple drama, a kind of *Sonnambula* without being an imitation of *La Sonnambula*," but nothing resulted. As late as September 1857, he wrote to the Naples impresario:

I'm in despair. These last few months I have read through an infinite number of plays, some of them very fine, but none of them will do for me! My attention was drawn by a fine and interesting play, *King Pedro's Treasurer*, which I had translated at once; but while making the sketch to reduce

San Francisco Opera, 1940: Elisabeth Rethberg as Amelia and Richard Bonelli as Renato.



it to musical proportions I struck so many difficulties that I gave up the idea. Now I'm reducing a French play, *Gustavus III of Sweden*, a Scribe libretto, put on at the Opéra more than twenty years ago. It's grandiose and huge; it's very fine; but it, too, uses the conventional procedures of all plays written for music—something that has always displeased me and that I now find unbearable. As I said, I'm in despair, because it is now too late to find other subjects, and moreover I would not know where to start looking; those that I have inspire no confidence in me.

He suggested to Naples that instead of a new opera he should mount revivals of *Aroldo*, *Simon Boccanegra*, and a revised *Battaglia di Legnano*. But Naples held him to his contract, and so *Gustavo III/Ballo* it had to be. Somma agreed to versify the

text in accordance with Verdi's instructions, provided that the composer specified the necessary meters and the stanza forms, and provided that his, Somma's, name, was withheld from the result.

That is one reason for choosing familiar matter: fulfilling a pressing engagement by recourse to an existing, effective libretto. But where Verdi is concerned there has to be more to it than that. The difficulties he had with Scribe over *Les Vêpres* are well documented. In some ways, he admired Scribe immensely; in the negotiations that led to *Les Vêpres* he had insisted on having Scribe as his librettist, and he upheld spectacular scenes in *Les Huguenots* and *Le Prophète* as

Continued on page 50

San Francisco Opera, 1937: Emanuel List and Norman Cordon as Sam and Tom; (inset) Giovanni Martinelli as Riccardo and Charlotte Boerner as Oscar.



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SUSAN DUNN

Fast-rising dramatic soprano **Susan Dunn** makes her first appearance with San Francisco Opera as Amelia in *Un Ballo in Maschera*. Local audiences have applauded her in a 1988 concert at the War Memorial, and in performances with the San Francisco Symphony of the Verdi Requiem and Schönberg's *Gurrelieder*. A native of Bauxite, Arkansas, Miss Dunn is completely U.S.-trained and in 1983 won three of America's most prestigious awards: the Richard Tucker Award, Chicago's WGN-Illinois Opera Competition, and the Dallas Morning News- G.B. Dealy Award. She had previously been a winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Award and the Philadelphia Opera Company/Luciano Pavarotti International Vocal Competition. Her initial successes brought her to the immediate attention of major musical capitals, and she was soon appearing on their stages. She made her Italian debut at Bologna's Teatro Comunale in *I Vespri Siciliani*, followed by her debut at Milan's La Scala in the title role of *Aida*. She was acclaimed as Leonora in *Il Trovatore* at the Washington Opera, and her debut with the New York Philharmonic followed in performances of the Verdi Requiem. Additional opera appearances have included *La Forza del Destino* and *Aida* at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, *Don Carlo* for the Dallas Opera, *Un Ballo in Maschera* at the Vienna Staatsoper and Houston Grand Opera, *Otello* at the Australian Opera, *Giovanna d'Arco* in Bologna, and *Simon Boccanegra* in Cologne. She made her highly acclaimed debut at the Metropolitan Opera earlier this year as Leonora in *Il Trovatore*. Equally heralded in concert, she has appeared with the orchestras of Rotterdam and Amsterdam, the Berlin Radio Orchestra, the Orchestre de Paris, Chicago Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra and Atlanta Symphony, and at the major international festivals including Tangle-



TRACY DAHL

wood, Cincinnati, Ravinia, Wolf Trap and Edinburgh. Her recordings include an album of Verdi and Wagner arias, Beethoven's *Mass in C*, and the Grammy award-winning Verdi Requiem. Recordings of Act I of *Die Walküre*, Schönberg's *Gurrelieder* and Mahler's *Das Klagende Lied* are in preparation. Future engagements include a return to the Metropolitan Opera in the title role of *Luisa Miller*.

After her triumph as Olympia in San Francisco Opera's 1988 production of *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, coloratura soprano **Tracy Dahl** returns to sing Oscar in *Un Ballo in Maschera*. A native of Canada, she received her training at the Banff School of Fine Arts and is a graduate of the 1985 Merola Opera Program, following which she toured with Western Opera Theater as Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*. She has appeared frequently with the Manitoba Opera Association, and made her professional opera debut with that company as Barbarina in *Le Nozze di Figaro*. In 1986, she made important debuts at the Houston Grand Opera as Eurydice in Offenbach's *Orpheus in the Underworld*, a role she also sang with Michigan Opera Theatre; Cincinnati Opera as Olympia; at Wolf Trap singing Olympia and her first performances of Susanna in *Le Nozze di Figaro*; as well as her first performances of Oscar in *Ballo* with Opera Hamilton. She then bowed with the Canadian Opera Company as Adele in *Die Fledermaus*, and in 1987 made her European debut at the Aix-en-Provence Festival as Blondchen in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*. Engagements during the 1988-89 season included her Washington Opera debut as the Fairy Godmother in Massenet's *Cendrillon*, a return to the Canadian Opera Company to sing her first Zerbinetta in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, her Opera Theatre of St. Louis debut as Serpenta in Mozart's *La Finta Giardiniera*, Oscar in *Ballo* for Houston



DIANE CURRY

Grand Opera, and a debut with Los Angeles Opera in *Orpheus in the Underworld*. Most recently, Miss Dahl appeared as Despina in *Così fan tutte* and as Adele at the Washington Opera; made her debut with L'Opéra de Montréal as Oscar; sang her first Marie in *La Fille du Régiment* in Calgary and St. Louis; also bowed with Santa Fe Opera and returned to Los Angeles as Amor in Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice*. Future plans include *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* and *La Fille du Régiment* in Winnipeg, *Falstaff* in Toronto, and *Ariadne auf Naxos* in Houston and St. Louis. She makes her Paris debut next year as Olympia in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* at the Théâtre Musical de Paris Châtelet, and will appear with the Metropolitan Opera for the first time in the world premiere of a new opera by John Corigliano.

Mezzo-soprano **Diane Curry** makes her San Francisco Opera debut as Ulrica in *Un Ballo in Maschera*. Acclaimed for her portrayals of the dramatic mezzo roles of Verdi, Wagner and Richard Strauss, she has, in recent seasons, performed Amneris in *Aida* in Bonn and at the Verona Arena; Azucena in *Il Trovatore* in Hamburg and West Berlin, where she also sang Fricka in *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*; and the Nurse in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* at the Metropolitan Opera. A frequent guest artist with the Lyric Opera of Chicago, her performances there include La Cieca in *La Gioconda*, Federica in *Luisa Miller*, and Katisha in the Peter Sellars production of *The Mikado*. Since 1981, Miss Curry has appeared at the Seattle Opera Wagner Festival singing Fricka in *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*, and Waltraute and the Second Norn in *Götterdämmerung*. She has also appeared at the New York City Opera, Opera Company of Philadelphia, and with the opera companies of Brussels, Geneva, Nice, Florence, Palermo, Graz, Toronto and Mexico City, among



ERMANN0 MAURO

many others. A popular soloist with many major orchestras, she has sung with the New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, Minnesota Orchestra, the symphonies of Cincinnati, Washington, D.C., Dallas, Atlanta, and Detroit, as well as with the London Philharmonia, Bavarian Radio Symphony, Cologne Radio Orchestra, and the National Symphonies of Poland and Brazil. Festival performances include the Maggio Musicale of Florence, Spoleto, (Italy and USA), Mostly Mozart, Chattanooga, Caramoor, and Saratoga. Miss Curry's recordings include Stephen Douglas Burton's *Ariel* Symphony, Gian Carlo Menotti's *Mass*, and the Grammy award-winning Verdi Requiem with Robert Shaw and the Atlanta Symphony. Future plans include Fricka in *Die Walküre* at the Dallas Opera, Ulrica in Bologna, Azucena in *Il Trovatore* and Mother Marie in *Dialogues of the Carmelites* in Rome, Edvige in *Guglielmo Tell* in Geneva, and Laura in *La Gioconda* for the VARA Radio, the Netherlands. The native of West Virginia is a graduate of Westminster Choir College in Princeton, N.J., where she earned the Bachelor and Master of Music degrees.

In his sixth season with San Francisco Opera, **Ermanno Mauro** portrays Gustavus III/Riccardo in *Un Ballo in Maschera*. A leading tenor with the Metropolitan Opera and a regular performer at the Vienna State Opera, the Paris Opera, Milan's La Scala, and the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, he made his Company debut during the 1982 Fall Season as Pollione in *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); Cavaradossi in *Tosca* (1987); and in the title role of *Otello* last fall. 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



ALAIN FONDARY

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 debut as Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly*. Last year's engagements 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 Munich. Mauro's recent assignments 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 Munich, *La Fanciulla del West* in Toulouse, and *Andrea Chénier* and *Turandot* in Vienna.

French baritone **Alain Fondary**, who made his United States debut with San Francisco Opera in 1987 as Scarpia in *Tosca*, returns to the Company this fall in the title role of *Rigoletto* and as Renato in *Un Ballo in Maschera*. A specialist in the Italian and French repertoire, he made his professional debut as Tonio in *Pagliacci*. In 1984, he bowed at the Paris Opera in Verdi's *Jerusalem*, subsequently appearing there as Amonasro in *Aida*. During



VICTOR LEDBETTER

the 1984-85 season, he sang Renato in Toulouse, Jack Rance in *La Fanciulla del West* in Ravenna, Hérode in Massenet's *Hérodiade* in Liège, the title role of *Simon Boccanegra* in Orange, and repeated his acclaimed portrayal of Jack Rance for his Royal Opera, Covent Garden debut that same season. Fondary made his debut at Milan's La Scala in 1985 as Amonasro, a role he repeated there twice in 1986. 1987-88 engagements include *La Fanciulla del West* at Torre del Lago, *Samson et Dalila* in Liège, *Falstaff* at Avignon, *Hérodiade* at Orange, and Rodrigo in *Don Carlo* and the title role of *Nabucco* at the Paris Opera. Performances during the 1988-89 season included *Samson et Dalila* in Bregenz and Chicago, *Tosca* in Dallas, *Cavalleria Rusticana*, *Aida* and *La Gioconda* at the Metropolitan Opera, *Otello* and *Nabucco* in Marseilles, *Aida* in Strasbourg, *Thais* at the Opéra-Comique in Paris, and *The Tales of Hoffmann* and *Nabucco* in Munich. Additional recent highlights include *Rigoletto* in Paris, *Tosca* in Venice and Salzburg, *Il Trovatore* in Toulouse, and *Nabucco* and *Don Carlo* in Orange. Future assignments include *Rigoletto* and *La Fanciulla del West* at the Met, *Samson et Dalila* in Vienna and Paris, *Tosca* in Barcelona, Palermo and Vienna, and *Thais* and *Falstaff* in Toulouse.

Baritone **Victor Ledbetter** sings five roles for the Company this fall: the Second Workman in *Wozzeck*, Count Ceprano in *Rigoletto*, a Servant in *Capriccio*, Christian (Silvano) in *Un Ballo in Maschera*, and Kuzka in *Khovanshchina*. A 1988-89 Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, he made his Company debut in the 1987 season as Baron Douphol in the family performances of *La Traviata*, and as Paris in *Roméo et Juliette*. He returned the following year as an Esquire in *Parsifal* and as Marcello in the student/family performances of *La Bohème*, and appeared here last fall as Ford in the Family Performance of *Falstaff*, a Trojan Man in *Idomeneo*, and the One-Eyed Man in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. For the Opera Center's 1988 Showcase series, he sang Count Almaviva in the



NIKITA STOROJEV

West Coast premiere of Hiram Titus's *Rosina*, and was seen here as Mr. Kallenbach in Glass' *Satyagraha*. A participant in the 1986 Merola Opera Program, he sang Marcello at Villa Montalvo, repeating the role on Western Opera Theater's 1986-87 tour which included performances in China. In April of 1988, Ledbetter returned to Shanghai as Scarpia in China's first *Tosca*, and for a joint concert with the Shanghai Opera and Conservatory. He was a Schwabacher Debut recitalist last year, and has performed with the Vancouver Opera in *The Cunning Little Vixen* and the San Diego Opera in *Don Pasquale*. Ledbetter's recent engagements include Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly* for the Dublin Grand Opera, and Valentin in *Faust* for the Cincinnati Opera. Future assignments include Falke in *Die Fledermaus* for San Diego Opera, and Alfio in *Cavalleria Rusticana* at the Washington Opera.

Russian bass **Nikita Storojev** makes his San Francisco Opera debut as Count Ribbing in *Un Ballo in Maschera*. He received his musical training at the Moscow Conservatory and won the Tchaikovsky International Singing Competition in 1978. He was principal bass soloist at the Bolshoi Opera from 1977 to 1981, also appearing with the Moscow Philharmonic and on Soviet radio and television. After singing principal roles of the Russian repertory throughout the USSR, he began his international career in Mexico in 1981, singing the four villains in *The Tales of Hoffmann*. He made his Vienna Staatsoper debut in 1982 as Ramfis in *Aida*, and became a permanent member of the Düsseldorf Opera in 1983, singing major roles there for three years. He has since been acclaimed in Paris (Pimen in *Boris Godunov*), Rome (Zaccaria in *Nabucco*), Nice (Padre Guardiano in *La Forza del Destino* and Enrico in *Anna Bolena*), Strasbourg (the title role of *Mefistofele*), Mannheim (the Grand Inquisitor in *Don Carlo*), and in Graz (the title role of *Boris Godunov*). Recent engagements include Banquo in *Macbeth* in Venice, the title role of *Boris Godunov* in



PHILIP SKINNER

Toronto and for Radio-France in Paris, Verdi's Requiem in London and Amsterdam, Rangoni in *Boris Godunov* in Washington, D.C., and the Commendatore in *Don Giovanni* in his New York City Opera debut. Storojev's growing list of recordings includes the Shostakovich 13th and 14th Symphonies, a disc of Russian opera arias, a set of songs by Rachmaninoff and Mussorgsky with David Ashkenazy at the piano, as well as complete recordings of *Don Carlos*, *Idomeneo* and *Boris Godunov*. Future plans include Pimen in Stuttgart, a tour of the USSR with a gala concert in Moscow, *Ivan the Terrible* at London's Festival Hall, a concert tour of Japan, Mussorgsky's *Songs and Dances of Death* in London led by Vladimir Ashkenazy, and a concert at the Antibes Festival. He has been honored with the "Golden Diapason" award in Paris, and the "Choc de la Musique" prize in 1988.

Bass-baritone **Philip Skinner** sings Monterone in *Rigoletto*, Count Horn (Samuele) in *Un Ballo in Maschera*, and Varsonofiev in *Khovanshchina*. He made his San Francisco Opera debut as Quinault in the 1985 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*, Parsi Rustomji in *Satyagraha* and, last fall, Montano in *Otello*, the Bonze in *Madama Butterfly*, and the One-Armed Man in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. He participated in the 1985 Merola Opera Program and went on to tour with Western Opera Theater in the title role of *Don Giovanni*. He was appointed an Adler Fellow in 1986, and appeared in the Opera Center's Showcase performances of Hindemith's *There and Back* and *The Long Christmas Dinner*, and in 1987 he portrayed the Colonel in the Showcase production of *Le Plumet du Colonel*. A graduate of Northwestern University, Skinner received his master's degree from Indiana University, where he performed in several productions. He has



DENNIS PETERSEN

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. Last 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 include the Canadian Opera Company, Arkansas Opera Theater, and the San Francisco Symphony. Recent engagements include a Schwabacher Debut Recital, his Honolulu Symphony debut in Handel's *Messiah*, the four villains in *The Tales of Hoffmann* with Baton Rouge Opera, and a debut with Seattle Opera in *War and Peace*.

American tenor **Dennis Petersen** portrays Juan in *Don Quichotte*, a Judge in *Un Ballo in Maschera*, and Pisandro in *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria*. Since his 1985 San Francisco Opera debut, he has appeared here in over 15 productions, and was seen most recently as The Marquis in last fall's presentation of *Lulu*. In 1987, Petersen made his debut with the Vancouver Opera in *Le Nozze di Figaro*. Additional debuts that year included his first Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte* with Cedar Rapids Symphony; Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with the Fort Wayne Symphony; and Jacquino in *Fidelio* with the New Jersey Symphony. His engagements in 1988 included the Fox in Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen* in Vancouver, the title role of Offenbach's *Christopher Columbus* with the Opera Ensemble of New York, and the Duke of Mantua in *Rigoletto* with Sarasota Opera. That same year he was featured in the Opera Center's Schwabacher Debut Recital series. Most recently, he has appeared as Don José in *Carmen* in Iowa, the Duke at Chautauqua, and Remen-

Continued on page 46



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The production was originally made possible by a gift from an anonymous friend.

Opera in three acts by GIUSEPPE VERDI

Text by ANTONIO SOMMA

Based on Scribe's libretto for Auber's opera *Gustave III, ou Le Bal masqué*

Un Ballo in Maschera

(in Italian)

Conductor

Maurizio Arena

Stage Director

Anne Ewers

Designer

John Conklin

Lighting Designer

Thomas J. Munn

Chorus Director

Ian Robertson

Choreographer

Victoria Morgan

Musical Preparation

Susanna Lemberskaya

Ernest Fredric Knell

Kathryn Cathcart

Svetlana Gorzhevskaya

Prompter

Jonathan Khuner

Assistant Stage Director

Sandra Bernhard

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First performance:

Rome, February 17, 1859

First San Francisco Opera performance:

September 19, 1931

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WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 31 AT 7:30

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 3 AT 8:00

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 6 AT 8:00

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 9 AT 8:00

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 14 AT 7:30

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 18 AT 2:00

CAST

(in order of appearance)

Count Horn (Samuele) Philip Skinner

Count Ribbing (Tommaso) Nikita Storojev*

Oscar Tracy Dahl

Gustavus III (Riccardo) Ermanno Mauro

Count Anckarström (Renato) Alain Fondary

A judge Dennis Petersen

Madame Arvidson (Ulrica) Diane Curry*

Christian (Silvano) Victor Ledbetter

Amelia's servant Dennis McNeil

Amelia Anckarström Susan Dunn

Solo Dancer Julian Montaner

*Courtiers, chiefs of staff, deputies, conspirators,
inhabitants of the port area*

*San Francisco Opera debut

TIME AND PLACE: 1792 in Stockholm, Sweden

ACT I *Scene 1:* Levee in the king's bedroom

Scene 2: Madame Arvidson's house on the waterfront

INTERMISSION

ACT II *Scene 1:* A lonely field

Scene 2: Count Anckarström's study

INTERMISSION

ACT III Inside the Stockholm opera house

Supertitles for *Un Ballo in Maschera* provided by a generous gift from McCutchen, Doyle, Brown & Enersen.

Supertitles by Jerry Sherk, San Francisco Opera.

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after the lights have dimmed.*

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The performance will last approximately three hours and twenty minutes.

Un Ballo in Maschera/Synopsis

ACT I

A morning levee in the king's bedroom. Among those waiting are a group of rebellious courtiers led by Count Ribbing and Count Horn. Oscar, the royal page, announces Gustavo and asks the king's approval of the invitations for a masked ball. Seeing the name of Amelia, wife of his chief minister, Anckarström, the king, who is romantically attracted to her, briefly loses himself in thought of a future meeting. As the others leave, Oscar admits Anckarström, who says he knows the cause of the king's distressed look: a conspiracy against the crown. Gustavo refuses to take him seriously. The minister of justice arrives with a decree banishing the fortune teller, Madame Arvidson, who has been accused of witchcraft. Oscar proclaims her innocent and describes her skill at stargazing. Deciding to see for himself and overruling Anckarström's objections, the king light-heartedly bids the court to join him in an incognito visit to the soothsayer.

After she has invoked the dark spirits before a group of fearful and fascinated women, Ulrica Arvidson, a fraudulent mystic, tells the sailor Christian that he will prosper. Gustavo, disguised as a fisherman, surreptitiously slips money and a promotion into Christian's pocket. When he finds it, all are suitably impressed. The king stays in hiding when Ulrica Arvidson sends her visitors away to grant an audience to Amelia, who comes seeking release from her illicit passion for Gustavo. Practical, and with a woman's natural intuition, Ulrica Arvidson instructs Amelia to find a magic herb that grows at the foot of the gallows outside the city gates and must be plucked at midnight. Amelia, though horrified, undertakes to do so that very night, and Gustavo resolves to follow her there. The disguised courtiers are now heard arriving as Amelia hurriedly departs. The king, still incognito, asks Ulrica Arvidson to read his palm. Fearing arrest for witchcraft, she creates the prophecy that he will die by the next hand he shakes, and he invites anyone in the company to give lie to her prophecy. When they refuse to do so, he clasps the hand of Anckarström, who had just arrived. Gustavo is then recognized and hailed by the crowd.

ACT II

A frightened Amelia arrives at the gallows as midnight strikes. Gustavo appears and declares his love for her. She admits her own love for him, but begs him to think of her honor. Anckarström rushes in to warn the king to flee the approaching assassins. Gustavo asks Anckarström to escort the hooded lady back to the city gates without attempting to discover her identity. Receiving his promise, the king leaves and the conspirators arrive shortly thereafter.

Finding Anckarström instead of their intended victim, they curse their luck. Anckarström draws his sword against Horn, and as Amelia rushes to defend her husband, her hood falls back, revealing her identity. The conspirators make fun of Anckarström's discomfiture. He asks Ribbing and Horn to meet him at his home in the morning and, as the conspirators leave, coldly reminds his wife that he had sworn to escort her to the gates of the city. He drags Amelia through the darkness to their home where he explodes in anger. He declares that death is the only possible punishment for her betrayal, but accedes to her request for a last meeting with her son. Amelia leaves and Anckarström deplores the double loss of friendship and love. He is interrupted by Ribbing and Horn. When he asks to join the conspiracy, they are at first suspicious, but become convinced when he offers his own son as hostage. United in purpose, they cannot agree on who should have the privilege of assassinating the king. Amelia returns just as the men are about to draw lots. Seeing the irony in Amelia's choosing her lover's assassin, Anckarström forces his wife to draw a name from the urn and rejoices when it is his. A moment later Oscar brings invitations to the masked ball. While the men hail this chance to execute their plan and arrange to identify themselves at the ball by the color of their costume and a red ribbon on their cloaks, Amelia determines to warn Gustavo.

ACT III

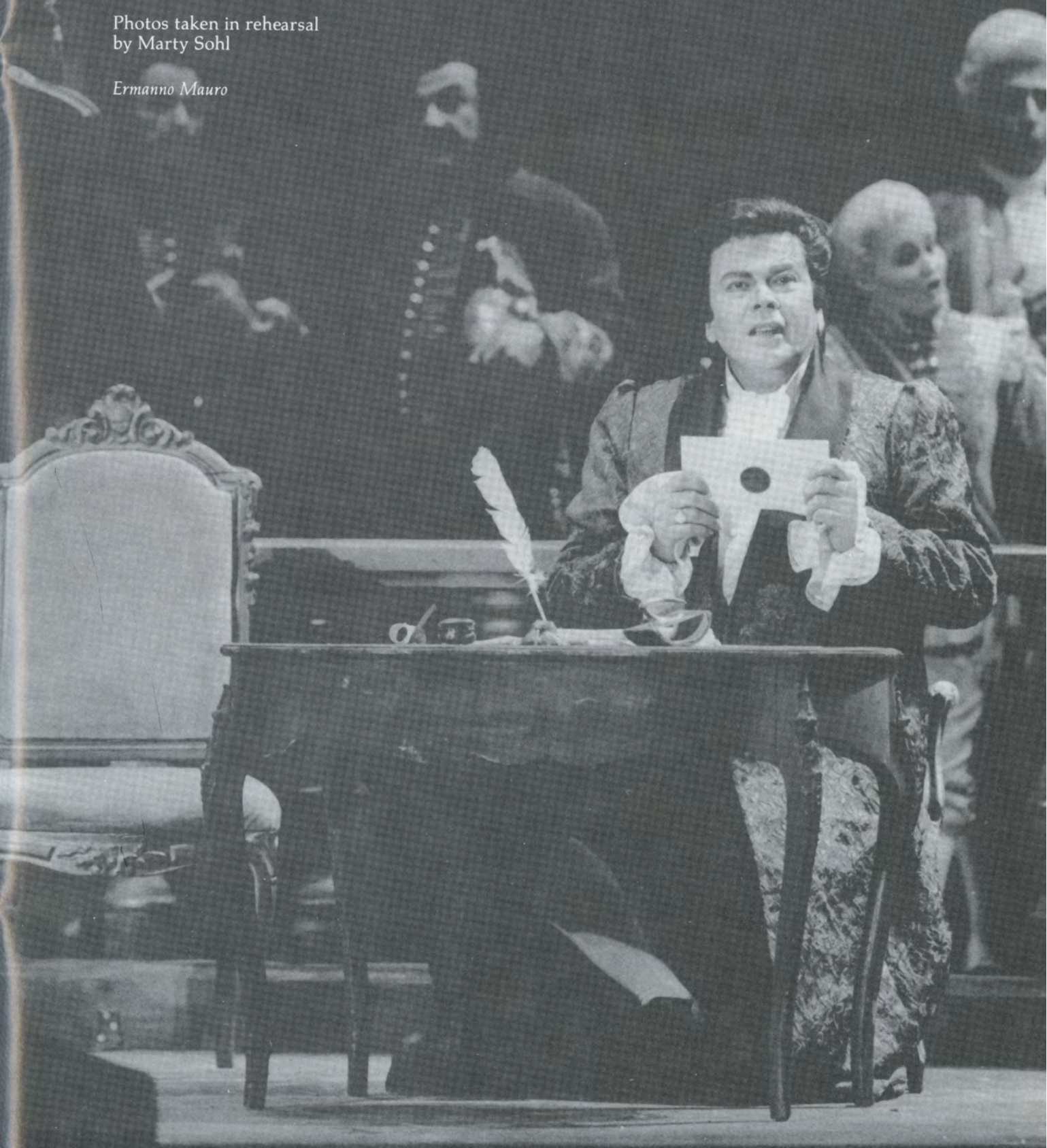
Alone in the empty theater of the Royal Opera House, Gustavo acknowledges that honor compels him to renounce his love and resolves to send Amelia and Anckarström on a diplomatic appointment abroad. Oscar delivers a note for the king from an unknown lady, warning him of a murder plot. He decides to ignore it, not wanting his absence to be taken as a sign of cowardice.

In the confusion of the masked ball, Anckarström informs Ribbing and Horn that the king will not be present. Oscar, playfully identifying Anckarström through his disguise is, in turn, unmasked by the minister. The page lets slip the news that the king is, after all, present, and when Anckarström insists that he must speak to the king on urgent state business, Oscar reveals Gustavo's disguise. Amelia, recognizing the king, urges him to leave as his life is in danger. He refuses, but tells her of the foreign assignment for her husband, and bids her an ardent farewell. Anckarström discovers them and shoots him. The dying Gustavo, surrounded by his grieving court, forgives Anckarström, who learns too late of his wife's innocence.

Un Ballo in Maschera

Photos taken in rehearsal
by Marty Sohl

Ermanno Mauro





Susan Dunn



Dennis Petersen, Tracy Dahl

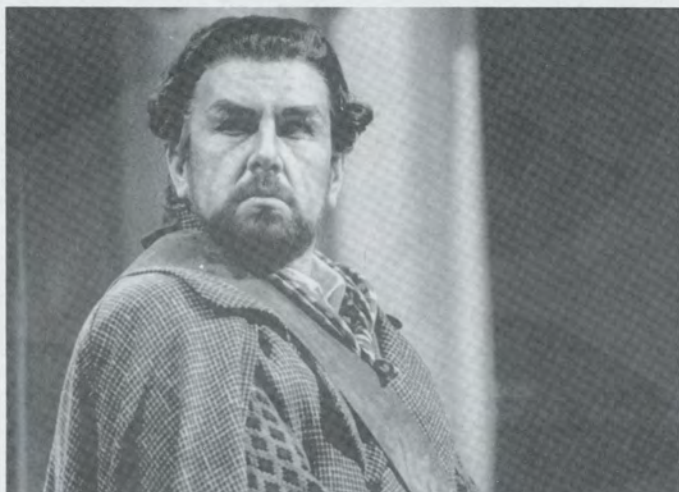


Philip Skinner

Nikita Storojev



Diane Curry, Victor Ledbetter, Members of the S.F. Opera Chorus



Levee, Act I





Ermanno Mauro, Tracy Dahl



Susan Dunn, Ermanno Mauro



Alain Fondary



Alain Fondary



Tracy Dahl, Carolyn Houser, Julian Montaner, Corps de ballet



*Ermanno Mauro, Roman Adler,
Members of the S.F. Opera Chorus*



Susan Dunn

Diane Curry



Susan Dunn





Tracy Dahl, Ermanno Mauro

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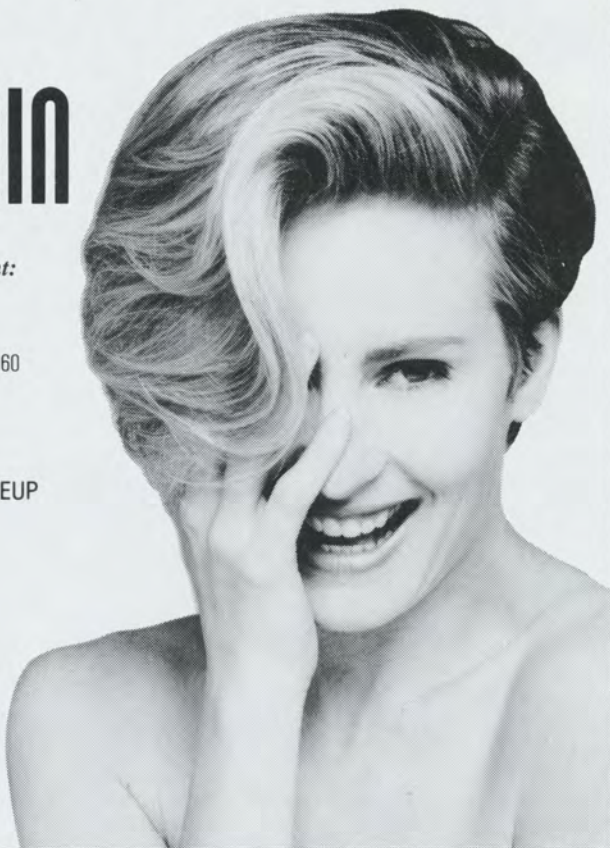
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DENNIS McNEIL

Continued from page 37

dado in *Carmen* in London and Tokyo. Future engagements include his debut at the Lyric Opera of Chicago as Mime in *Das Rheingold*, Don Basilio in *Le Nozze di Figaro* and Jacquino in *Fidelio* for New Orleans Opera, Handel's *Messiah* with the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, and a concert presentation of *Salome* with the Boston Symphony.

Tenor **Dennis McNeil** makes his San Francisco Opera debut as a Servant in *Capriccio*, Amelia's Servant in *Un Ballo in Maschera*, and Eisenstein in the family performance of *Die Fledermaus*. A member of the 1989 Merola Opera Program, he sang Don José in *Carmen* both at Villa Montalvo and on Western Opera Theater's 1989-90 national tour. In 1989, he made his debut with the Los Angeles Music Center Opera as Ferrando in their student outreach production of *Così fan tutte*, followed by performances with the main company as the Second Jew in *Salome*. He has also sung the roles of Prince Paul in *The Grand Duchess of Gerolstein*, Jenik in *The Bartered Bride*, and Piquillo in *La Périchole*. Equally comfortable on the musical theater stage, he has performed the role of Mr. Snow in *Carousel* over 140 times. In Los Angeles recently, he appeared as Niko in *Zorba* with John Raitt in the title role. In 1988, McNeil toured with Sammy Cahn in the lyricist's hit musical review *Words with Music*, which completed its run at San Francisco's Marines' Memorial Theater. A fifth generation Californian, he is a graduate of the American Center for Musical Theater where he was trained in both opera and musical comedy. He lives in Southern California where he studies with New York City Opera baritone William Chapman and his wife, Irene.

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MAURIZIO ARENA

Maestro **Maurizio Arena** returns to San Francisco Opera to conduct *Un Ballo in Maschera*. He made his Company debut with *Manon Lescaut* during the 1983 Fall Season and returned in 1985 to lead acclaimed performances of *Adriana Lecouvreur* and *Falstaff*. He conducted *La Forza del Destino* and *La Bohème* during the 1986 Fall Season, *Nabucco* in 1987, 1988's opening night production of *L'Africaine*, and *Mefistofele* last fall. Born in Messina, Italy, he studied music in Palermo and Perugia, where he was trained in conducting by Franco Ferrara. After many years of collaboration with Tullio Serafin and Antonino Votto, he began his operatic training as répétiteur and assistant conductor at the Teatro Massimo in Palermo from 1960 to 1963. From 1963 to 1969, he was permanent conductor at that theater, where he led performances from the Italian operatic repertoire in addition to many modern and contemporary operas, including *Wozzeck*, *Bluebeard's Castle* and *Carmina Burana*. Since 1969, he has been a guest conductor at the important operatic capitals in Europe, including Milan's La Scala, Rome, Trieste, Brussels, Lyons, Paris and Venice, in addition to the Chorégies d'Orange, the Dubrovnik Festival and the Aix-en-Provence Festival. Recent engagements include *L'Elisir d'Amore* and *Tosca* at the Verdi Theater in Trieste, *La Fanciulla del West* at the Verona Arena, and the Canadian Opera Company's 1987-88 season opener, *La Forza del Destino*. He also recently conducted Pizzetti's *Fedra* in Palermo, the first performance of this rarely-performed opera since 1940, in addition to *Il Tabarro* at the Puccini Festival at Torre del Lago and concerts in Japan. Arena's extensive list of recordings includes *Adriana Lecouvreur* and *Francesca da Rimini*. His many honors include the first international "Luigi Illica" prize in 1979, and the first "Antonello da Messina" award in 1982. The maestro also conducts a busy schedule of master classes in Italian opera.



ANNE EWERS

After making her 1988 San Francisco Opera directing debut with *La Gioconda*, **Anne Ewers** returns to stage *Un Ballo in Maschera*. She began her professional operatic career with the Company in 1979, worked here for three years as assistant stage director/staging coordinator during the main season, and also staged scenes and productions for the Merola Opera Program and Brown Bag Opera. 1980 marked the beginning of her continuing association with the Canadian Opera Company, where she has directed her own productions of *Tosca*, *Lucia di Lammermoor* and, most recently, *La Rondine*. A long association with the Boston Lyric Opera began in 1983 when she directed the *Ring* cycle in Boston and New York to critical acclaim. Miss Ewers recently resigned her position as the Boston company's general director in order to devote more time to her directing career. Assignments during the 1988-89 season included *Carmen* for Calgary, Edmonton and Manitoba Operas, *Béatrice et Bénédicte* for Glimmerglass Opera, *La Wally* for Sarasota Opera, *Manon Lescaut* at the Florentine Opera, and *Madama Butterfly* for Lake George Opera. She opened the 1989-90 season with *The Merry Widow* with Dame Joan Sutherland for the Dallas Opera, followed by *Carmen* for Opera/Columbus, *Dialogues of the Carmelites* for Edmonton Opera, *Rigoletto* for Opera Carolina, *Un Ballo in Maschera* at Lake George, and *Norma* for New Orleans Opera. Future plans include *Turandot* in Buffalo and Syracuse, *Ballo* for Opera Pacific, *Eugene Onegin* in Edmonton, *Falstaff* in Calgary, and *Faust* for New Orleans Opera. The artist has also directed for Michigan Opera Theater, the New York City Opera, Houston Grand Opera, as well as for the companies of Minnesota, Madison, Mississippi, Wolf Trap and Shreveport.

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JOHN CONKLIN

John Conklin designed the sets and costumes for *Un Ballo in Maschera* as his first San Francisco Opera assignment in 1977, a production that also opened the 1982 Fall Season and which was repeated in 1985. Local audiences first saw his work in Spring Opera Theater productions of *Orfeo* (1972), *Death in Venice* (1975 and '79) and *Julius Caesar* (1978). After his debut with the Company in 1977, he returned for *Don Pasquale* (fall 1980, summer 1984), *La Traviata* (1987), and for the new production of *Idomeneo* last fall. He created designs for the four operas of Wagner's *Ring of the Nibelung*, which had been unveiled in 1983 (*Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*), 1984 (*Siegfried*) and 1985 (*Götterdämmerung*). He also served as production consultant for the Company's presentation of the *Ring* this past summer. Conklin's designs have been seen in numerous opera, ballet and legitimate theater productions. He has worked for such companies as the New York Shakespeare Festival, the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis, the Goodman Theatre in Chicago, the Long Wharf Theater in New Haven and the Hartford Stage Company. His long association with Santa Fe Opera has resulted in American premieres of Henze's *We Come to the River*, the three-act version of *Lulu*, Aulis Sallinen's *The King Goes Forth to France*, and Penderecki's *The Black Mask*. For New York City Opera his production credits include *Il Turco in Italia*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and the world premieres of Argento's *Miss Havisham's Fire* and Anthony Davis's *X*. Other American opera projects have been for the Lyric Opera of Chicago (*Tancredi* and *The Barber of Seville*); Dallas Opera (the world premiere of Argento's *Aspern Papers*); Seattle Opera (*Il Trovatore* and the recent production of *War and Peace*); and Opera Theatre of St. Louis, among others. For the Metropolitan Opera, he has designed the costumes for *Khovanshchina*, and is currently working on set designs for a new production of *Semiramide*. On the other side of the Atlantic, he



VICTORIA MORGAN

has been responsible for production designs for the Holland Festival, Scottish Opera, and the Munich Opera. He teaches at the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University.

In her third year as Ballet Mistress for San Francisco Opera, **Victoria Morgan** created the dances for *Don Quichotte* and *Un Ballo in Maschera*. She was a principal dancer with San Francisco Ballet and Ballet West, and performed lead roles in ballets choreographed by George Ballanchine (*Chaconne*, *Stars and Stripes*, *Prodigal Son*, *Symphony in C*, *Serenade*); Michael Smuin (*The Tempest*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Songs of Mahler*, *Stravinsky Piano Pieces*); Lew Christensen (*The Nutcracker*, *Airs de Ballet*, *Con Amore*, *Beauty and the Beast*); as well as in contemporary pieces created by Jiri Kylian, Elisa Monte, Bruce Marks and William Forsythe. Miss Morgan has also choreographed works for the San Francisco Ballet, Utah Ballet, Ruth Langridge Company, Mountain Play Theater, and S.F. Dance Theater. In her many television appearances, she has performed as soloist in Smuin's *The Tempest*, Robert Gladstein's *Symphony in Three Movements*, Robert Sund's *Women's Song*, and was featured choreographer and dancer in the documentary *The Creation of O.M.O.* She graduated magna cum laude from the University of Utah with an M.F.A. (receiving the university's Young Alumni award in 1987), and has been awarded grants for her choreography from the National Endowment for the Arts, the California Arts Council, and the Djerassi Foundation.

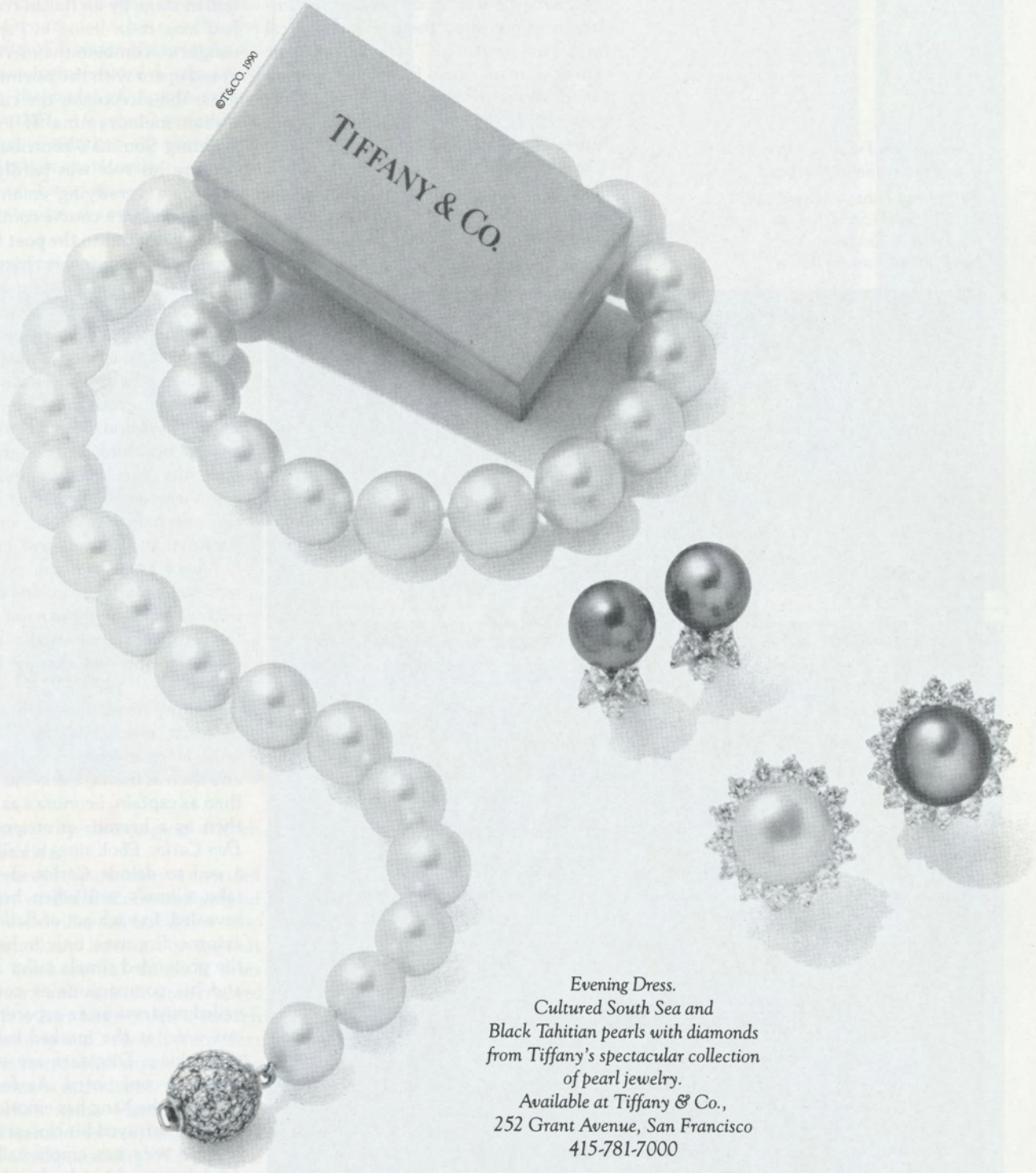


THOMAS J. MUNN

Lighting Director and Design Consultant for San Francisco Opera, **Thomas J. Munn** created the lighting for *Suor Angelica/Pagliacci*, *Rigoletto*, *Capriccio*, *Un Ballo in Maschera*, *Die Fledermaus*, *Khovanshchina*, and *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria*. In his 15th season with the Company, he has lighted over 130 productions for here and most recently created the lighting and special effects for this summer's *Ring* cycle. He also serves as scenic adviser for the Company, and has designed scenery for *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, *Roberto Devereux*, *Pelléas et Mélisande*, *Billy Budd* and *Nabucco*. In addition to his numerous design credits for the War Memorial stage, Munn has designed scenery and lighting for Broadway, Off-Broadway, regional theater, ballet, industrials and films. His television credits include San Francisco Opera productions of *La Gioconda* (for which he received a 1979 Emmy Award), *Samson et Dalila*, *Aida*, *L'Africaine* and *La Bohème*. Recent credits include lighting and projection designs for *Madama Butterfly* for the Netherlands Opera; scenery and lighting for Hartford Ballet's production of *Coppélia* and *The Nutcracker*; and lighting designs for the Hartford Opera and Pittsburgh Opera productions of *Hansel and Gretel*. His most notable achievement as a lighting consultant is the new Muziektheater in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

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Unmasking *Ballo*

Continued from page 30

models for his *Don Carlos* librettists. In other ways, especially after the collaboration on *Les Vêpres*—he despised him. (Wagner's view of Scribe was not dissimilar; he appreciated the poet's theatrical flair but wrote of "effects without causes"; in his own *Rienzi* he essayed grand Meyerbeerian effects that, unlike those of *Le Prophète*, did result from "causes.")

In this light, we can view the *Ballo* libretto as at once an appreciation and a criticism of what Scribe had to offer. Verdi follows his original closely, but he prunes, refines, sharpens, purges mere

decorativeness (two ballet divertissements, one in the first and one in the last act, are omitted), and focuses tightly on the essential drama. *Ballo*, in libretto as in music, is an opera conceived for the Italian stage by an Italian composer who had long been living in Paris, one who sought to combine the merits of French grand opera with the warmth, the swiftness, the directness, the conciseness of Italian melodramma. If I seem to be slighting Somma's contribution, that is because his role was hardly more than that of a versifying amanuensis. The correspondence course continued: Verdi had to point out to the poet that "è desso . . . ad esso" is a feeble rhyme, that "contratto" (at a stroke) when sung, sounds like "contratto" (contract).

Verdi never composed an opera whose subject did not fire and inspire him. He would not have chosen *Gustave III* on "practical" grounds alone. In Scribe's drama, he found themes close to his heart and to his thinking. Roughly summarized, they are: responsibility, and the often irreconcilable conflict between, on the one hand, duty and, on the other, personal inclination and emotion; the limits of trust and the possibilities of betrayal, maybe misguided or unwitting betrayal even by those most trusted; and the vanity of supposing that by donning a disguise one can escape from harsh reality.

We find these themes in other operas. In *Forza*, one protectively donned disguise after another—Alvaro's as captain and then as monk, Carlo's as student and then as captain, Leonora's as a youth and then as a hermit—is stripped away. In *Don Carlos*, Eboli sings a Veil Song, dons a veil to delude Carlos, determines to take a nun's veil when her perfidy is revealed. In each act of *Ballo*, characters assume disguises, only to be unmasked: the pretended simple sailor as the King, and his companions as courtiers; the veiled mistress as an apparently adulterous wife; at the masked ball, a general unmasking. Disguises are vain. Reality must be confronted. As for trust and betrayal: the King has emotionally, if not in deed, betrayed his closest friend. That friend's wife has emotionally, if not in deed, betrayed her husband. Honor and duty lead her to a place where, ironically, her very presence seems to her husband to confirm her guilt. Believing himself betrayed, he in turn betrays his friend, and later tricks Oscar into another betrayal; vanity and frivolity lead to it, but the consequence is fatal.

(Opposite) San Francisco Opera, 1961:
Gré Brouwenstijn as Amelia.

(Below) San Francisco Opera, 1957:
(L. to r.) Sylvia Stahlmann as Oscar;
Jan Peerce as Riccardo;
Leonie Rysanek as Amelia.



LACKENBACH

(As a biographical aside to all this, we may note that in 1859, the year *Ballo* reached the stage, Verdi did two unexpected things: he married the woman, Giuseppina Strepponi, with whom he had been living in what the world deemed sin for 14 years; and he sought the acquaintance of Cavour, that statesman who [in Giuseppina's words] "conserved a heart in the midst of diplomacy and politics." In 1861, at Cavour's persuasion, he became a member of the newly formed Italian parliament, and he embarked on *Forza*, an opera concerned with the vanity of trying to achieve



JEANETTE

personal peace by disengaging oneself from the world.)

The theme of responsibility is sounded at the start of *Ballo*. Courtiers sing of loyalty to their ruler (all but a few who are disaffected), and he enters crying that "power is not beautiful unless it dries subject's tears and aims at uncorrupted glory." A few bars later—with a sudden leap of harmony and a switch from clear diatonicism to troubled chromatics—the countertheme is introduced, as the King reads Amelia's name. Hard upon that, Amelia's husband enters, and restates the theme of responsibility: "To your life . . . the destiny of thousand upon thousand of other lives is linked." The King is then called on to judge a case, hears both sides (Mlle. Arvidson is denounced by the judge, defended by the sparky young ensign Oscar), and decides to examine the evidence for himself—if that is not too serious a way of describing a decision

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San Francisco Opera, 1961: Giuseppe Zampieri as Riccardo; Ettore Bastianini as Renato.

undertaken more or less for a lark.

Verdi designated the opening stretch of music—comprising a chorus, three arias (the King's *sortita*, Anckarström's *cantabile*, and Oscar's *ballata*), and an ensemble finale—as a single “number,” *Introduzione*. It provides a vivid, individualized portrait of a ruler well aware of his public duties but also volatile and various: passionately in love, high-spirited, irresponsibly ready to combine entertainment with office. In this *Introduzione*, the tragedy is already implicit, given the King's character, Anckarström's devotion to his better qualities, Oscar's encouragement of his frivolous side, and the gathering conspiracy. When duty at last triumphs—when the King decides to renounce his love—it is too late to right the harm that has been done. *Ballo*, however, is far from being wholly somber. In each act there is also laughter. Oscar's high spirits sparkle throughout, matched in the first scenes by the King's gaiety, and contrasted in the last scenes with the grim conspiracy. The conspirators' sardonic laughter underpins the second act finale. The brilliance of the ball throws the catastrophe into relief.

Scribe had already done much of Verdi's work for him—that preliminary hard work of getting a dramatic action into shape for the lyric stage. Of the operas that Verdi composed between *Les Vêpres*

and *Aida*, only *Ballo* was not subjected to extensive revision after the premiere. For once, Verdi got it right the first time; there was none of the subsequent large-scale structural wrestling, as with *Boccanegra*, *Forza*, *Don Carlos*, nor even any of the smaller revisions, as with *Traviata*, *Otello*, *Falstaff*. To be sure, the opera ran into other troubles, but they were concerned with censorship, not with flawed dramaturgy. To appease the Neapolitan censor, Verdi and Somma had already transferred the action from a Stockholm within living memory (Gustavus was assassinated in 1792) to 17th-century Pomerania. On the day the composer arrived to begin rehearsals, Felice Orsini attempted to assassinate Napoleon III, on his way to the theater, and when the news reached Naples, any attempt to present the drama in something like its original form was doomed. The censors came up with an emasculated version (no ruler, no masked ball, no onstage assassination) set in 14th-century Florence, and Verdi withdrew his opera. The premiere was given in Rome the following year—with a Colonial Boston setting. For the Paris premiere, in 1861, the setting was Florence, in London that year, it was . . . Naples. But in modern productions—as in this one—the action is often returned to the place of the original, the brilliant court of Gustavus III of Sweden. ■

Recently, a production of Puccini's *Turandot* was scheduled for the gala opening of the Beijing Auditorium inside the old Forbidden City, where China's Imperial Palace fronts on Tiananmen Square. The original plan derived from more liberal days,

William Huck is a San Francisco-based music critic and opera librettist. His writing appears in the San Francisco Sentinel, Opera Quarterly and the Los Angeles Times. He is editor and program annotator for San Francisco Ballet magazine.

A B O U T

CENSORSHIP

By WILLIAM HUCK

a year and a half earlier, but when the time came for the Auditorium's inauguration, Tiananmen Square was drenched in blood. The students who massed there calling for democracy had been dispersed by the Armies of the People's Republic.

Not surprisingly, China's Culture Ministry no longer looked so favorably on Puccini's chilling drama of the Tartar prince who risks death for the love of Turandot, the cruel daughter of a senile Chinese emperor. After all, the opera's most important ministers of the state would have to intone in a reproduction of the now blood-stained square their awful and all too prescient warning: "This is the door of the great slaughterhouse. They strangle you in this place, impale you, cut your throat, decapitate you, saw you and disembowel you."



Pong, Ping and Pang (Jonathan Green, David Malis, Frank Kelley) and the populace of Peking/Beijing in San Francisco Opera's 1985 staging of Turandot.

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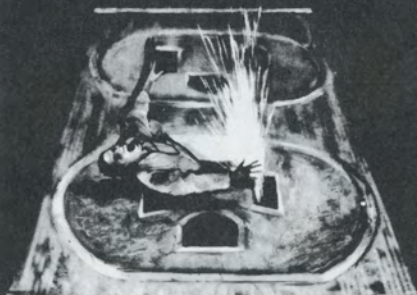
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As reported from Beijing by Uli Schmetzer of the *Chicago Tribune*, the government's official reason for taking a dim view of the new production was the usual flim-flam. "We do not want to promote the idea that the Chinese adore western music." But like so many hidden messages, the explanation paled before the truth. Schmetzer got another version of the story from an honest, though discreet, source. "The appraisal of a senior editor of the official Xinhua News Agency," Schmetzer wrote, "was more blunt": "This is not a convenient opera, since it might arouse people to blood-thirsty acts."

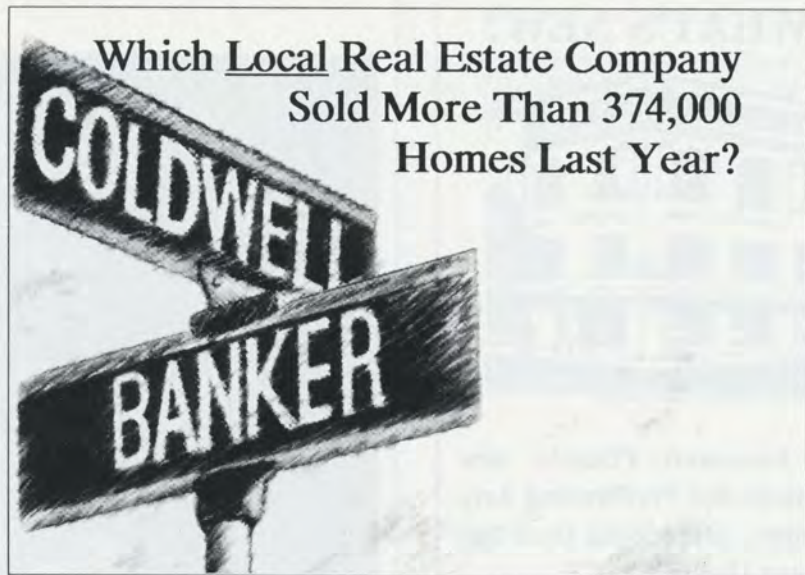
When the curtain rose on the long-awaited production of *Turandot* (for such it was called up until the very end), the audience heard not the harmonic darkness of Puccini's opening music, broken by the clanging of gong and xylophone, but the ethereal strings of Wagner's *Lohengrin* Prelude. There followed arias from *Carmen*, *Rigoletto* and *La Traviata*. (So much for not liking western opera!) The potpourri ended with two selections from Chinese opera that reminded one listener of the "Soviet atonal dialectics of the fifties."

As Schmetzer reported, "Worse was in store. *Turandot* was indeed staged after intermission, but pruned.... Gone were all the scenes of torture and corruption. Gone were the choruses calling for blood, the executioners promising, 'We are ready to embroider your skins,' and the imperial guards assaulting the populace with shouts of 'Back, back, you dogs!'

"Excised, too, was the ominous proletarian chant against the emperor and his hatchet men: 'We are already digging a grave for you who dare to challenge love; in darkness, alas, is written your cruel fate.'" The only scene left untouched was the last one, but unfortunately that one was not even written by Puccini.

Censorship is always an act of desperation. It shows a government afraid of its own people, afraid of what they might do if they are allowed to think and choose for themselves. American audiences might be inclined to sit smugly by and laugh at the pretzel-like configurations to which Beijing's Central Opera subjected *Turandot*—except that our government has recently begun to legis-

Liù (Adriana Anelli), captured by a guard, is about to be put to torture. Turandot, San Francisco Opera, 1985.



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PETERS

late in that gray area wherein lies the heart of artistic freedom.

Offended by some of the projects sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts, Senator Jesse Helms from North Carolina has convinced the Congress of the United States to put restrictions on what remains of the NEA, which has been for nearly twenty-five years this country's greatest cultural pledge. Now, unless artistic institutions promise never to present potentially obscene material, the National Endowment cannot fund them. The question is admittedly a delicate one, for the laws of the United States specifically state that society has a right to protect itself against obscenity. But who is to decide, and on what basis? Once upon a time it was thought obscene for a woman to show her ankle, and now Balanchine ballerinas float through some of the greatest art ever conceived in nothing more than practice tights.

Even on strict technical terms, the problem is more difficult than it appears.

The U.S. courts have never adequately set up guidelines determining what is obscene and what is not. Justice Byron White's dictum, "I know when I see it," is so personally biased that it strikes not at obscenity, but at the heart of democratic government. White's position skirts the rule of law, which is the entire basis of our judicial code, and puts in its place the rule of an individual, who could easily become an autocrat.

If this country were a monolithic society where everyone agreed on issues of belief and aesthetics, it would be easier to define what exists within the pale and what outside. Catholic Spain under the Inquisition, for example, had little difficulty deciding what was heresy, but even that unanimity did not keep the fires from burning, and frequently. However, the United States is the very opposite of homogeneous Spain. This country was peopled principally by massive waves of immigration. As such, it was perhaps the first society on earth to base its integrity not on conformity, but on toleration of

Così fan tutte at the San Francisco Opera in 1963: (L. to r.) Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, Helen Vanni, Hermann Prey.

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San Francisco Opera's 1987 *Fidelio*: Four of the principals in front are David Bender (Jacquino), Franz Ferdinand Nentwig (Don Pizarro), Paul Plishka (Rocco) and Elizabeth Connell (Leonore).

differences of opinion, custom and skin color.

We were the first openly pluralistic society and we should be proud of that, for history has proven that as the world shrinks, the fate of humanity depends on just such a pluralistic vision. Where we were once a nation made up of many diverse elements, we are now a world whose vast differences are joined together by our need to survive. Within a pluralistic society, what is offensive to one group may be art to another. Three hundred years ago many of the cathedrals of North Europe were stripped of all their gold and lace, their statues and stained glass, because such objects were considered offensive and immoral.

The second problem with censorship is that it is always hide-bound to the past. It is afraid of what is new and vital and true. And it cannot be otherwise, for while art

is frequently in the hands of pioneers, law by its very definition is bound by precedents. The Declaration of Independence was once a seditious document. Theater producers once felt it necessary to rearrange Shakespeare's works because they were too bawdy or too real or too painfully tragic.

For over a century Lorenzo da Ponte's libretto for Mozart's *Così fan tutte* was thought too immoral to be shown on the stage. In every country in Europe, it was rearranged to fit a more complacent view of human feelings and desires. As early as 1794, a Leipzig production shifted the scene of action from Vienna to Flanders, because German women were, of course, never so frivolous. Eight years later, a Vienna production moved the drama to the notoriously lascivious south, and set the story in Milan. Under the guidance of L. Schneider and E. Devrient in the



SOHL

second half of the nineteenth century, *Così fan tutte's* women were let in on the secret and so their lovemaking was only a joke they played on the jokesters.

Several attempts were made to drop Da Ponte's libretto altogether. In Paris in 1863, the opera was completely refashioned to fit the plot of Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost*. In Dresden in 1909 the music was adapted to a new libretto founded on a comedy by Calderón. Only in 1920 was there a Paris production that actually translated the opera from the original.

One might argue that all this self-imposed censorship occurred in autocratic rather than democratic countries, but not even a representative government is an adequate assurance against oppression. Whenever a government, even a majority one, insists on deciding what constitutes art, then the suppression of artistic freedom follows. Originally, Oscar Wilde's *Salomé* was banned in London, to be fully heard there for the first time under the guise of Strauss' opera. At the height of the First World War, *The Rainbow*, D.H. Lawrence's warmest and most loving evocation of the human condition, was burned by an outraged society more concerned with the author's pacifism and his German wife than his so-called immorality.

The clash between art and complacency is inevitable. Of course there have been and always will be those towering artists whose work is not an adventure but a summation of what has gone before. These poets and painters, composers and novelists, believe in Pope's definition of art as "what oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed." In music, we might remember J.S. Bach and Franz Joseph Haydn, Johannes Brahms and even Alban Berg, who in his way summed up the achievements of his teacher Arnold Schönberg and brought those revolutionary ideas into the mainstream.

Yet among the greatest of artists, there is also another kind, perhaps even more important to society. He is the rebel, the innovator, the pioneer. Many of our most artistic (and scientific) minds thrive when engaged in a voyage into the unknown or even the known—yet ne'er expressed. For this kind of artist, to repeat the past is boring and trivial. What excites is the exploration of artistic truth beyond the boundaries of what was previously acceptable.

This dichotomy between artistic types has always been with us. In ancient Rome, Virgil spoke for Empire, while Catullus spoke for the human soul. In the Middle Ages, Dante earned his exalted artistic status, partly because he pleaded simultaneously for the empire of the Catholic church and the not-so-pure humanity he saw around him all the time. If Michelangelo were working today, what would Jesse Helms think of his sculptures and frescoes? And John Donne was a scurrilous, sacrilegious poet before he became a priestly one.

But no era has more favored the artist as defier of convention and conventional thinking than the last 250 years. At the beginning of this period, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, the darling of music, beyond whom there is probably no more universally revered artist, ventured into a highly political and extraordinarily

Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk at the S.F. Opera in 1981: William Lewis as Sergei and Anja Silja as Katerina.



POWERS

Un Ballo in Maschera at the San Francisco Opera in 1940: (L. to r.) Margit Bokor (Oscar), Richard Bonelli (Renato), Jussi Bjoerling (Riccardo) and Paul Walti (A Judge).

controversial field when he based his last opera, *The Magic Flute*, on the rituals and beliefs of Freemasonry, for Freemasonry had been under attack by the Hapsburg monarchy for a decade and was about to be snuffed out. At the height of the *ancien régime*, Mozart could be said to have begun the modern debate on immorality in great art, first in his ruthless analysis of sexual passion in *Don Giovanni* and then with his more loving one in *Così fan tutte*. It is perhaps an interesting footnote on the ways in which the censorial mind works that it was the more loving opera that roused more suspicion.

By the turn of the century, Beethoven had created both an artistic and a political explosion with the *Eroica* symphony, first dedicated to Napoleon, who was then denied the dedication when he crowned himself Emperor. One still wonders how Beethoven got away with *Fidelio* with its savage indictment against the corruption

of a police regime.

Artists of the early 19th century everywhere were concerned with the issues of freedom and liberty. In the 1820s Alexander Pushkin, whose poems have contributed so much to opera, was punished for his involvement in the Decembrist revolt in Russia. In 1830 Daniel Auber's opera *La Muette de Portici*, whose story was based on the insurrection at Naples in 1647, actually started a revolution. The performance on August 25 touched off a popular uprising that resulted the next year in the creation of Belgium as an independent state.

By 1849, Dostoevski had been sentenced to death for his revolutionary activities, only to have the decree sadistically withdrawn at the last moment, when the artist was already standing before the firing squad. Wagner, who was an active member of the revolutionary party in Dresden in 1849, was forced

MORTON



into exile where he remained for nearly 15 years until he was forgiven by King Ludwig II of Bavaria.

Nor was such censorship confined to the 19th century. In 1936, another composer was threatened. Though the case occurred in the more brutal world of Joseph Stalin's USSR, its basic outlines are altogether too similar to the current trends in our country, where bureaucrats and politicians are trying to dictate to artists about art.

In January of 1934, Dmitri Shostakovich gave the premiere of his second opera, *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, with its savage, sardonic tale about the attempted escape of a merchant's wife demeaned by her husband and father-in-law. When she is attracted by the brute strength and masculine allure of a new hired hand, Katerina murders her two oppressors and marries Sergei, only to have the bodies discovered during the wedding feast. The last act shows enormous sympathy for the fallen heroine and the other convicts she has joined on their way to prison in cold Siberia.

Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk ran for 36 performances in five months after its Leningrad premiere. Moscow's Bolshoi Theater saw 94 performances in two seasons. Never had a modern opera experienced such a sensational success in the Soviet Union, that is, until Stalin ventured into a performance in 1936. As Shostakovich himself remarked, "before Stalin's intervention, I was a boy who might have been spanked, afterwards I was a state criminal, always under observation, always under suspicion."

Still, no artist was more despised by the censor or more beloved by the public than Giuseppe Verdi, who helped to kindle the great fire of Italian patriotism in the Risorgimento period. After the Napoleonic Wars and for most of Verdi's career, Italy was carved up into various principalities and duchies under the control of mainly foreign regimes. The emperor of Austria, for example, was King of Lombardy and Venice, while his obedient relatives ruled in Parma, Modena, and Tuscany. Only two Italian states were powerful enough to reconstitute themselves, and both had powerful foreign backing. The Bourbons of Naples regained control of Sicily and all the boot of the peninsula, while the House of Savoy returned from the island of Sardinia to their old capital at Turin in the

heart of the Piedmont. Throughout the land, and not the least in the Papal States, autocracy became a way of life. It was a life frightened by the French Revolution and now determined to maintain its supremacy at all costs.

The story of Verdi's nationalistic operas is not just a tale of clever deception and intrigue, but also one of the purest examples of the futility of censorship. There had been musical precedents for Verdi's work, of course. Rossini's *William Tell* is charged with anti-Austrian feeling and in 1844 a group of Italian nationalists faced a firing squad while singing a chorus by Mercadante on the text, "He who dies for his country has lived long enough." But with Verdi, Italian patriotism was not an incidental feeling. It was an integral part of his work. Verdi meant to work his audience into a frenzy, and to the great discomfort of the censors who reported to the crown, he all too frequently succeeded.

As George Martin reports in his essay "Verdi and the Risorgimento," not only did *Nabucco's* famous chorus of exiled Israelites stop performances of the opera throughout the land, but so did the Lombards on the crusade in Verdi's next opera, *I Lombardi alla Prima Crociata*. In that work, when the tenor cried "The Holy Land will be ours today," the chorus—and inevitably the audience as well—replied with a call for war, "Si! ... Guerra! Guerra!" Likewise, when the Roman general in *Attila* told the invading Huns, "You may have the universe, but leave Italy to me," he spoke not only for 5th-century Rome but for contemporary Italy as well. And of course, pandemonium broke out. To counter this, a police order forced the theater to drop the lines, but that resulted in a demonstration as well.

Even in *Macbeth*, seemingly an unlikely subject for Italian patriotism, Verdi slyly inserted a chorus for the Scottish exiles, "O patria oppressa." "At the performances in Venice," writes Martin, "the audience took to throwing onto the stage bouquets of red and green, the Italian colors, which instantly provoked demonstrations. When the police forbade red and green, the audience threw bouquets of yellow and black, the Austrian colors, for the pleasure of watching the singers refuse to pick them up."

As Verdi matured, it was not only his nationalism that got him into trouble

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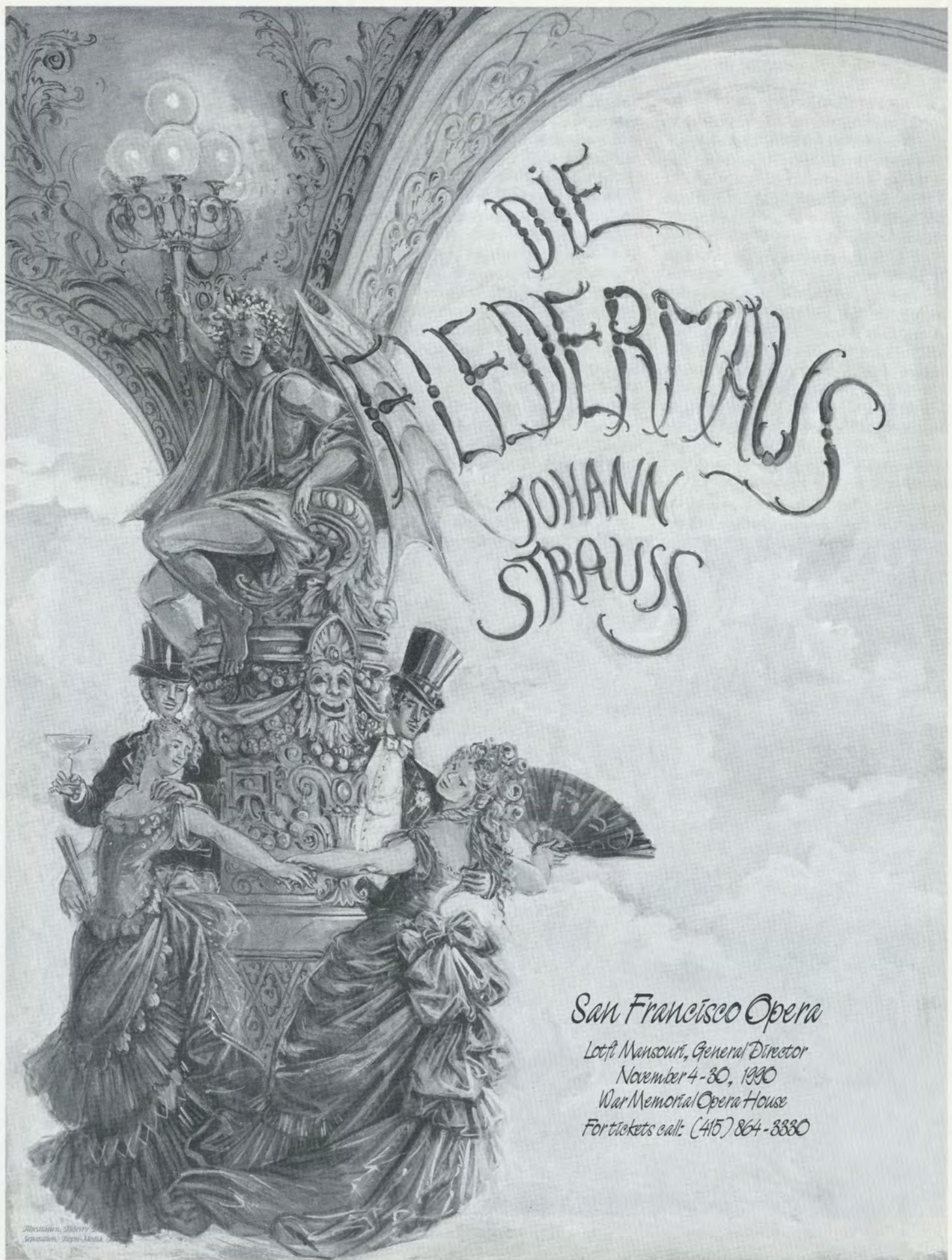
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with the autocratic regimes that ran Italy. Soon, his generous sense of morality came under fire as well. In the unjustly neglected *Stiffelio*, Verdi tells a vivid psychological story about an evangelical Protestant minister who forgives his wife for her love affair by intoning from the pulpit Christ's admonishment about the woman taken in adultery, "Let he who is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone." Immediately the censors demanded revision. It is perhaps now amusing to note that one of their strongest objections was to the biblical passage itself.

Indeed, the moralistic objections to *Stiffelio* were so severe and so rampant that Verdi eventually cannibalized his autograph score to make *Aroldo*, where the minister is transformed into a returning Crusader and the climactic Biblical quotation is transferred from the mouth of the hero, where it has real dramatic power, to that of a suddenly appearing hermit, where it becomes a platitude. If two copies of the original score had not been found in the Naples Conservatory in 1968, the boldness and the brilliance of Verdi's original design would have been

lost forever.

Coupled with *La Traviata*, *Stiffelio* shows the composer groping towards a new age of humanism with its growing sympathy for the individual in whatever walk of life. Only try to imagine opera's great loss, if after the experience of *Stiffelio* Verdi had been scared away from the sordid tale of a courtesan dying of consumption.

Verdi busied himself with the re-fashioning of *Stiffelio* into *Aroldo* just before taking up *Un Ballo in Maschera*, which once again cast the composer into a torturous struggle with the censors. Of course, the opera should have been acceptable. Its plot was 15 years old, and had already been set by at least three composers of note. Furthermore, despite its overly romanticized view of politics, the tale came from life. King Gustav III of Sweden had been a despot of the Enlightenment, like Joseph II of Austria. Gustav's reforms, like Joseph's, made him many enemies among the nobility, and he was assassinated during a masked ball in 1792 by a gentleman of his court. But truth was no justification to the censor. Indeed, history was even more frighten-

ing to the Neapolitan state, where *Ballo* was to have its premiere, than fiction. After all, 1792 had seen the killing of another king, this time by his own people.

When Verdi first submitted his synopsis of *Ballo* for approval, he received back a stern and angry letter demanding seven different revisions—as Julian Budden has outlined in his masterful *The Operas of Verdi*. (1) The king, as in *Rigoletto*, must be demoted to a lesser rank, perhaps a duke. (2) The action must be transferred to a pre-Christian era when witchcraft was believed in (here the censor meant permitted, for it has been believed in throughout the ages). (3) The country could be anywhere in the non-Catholic North, except Norway and Sweden, which were monarchies. (4) The hero's love must be noble and tinged with regret, for the censors were still smarting over the callous swagger of *Rigoletto's* Duke. (5) The conspirators must hate the duke for hereditary reasons, such as usurpation of property. This is at first blush the strangest of all requests, for it turns Verdi's overly romantic drama back towards life. Yet the reason for it is

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not hard to surmise: at least this version kept the quarrel firmly within the landed, hereditary class. The two elements in society that all monarchies of the 19th century feared most were the republican lawyers, like Robespierre, and the mob they could incite. (6) The feast should faithfully conform to the outmoded customs of its far-away time. (7) No firearms.

While Verdi begrudgingly complied with these requirements, and set the drama in 17th-century Pomerania with a suitably remorseful Duke, news reached Naples of an attempt on the life of Napoleon III of France. Aghast, the censor demanded that the whole text be rewritten. Now the objections had increased: (1) Verdi must take away the offending hero's sovereignty altogether, making him merely a lord at court. (2) He must change the baritone's wife into his sister, thus maintaining the sanctity of marriage. (3) The 17th century, despite the enormous witchcraft scare that abounded in those times, was not far enough distant in time. (4) No dancing, for it might lead to immoral thoughts in the audience. (5) The murder must take

place off-stage. (6) Cut out the scene where the names are chosen by lot.

Almost behind Verdi's back, the theater's management refashioned the libretto into a drama about the feuding Guelphs and the Ghibellines in 14th-century Florence. Looking over the revisions, Verdi was in despair. The scintillating music for the page-boy Oscar would sound silly in the mouth of the soldier he had become. In the great Act II love duet, with its surrounding gallows changed to shade trees, Amelia was not even allowed to say "I love you." As Verdi remarked, "Unless Amelia lets slip the words 'T'amo,' the whole piece is without life, without passion, without warmth, without the enthusiasm and sense of abandon that's needed." For Verdi, the changes were a question of "bizarreries that violate the most obvious principles of dramatic art and degrade the conscience of an artist."

As Verdi wrote to his librettist, Antonio Somma, "The management adds and removes lines at its pleasure as though to say, 'Signor Maestro, cobble your notes onto this.... What, you've already written the piece? What does that matter.

Lengthen, shorten, cut around, it will be all right! We want music, we want your name, and you as our accomplice in gulling the public who are paying! Drama, good sense? Bah! Rubbish! Rubbish! That's how it is and that's the respect they have for the public, for art and for artists! "

A hundred and thirty years later, San Francisco Opera audiences are able to experience both glittering and turbulent sides of Verdi's *Ballo*, with its love-filled duets and hate-driven ensembles. *Ballo's* plot no longer shocks us, nor is it likely to incite anyone to take a gun and kill the president.

Yet Verdi's struggle with the dictators of art is, in certain ways, an even more eternal drama. His reaction to the bonds of censorship, his shame-filled sense of the degradation of the artist and his chagrin at the suppression of artistic conscience are the same today as they were in his time. What would Puccini, for example, have thought of that mutilated production of *Turandot*? Or what would Verdi have said about a politician like Helms dictating to the artistic community? ■

PERFORMING ARTS LIBRARY PRESENTS NEW EXHIBITION

The San Francisco Performing Arts Library & Museum (SF PALM for short; formerly known as The Archives for the Performing Arts) will present *Tapestry: The Threads of Bay Area Multicultural Art* in its new gallery at 399 Grove Street, one block west of the Opera House.

This exhibition of three photographic collections, presented in conjunction with *Festival 2000*, will run from mid-October through January:

Prime Movers—a look at the many important living figures who have helped shape the Bay Area multicultural arts scene;

In Performance—an overview of the multicultural performers and performing organizations in the Bay Area;

Portraits and Profiles—a behind-the-scenes examination of artists in rehearsal and in the community.

Each of these three sections has been created by a different Bay Area photographer, selected by a jury of five from nearly 40 applicants, whose work has been specially commissioned by *Festival 2000* for this exhibition. The commissioned photographers are Marion Gray, Robert Hsiang, and Holman "Bob" Turner.

Ultimately, these photographs, along with appropriate documentation, will become part of SF PALM's permanent collection.

The gallery is open from noon to 5 pm, Monday, Thursday and Friday, and from noon to 6 pm on Tuesday and Wednesday. For information and special group viewings, please call 255-4800.

Tapestry has been made possible, in part, by generous support from the James Irvine Foundation, the Zellerbach Family Fund, and *Festival 2000*.

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1990 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 current previews and lectures that are open to the public.

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD INSIGHTS

Renowned artists and personalities (to be announced) from the world of opera share their insights and experiences during informal interviews.

Held in Herbst Theatre, Veterans Building, 401 Van Ness Ave., in San Francisco. All 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.

Capriccio 10/8
Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria 11/22

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD PREVIEWS 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 \$36 for 7 previews (\$30 for students and seniors). Single tickets are \$6 (\$5 for students and seniors). For further information, please call (415) 388-6789.

Don Quichotte 10/10
Michael Mitchell
Capriccio 10/17
James Keolker
Khovanshchina 11/14
Richard Taruskin
Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria 11/19
William Mahrt

SOUTH PENINSULA

Previews held at the Palo Alto Senior Center, 450 Bryant, at 8 p.m. Series registration is \$30 (students \$15); single tickets are \$5 (students \$4). For further information, please call (415) 948-8717.

Don Quichotte 10/9
Michael Mitchell
Capriccio 10/16
James Keolker
Khovanshchina 11/13
Richard Taruskin
Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria 11/20
William Mahrt

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 for San Jose

Opera Guild members). For further information, please call (408) 354-7525.

Don Quichotte 10/9
Michael Mitchell
Capriccio 10/16
James Keolker
Khovanshchina 11/13
Richard Taruskin
Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria 11/20
William Mahrt

SONOMA COUNTY CHAPTER

Previews held at various times and locations (see below). Series registration is \$40 for 6 previews (chapter member); \$48 non-member. Single tickets \$8. Extra cost of luncheons \$10; dinner \$24. For further information and reservations for luncheons and dinner, please call (707) 935-1957 or (707) 996-2590.

Don Quichotte 10/8, 10:30 a.m. lecture,
Michael Mitchell lunch following
La Provence,
141 Stony Circle,
Santa Rosa
Khovanshchina 11/12, 6:15 p.m. lecture,
Richard Taruskin dinner following
Sts. Peter & Paul
Russian Orthodox Church,
3395 Stony Point Rd.,
Santa Rosa
Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria 11/9, 10:30 a.m. lecture
William Mahrt lunch following
Villa Restaurant
3901 Montgomery Dr.,
Santa Rosa

JUNIOR LEAGUE OPERA PREVIEWS

Previews held in Herbst Theatre, Veterans Building, 401 Van Ness Ave., in San Francisco. Previews begin at noon, and there is no admission charge. For further information, please call (415) 626-0609.

Don Quichotte 10/10
Michael Mitchell
Khovanshchina 11/14
Richard Taruskin
Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria 11/21
William Mahrt

OPERA EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL PREVIEW SERIES

Previews of the operas of the 1990 season will be given by Michael Barclay, director of Opera Education International. Lectures will be presented at the

Pacific Jewish Theatre, 820 Heinz Ave., in Berkeley, at 7:30 p.m. Admission to the series of 9 previews is \$65; individual admission at the door is \$8. For further information, please call (415) 526-5244.

Don Quichotte 10/1
Capriccio 10/15
Un Ballo in Maschera 10/22
Die Fledermaus 10/29
Khovanshchina 11/12
Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria 11/19

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 1990 fall season, on Tuesday evenings at 7 p.m., beginning August 21 and ending in December. 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.

ROBERT GOODHUE'S FALL OPERA COURSE

Eight previews on San Francisco Opera's season; offered on Mondays at 6:30 p.m. Sessions are held at the First Congregational Church, Post at Mason, in San Francisco. Admission is \$12 per class. For further information, please call (415) 956-1271.

Don Quichotte 10/8
Capriccio 10/15
Un Ballo in Maschera 10/22
Die Fledermaus 10/29
Khovanshchina 11/12
Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria 11/19

SAN FRANCISCO CITY COLLEGE OPERA PREVIEWS

City College of San Francisco is offering an opera preview class, Music 27B, featuring San Francisco Opera's 1990 fall season, on Thursday evenings from 7 to 10 p.m., beginning August 23 and ending December 13. The course is free of charge and there are no prerequisites to enroll. Classes are held at the College, 50 Phelan Ave., Creative Arts Building, Room A-135, in San Francisco. For further information, please call (415) 239-3641.

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

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Medallion Society/Corporate Council

The Medallion Society, the premier support group of the San Francisco Opera family, and the Corporate Council play a vital role in maintaining the company's stature as one of the world's leading opera companies. The generosity of these members help to ensure the fiscal stability necessary for the production of first-rate opera, season after season.

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The San Francisco Opera Corporate Council includes Bay Area businesses and corporations that play an active role in the Opera. San Francisco Opera seeks to add new members to the Corporate Council so that it reflects the varied Bay Area business community. Council activities include participation in members-only dress rehearsals, numerous Council evenings at the Opera, and special behind-the-scenes glimpses into the world of opera. These benefits can be enjoyed by your business clients and employees.

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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.

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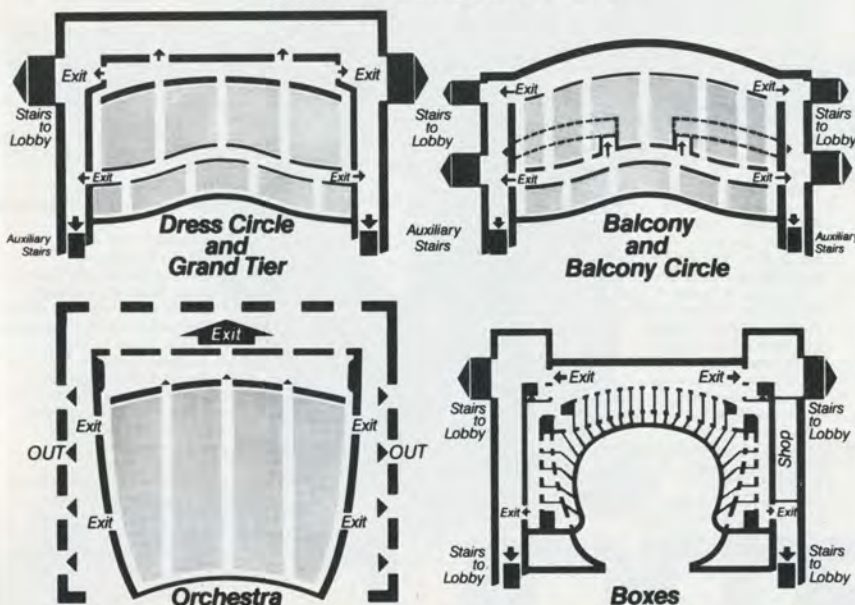
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The role of Amelia in today's performance of *Un Ballo in Maschera* will be sung by Deborah Voigt, replacing Susan Dunn, who is ill.

Young American soprano **Deborah Voigt**, who created a sensation earlier this year as the Gold Medal winner of the prestigious Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow, returns to San Francisco Opera as Amelia in *Un Ballo in Maschera*. She made her Company debut in the 1986 Fall Season in *Don Carlos* and also sang in *Jenůfa* and *Macbeth*. Her most recent appearance here was in 1987, when she performed the First Lady in *The Magic Flute* and Anna in *Nabucco*. Miss Voigt was a participant in the 1985 Merola Opera Program and toured that year with Western Opera Theater as Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*. An Adler Fellow in 1986 and 1987, she appeared in the Opera Center's 1986 Showcase production of Hindemith's *The Long Christmas Dinner*, and in 1987 she sang Jenny in the Showcase production of Rorem's *Three Sisters Who Are Not Sisters*. That fall she was presented as a Schwabacher Debut Recitalist. She has also appeared in solo recital at the Châtelet in Paris, at Italy's Rimini Festival, and at the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie in Brussels. After her New York debut at Carnegie Hall as soloist in the Verdi Requiem, she was acclaimed in the Netherlands as Marietta in a concert performance of Korngold's *Die Tote Stadt*. This led immediately to an engagement to sing the Verdi Requiem with the Netherlands Philharmonic at the Concertgebouw. Additional concerts include Shostakovich's 14th Symphony with the Chamber Symphony of San Francisco, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with Milwaukee Symphony, Honolulu Symphony and the Los Angeles Philharmonic. Future engagements include the Mozart Requiem and Rossini's *Stabat Mater* with the Boston Symphony, Beethoven's Ninth with the St. Louis Symphony, and Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* with the Minnesota Orchestra. She also adds three new roles to her repertoire: Elettra in *Idomeneo* at the Finnish National Opera, the title role of *Ariadne auf Naxos* with Boston Lyric Opera, and the Female Chorus in *The Rape of Lucretia* with San Diego Opera. She will appear next year as Amelia in *Un Ballo in Maschera* in the Metropolitan Opera's Parks Series. A native of Southern California and an alumna of California State University at Fullerton, she also won First Prize in Italy's prestigious Busseto Verdi Competition, the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, the Luciano Pavarotti/Opera Company of Philadelphia International Vocal Competition, the Schwabacher Memorial Award, and the National Association of Teachers of Singing Competition. She has been awarded career grants by New York's Opera Index and the Richard Tucker Music Foundation.

