

Le Nozze di Figaro
(The Marriage of Figaro)

1990

Sunday, June 2, 1991 1:30 PM
Thursday, June 6, 1991 7:30 PM
Sunday., June 9, 1991 1:30 PM
Saturday, June 15, 1991 7:30 PM
Wednesday, June 19, 1991 7:30 PM
Friday, June 21, 1991 7:30 PM

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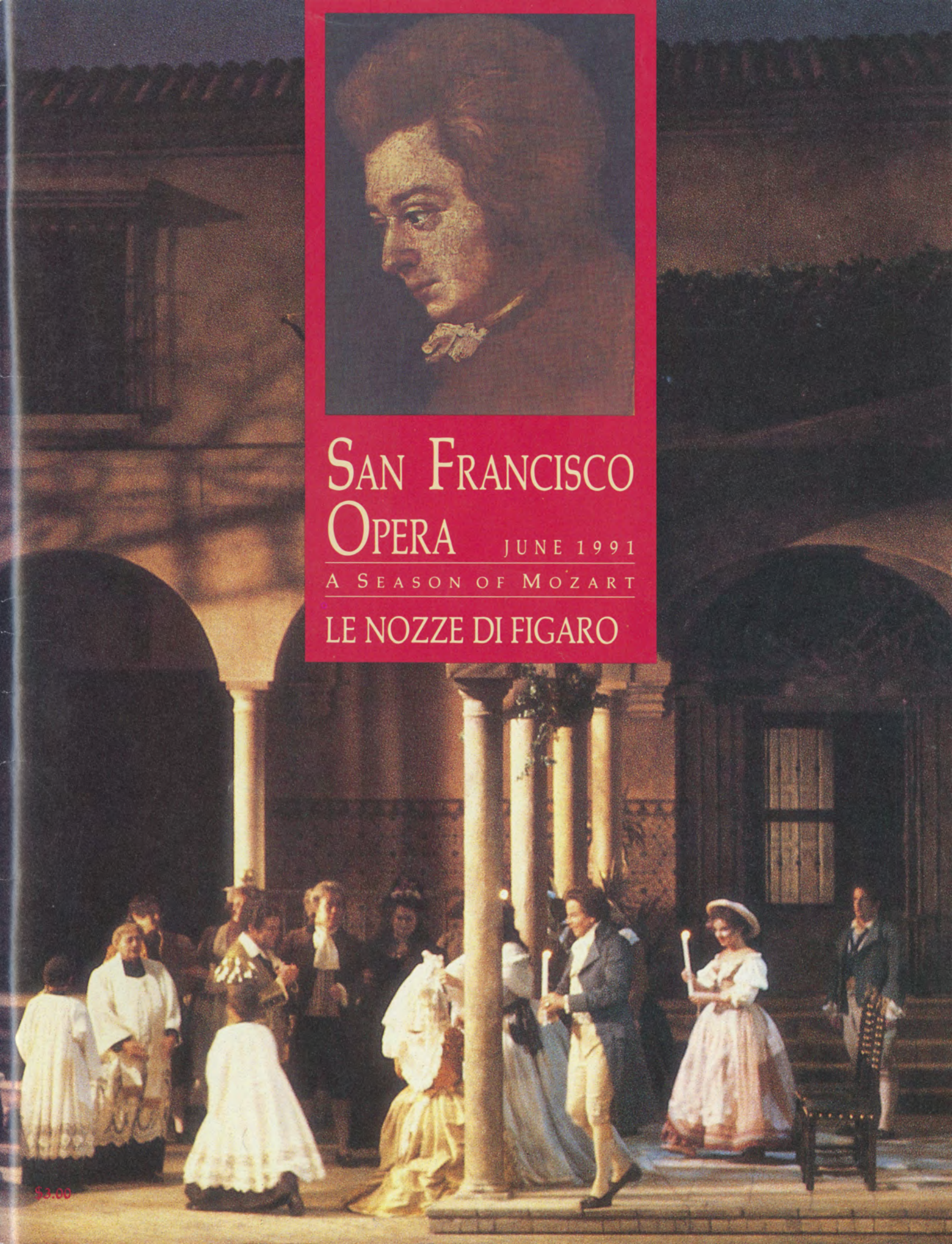


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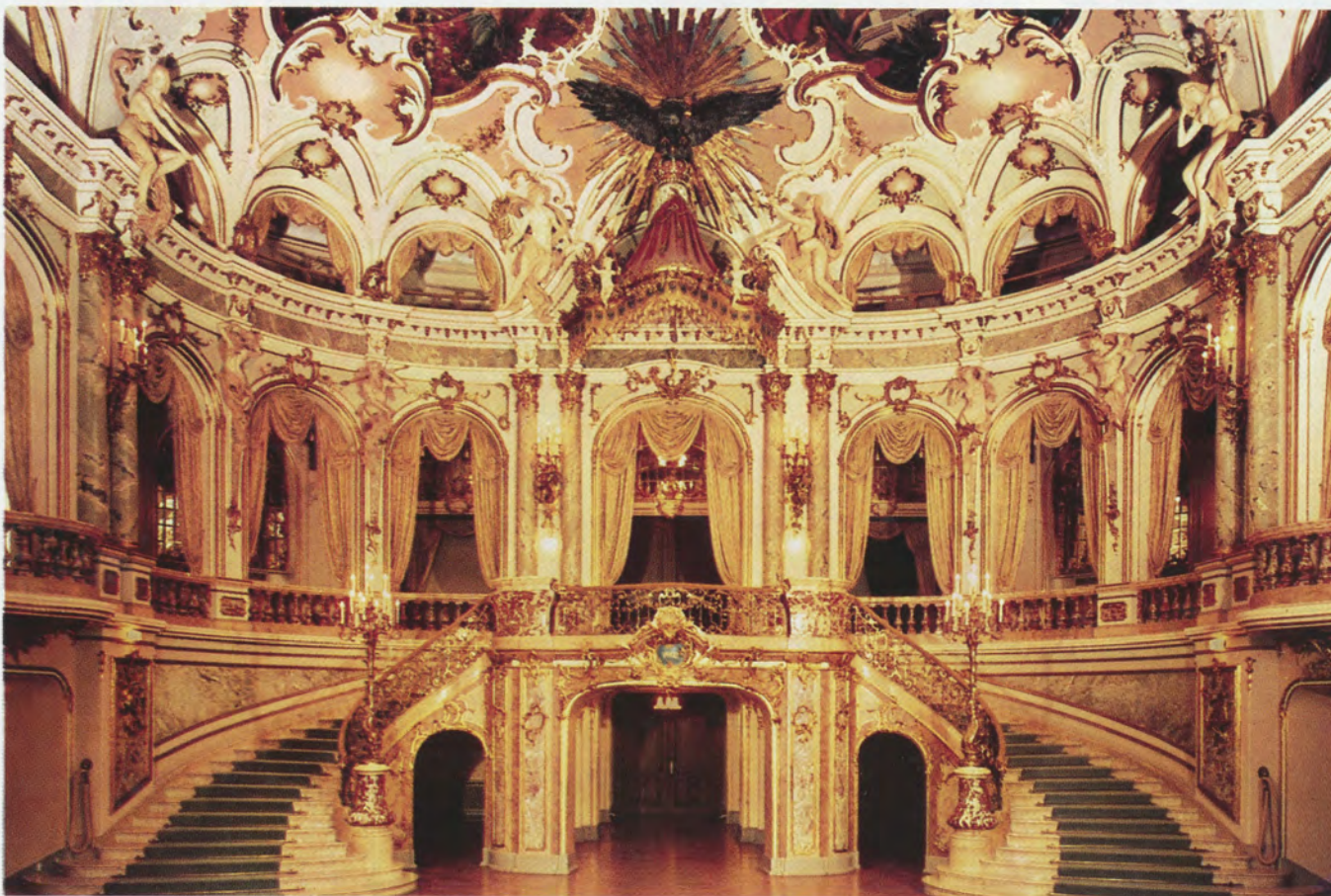
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Lotfi Mansouri, *General Director*

Le Nozze di Figaro

1991 MOZART SEASON
Vol. 69, No. 3

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The author examines the reasons behind the evergreen popularity of *Le Nozze di Figaro*.
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Profile of Pierre Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais, the author of the *Marriage of Figaro* play.
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Background: Wedding scene in San Francisco Opera's 1982 presentation of Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro*. Photo by Ron Scherl.
Inset: Unfinished Mozart portrait, made by his brother-in-law Joseph Lange in 1790.



MOZART · &
HIS · TIME

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SOHL

FROM THE PRESIDENT AND THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

Welcome to our summer season of Mozart opera! This is the first season we have devoted to a single composer—apart from Wagner's *Ring* cycle, which is in a category by itself. It is also our first participation in a city-wide arts festival devoted to a single theme.

"Mozart & His Time, A San Francisco Festival, 1991" has been underwritten by a combination of generous benefactors. The individual festival participants (some 50 different organizations) are each providing a portion of the necessary money; additional funding is being provided by BankAmerica Foundation, Grants for the Arts of the San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund, The James Irvine Foundation, The San Francisco Foundation and the William and Flora

Hewlett Foundation. This wonderful coalition of underwriters is a model of fiscal cooperation, and is providing our city with a cultural event from which everyone can potentially benefit.

Regarding our own festival offerings, we have also been blessed with generosity. Our magnificent David Hockney production of *Die Zauberflöte*, which was originally made possible by Bernard and Barbro Osher, is being revived with the generous assistance of Lexus, a division of Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Inc. Our imposing production of *Le Nozze di Figaro*, designed by Zack Brown, was originally made possible by the San Francisco Opera Guild. In addition, our striking new production of *Così fan tutte* has been underwritten by a gift from Mr.

and Mrs. Evert B. Person. To all of these dedicated patrons of the arts, we offer a tip of our Mozartian three-cornered hat.

Once again, we acknowledge our governmental funding sources, including the National Endowment for the Arts, the California Arts Council and the Grants for the Arts program of the San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund. We also extend our appreciation to Mayor Art Agnos and Chief Administrative Officer Rudolf Nothenberg, whose continued support has been most gratifying. And of course, along with the Opera Guild, we wish to express our thanks to the ongoing support of the War Memorial Board of Trustees.

Reid W. Dennis
Chairman

Thomas Tilton
President



GENERAL DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Welcome to our season of Mozart!

I am excited by this summer's presentations for a variety of reasons. First, it is always an aesthetic pleasure to present the masterpieces of a genius of Mozart's caliber. Second, our Mozart season is part of the city-wide "Mozart & His Time, A San Francisco Festival, 1991." A festival of this sort, encompassing all of the performing arts as well as the graphic arts and humanities, has been my dream for this city ever since I became general director of San Francisco Opera in 1988. No other single-theme festival on this scale—over 150 events presented by some 50 organizations—has ever been organized in San Francisco before, and to see it become a reality has been most satisfying.

It is my sincere hope that all of you will take this unique opportunity to explore the man, his music and his age by attending many of the non-operatic events in

the festival schedule, as well as our own performances. Encountering Mozart in other contexts can only enhance your enjoyment of his incomparable operas. His accomplishments are so staggering, we can only represent a sampling of his output in one month.

Our selections range chronologically from one of his earliest operas, written when he was 16, to his final dramatic work; the styles encompassed include a German *Singspiel*, an Italian opera seria never before performed by the Company, and three delicious—and highly distinctive—comedies. The season will see the American opera company debut of the celebrated German director Harry Kupfer and his design team of Reinhart Zimmermann and Eleonore Kleiber, as well as singers Monica Bacelli and Michael Kraus. Company debuts include conductor Gerard Schwarz and singers Alexandra Coku, Renée Fleming, James

Michael McGuire, Deon van der Walt, Sally Wolf. Also for the first time, the San Francisco Opera Center's annual Showcase production will be offered free to the public at Sigmund Stern Grove on June 30.

Most of all, I hope you will join us in celebrating the life-affirming spirit of Mozart, so that his insight might help us to smile at the world as he did. As awesome as his intellectual achievement is, we must not be intimidated by this most accessible of musicians. Mozart wanted, above all else, for his audiences to enjoy what he created. That is what we at San Francisco Opera want for our audiences, too.

You're torn.

Do you park it outside so the
neighbors can see it?

Or inside, so the birds can't?

You put it inside.

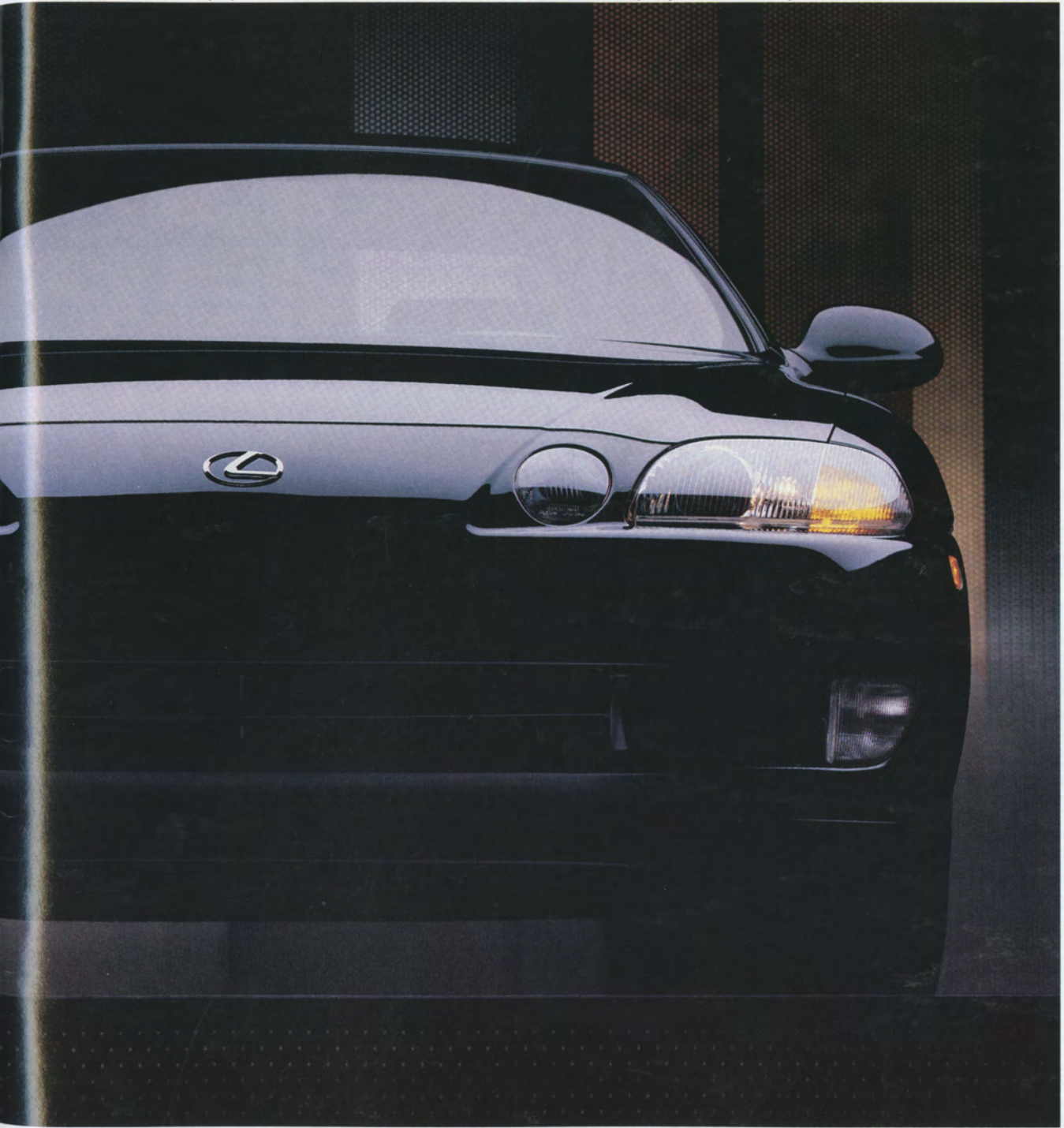
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★★★ *Jim Wood, San Francisco Examiner*

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SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

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1991 MOZART FESTIVAL

Saturday, June 1, 8:00

Die Zauberflöte

Swenson, Wolf*, Racette, Guo†, Keen, Claycomb†; Hadley, Kraus**, Langan, S. Cole, Stewart, Li, Skinner, Fischer*

This production is made possible by Lexus, a division of Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Inc. Production originally made possible by Bernard and Barbro Osher.

Sunday, June 2, 1:30

Le Nozze di Figaro

Fleming*, Parrish, von Stade, Christin, Mills†; Alaimo, Brendel, Sénéchal, Estep, Montarsolo, Drake Rennert/Copley/Brown/Arhelger

Production originally made possible by the San Francisco Opera Guild.

Tuesday, June 4, 8:00

Die Zauberflöte

Thursday, June 6, 7:30

Le Nozze di Figaro

Friday, June 7, 8:00

Die Zauberflöte

Sunday, June 9, 1:30

Le Nozze di Figaro

Thursday, June 13, 8:00

Die Zauberflöte

Friday, June 14, 8:00

New Production

Così fan tutte

Patterson, Forst, Williams; McGuire* van der Walt*, Travis Summers/Kupfer*/Zimmermann*/Kleiber*/Munn

Underwritten by a generous gift from Mr. and Mrs. Evert B. Person.

Production designs from Komische Oper, Berlin, newly built by San Francisco Opera.

Saturday, June 15, 7:30

Le Nozze di Figaro

Sunday, June 16, 2:00

Die Zauberflöte

Tuesday, June 18, 8:00

Così fan tutte

Wednesday, June 19, 7:30

Le Nozze di Figaro

Thursday, June 20, 8:00

Così fan tutte

Friday, June 21, 7:30

Le Nozze di Figaro

Saturday, June 22, 8:00

Die Zauberflöte

Sunday, June 23, 2:00

Così fan tutte

Wednesday, June 26, 8:00

Così fan tutte

Friday, June 28, 8:00

San Francisco Opera Premiere

Concert Performance

Lucio Silla

Bacelli**, Panagulias, Coku*, Wolf; V. Cole, Li Rudel/Norris

Production generously sponsored by the Franklin Group of Funds.

Saturday, June 29, 8:00

Così fan tutte

Sunday, June 30, 2:00

Opera Center Showcase Production

Sigmund Stern Grove

La Finta Giardiniera

Fortuna†, Mills†, Claycomb†, Guo†; Nava, Estep, Vasquez† Takazauckas/Vendice/Wilson

Underwritten by a generous gift from Chevron U.S.A. Inc.

Sunday, June 30, 7:00

Lucio Silla

** United States debut

*United States opera company debut

*San Francisco Opera debut

†1991 Adler Fellow

All performances (except for *La Finta Giardiniera* which is sung in English) are in the original language with English Supertitles.

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SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

Lotfi Mansouri, *General Director*

1991 SEASON

Opening Night Friday, September 6, 7:30 La Traviata Verdi Vaness, Keen, Petersen; Giordani*, Coni*, Skinner, Travis Arena/Copley/Conklin/Walker/Munn <i>Production originally made possible by Louise M. Davies.</i>	Sunday, September 22, 2:00 La Traviata Verdi	Sunday, October 13, 2:00 Don Giovanni Mozart
Saturday, Sept. 7, 7:00 <i>San Francisco Opera Premiere</i> War and Peace Prokofiev Panagulias, Zaremba**, Bogachova**, Keen, Markova-Mikhailenko**, Bower, Racette; Kharitonov*, McCauley, Plishka, Galusin**, Alexeiev**, Skinner, Travis Gergieff*/Savary**/Lebois**/Schmidt**/Peduzzi**/Morgan/Munn <i>Underwritten, in part, by a generous gift from Cynthia Wood and the Columbia Foundation.</i>	Wednesday, September 25, 7:30 I Capuleti e i Montecchi Bellini	Tuesday, October 15, 8:00 Don Giovanni Mozart
Tuesday, September 10, 7:00 War and Peace Prokofiev	Thursday, September 26, 7:00 War and Peace Prokofiev	Wednesday, October 16, 7:30 Carmen Bizet
Wednesday, September 11, 7:30 La Traviata Verdi	Friday, September 27, 8:00 La Traviata Verdi	Saturday, October 19, 8:00 Don Giovanni Mozart
Thursday, September 12, 7:00 War and Peace Prokofiev	Saturday, September 28, 8:00 Don Giovanni Mozart Mims, Esperian*, Blackwell*; G. Quilico, Gallo**, Lopardo*, Dupont, Rose** Hager*/Hampe/Feldman/Businger/Munn <i>Production originally made possible by James D. Robertson.</i>	Sunday, October 20, 1:30 Carmen Bizet
Saturday, September 14, 8:00 La Traviata Verdi	Sunday, September 29, 1:00 I Capuleti e i Montecchi Bellini	Monday, October 21, 7:00 Tristan und Isolde Wagner Schnaut**, Schwarz; Johns, Muff, Welker*, De Haan, Schade* Schneider/Mansouri/Pagano/Munn <i>Production from Cologne Opera, newly built by San Francisco Opera as a co-production with Washington Opera. Underwritten by a generous gift from the L.J. Skaggs and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation.</i>
Sunday, September 15, 1:00 War and Peace Prokofiev	Sunday, September 29, 8:00 La Traviata Verdi	Wednesday, October 23, 7:30 Carmen Bizet
Wednesday, September 18, 7:30 La Traviata Verdi	Tuesday, October 1, 8:00 Don Giovanni Mozart	Thursday, October 24, 7:00 Tristan und Isolde Wagner
Thursday, September 19, 7:30 <i>San Francisco Opera Premiere</i> I Capuleti e i Montecchi Bellini Gasdia, Ziegler*; Plishka, Dupont* Pappano*/Chazalettes*/Santicchi*/Arhelger <i>Underwritten, in part, by a generous gift from Herman J. Miller and Edward J. Clarke. Production owned by the Lyric Opera of Chicago; created through a generous gift from Ameritech/Illinois Bell.</i>	Wednesday, October 2, 7:00 War and Peace Prokofiev	Friday, October 25, 7:30 Carmen Bizet
Friday, September 20, 7:00 War and Peace Prokofiev	Thursday, October 3, 7:30 Don Giovanni Mozart	Saturday, October 26, 7:30 Carmen Bizet Kuhlmann, Haymon*, Claycomb†, Guo†; McCauley, Hale, Vasquez† Šutej/Ponnelle/Williams/Ponnelle/Juerke/Munn
Saturday, September 21, 8:00 I Capuleti e i Montecchi Bellini	Saturday, October 5, 8:00 I Capuleti e i Montecchi Bellini	Sunday, October 27, 1:00 Tristan und Isolde Wagner
	Sunday, October 6, 2:00 Don Giovanni Mozart	Tuesday, October 29, 7:30 Carmen Bizet (Same cast as October 26)
	Tuesday, October 8, 8:00 I Capuleti e i Montecchi Bellini	Wednesday, October 30, 7:00 Tristan und Isolde Wagner
	Thursday, October 10, 8:00 I Capuleti e i Montecchi Bellini	Friday, November 1, 7:30 Carmen Bizet (Same cast as October 26)
	Friday, October 11, 8:00 Don Giovanni Mozart	Saturday, November 2, 7:00 Tristan und Isolde Wagner
	Saturday, October 12, 7:30 Carmen Bizet Horne, Racette, Fortuna†, Guo†; Shicoff, Kharitonov, Vasquez†* Šutej*/Ponnelle/Williams/Ponnelle/Juerke/Munn <i>Production originally made possible by the San Francisco Opera Guild and Friends of Kurt Herbert Adler.</i>	

Kawai is the official piano of the San Francisco Opera. Pianos provided and serviced by R. Kassman.

Tuesday, November 5, 7:00
Tristan und Isolde Wagner

Thursday, November 7, 7:30
Carmen Bizet
(Same cast as October 26)

Friday, November 8, 8:00
United States Premiere
Das Verratene Meer Henze
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Saturday, November 9, 7:00
Tristan und Isolde Wagner

Sunday, November 10, 1:30
Carmen Bizet
(Same cast as October 26)

Wednesday, November 13, 8:00
Das Verratene Meer Henze

Saturday, November 16, 8:00
Elektra Strauss
Jones, Secunde*, Dernesch; Pederson, Fox, King
Thielemann**/Serban*/Kokkos*/Munn
Original production from Grand Théâtre de Genève.

Sunday, November 17, 2:00
Das Verratene Meer Henze

Wednesday, November 20, 7:30
Das Verratene Meer Henze

Thursday, November 21, 7:30
San Francisco Opera Premiere
Attila Verdi
Connell; Ramey, Schexnayder, Ordoñez*
Ferro*/Mansouri/Alley*/Lee/Arhelger
Production from New York City Opera.

Friday, November 22, 8:00
Elektra Strauss

Saturday, November 23, 8:00
Das Verratene Meer Henze

Sunday, November 24, 2:00
Attila Verdi

Monday, November 25, 7:30
La Traviata Verdi
Patterson, Guo†, Petersen; Lopez-Yañez, Laperrière, Skinner, Travis
Robertson/Copley/Conklin/Walker/Munn

Tuesday, November 26, 8:00
Elektra Strauss

Wednesday, November 27, 7:30
Attila Verdi

Friday, November 29, 8:00
La Traviata Verdi
(Same cast as November 25)

Saturday, November 30, 8:00
Attila Verdi

Sunday, December 1, 2:00
Elektra Strauss
(Orest: Fox)

Tuesday, December 3, 8:00
Attila Verdi

Wednesday, December 4, 7:30
Elektra Strauss
(Orest: Fox)

Thursday, December 5, 7:30
La Traviata Verdi
(Same cast as November 25)

Friday, December 6, 8:00
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Saturday, December 7, 7:30
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Two images from San Francisco Opera's 1982 presentation of *Le Nozze di Figaro*: (Top left) Lucia Popp during Susanna's "Deh, vieni non tardar"; Tom Krause (Count Almaviva) in Act I.

LOVE ^{and} MARRIAGE

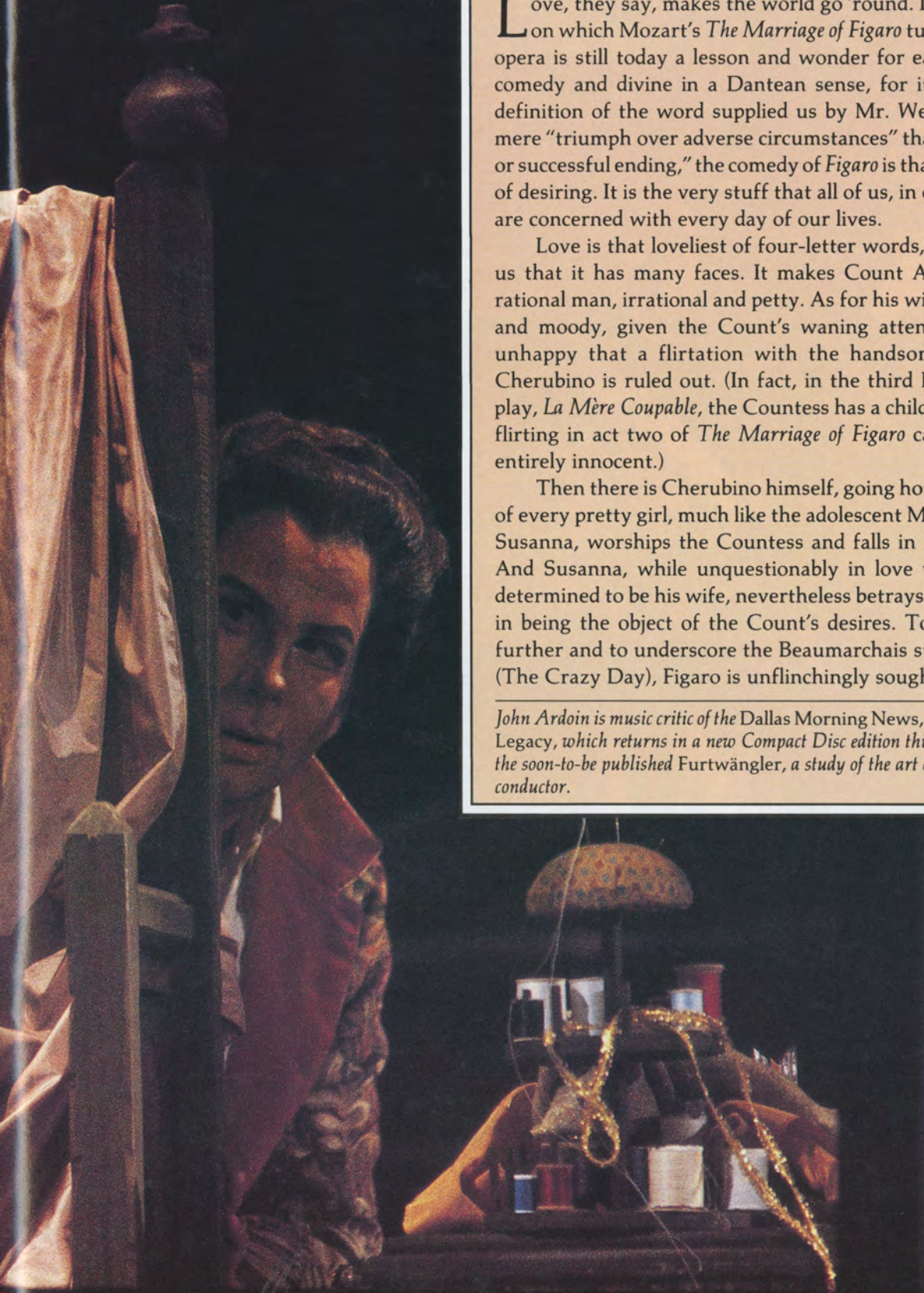
By JOHN ARDOIN

Love, they say, makes the world go 'round. It is certainly the axis on which Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* turns. Thanks to it, the opera is still today a lesson and wonder for each of us. *Figaro* is a comedy and divine in a Dantean sense, for it ranges beyond the definition of the word supplied us by Mr. Webster. Rather than a mere "triumph over adverse circumstances" that results "in a happy or successful ending," the comedy of *Figaro* is that of living, of hoping, of desiring. It is the very stuff that all of us, in one form or another, are concerned with every day of our lives.

Love is that loveliest of four-letter words, yet Mozart reminds us that it has many faces. It makes Count Almaviva, a normally rational man, irrational and petty. As for his wife, while melancholy and moody, given the Count's waning attentions, she is not so unhappy that a flirtation with the handsome young page boy Cherubino is ruled out. (In fact, in the third Beaumarchais-*Figaro* play, *La Mère Coupable*, the Countess has a child by Cherubino; their flirting in act two of *The Marriage of Figaro* can hardly be seen as entirely innocent.)

Then there is Cherubino himself, going hot and cold at the sight of every pretty girl, much like the adolescent Mozart. He plays up to Susanna, worships the Countess and falls in love with Barbarina. And Susanna, while unquestionably in love with her Figaro and determined to be his wife, nevertheless betrays a certain satisfaction in being the object of the Count's desires. To complicate matters further and to underscore the Beaumarchais subtitle *La folle journée* (The Crazy Day), Figaro is unflinchingly sought in marriage by the

John Ardoin is music critic of the Dallas Morning News, and author of *The Callas Legacy*, which returns in a new Compact Disc edition this fall from Scribner's and the soon-to-be published *Furtwängler*, a study of the art of the influential German conductor.



SCHERL



Samuel Ramey as Figaro and Gianna Rolandi as Susanna in San Francisco Opera's 1986 production of *Le Nozze di Figaro*.

Count's aging housekeeper Marcellina, who, in the course of these typsy-turvy twenty-four hours, is discovered to be in fact Figaro's mother. She in turn reveals that Bartolo, the Count's lawyer and the person representing her in her suit against Figaro, is his father!

Even the music master Don Basilio falls victim to the amorous madness in the air through his vicarious interest in everyone else's romantic business. It would seem that only Figaro is not guilty of a roving eye, but he is so jealous where Susanna is concerned, that he is willing to believe her unfaithful without giving her a chance to explain her behavior during the riotous mixup of identities that concludes the opera.

This remarkable final scene perhaps leaves the impression, as William Mann has suggested in his engaging book on the Mozart operas, that Countess Rosina is the opera's heroine, for it is her forgiveness of the Count's philandering that brings the evening to a happy and jubilant close. But this is far from the truth, for she has, in Mann's words, "behaved regularly like a none too bright doll with a lovely voice and features to match." No, as Mann points out, the real heroine is Figaro's pert Susanna.

She is the one pulling the strings, not only with her mistress and Figaro, but with the Count, Cherubino, Barbarina and Marcellina. And, had necessity dictated it, she would have wound Basilio and Antonio as well around her little finger. The Countess eventually becomes the centerpiece in the grand public reconciliation of the last act, but, as Mann puts it, the scene was "scripted, stage-managed and invigilated by Susanna."

Musically, she plays as crucial a part in the opera as she does in the dramatic sense. She is on stage more than any other character, sings more notes than anyone else and takes part in every one of the opera ensembles. And it is these ensembles that are the backbone and the glory of the score. Where would Rossini have been, and Donizetti and Verdi after him, without the model of Mozart's finale for Act Two of *Figaro*. Peter Shaffer has best described what happens here in his play *Amadeus* when he has Mozart say to Joseph II's ministers:

"I tell you I want to write a finale

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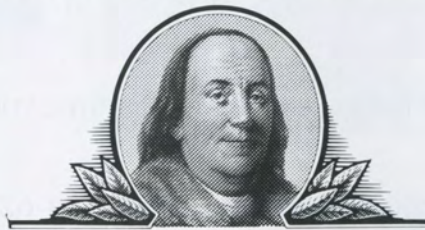


*"If music be
the food of love,
play on."*

William Shakespeare
Richard II



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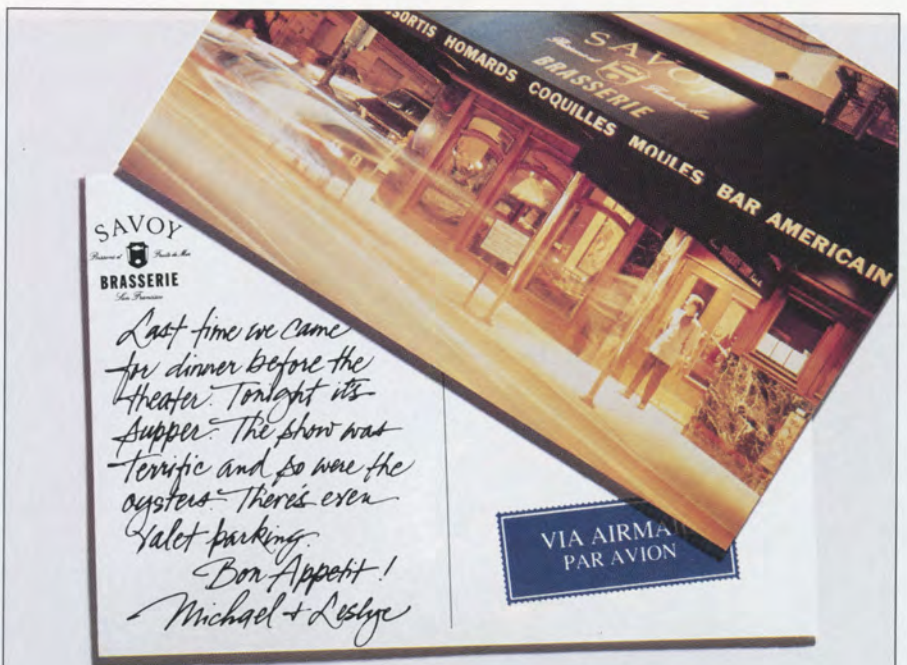
LOVE AND MARRIAGE

lasting half an hour! A quartet becoming a quintet becoming a sextet. On and on, wider and wider—all sounds multiplying and rising together—and then together making a sound entirely new; I bet you that's how God hears the world. Millions of sounds ascending at once and mixing in His ear to become an unending music, unimaginable to us! That's our job, we composers: to combine the inner minds of him and him and him and her and her—the thoughts of chambermaids and Court Composers—and turn the audience into God."

Of all the composers who turned their attention to opera, Mozart was surely the most wonderfully well-equipped, not only because he instinctively understood the human voice in terms of song, but because he possessed an innate, classic feeling for formal balance. He brought into a final, concise form all the elements of operatic drama that had come before him, and he influenced all that was to come after him. He was the bridge, as Sir Thomas Beecham was fond of pointing out, between the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries.

Mozart was born at an ideal time for a music dramatist. Opera was the most popular entertainment of the day, especially Italian opera, and everywhere there were theaters ready to stage new works and audiences eager to hear them. The art of singing was at a high level of achievement and stage design was in an innovative and fertile period. Thanks to Gluck, and the war he had waged on behalf of drama, the variety of stylistic possibilities opened to a composer was stimulating. Mozart explored them all. His 14 stage works are amazing in their diversity of style and their exploration of the voice, and within them can be found virtually every possibility of operatic form as it existed at that time.

To these, Mozart added innovations of his own. Yet, ironically, he was not the most successful operatic composer of his day. Widespread recognition came only a scant five years before his death in 1791 with the creation of *Le Nozze di Figaro*. The roots of this divine comedy stretch back to 1775 when the composer was at work on a charming but lesser work, *Il Re Pastore*. That year in France, playwright Pierre Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais



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LOVE AND MARRIAGE

was at last able to sidestep the censors and produce a play he had written two years earlier entitled *Le Barbier de Seville*. Its premiere was not a success, but with revisions the play caught on and made its author famous and fashionable. To cash in on that fame, Beaumarchais produced a sequel he called *Le Mariage de Figaro*. This, too, triumphed, and it, too, had a sequel—*La Mère Coupable*—but this failed; the third time was not to be the charm of the *Figaro* trilogy.

Meanwhile, *Le Barbier* was set to music as *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* in 1782 by Giovanni Paisiello; a more famous setting (now, but not then) by Rossini would



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LOVE AND MARRIAGE

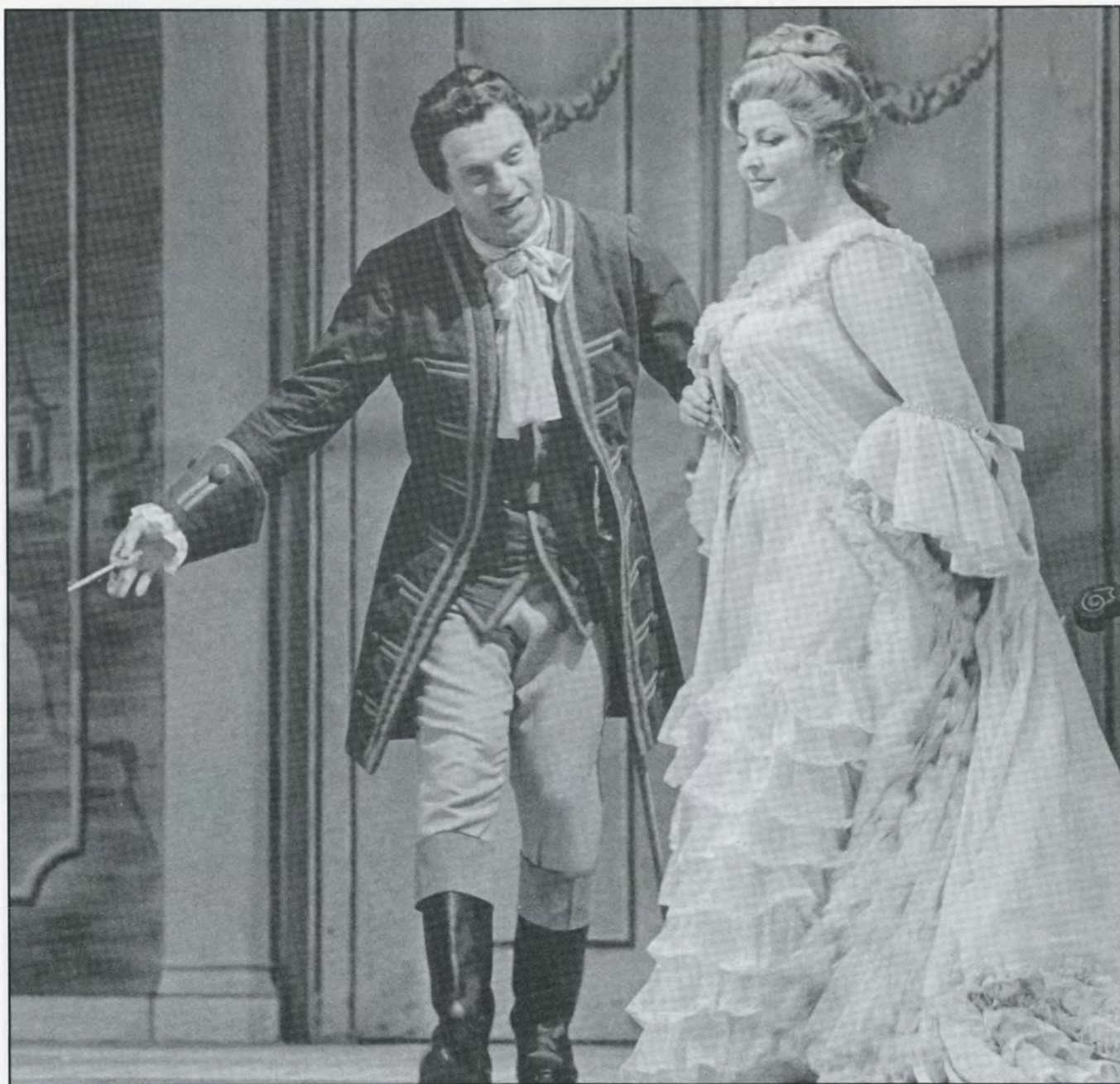
follow 32 years later. The Paisiello setting is important, however, because its popularity was once as great with the theater-going public as was that of the Beaumarchais original play, and nowhere more so than in Vienna. Mozart, who needed a story for a new opera, quite naturally turned to the second play that continued the adventures of the Count Almaviva, his love, Rosina, and his barber-valet, Figaro. It is not generally acknowledged, but I have always suspected that Paisiello's success spoke louder to Mozart than that of Beaumarchais.

The new was always in vogue in

Vienna, and Mozart, desperately needing the sort of success that came only with a hit opera, obviously hoped that lightning could as easily strike twice, that Figaro would be for him what *Le Barbier* had been for Paisiello. With ideas for the opera bursting in his mind, Mozart approached the court dramatist Lorenzo Da Ponte, an extraordinary figure in history, who eventually wound up in New York City where he taught Italian and where he is buried. Could da Ponte, Mozart inquired, turn the Beaumarchais *Figaro* into a libretto? Da Ponte was well aware of Mozart's prodigious talents, and, more to the point, he appreciated

(Opposite page) In 1936, San Francisco Opera presented *Le Nozze di Figaro* for the first time. Portraying the title role was Ezio Pinza, shown in a photo taken backstage that same year. He was to repeat the role here in 1940, 1946 and 1947.

(Below) Eberhard Waechter and Pilar Lorengar as the Almavivas in San Francisco Opera's 1964 staging of *Le Nozze di Figaro*.



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LOVE AND MARRIAGE

them. He must have also been quick to grasp the possibilities the play offered for a musical setting.

But he was well aware that the Emperor had banned performances of the play, which he considered "licentious" and "provocative." Joseph II was none too happy about a play centering on a servant who outwits and successfully revolts against his master; it might become too popular in Vienna and give the wrong people the wrong ideas. But Da Ponte felt that given the right situation, he could overcome the Emperor's objections. So he urged Mozart to begin the composition, work in secret, and wait for the perfect moment to spring the opera on the Emperor.

Within six weeks, *Figaro* was finished. Mozart entered it in the catalogue he kept of his compositions on April 29, 1786. Da Ponte's "perfect moment" was not long in coming. A new work was needed at the opera, and the poet offered *Figaro* to the Emperor. The monarch reminded his court poet that the Beaumarchais drama had been forbidden in Vienna, but Da Ponte replied that he had rewritten the play, and his words and Mozart's music had eliminated anything that might give offense.

The Emperor then parried by saying that while Mozart was "good" at writing for instruments, he had little standing as an operatic composer. "Without your Majesty's gracious protection," Da Ponte



LOVE AND MARRIAGE

answered, "I would have written only one drama in Vienna." With this, the Emperor gave in, and shortly afterwards Mozart came to the palace to play sections of the score, all of which met with royal approval.

The first performance on May 1, 1786, was an immense success in spite of the efforts of rivals (chiefly the courtiers loyal to Court Composer Antonio Salieri) to create a fiasco. We read that certain singers sang flat or pretended to forget their parts during the first act. Mozart appealed directly to the Emperor, who intervened, ordering the offenders to behave or leave Vienna. Michael Kelly, an Irish tenor who first sang the roles of Don Basilio and Don Curzio, tells us of

the preparation and first performances of *Figaro* in his lively memoirs:

"I remember at the first rehearsal of the full band, Mozart was on the stage with his crimson pelisse and gold-laced cocked hat, giving the time of the music to the orchestra. Figaro's song, 'Non più andrai, farfallone amoroso,' Bennuci gave, with the greatest animation and power of voice [Kelly consistently but incorrectly spells the name of Francesco Bennucci, the bass who created Figaro, with two n's and one c instead of one n and two c's].

"I was standing close to Mozart, who, *sotto voce*, was repeating, 'Bravo! Bravo! Bennuci,' and when Bennuci

(Opposite page) Martial Singher as Count Almaviva in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, the role he performed with the San Francisco Opera in 1947.

Reri Grist as Susanna and Thomas Stewart as the Count at the S.F. Opera in 1966.



KQED

LOVE AND MARRIAGE

came to the fine passage 'Cherubino, alla vittoria, alla gloria militar,' which he gave out with Stentorian lungs, the effect was electricity itself, for the whole of the performers onstage, and those in the orchestra, as if actuated by one feeling of delight, vociferated 'Bravo! Bravo! Maestro. Viva, viva, grande Mozart.'

"Those in the orchestra I thought would never have ceased applauding, by beating the bows of their violins against the music desks. The little man acknowledged, by repeated obeisances, his thanks for the distinguished mark of enthusiastic applause bestowed upon him . . . [At the first performance] I thought the audience would never have done applauding and calling for Mozart; almost every piece was encored, which prolonged it to nearly the length of two operas, and induced the Emperor to issue an order, on the second representation, that no piece of music should be encored. Never was anything more complete than the triumph of Mozart and his *Nozze di Figaro*, to which numerous overflowing audiences bore witness."

When the opera was repeated in Prague, an occasion that led to the commissioning of *Don Giovanni*, Mozart wrote to his friend in Vienna that "Here they talk about nothing else but *Figaro*. Nothing is played, sung or whistled but *Figaro*. Certainly a great honor for me." The cheering has continued for over 200 years. Just what is the enormous appeal

this comedy in music continues to exert? There is no denying that it is a marvel of invention, a work that is self-renewing through its ability to speak to audiences of all ages and tastes with immediacy and freshness. But what specifically is behind its unflagging popularity?

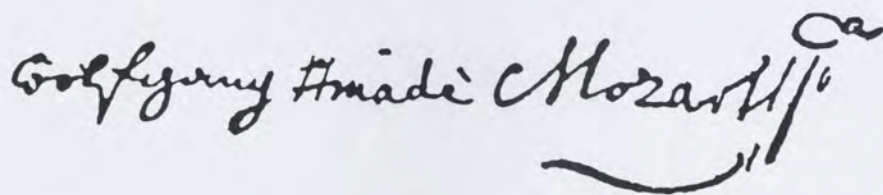
One can and must point to the music. Its tunes are abundant and easily retainable. Such melodies as Figaro's "Non più andrai," Cherubino's "Voi che sapete" and Susanna's "Deh vieni, non tardar" can be hummed as you leave the theater, and the score as a whole flows with absolute naturalness and spontaneity. And then there are those miraculous finales, which take the score to a different plane of dramatic and musical action than had ever been known in opera before.

But many of these same virtues can be found in *Così fan tutte* and *Don Giovanni*. Yet neither of these works manages to quite move us in the same way that *Figaro* does. Nor is the answer to be found solely in Da Ponte's words. *Figaro* is a good story, well told, but *Così* is funnier and certainly *Giovanni* is more dramatic. Perhaps we can come closest to a true understanding of the wonder of *Figaro* by examining how the Beaumarchais characters, channeled through Da Ponte's words and Mozart's music, are made to create a mirror in which each of us sees himself or herself, with vanities reflected, for the abiding quality of *Figaro* lies in its humanity, in how Mozart characters were transformed into human beings, living people who are at once

identifiable and assailable. In comparison, those figures who people the plots of *Così* and *Giovanni* are more stereotypes than individuals.

It is often pointed out that the characters in *Figaro* come from two different worlds. There is the aristocratic air breathed by the Count and Countess Almaviva, and the more earthly sphere of their servants Figaro and his bride-to-be Susanna. But it seems to me much too much is made of the question of class in *Figaro*. This was an important issue when *Figaro* was new, and it was responsible for most of the controversy caused by the *Figaro* plays. But was this really a burning issue with Mozart? Like most musicians he tended to be apolitical; he was more concerned with having a success than taking a stand.

And the political overtones of *Figaro*—the fact that the French Revolution was only three years away at the time of its first performance—is only of historic interest today, at least to most of us (*pace* Peter Sellars). What matters more, and I believe it mattered most to Mozart, is the part Eros played in the lives of all who live through Beaumarchais's "crazy day." Without getting too Freudian about it all, we have to return to where we began—to love. For this is the generator that hums away in the background and turns the gears of *Figaro's* drama. And it is love, not caricatured as in *Così* or exaggerated as in *Don Giovanni* or idealized as in *The Magic Flute*, but warmly human as it is in *Figaro* that keeps this opera so evergreen. ■

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, decorative flourish at the end.

Figaro's Father

By WILLIAM HUCK



Pierre Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais, 1732-1799,
in a contemporary engraving.

Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro* is perhaps the world's most perfect opera. Its characters are vital, its issues still compelling, even if its pretext was outmoded even before it was written. But most of its plot was as tightly sprung as a fine eighteenth-century clock. Operatic music had never before followed so closely such a bewildering array of complications as in the uproarious second act, while being at the same time so tightly organized as pure music. By 1786, Mozart wielded the classical style—the musical theory that Haydn had been perfecting for the previous 25 years and which Mozart himself had been advancing at such an amazing rate—with supreme confidence. The results were that the end of *Figaro's* second act is not only a whirling succession of thrusts and counter-thrusts, but also a coherent piece of music, one that (minus the words) would have fitted nicely as the finale even to one of Haydn's most mature symphonies.

In order for Mozart to achieve such an astonishing, even revolutionary musical structure, the composer did need some help: he needed a drama that was already partly shaped to his ends. In Lorenzo Da Ponte's libretto for *Le Nozze di Figaro*, the second act is taken over almost word for word from Pierre Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais's *Le Mariage de Figaro*. As the act gets wilder and more nerve-wracking, the libretto hones more closely than ever to the original.

Beaumarchais was not merely the midwife to Mozart's genius. He was one of *Le Nozze di Figaro's* legitimate fathers, for he had created not only the dazzling array of characters, whose personalities were so vivid for the composer, but he also carefully and wittily plotted his story that the Viennese composer, who was the one to suggest the project to Da Ponte, could almost read the lines of his music on the printed page of the Beaumarchais play.

Wit was, of course, the *sine qua non* of French literature in the latter part of

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*.

the 18th century. But even among the flying bon mots of the Parisian cafés, those belonging to Beaumarchais had a particularly salient angle. Handsome and self-assured, Beaumarchais was born Pierre Augustin Caron in 1732. His father was a watchmaker in Paris and expected his son to take over the shop when his time came. But Pierre Augustin aimed higher. At first, all the obvious avenues seemed blocked by the rigid system of the *ancien régime*, so the young man turned back to his trade and devised a simplified escapement system for his watches. The escapement is what makes

a watch keep regular time. By simplifying this mechanism, Pierre Augustin claimed he could reduce the watches' size, making it possible to fit one in a lady's ring.

Along the way to this discovery, Pierre Augustin worked in the library of his friend and fellow-watchmaker, Lepaute. Letting property outweigh talent, Lepaute tried the new procedure as soon as Pierre Augustin explained it to him. Using all his connections, Lepaute published an article demonstrating the advantage of the mechanism in a scant two weeks. In the article, he claimed all the credit for himself, failing even to mention the inventor's name.

It was in the ensuing controversy over the right of property versus the right of talent that the Beaumarchais we know was born, for the young Pierre Augustin was not going to take this thievery sitting down. He denounced the fraud in his first

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great defense of himself, a *mémoire* addressed to the Academy of Sciences, and he pushed his battle until he won it.

The celebrity created by Pierre Augustin's case against Lepaute aroused even the interest of King Louis XV, who in 1753 made the young rapsallion the official watchmaker to the King. Like the first *mémoire* in which the young artisan created the vision of himself as a writer, this promotion allowed the shopkeeper's son the chance to refashion himself as a gentleman on a footing near to, if not equal with that of the nobility.

With his charm, his musical talents and his wit, (not to mention the newly-bought golden suit of clothes) Caron attracted the attention of more than one of the ladies at court, but principally Madeleine-Catherine Aubertin, the young and lovely bride of the old Clerk Controller of the Court, M. Franquet. Franquet was so gouty that he preferred to spend his evenings at home and was more than happy to welcome the young watchmaker into his house, partly because it pleased Madeleine-Catherine, and partly because the two entertained him with a wide variety of harpsichord pieces, played four-hands.

The major source of Franquet's large income was his position as Controller of the Military Chest. He kept the Clerk Controller's job, which paid him a pittance, only because it gave him an official place at Court. But even this had become more of a chore than a reward, and soon the old man ceded his subsidiary office over to young Caron, for a sizeable annuity. That way, Caron came one step closer to becoming de Beaumarchais.

When the old general suddenly died in 1757, Caron helped the grieving widow clean up her affairs—and discovered that only the fancy Parisian house and some land (along which was a parcel called Beaumarchais) was left. It was enough. Caron took the widow and added de Beaumarchais to his name. Poor Madeleine-Catherine died ten months later, and Beaumarchais, not having finalized the arrangements that would give him control over his wife's estate, gained little more from the marriage than a brief spring of love and the name by which he is known to history.

It was not until 1761 that Beaumarchais actually purchased his patent of nobility and the office of Lieutenant-général de la Varenne du Louvre, and therefore made good on the promise of the name he had adopted. To buy such

Continued on page 46

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RENÉE FLEMING

Soprano **Renée Fleming**, who has emerged in the last few seasons as a leading artist in theaters around the world, makes her first appearance with San Francisco Opera as the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro*. This is the role in which she made her acclaimed Metropolitan Opera debut earlier this year, and which has served as her introduction to many opera houses, including Houston Grand Opera, the Opéra Bastille in Paris, the Spoleto Festivals of both the U.S. and Italy, and the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires. She has also been applauded as Anne Trulove in *The Rake's Progress*, Micaëla in *Carmen*, the Governess in *The Turn of the Screw*, Pamina in *The Magic Flute*, and most recently as Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* and in the title role of Dvořák's *Rusalka* in a new production shared by Seattle Opera and Houston Grand Opera. Miss Fleming made debuts at the Royal Opera Covent Garden as Dircé in a new production of Cherubini's *Médée*, and at the New York City Opera as Mimi in *La Bohème*, for which she was given that company's Debut Artist Award in 1989 and the role of the Countess to open the 1990-91 season. A frequent concert and oratorio soloist, she has performed the Verdi Requiem with the Lincoln Symphony at Italy's Spoleto Festival (telecast live); the Brahms Requiem with the Houston Symphony and Vienna Symphony; and Sydney Hodkinson's *Chanson de Jadis* which she performed and recorded with the Eastern Connecticut Symphony. She made her Paris recital debut recently in a special concert at the Crillon Hotel. The artist has appeared on national television twice this past season: with Luciano Pavarotti on the "Live from Lincoln Center" *Pavarotti Plus*, and on the PBS telecast of the Richard Tucker Gala at Avery Fisher Hall. Future plans include the world premiere of John Corigliano's *The Ghost*



CHERYL PARRISH

of *Versailles* at the Met, *Rusalka* to open the season at Houston Grand Opera, *La Finta Giardiniera* with the Orchestre de Paris, *Thaïs* with the Washington Concert Opera, *La Dame Blanche* with the Opera Orchestra of New York, as well as *Così fan tutte* in Geneva and at the Glyndebourne Festival, and Rossini's *Viaggio a Reims* at the Royal Opera in London. The recipient of numerous awards, she was the winner of the 1988 Metropolitan Opera National Auditions, the 1990 Richard Tucker Award, a Career Grant from the Tucker Foundation, the George London Prize, the Grand Prix at the International Singing Competition in Belgium, and the Shoshana Foundation's Richard F. Gold Career Grant.

Soprano **Cheryl Parrish** sings Susanna in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, a role in which she has been applauded at Miami Opera and Michigan Opera Theatre. The native of Texas made her San Francisco Opera debut in 1983 in *Ariadne auf Naxos* and *La Grande Duchesse di Gérolstein*, and was heard in the summers of 1984 and 1985 in *Siegfried*. She sang the role of Sophie in both *Werther* and *Der Rosenkavalier* in the fall of 1985, returned in 1987 as Papagena in *Die Zauberflöte* and as Marzelline in *Fidelio*, and appeared here last fall as Blonde in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*. A Merola Opera Program participant in 1981 and '82, she toured with Western Opera Theater in 1982 as Gilda in *Rigoletto* and in 1984 was awarded an Adler Fellowship. In 1986 she was featured in the "Live from Lincoln Center" *Pavarotti Plus* telecast. Miss Parrish has subsequently appeared with numerous opera companies and orchestras, including the Cleveland Orchestra, Chicago Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra, Toronto Symphony and San Francisco Symphony. Highlights of recent opera seasons include her European debut at the



FREDERICA VON STADE

Zurich Opera as Sophie in *Der Rosenkavalier*; as well as debuts with Miami Opera as Ophelia in Thomas's *Hamlet*; at the Canadian Opera Company, Artpark and at Opera Pacific as Adele in *Die Fledermaus*; at Lincoln Center's Mostly Mozart Festival as Serpetta in *La Finta Giardiniera*; and at Chautauqua Opera as Marie in *Daughter of the Regiment*. This past season saw the soprano as Sophie in *Der Rosenkavalier* at both Florence's Maggio Musicale and at Santa Fe Opera; in the title role of *Naughty Marietta* in her debut at New York City Opera; the title role of *The Ballad of Baby Doe* at Michigan Opera Theatre and Dayton Opera; and as Norina in *Don Pasquale* at San Diego Opera. Miss Parrish was also invited by Régine Crespin to sing at the renowned artist's farewell gala in Paris, a celebration which was telecast throughout Europe. Future plans include a return to the Canadian Opera as Sophie in a new production of *Der Rosenkavalier*, a role she repeats at San Diego Opera along with Sister Constance in *Dialogues of the Carmelites*. The recipient of numerous prizes and awards, Miss Parrish won the Sonia Parr Award and Bronze Medallion in the 1986 Rosa Ponselle Competition.

Renowned mezzo-soprano **Frederica von Stade** sings the role of Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, the vehicle of her 1972 debut with San Francisco Opera. Described by *The New York Times* as "one of America's finest artists and singers," she enters the third decade of a brilliant career that has taken her to the stages of the world's great opera houses, as well as concert and recital platforms throughout this country and abroad. Her operatic life began with a contract she won in the Metropolitan Opera Auditions, which led to her subsequent debut with the Met in *Die Zauberflöte*. She has since returned

Continued on page 41

San Francisco Opera

This production was originally made possible by the San Francisco Opera Guild.

Opera in four acts by WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

Text by LORENZO DA PONTE

After the comedy by PIERRE AUGUSTIN CARON DE BEAUMARCHAIS

Le Nozze di Figaro

(in Italian)

Conductor

Wolfgang Rennert

Stage Director

John Copley

Designer

Zack Brown

Lighting Designer

Joan Arhelger

Chorus Director

Ian Robertson

Musical Preparation

Robert Morrison

Kathryn Cathcart

Christopher Larkin

Susan Miller Hult

Philip Eisenberg

Prompter

Philip Eisenberg

Harpichord Continuo

Robert Morrison

Assistant Stage Director

Sandra Bernhard

Stage Manager

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First performance:

Vienna, May 1, 1786

First San Francisco Opera performance:

November 9, 1936

SUNDAY, JUNE 2 AT 1:30

THURSDAY, JUNE 6 AT 7:30

SUNDAY, JUNE 9 AT 1:30

SATURDAY, JUNE 15 AT 7:30

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 19 AT 7:30

FRIDAY, JUNE 21 AT 7:30

CAST

(in order of appearance)

Figaro Simone Alaimo

Susanna Cheryl Parrish

Dr. Bartolo Paolo Montarsolo

Marcellina Judith Christin

Cherubino Frederica von Stade

Count Almaviva Wolfgang Brendel

Don Basilio Michel Sénéchal

Countess Almaviva Renée Fleming*

Antonio Archie Drake

Barbarina Mary Mills†

Don Curzio Craig Estep

Peasants and servants

*San Francisco Opera debut

†1991 Adler Fellow

TIME AND PLACE: 18th century; the villa of
Count Almaviva outside Seville

ACT I A room in the villa

INTERMISSION

ACT II The Countess' apartment

INTERMISSION

ACT III A courtyard of the villa

INTERMISSION

ACT IV The garden of the villa

Supertitles by Clifford Cranna, San Francisco Opera.

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

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

The performance will last approximately four hours.

Le Nozze di Figaro/*Synopsis*

ACT I

Count Almaviva's valet, Figaro, and Countess Almaviva's personal maid, Susanna, are to be married and have been given the room connecting their employers' personal apartments. Susanna warns Figaro that this will assist the Count in his attempts to seduce her. Figaro determines to outwit Almaviva. The housekeeper of the villa, Marcellina, has lent Figaro money against a promise of marriage, and plots with her ex-employer, Doctor Bartolo, how to prevent Figaro's wedding, since the sum is unpaid; Bartolo will urge the Count to order a breach of promise action. Cherubino, a wellborn page living in the villa, has roused Almaviva's indignation by his amorous conquests, and will be dismissed unless Susanna intercedes with the Countess. Cherubino hides when Almaviva enters to court Susanna. The arrival of Don Basilio, priest and music teacher, causes Almaviva to hide as well, but he emerges when Basilio gossips about Cherubino's passion for the Countess. By accident the Count discovers Cherubino's hiding place and angrily orders the boy to accept a Commission in the Almaviva Regiment, stationed far away.

ACT II

Susanna and Figaro conspire with the Countess to embarrass Almaviva by rigging a double rendezvous; this involves disguising Cherubino (still lurking on the grounds) as a girl. Susanna gives the boy a costume fitting in the Countess' bedroom. The Count arrives and Cherubino quickly has to be hidden. The worst is suspected, but the conspirators get the better of Almaviva, notwithstanding the gardener,

Antonio, who insists that he has seen Cherubino. At the moment of reconciliation Marcellina bursts in with Bartolo and Basilio. They easily persuade the Count to try Figaro for breach of promise.

ACT III

The Count makes a rendezvous with Susanna for that night, but then overhears her plot with Figaro. The litigants assemble; the Count supports the notary, Don Curzio, in the judgement that Figaro must either repay Marcellina, or marry her. Figaro explains that he is a foundling of respectable birth. Marcellina discovers that she is his mother and Bartolo his father. They decide to celebrate a double wedding. The Countess and Susanna concoct a letter of assignation for the Count. Now the village girls, led by the gardener's daughter, Barbarina, bring flowers to the Countess. One of the girls is recognized to be Cherubino in skirts, but Barbarina persuades the Count to let her marry the boy. The act ends with the civil wedding during which Susanna delivers her note.

ACT IV

In the garden, where the rendezvous are to be faked, Figaro suspects his wife of cuckolding him. But Susanna and the Countess exchange clothes. Cherubino and Almaviva are both found embracing the Countess, thinking her to be Susanna; the Count catches Figaro in a compromising situation with—not the Countess, but his own wife. Almaviva again has to beg his wife's pardon, and all ends happily.

Used by permission from the Royal Opera, Covent Garden.

Le Nozze di Figaro

(The Marriage of Figaro)

Photos taken in rehearsal
by Larry Merkle

Cheryl Parrish



Simone Alaimo





Cheryl Parrish



Renée Fleming, Cheryl Parrish

Simone Alaimo, Frederica von Stade



Wolfgang Brendel, Archie Drake



Paolo Montarsolo, Judith Christin





Frederica von Stade



Wolfgang Brendel



Michel Sénéchal, Cheryl Parrish, Wolfgang Brendel



Simone Alaimo, Cheryl Parrish



Craig Estep

Cheryl Parrish, Simone Alaimo, Women of the San Francisco Opera Chorus





JUDITH CHRISTIN

Continued from page 34

there to sing many of her most famous roles, including Rosina in *The Barber of Seville*, Adalgisa in *Norma*, Octavian in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Mélisande in *Pelléas et Mélisande*, Charlotte in *Werther*, Idamante in *Idomeneo*, as well as Cherubino. Miss von Stade began her association with San Francisco Opera when she scored a great triumph as Sesto in Spring Opera Theater's 1971 production of Mozart's *Titus*. Subsequent Company credits include Dorabella in *Così fan tutte* (1973), Rosina (1976), the title role of *La Cenerentola* (1974), her first performances of the title role of *La Sonnambula* (1984), a return to the stage of the War Memorial the following year in recital and, last fall, Penelope in *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria*. In 1973 she appeared in the Paris Opera production of *Nozze* that inaugurated the regime of Rolf Liebermann and she has returned to that company frequently. She made her debut at La Scala in Milan during the 1975-76 season, singing Marguerite in a concert performance of Berlioz's *La Damnation de Faust*, returning in later seasons as Cherubino, Rosina, Cenerentola and Mélisande, among many other roles. In addition to her numerous operatic appearances in Santa Fe, Houston, London, Vienna and Hamburg, as well as festival appearances at Salzburg, Edinburgh, Wexford, Holland, and Glyndebourne, she also performs in concerts and recitals with major orchestras and accompanists. She has made over three dozen prize-winning recordings, including complete operas, aria albums, symphonic works, solo recital programs, and popular crossover albums. Her numerous television appearances include the world premiere of Dominick Argento's *The Aspern Papers*, a work written for her and performed at Dallas Opera. Miss von Stade is the recipient of honorary doctorates from Yale University, Boston University, the Georgetown University School of Medi-



MARY MILLS

cine, and her alma mater, the Mannes School of Music.

Mezzo-soprano **Judith Christin** appears as Marcellina in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, the role of her 1986 San Francisco Opera debut. Additional roles with the Company include Marthe in *Faust*, the Third Lady in *The Magic Flute*, Mother Goose in *The Rake's Progress*, and Marta in *Mefistofele*, a production which was televised and videotaped. A veteran of many seasons at the New York City Opera, her portrayals of Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly* and Catcher in Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen* were seen on "Live From Lincoln Center" telecasts. Likewise her performance as Mum in *Albert Herring* with the Opera Theatre of St. Louis was also televised nationwide and in Europe. She has performed in many world and U.S. premieres: she sang the role of La Baronne in the U.S. premiere of Massenet's *Chérubin* at Carnegie Hall, and Dolly in the U.S. premiere of Iain Hamilton's *Anna Karenina* with the Los Angeles Opera Theatre. Miss Christin's world premiere performances include Beeson's *Dr. Heidegger's Fountain of Youth*, Burton's *The Duchess of Malfi*, Pasatieri's *Signor Deluso*, Titus's *Rosina*, and revised versions of Pasatieri's *Washington Square* and Mayer's *Death in the Family*. Highlights of recent seasons include her European debut in Amsterdam with the Netherlands Opera as Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly*, as well as debuts at the Metropolitan Opera in *Eugene Onegin* and with Houston Grand Opera in *The Marriage of Figaro*. During the 1989-90 season, she returned to the Met as Berta in *The Barber of Seville* and as Mary in *Der Fliegende Holländer*. She made her Seattle Opera debut that same season as Marcellina, and appeared in Santa Fe as Despina in *Così fan tutte* and as Mirza in *Judith*. At the Met last year, she was seen as the Third Lady in *Die Zauberflöte* (a production which will be tele-

cast on PBS this month), Marthe in *Faust*, Laura in *Luisa Miller*, the Countess in *Andrea Chénier*, and as Marcellina. Most recently she appeared at Houston Grand Opera as Marthe in *Faust*, Mamma Lucia in *Cavalleria Rusticana*, the Third Lady in *Die Zauberflöte*, and Marcellina. Future plans include the role of Susanna in the world premiere of John Corigliano's *The Ghost of Versailles* at the Metropolitan Opera, and a return to San Diego as Marcellina.

A 1990-91 Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, soprano **Mary Mills** portrays Barbarina in *Le Nozze di Figaro* and Arminda in *La Finta Giardiniera*. Since her 1989 Company debut in *Lulu*, she has appeared here as Wellgunde in *Das Rheingold* and *Götterdämmerung* for the 1990 Ring cycle, and as the First Lay Sister in *Suor Angelica*, a Page in *Rigoletto*, Pedro in *Don Quichotte*, and La Fortuna in *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria* last fall. As a member of the 1989 Merola Opera Program, she portrayed Micaëla in *Carmen*, a role she continued to perform on Western Opera Theater's 1989-90 national tour. The Dallas native received her undergraduate degree from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music and her Master of Music degree from the Yale School of Music. She continued her operatic training at the Banff School of Fine Arts Program in Alberta, Canada, the Mozarteum Summer Academy in Salzburg, the American Institute of Musical Studies in Graz, the Central City Opera Studio Program, and the Houston Grand Opera Studio. She made her professional debut as Barbarina with Houston Grand Opera, and also appeared in their productions of *Show Boat* and *Dialogues of the Carmelites*. Miss Mills was a 1989 National Winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, a prize winner in the S.F. Opera Center Auditions, and the recipient of the Poetz Memorial Award at the Merola Opera Program's Grand Finals. Later this year she will portray Yum-Yum in *The Mikado* for Edmonton Opera, and will appear with the Company this fall in *War and Peace*.

Bass-baritone **Simone Alaimo**, who made his 1988 San Francisco Opera debut in the title role of *Maometto II*, sings the role of Figaro in *Le Nozze di Figaro*. Born in Villabate, Italy, he completed his musical studies in Palermo and studied at the Vocal Academy of La Scala in Milan under the tutelage of famed soprano Gina Cigna. After further studies of the bel canto repertoire, he made his debut in 1977 at the Fraschini Theater



SIMONE ALAIMO

in Pavia, Italy. Alaimo is the winner of many international vocal competitions, including that of the first RAI Italian television Maria Callas Award, which launched his career in the major opera houses of Europe. He made his highly acclaimed U.S. opera debut at the Lyric Opera of Chicago in 1987 as Mustafà in *L'Italiana in Algeri*. The following season he sang the roles of Mustafà at Covent Garden, Dulcamara in *L'Elisir d'Amore* in Turin, Escamillo in *Carmen* in Cagliari and Lecce, as well as Polidoro in the first 20th-century staging of Rossini's *Zelmira* in Rome. He made his Vienna Staatsoper debut during the 1989-90 season as Mustafà, also repeating this role in Monte Carlo and Treviso. In Italy he sang Escamillo in Sassari, the title role of *Attila* in Martina Franca and Benevento, the title role of *Nabucco* in Lecce, as well as the title role of Apolloni's *L'Ebreo* in Savona and at the Montpellier Festival in France. Future plans include Figaro in *Le Nozze di Figaro* at Aix-en-Provence, at the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires, and in Bilbao; Mustafà and Mozart's Figaro for his Munich Opera debut; Alfio in *Cavalleria Rusticana* in Naples; *Semiramide*, *Zaira* and *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* in Catania; his first appearance with Dallas Opera as Mozart's Figaro, as well as Assur in *Semiramide* and as Don Magnifico in *La Cenerentola*; *Don Pasquale* in Chicago; Mustafà at the Vienna Staatsoper; and Don Basilio in a new film version of *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*. Alaimo's recording credits include Rossini's *Ermione*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *Il Turco in Italia* and *La Cenerentola*; Donizetti's *Maria Stuarda*, *Le Convenienze ed Inconvenienze Teatrali*, *Torquato Tasso* and *L'Esule di Roma*; Cimarosa's *Astuzie Femminili* and *Gli Orazi e Curiazi*; Apolloni's *L'Ebreo*; Verdi's *I Masnadieri*, *Luisa Miller* and *Requiem*; Bellini's *Zaira*; and Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, in addition to a solo recital of Rossini arias.



WOLFGANG BRENDEL

German baritone **Wolfgang Brendel** appears as Count Almaviva in *Le Nozze di Figaro*. He made a highly praised San Francisco Opera debut in 1979 as Rodrigo in *Don Carlo*, and returned here for several roles including the High Priest in *Samson et Dalila*, Ottone in *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, Count di Luna in *Il Trovatore*, the title role of *Don Giovanni*, and Don Carlo in *La Forza del Destino*. He first appeared on the opera stage in Kaiserslautern in 1969, and was immediately engaged by the Bavarian Staatsoper, where he was a company member and leading baritone for 15 years, beginning in 1971, and is still a frequent guest artist. It was in Munich that he was invited by Carlos Kleiber to sing Germont in *La Traviata*, his first Italian role, and his great success in the part was a decisive influence on the course of his career. He made his 1975 Metropolitan Opera debut as the Count in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, the vehicle of his 1981 debut at Milan's La Scala. He has also made numerous guest appearances in Berlin, Düsseldorf, Frankfurt, Hamburg, Amsterdam, Geneva, Prague, Vienna, Zurich, Barcelona, London, Chicago, and at the Edinburgh, Salzburg and Bayreuth Festivals. In 1977 he became the youngest singer ever to be named Kammersänger at the Bavarian Staatsoper, and bowed the following year at the Lyric Opera of Chicago as Miller in *Luisa Miller*. He made his Bayreuth Festival debut in 1985 as Wolfram in *Tannhäuser*, an assignment he repeated in 1986, 1987 and 1989. The baritone's most recent assignments include Germont in *La Traviata* and the Speaker in *Die Zauberflöte* at the Met, the title role of *Eugene Onegin* in Chicago, and appearances in Japan with the forces of the Bayreuth Festival under Giuseppe Sinopoli in *Tannhäuser*. Future projects include *Parsifal* at La Scala and a new production of *Il Trovatore* at the Bayerische Staatsoper in Munich. Brendel's



PAOLO MONTARSOLO

growing discography includes complete recordings of *Die Zauberflöte*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Der Freischütz*, *Pagliacci*, *Die Fledermaus* (singing the role of Dr. Falke), Paer's *Leonora*, the Brahms *Requiem*, and a solo album of operatic arias. Brendel just recorded a second *Fledermaus* in which he sings the role of Eisenstein.

Paolo Montarsolo, renowned buffo specialist, portrays Dr. Bartolo in *Le Nozze di Figaro*. Born in Portici, Italy, on the Gulf of Naples, the bass-baritone made his operatic debut as Dr. Dulcamara in *L'Elisir d'Amore* in Naples and has since performed at all of the major festivals and opera houses of the world, especially at Milan's La Scala. He made his U.S. debut with Dallas Opera as Mustafà in *L'Italiana in Algeri* with Giulietta Simionato and *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* opposite Teresa Berganza. He bowed with San Francisco Opera in 1969 as Don Magnifico in *La Cenerentola*, repeating that assignment here in 1974 and 1982, and returned to the War Memorial in 1984 to direct and perform the title role of *Don Pasquale*. A partial list of his successes includes appearances at the Metropolitan Opera (Don Basilio in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Don Alfonso in *Così fan tutte*, as well as Mustafà, Don Pasquale and Mozart's Dr. Bartolo), the Lyric Opera of Chicago (Don Magnifico and Dr. Dulcamara in *L'Elisir d'Amore*), the Washington Opera at the Kennedy Center (*La Cambiale di Matrimonio* and *Il Matrimonio Segreto*) and the Dallas Opera (Don Magnifico, Rossini's Basilio, Don Pasquale and the title role of *Gianni Schicchi*). Montarsolo is also well known at the world's major music festivals, including those at Salzburg, Glyndebourne and Edinburgh. He made his directing debut with *Così fan tutte* at the Teatro Regio in Turin and with *Don Pasquale* at the Teatro dell'Opera in Rome. Most



MICHEL SÉNÉCHAL

recently, he directed and sang in Dallas Opera's *Il Turco in Italia* and *Don Pasquale*, and staged *La Cenerentola* and *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* at the Teatro Municipal in Santiago, Chile. Earlier this season he sang the title role of *Don Pasquale* at the Royal Opera Covent Garden, a part he is scheduled to sing in London next year. His recording credits include complete versions of *L'Italiana in Algeri* and *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, as well as two complete recordings of *La Cenerentola*. He has also appeared in several films—*La Cenerentola*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Così fan tutte*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and *La Serva Padrona*—all directed by the late Jean-Pierre Ponnelle. The President of the Italian Republic has conferred upon Montarsolo the honorary title of Grande Ufficiale della Repubblica for artistic excellence.

Michel Sénéchal, who portrays Don Basilio in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, made his San Francisco Opera debut in 1989 as Dr. Caius in *Falstaff*, and was seen here last fall as Monsieur Taupe in *Capriccio*. Celebrating over 40 years of professional operatic activity, the French tenor made his debut at the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie of Brussels in 1950. He has since performed at the major opera houses of the world, and has been a regular guest artist at the Paris Opera and at the Opéra-Comique since 1958. He has sung at all of the major festivals, including those at Aix-en-Provence, Salzburg, and at Glyndebourne. New York's Metropolitan Opera has engaged him in the French and Italian repertoire since 1982, and he has been one of the few French tenors to have sung principal Mozart roles at the Vienna Staatsoper. A frequent recitalist and concert performer throughout North America, France, Italy, and the USSR, he has also performed in several operatic films. A prolific recording artist, Sénéchal's discography includes Ravel's *L'Heure Espagnole*



CRAIG ESTEP

and *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges*, Rameau's *Platée*, Berlioz's *L'Enfance du Christ*, and an anthology of songs by Francis Poulenc. He is currently Director of the School of Lyric Art at the Paris Opera, and regularly offers master classes at the Metropolitan Opera. His numerous awards include Officer of the National Order of Merit, Officer of the Order of Arts and Letters, and the coveted Officer of the Legion of Honor.

Tenor **Craig Estep** appears as Don Curzio in *Le Nozze di Figaro* and as Il Contino Belfiore in *La Finta Giardiniera*. A 1990 Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, he made his Company debut in 1989 as Dr. Caius in the family performance of *Falstaff*, and was also seen in *Madama Butterfly* and *Lohengrin*. Last fall he appeared here as Borsa in *Rigoletto*, the Italian Tenor in *Capriccio*, Alfred in the family performance of *Die Fledermaus*, and Anfimono in *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria*. A 1987 and 1988 Merola Opera Program participant, Estep sang in *Madame Butterfly* on Western Opera Theater's national tour and in Japan with the Center's Pacific Rim Exchange Program. He has also toured in Western Opera Theater's production of *Don Pasquale*. The tenor traveled to Shanghai in 1988 to sing Spoletta in the first production of *Tosca* ever seen in China. In 1989 he appeared in the Opera Center's Showcase production of Handel's *Giustino*, and was a soloist in the San Francisco Symphony Pops Series. Earlier this year he visited Japan and Guam with other Company personnel for a collaborative presentation of *Carmen*. Additional recent engagements include his Canadian debut with the Calgary Opera as Tonio in *La Fille du Régiment*, Hal in the world premiere of Gordon Getty's *Plump Jack* with Marin Opera, and Arkenholz in Opera Center's Showcase production of Reimann's *The Ghost Sonata*. He will be seen



ARCHIE DRAKE

on the stage of the War Memorial this fall as Noboru in the U.S. premiere of Henze's *Das Verratene Meer*. The North Carolina native has a master's degree in vocal performance and has sung with the North Carolina Opera, Connecticut Grand Opera and the Charleston Opera.

Bass-baritone **Archie Drake** portrays Antonio in *Le Nozze di Figaro*. He made his San Francisco Opera debut in 1968 and sang several roles for Spring Opera Theater in 1968 and 1969. Since then he has sung more than 130 roles, ranging from Bartolo in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and *Le Nozze di Figaro* to Wotan in the Ring cycle, with the opera companies of Chicago, Houston, Cincinnati, Miami, San Diego, Arizona, Nevada, Portland, Vancouver, Edmonton, Hawaii, and Seattle, where he is now in his 23rd year. Recent engagements there include Luther/Crespel in *The Tales of Hoffmann*, the Duke of Verona in *Roméo et Juliette*, Simone in *Gianni Schicchi*, the Speaker in *Die Zauberflöte*, and Prince Nicolai Bolkonsky in the highly acclaimed production of *War and Peace*. Drake created the role of Candy in the world premiere of Carlisle Floyd's *Of Mice and Men*, and the role of Sorin in Thomas Pasatieri's *The Seagull* was written for him by the composer.

German conductor **Wolfgang Rennert**, who made his American debut with San Francisco Opera's 1980 production of *Arabella*, and who led *Wozzeck* here a year later, is on the podium for *Le Nozze di Figaro*. Brother of the late director Günther Rennert, he studied with Clemens Krauss and in 1953 began a long association with the Frankfurt Opera, first as house conductor, subsequently as assistant to Georg Solti and finally as deputy musical director. In 1967 he was appointed chief conductor of the Gärtnerplatz Theater in Munich and since 1971 he has been a regular guest at the



WOLFGANG RENNERT

Berlin State Opera and the Royal Opera, Copenhagen. From 1980 to 1985 Maestro Rennert was general music director and opera director at the National Theater in Mannheim. His conducting engagements have taken him to the major opera houses of Vienna, Munich, Hamburg, Stuttgart, London, Rome, Venice, Naples and Palermo, and he has appeared at the Salzburg, Munich, Athens and Osaka Festivals. Last year, he was appointed permanent guest conductor at the Berlin State Opera, where his schedule this season includes performances of *Salome*, *Aida*, and *Il Trovatore*. Earlier this year he was named permanent guest conductor at the Dresden State Opera as well as at the Komische Oper Berlin. In Dresden this season he is scheduled for *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Parsifal* and *Die Zauberflöte*; next year will lead *Arabella* and, in 1995, Harry Kupfer's new production of *Jenůfa*. He recently conducted *Die Schweigsame Frau* for the Komische Oper. Rennert has led concerts with numerous orchestras including the Berlin Staatskapelle, London Philharmonic, Royal Philharmonic, the Mozarteum Orchestra of Salzburg, and the radio orchestras of Hamburg, Berlin, Vienna and Rome.

John Copley returns for his ninth season with San Francisco Opera to direct *Le Nozze di Figaro*, a production he staged here in 1986. He made his Company debut during the 1982 Summer Season with Handel's *Julius Caesar* and returned in the fall of 1983 for the U.S. premiere of Tippett's *The Midsummer Marriage*. Subsequent San Francisco Opera assignments have been *Don Giovanni* (1984), Handel's *Orlando* (1985), *Eugene Onegin* (1986), *La Traviata* (1987), *Idomeneo* (1989), and *Suor Angelica* last fall. Copley spent several years early in his career as a



JOHN COPLEY

stage manager for musicals in London's West End before becoming assistant and then principal resident director of the Royal Opera at Covent Garden. Included among his many productions there are *La Bohème*, *Werther*, *Così fan tutte*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *L'Elisir d'Amore* and Handel's *Semele*, as well as the three largest royal galas mounted at Covent Garden, marking the occasions of England's entry into the Common Market, Queen Elizabeth's Silver Jubilee and 60th birthday celebration. He also staged Dame Janet Baker's farewell performances in *Alceste* at Covent Garden and in *Mary Stuart* with the English National Opera. Other ENO credits include *Julius Caesar*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, *La Belle Hélène*, *Il Trovatore*, *Werther* and *Aida*. Copley's work has also been seen at the Théâtre de la Monnaie in Brussels, the Geneva Opera, the Munich Staatsoper, Deutsche Oper Berlin, La Scala in Milan, the Welsh National Opera, Scottish Opera, Netherlands Opera, the Greek National Opera and festivals at Drottningholm, Aix-en-Provence, Ottawa, Munich, Athens, Wexford and Wiesbaden. He has also directed over 25 productions in Australia. In North America, his directing credits include productions for the Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Dallas Opera, Washington Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Canadian Opera Company, Vancouver Opera, and the New York City Opera. Recent engagements include *L'Elisir d'Amore* at the Deutsche Oper Berlin, *Julius Caesar* and *Semiramide* at the Metropolitan Opera, *Tancredi* at the Los Angeles Music Center Opera, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, *Tancredi* in Geneva, *La Bohème* in Santa Fe and San Diego, and *Semele* in Venice. Copley will return to San Francisco Opera this fall to direct *La Traviata*.



ZACK BROWN

Zack Brown designed the sets and costumes for *Le Nozze di Figaro*, a production first seen here in 1982 and revived in 1986. He made his debut with San Francisco Opera in 1979 with the sets and costumes for *La Gioconda*. That production, which was telecast nationally and which earned him two Emmy awards, was repeated on the stage of the War Memorial in 1983 and 1988. As resident designer for Washington Opera since 1979, Brown has designed sets and costumes for over 20 productions including *A Postcard from Morocco*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *Semele*, *The Rake's Progress* and *The Medium* in the Terrace Theater, and *La Bohème*, *Un Ballo in Maschera*, *The Merry Widow* and *Rigoletto* in the opera house at Kennedy Center. Other opera credits include both sets and costumes for Busoni's *Doktor Faust* and sets for Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Gondoliers* at Wolf Trap and set designs for *La Traviata* at New York City Opera and Verdi's *Stiffelio* for the Boston Opera Company. For Broadway, Brown designed scenery and costumes for the Tony-award-winning revival of *On Your Toes*. Among many productions for New York's Circle in the Square Theater, his scenery for Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* and his costumes for *Saint Joan* won nominations for Tony and Drama Desk awards, respectively. Brown has designed *La Sonnambula* for the American Ballet Theatre and *Swan Lake* for Atlanta Ballet. His costume designs were seen in a five-part television mini-series of O'Neill's *Mourning Becomes Elektra*. His work has also been seen at the Williamstown Theatre Festival, the Guthrie Theatre and Arena Stage in Washington. His designs for opera were seen last year at the Metropolitan Opera (*Rigoletto*), Washington Opera (*Werther*), Seattle Opera (*The Daughter of the Regiment*), Opéra de Montreal (*Un Ballo in Maschera*), and the Hollybush Festival (*The Medium*).



JOAN ARHELGER

San Francisco Opera Associate Lighting Designer **Joan Arhelger** created the lighting schemes for *Le Nozze di Figaro*. Since joining the Company in 1983, she has been responsible for the lighting of *La Traviata*, *La Sonnambula*, *L'Elisir d'Amore*, *Anna Bolena*, *Werther*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, *The Medium*, *Tosca*, *Fidelio*, *Maometto II*, *Manon Lescaut* and, last fall,

the SFO premieres of *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* and *Don Quichotte*. She also served as lighting supervisor for the entire 1986 Summer Season. Her opera credits in lighting design include productions for the Spoleto Festival U.S.A., Wolftrap, and the opera companies of Louisville, Fort Worth, New Orleans, Pittsburgh, Omaha, Seattle, Costa Mesa, Anchorage, and repertory seasons with the Kansas City Lyric Opera and the Central City Opera. Her work has been seen locally in Bill Irwin's *In Regard of Flight* (featured on the PBS *Great Performances* series), and with numerous dance companies, including the Bay Area Dance Coalition's "Dancemakers '82" Festival in Herbst Theatre. A student of Gilbert Hemsley, Miss Arhelger served as assistant lighting designer for American presentations by the Ballet Nacional de Cuba, the Stuttgart Ballet, the Bolshoi Opera and the Berlin Opera. For five seasons she was the resident lighting assistant for Washington Opera at the Kennedy Center.



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Scenes from *Le Mariage de Figaro* by
Beaumarchais. Etchings by Daniel Nikolaus
Chodowiecki, 1785.

Figaro's Father

Continued from page 32

fruits of an aristocratic culture, Beaumarchais had to have money; he'd known that in advance. Shortly after his wife's death, the cunning, literate young man began his association with the businessman Pâris-Duverney, through whom he amassed a fine fortune. However, Beaumarchais was to prove once again that he was better at getting than at holding his wealth and public position.

When Pâris-Duverney died in 1770, Beaumarchais left unfinished the documents that would have secured his part of their joint wealth. The expected scandal broke out. Pâris-Duverney's heir was his grand-nephew, the Count Falcoz de la

Blache, who promptly claimed that the Beaumarchais documents were forged after the fact. According to the heir's calculations, Beaumarchais owed the estate 139,000 francs—enough to sink the weary entrepreneur. When the matter was first debated in court, the ruling favored Pâris-Duverney's business partner rather than his heir. But then, in December of 1770, Chancellor Maupeou formed a new *Parlement* (a French legislative body that also acted as a court) in which the grandnephew La Blache had several underhanded connections.

The case dragged on until April of 1773, when one of Maupeou's most corrupt protégés, a Louis-Valentin Goezman, was appointed to report on the case. La Blache had already secured Goezman's cooperation before the announcement was made, and Beaumarchais was left dangling—at that moment, in fact, residing somewhat uncomfortably in jail for the offense of brawling with a nobleman.

By now, the author of the *Memorial against Lepaute* knew his fair share of corruption and intrigue. He tried to reach Goezman, but found the door blocked by the judge's wife, who wanted 100 gold louis for an easy passage and a brief interview. This much Beaumarchais could manage, but when Mme. Goezman demanded another 100 louis for a second interview, with an extra 15 going to Goezman's secretary for arranging the details, Beaumarchais found himself a little low on money. The former watchmaker offered a splendid diamond clock valued at 100 louis, to which he added the extra 15 in cash.

The second interview never came off, but when Mme. Goezman returned the clock without the extra cash, Beaumarchais became furious. Losing his case was bad enough, but the insult dealt him by M. and Mme. Goezman was too much. So he sued to recover his lost 15 louis.

In the five *Memorials against Goezman*, the most brilliant defense-attacks since Cicero's *Orations against Catiline*, Beaumarchais waged a fierce and daring battle. After the first one he saw that rehearsing the dry legalities of the case would never convince the judges, whose minds were already made up, nor would they win over the general public. So, Beaumarchais turned the attacks into a comic drama instead. He conjured up each of his opponents in pointed caricatures, catching their typical gestures and making them strut as if upon the stage. He gave a full display of their rapacity, greed and arrogance. Maupeou, who was the one figure in contemporary French

politics to attempt to strike at the tax-exempt privilege of the nobility, had staked everything on the appearance of fairness in his new *Parlements*. This appearance Beaumarchais promptly destroyed.

Amid the hilarity of the Beaumarchais duel with the government, the players of the Comédie Française decided to revive his first play, *Eugénie*, which failed ten years earlier, but was now turned into a triumph, complete with a riot erupting at its end. Warmed by this success, the players now wondered why not try the Beaumarchais comedy *Le Barbier de Séville*, which had been sitting around unused for two years. In 1773, before the Gozman affair, one of Beaumarchais's now ferocious opponents had officially authorized a performance of *Le Barbier*, so that there was no need to ask for it again. The players were crafty, but at first they did not succeed. Half-an-hour before curtain, with a huge crowd already in the theater, order came from Versailles forbidding the performance.

Such arbitrary and erratic behavior from the government weakened its moral position and drew many of the undecided to the side of Beaumarchais. His wit was now allied to the unpopularity of Maupeou's new *Parlements*, more reforming but also more autocratic than the old ones, so that quickly the streets rang with the charge that "Louis XV destroyed the old *Parlement*; fifteen louis will destroy the new one."

Eventually, the watchmaker-turned-businessman-turned-litigant won his victory, but at the cost of much airing of dirty laundry: his own by his opponents, and the government's by Beaumarchais. Amid the carnage, Gozman lost his office. Mme. Gozman was placed under the infamous sentence of *blâmé*, a condition that deprived her of all her civil rights, and so was Beaumarchais.

The *blâmé* was but an outward sign of Beaumarchais's isolation. The fourth Gozman memorial, published the day after *Le Barbier de Séville* failed to open, was praised by no less than Voltaire himself. The grand old man of the Enlightenment exclaimed, "No comedy was ever more amusing, no tragedy more touching . . . [Beaumarchais] unites everything—humor, seriousness, argument, gaiety, power, emotion, and every kind of eloquence, yet he seems to seek none. He confounds his enemies and gives lessons to the judges. His naïveté delights me, and I forgive him his carelessness and petulance." But Voltaire lived as an exile in Switzerland; the

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Two views of the Beaumarchais play: (Above, right) Dressing Cherubino in the late 18th century; engraving by Blanchard and Johannot; (Above, left) at San Francisco's A.C.T., whose staging of *The Marriage of Figaro* runs through June 9th at the Palace of Fine Arts Theater and is part of the city-wide festival, "Mozart & His Time." Left to right: Lynnda Ferguson (Countess), Garon Michael (Cherubino), and Vilma Silva (Suzanne).

Beaumarchais peers in Paris were less warmly disposed to the vociferous upstart. His wit was too acidulous to gain him many friends, and now with the *blâmé*, he was almost stateless as well as friendless.

In order to re-ingratiate himself with the government, Beaumarchais seized the opportunity offered him by Louis XV to engage in some clandestine work on the King's behalf in London. The writer found he liked the work and when Louis XVI ascended the throne, Beaumarchais went out again as a secret-agent, this time on to Holland and Vienna, where he found himself in a brawl with a bandit that he may himself have staged. In this second venture, there seemed to be some doubt as to whether Beaumarchais himself might not actually be the author of the libelous report that he was taking money to suppress.

The coming of the American Revolution was a godsend to the entangled watchmaker turned playwright and memorialist turned secret agent. America's idealism and Beaumarchais's sometimes nefarious efforts on its behalf complete the picture of the author of the play on which Mozart created his masterpiece. In France, Beaumarchais was one of the Americans' earliest and most ardent spokesmen. In four memorials published between September 1775 and February 1776, that is, before the Declaration of Independence, Beaumarchais undertook to prove to the King and the public why it was essential for France to intervene in the brewing struggle. Of course, the businessman Beaumarchais had his hand in a gun-running deal, but the idealist was involved as well. It was the combination of the idealist working in a sordid world of semi-illegal business operations that gave Beaumarchais his

special perspective.

Watchmaker, nit-picker, idealist, successful memorialist and semi-successful playwright, sordid intriguer and shady businessman, Pierre Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais summed up his career and his life in a single play, *Le Mariage de Figaro*. Though commentators at the time, looking at all the obstacles put before it, claimed that it took more wit to get *Le Mariage* performed than it took to write it, it remains the single most vivid embodiment of the French Enlightenment outside the work of Beaumarchais's idol Voltaire.

Unfortunately, the wits knew more than they thought. *Le Mariage* had been reviewed by six censors. One of them was Suard; he had refused the play originally and continued to attack it after its April 27, 1784 opening. Beaumarchais made it known that he would not deign to reply to such criticism, since he had

already had to fight "lions and tigers" to get it performed. Louis XVI, who would never have allowed the play to reach the stage, except for the special pleadings of his wife, Marie Antoinette, saw in this statement a covert insult to himself, the lion of France. Using his arbitrary powers, he ordered the playwright to prison.

Beaumarchais had encountered this punishment before, and he prepared himself gracefully to enter the gates of the Bastille—but it wasn't the Bastille to which he was being sent. It was the children's prison, where the police spanked naughty boys and sent them home after a night's chagrin. Beaumarchais was furious: the King was treating him not like a brilliant enemy, but like a child, and a naughty child at that. The playwright could have left the prison that night, but he stayed five days, fuming at his predicament.

The insult hit Beaumarchais where he had no psychological defenses. The grand *bon vivant* never again rose to the wit or the prominence that he gained by *Le Mariage*. He did continue his work, which included publishing the first complete edition of the writings of Voltaire and he did finally get paid by the American government. But the French Revolution confused the good-hearted scoundrel and at the height of the terror in 1792 it nearly cost him his life. Beaumarchais returned to France in 1796 a broken man. He died there on May 18, 1799.

Le Mariage de Figaro differs from *Le Nozze di Figaro* much less in detail than it does in tone and intent. The primary difference is that Mozart, like Cherubino (I shall use all the character names in the Italian forms best known to operagoers), was in love with love. He put Amor at the center of his imagination. Beaumarchais, as his life will tell you, was a much more strident fellow. The courtroom, not the boudoir, was his natural milieu. For all of his delightful wit, Beaumarchais was also something of a prude. In one of the playwright's never-fully explained trips to Spain, for example, he wrote home decrying the excessive spending of the noblemen (still wealthy from South American gold), the abuses of the government, the severity of censorship, the orgiastic character of life in Madrid, and capped everything off with a tirade about the obscenity of the new dance, the *fandango*, which Mozart, who would not have known of this letter, relished so much that he put one into his third act.

The two most significant cuts that Da Ponte and Mozart made on the Beaumarchais play show immediately the difference between the two works of art.



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In the first, the composer and his librettist telescoped to almost nothing the trial concerning Figaro's promissory note to Marcellina and, second, the deftly excised Figaro's Act V monologue on the unjustness of society as he knew it. The first is a real loss, for it contains the most scintillating writing in the original play. It is the one scene Beaumarchais wrote out of his own experience, and, in fact, contains the play's most dramatic accusation of the arbitrary way in which an aristocratic society conducts its business. In Mozart and Da Ponte the lawyer Don Curzio, for example, passes by with a few chuckles about his stutter, but in Beaumarchais he had a much larger part. Satirically named Don Guzman Bridle-goose and modeled on the playwright's old opponent, he bore the brunt of Beaumarchais's anger at the legal system with his dim-witted, nonsensical judgments.

Mozart wasn't as interested in the legal standing of his characters as he was in their loves. In the Beaumarchais original, the long third act was so taken up with legal maneuvering that surrounded Figaro's promise to pay or wed Marcellina that the Countess herself finds no place in it at all. Can you imagine Mozart's third act without the Countess? She has two of its finest scenes, the aria "Dove sono" and the Letter Duet. They serve to keep her plight before us, and, more significantly, they establish that amid all this legalistic hubbub, hers is the real drama of the evening.

The second of these cuts was undoubtedly demanded by the censors—or would have been had Mozart and Da Ponte been foolish enough to leave it in. Some conservative critics of the play find this speech out of character for the witty, accommodating valet, but such a position suggests that these learned Bridlegooses know more about Figaro and his author. No, a character in a play is whatever he says and does. In *Le Mariage de Figaro* this means that the title character's longest speech—his autobiographical tirade against censorship, privilege, and the conspiracy of the haves against the have-nots—represents his most important and most characteristic moment. The speech stands in a climactic place in the plot, right in the middle of the last act, and was reason enough for King Louis XVI's original judgment that they would have to tear down the Bastille before the Beaumarchais work could reach the stage.

The playwright had, of course, kicked off Figaro's explosion by having his hero meditate on Susanna's alleged

infidelity, so Da Ponte and Mozart had an easy task in trimming off the political commentary while keeping Figaro's jealous ravings. In one way, the loss is not much, for the monologue is pure soap-box stuff, but it does change the tone of the whole enterprise, and especially its last act, from political satire to a drama about love.

A third, and lesser, cover up is consistent with this shift. In Beaumarchais, the Count seduces the supposed Susanna in the garden not only with graceful compliments about her smooth hands, but he also indulges in a chauvinist explanation of the philandering eye. In the end it all comes down to the weary sameness of marriage, he says, when the woman no longer finds it necessary to entice her husband. The Count's infidelity is really the fault of the Countess! In Mozart, the scene is kept to the misplaced compliments on Susanna's hands. The change here serves both to soften the Count's arrogance, and make the Countess a little more comfortable, but even more importantly, it takes the harsh reality out of the final act's image of love and reconciliation. For Mozart would do nothing to tamper with the final transcendence of the Countess.

Beaumarchais had introduced this lady, quickly, nonchalantly, almost as an afterthought, at the end of the first act. Mozart is more ceremonious about his heroine; he saves her entrance for a grander moment, when he can wrap her in the silks and satins of his clarinets. At the opening of the second act comes "Porgi amor," with her innermost secret thoughts: "Oh love, bring comfort to my suffering heart. Restore my lover to me or let me die." It has no antecedent in Beaumarchais. The Countess, the elegant lady whose plight breaks our hearts, is almost entirely the creation first of Da Ponte, but even more of Mozart himself. The sighing thirds, the close harmony, those delicious clarinets all combine to enhance our sympathy for the Countess.

Da Ponte and Mozart's second major addition, the aria "Dove sono," continues this pattern of throwing more emphasis on the Countess and her plight. The Beaumarchais *Mariage* ends substantially as Mozart's *Le Nozze* does with the Countess forcing the Count to realize his error and beg forgiveness. No one in the Beaumarchais audience would believe for a moment that the Count is going to keep his promise. No, the Count, as he has just told his disguised wife, is an incipient Don Giovanni—a milder one, it is true, for one can't believe that he would ever truly desert his wife—with a trace of the

Don's arrogant disregard of the lives, the pains and the hopes of others.

As John Ardoin rightly argues in the accompanying article, it was Mozart who transformed the Beaumarchais political satire into a story about love. The beautiful resolution to the tonic that comes with the Countess' plea in the garden changes the Beaumarchais drama from a human comedy to a visionary one. We really can—or almost can—believe that Mozart's Count will return steadfastly to his wife. If he were a real music-lover, he certainly would.

Two hundred years later, we take Beaumarchais a little for granted, because he helped to expose the failings of the *ancien régime* and establish the world order as we know it today. But do not let us therefore pass over the watchmaker's son, who rose by the wit of his pen and the cunning of his intrigue. He knew what it was like to appeal to an aristocratic court that cared more for the applicant's birth than for his truth.

Out of this knowledge, Beaumarchais created a modern hero: Figaro, the man who lives by his brains and outwits the established forces of greed and decadence so that he can get and keep his own little place in the sun. Such a man of the future is Figaro that he almost seems an American. His mother was the French enlightenment and his father harbored Beaumarchais's own belief in the truths of the Declaration of Independence. It was his struggles against Marcellina and his diatribe that formed the heart of Beaumarchais's play.

In a sense, Mozart watered down the story, when he gradually changed the emphasis from Figaro's intrigue to get married and protect his bride to the Countess' own intrigue to recapture her husband. But in another sense Mozart did something altogether more subtle. It was almost as if he took the Beaumarchais arguments for granted, just as we do today. For Mozart, all his creatures were equal; all ready to be filled with glorious music; it was just that of all their various stories the one of the Countess beguiled him the most.

Perhaps I am splitting hairs and giving Mozart more credit than he deserves. But as the Parisian wits said, it took more brains to get *Le Mariage* produced than it took to write it. Looking over both his shoulders, Mozart kept the bright, frothy comedy of the two servants showing up the arrogant master, but then he covered it all in the softly breathing zephyrs of the plight of the Countess. What music lover would wish it otherwise? ■

"Even if I had to beg for my food, I would never serve the Archbishop of Salzburg again; it is something I'll never forget . . . My heart is set on winning fame and money for myself, and I think I can be even more helpful to you in Vienna than in Salzburg. Also, the way to Prague is less firmly closed to me in Vienna than in Salzburg. I don't want to hear *anything more* about Salzburg, and I hate the Archbishop to madness!"

Mozart did not break the news gently to his father. Ever since Leopold Mozart, the original stage father, had taken his son off to perform before all the crowned heads of Europe at the age of six, the boy had been happiest when away from Salzburg.

Now, at age twenty-five, he was writing to Leopold to announce that he had resigned his service to the Archbishop and would make his way in Vienna alone. He never lived in Salzburg again.

"Well, there it is," said the guide, planting himself before a squat, cream-colored building in a small lane of shops. "Number 9, Getreidegasse. In this house was born Johannes Chrysostomus Wolfgangus Theophilus Mozart, January 27, 1756.

We had come to the town of Mozart's birth, in this bicentennial year of his death, to follow his path to Prague and discover some of his haunts along the way, and our guide had helped us find the Mozart track in the town on the Salzach he most wanted to leave.

We had seen statues and family graves, Mozartplatzes and Mozartkugeln and the house on the river on Makart Square where the family moved in 1773, away from the medieval rooms at Getreidegasse, where Leopold complained that they slept "like soldiers in a bunkhouse."

We had visited Anna Maria Mozart's village at St. Gilgen, with its requisite Mozart museum on the crystalline Wolfgangsee and the countryside the family passed through when visiting the mother's birthplace and sister Nannerl's later home.

We had waited outside the great closed doors of the cathedral as an afternoon storm thundered down the river—Salzburg's awesome "Dom" where Mozart was baptized on a frozen day in January, where he served as court organist and where the Archbishop later



ON THE MOZART TRAIL

By CAROLINE CRAWFORD

Early this year, the writer of this article, Caroline Crawford, and the photographer Etta Clark, journeyed in Mozart's footsteps through Europe. This article describes some of their impressions.

closed the doors to him out of spite for a broken contract.

On another afternoon we heard the Mass in C minor under the dark spires of Peterskirche, first performed there with the composer conducting because by 1783 he was no longer welcome in the Dom.

We had heard his music played in the graceful Marble Hall of Mirabell Palace, where he first performed publicly with Nannerl, and in the Knight's Hall at the Archbishop's Palace, where he gave his first recital in 1763.

Many hours had been spent looking out of the amber windows of the Sternbräu, Mozart's favorite tavern, listening to Salzburgers talk. They knew Mozart's opinions about everything from love to the training of dogs. They knew to the hour how many days Mozart traveled in his life (3,720). They knew by heart the poem he wrote to memorialize a pet starling, and to the gulden they knew

how much less he earned as Kammermusikus in Vienna than his predecessor Gluck (1200 gulden).

And now, before leaving the town, we had come back to the starting point at 9 Getreidegasse, where Anna Maria Pertl Mozart gave birth to seven children, of whom two survived; where Mozart wrote *La Finta Semplice*, sonatas and symphonies; where the family played quills on Sunday afternoons in the courtyard with landlord Lorenz Hagenau's family; where on a January afternoon in 1762 a carriage had rolled down from the Löchelplatz to take Leopold, Wolfgang and Nannerl to Munich, and later to Vienna, Paris and London.

There is Anna Maria's gloomy kitchen, overlooking the tiny courtyard, and the tidy salon where copies of manuscripts and period instruments are displayed; there are the telling portraits of a stern Leopold and a soft, yielding Anna Maria, and the famous unfinished portrait of Mozart by his brother-in-law Joseph Lange.

But among all the portraits and period furnishings and manuscript pages, Mozart is somehow lacking. Perhaps he was never truly in residence after the first carriage stopped in front of the doorway at No. 9 and took him away to his future.

The train from Salzburg to Vienna passes through tidy, bucolic landscapes that look much as they did when Mozart saw them from the banks of the Danube in 1762. Vienna had a special place in the composer's heart since the first imperial carriage picked him up at the White Ox in the Fleischmarkt on an autumn day and took him and Nannerl out to the sumptuous country palace at Schönbrunn to perform for the Hapsburg's first family: Emperor Francis I and Empress Maria Theresia and their children.

No serious scholar dares doubt that Mozart in the splendor of the Mirror Room climbed up onto Maria Theresia's lap and professed his love, or asked the seven-year-old Marie Antoinette to marry him when they grew up. History apparently remembered the story better than she, for at a time when she could have helped Mozart two decades later to the fame and wealth he coveted and which was so doggedly denied him by her brother, Joseph II, she was off in Paris.

Mozart loved the bustling capital:



*(Above) Prague's Villa Bertramka.
 (Background) The road Mozart took from
 Vienna to Prague, viewed from an overpass.
 (Opposite page inset) House number on
 Mozart's birthplace in Salzburg.*

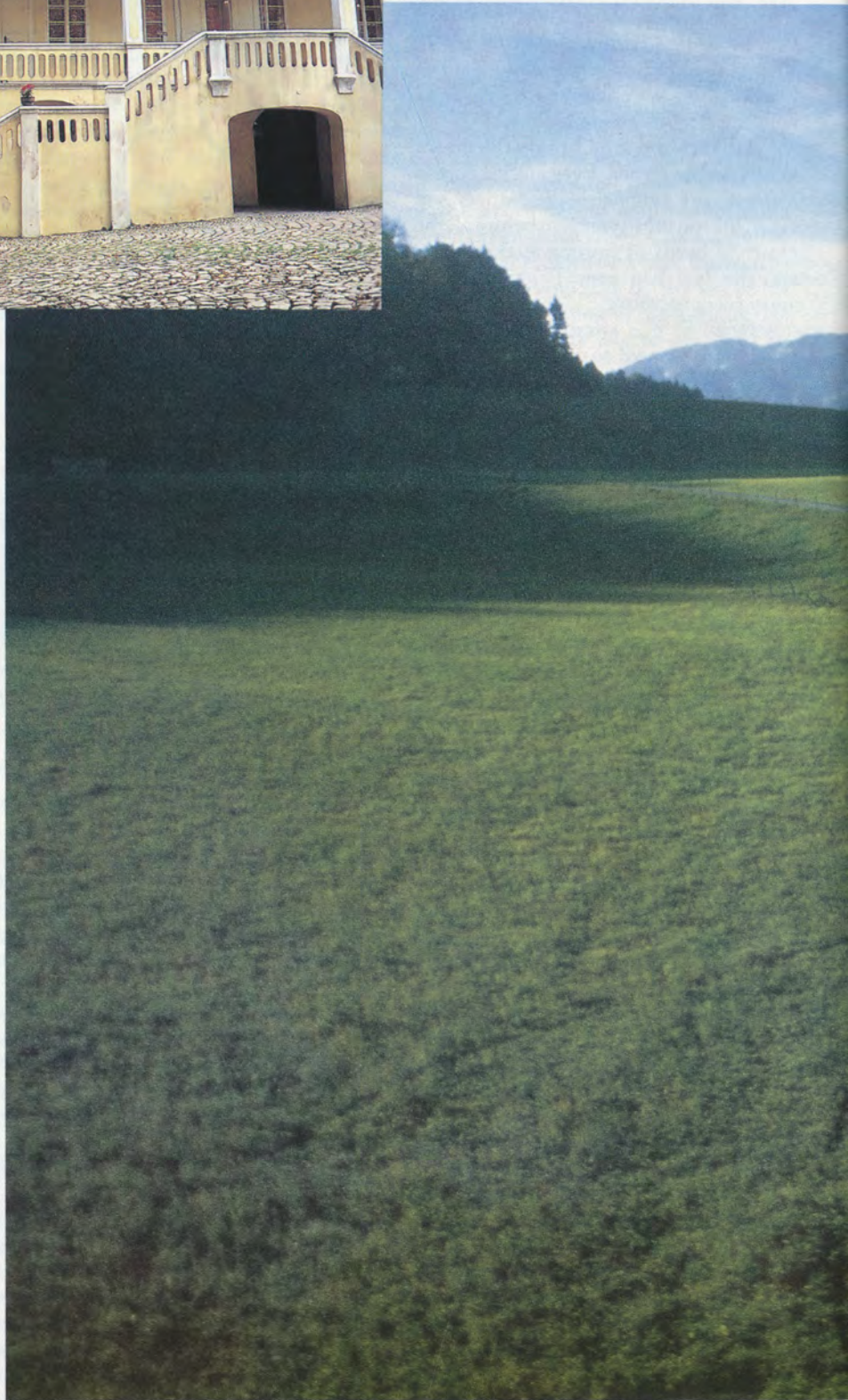
once settled there, he wrote Leopold in 1781: "Vienna is a magnificent place, the best place in the world for my profession. Everyone will tell you the same. Moreover, I like being here and consequently am making all the profit out of it that I can. I promise you that my only object is to make as much money as possible, for after health, it is the thing most worth having. Think no more of my follies . . . Misfortunes teach one sense, and my head is now full of quite other thoughts." Vienna for Mozart was as much about folly and misfortune as it was about fame and success.

The Mozart trail in Vienna begins at the Danube River landing where in 1762 Leopold urged the children to play for an unnamed customs official who was unsure about letting the family in with their traveling clavichord. It is one of the few sites unmemorialized by a bronze plaque, unlike the handsome baroque Collalto Palace, where they performed, and the lodging at 25 Wipplinger Strasse where they stayed. Schönbrunn must be taken in; many of its 1400 rooms may be visited, including the hall of mirrors, site of the famous incident that broadcast the boy's fame through all the courts of Europe.

Maria Theresia was so taken with Mozart at that performance that she sent a satin court costume over to him on Wipplinger Strasse; perhaps the beginning of his lifelong penchant for fine

haberdashery. Leopold hired an artist to paint him in the costume for posterity; it hangs in Salzburg's Mozartmuseum.

The center of Mozart's Vienna in later years is St. Stephen's, which crowns the great baroque walking mall, Graben, with dark, 14th-century spires. He settled near the cathedral in 1781, and married Constanze there in 1782. It was



there, in a small chapel close to the burial vaults, that his body was blessed in the stormy early hours of December 5, 1791, before it was taken to an unmarked grave at St. Mark's Cemetery.

Mozart and Constanze moved eleven times in their slightly more than nine years of marriage, decamping constantly in order to escape gossiping

tongues and harrasing creditors. Mozart always took lodgings at the nerve center of the city, for he was an urban soul, unlike Beethoven, who was even more restless (the Viennese claim three dozen addresses for Beethoven during his 36 years there, many in outlying districts).

Most of Mozart's apartments were

high up in the handsome buildings on the Graben, and the concierge at our pension had something to say about all of them. "In fact, that one there," she pointed through the lace curtained window to a square of reddish light, "will be lit every night, all night, just as in Mozart's day. The resident is a notorious gambler," she added with a knowing smile. She had



flaxen hair and slightly protruding eyes and a certain resemblance to the Hapsburg ruler who once remarked to Mozart that one of his operas had "simply too many notes" (*Abduction from the Seraglio*), and another was "simply too difficult for singers to manage" (*The Marriage of Figaro*), not to mention a third that was "simply not meat for my Viennese" (*Don Giovanni*).

This was the music-loving Joseph II, who recognized Mozart for the "treasure" he was, but begrudged him every advancement and initially prohibited his writing of *The Marriage of Figaro*.

The concierge at the pension on the Graben went back further into Mozart's Vienna years. She showed us the Orphanage Church at Renneg 91, where at age 12 Mozart conducted the "Orphanage Mass" he had composed for the 1768 consecration of the church, the staircase at 7 Singerstrasse (Hall of the Teutonic Knights), where the Archbishop had Mozart kicked downstairs and made him eat with the cooks and valets, much to his distaste.

She could point out 6 Tuchlauben, where Mozart lodged with the Weber family after breaking his service with the Archbishop and where he courted Constanze, and his last home at 12 Rauhenstein Gasse (now a department store), where the mysterious stranger stopped and requested a requiem for his employer, Count Franz Walsegg-Stuppach, in 1791.

Closer to the center is St. Michael's Church, where Mozart performed and had his six children baptized (only two survived to adulthood). At the Hofburg, Joseph's ghost is a presence in every chamber and corridor. Here the Emperor was said to have told Mozart to go ahead with his plans to compose *Figaro*, grudgingly, because he thought the story too strong for the tender sensibilities of his Viennese.

Finally we stopped at 5 Domgasse, in the shadow of St. Stephen's. This rather elegant apartment was home to the Mozarts from 1784 to 1787, and remains much as it was then. There Mozart auditioned Beethoven, welcomed Haydn and Gluck, and played countless hours of billiards with Irish tenor Michael Kelly, whom Joseph had imported for his "Italian" opera troupe, and who created the role of Don Basilio at the May 1786 premiere of *Figaro* at the Burgtheater.

Mozart paid over half his fairly meager annual salary for the stylish rooms at Domgasse, and when Leopold visited them there, he is said to have paid Constanze the only compliment she ever got from him: "The household manage-



(Left) Tyl Theater, site of the first performance of *Don Giovanni*, as it looks today.

(Below) An earlier visitor to Prague captured the side of the same theater in 1988 before the scaffolds went up. The inscription reads: Franciscus Antonius S.R.I. Comes de Nostitz-Rienek Fundavit A.D. MDCLXXXI, honoring the theater's founder, Count Nostitz. In Mozart's days, the theater was known as the Nostitz and was later re-named Tyl.



ment," he wrote Nannerl, "is economical in the highest degree."

At 5 Domgasse, Mozart wrote happily: concertos, sonatas, the "Haydn" quartets, and *The Marriage of Figaro*. He rehearsed with his British friends there (the role of Susanna was written for another English friend, Nancy Storace), and there are collected memorabilia from the premiere. The Burgtheater no longer stands, but Mozart's biographer and friend Niemetschek recorded that at the rehearsal the "disgruntled singers, out of hate, envy and ill will, tried to spoil the opera by continually making mistakes." Our pensionkeeper knew the story well and related in detail how the Emperor intervened on Mozart's behalf and admonished the singers to get on with the rehearsal. "Of course," she added, "they were Italians and didn't have the proper appreciation for Mozart."

The Marriage of Figaro had a success in Vienna, but it was nothing like the reception given it in Prague.

"Here they talk of nothing but

Figaro. Nothing is played, sung or whistled but *Figaro*. No opera is drawing like *Figaro*. Nothing, nothing but *Figaro*!" Mozart wrote these words to a friend in Vienna when he arrived in Prague in the autumn of 1786.

Prague was a destination in Mozart's imagination long before it opened its heart to "the German Apollo." He had mentioned it in letters to his father, and when Count Thun and the entire Prague orchestra summoned him, he and Constanze set off in a rented carriage through a green and gold landscape that Mozart loved. Traveling with them were several musicians, some ladies from Mannheim, a valet, and the family dog Gauckerl.

According to his notes, Mozart found carriage rides, even in company, ideal for composing, and much of *Don Giovanni* was written on the way to Bohemia a year later, and finished on slips of paper in the taverns of Prague's Malá Strana.

The people of Prague know every detail of every visit to their city. They

know that the Mozarts stayed at Count Thun's grand baroque mansion in the Mala Strana, the location of the new pianoforte in the salon and the Count's in-house orchestra, which Mozart conducted. True or not, they claim that Mozart frequented the ancient tavern At the Cat, and that everywhere he went he heard *Figaro*, transcribed into piano duets, pieces for wind bands, and German dances.

Our guide in Prague was a dark young economist from the Ministry of Culture who showed us sadly around the magnificent Tyl Theater, where Mozart heard a performance of *Figaro* and then conducted one. Two days later he offered a concert at which he improvised on "Non più andrai" and led the premiere of the Symphony in D Major, written for the occasion and later called the "Prague."

"Before *Figaro* came to Prague," the guide said, "Pasquale Bondini's opera company was bankrupt. But when the city heard *Figaro*, they made up the deficit and urged Bondini to commission a new opera for the following October—it was *Don Giovanni*."

"*Figaro* ran every night here for six months," she added, "long after it was heard in Vienna. It's true that Mozart loved Prague best—he told Joseph that the orchestra in Vienna was a collection of invalids by comparison with Prague's. But now—" she looked up at the gold and white ceilings and the delicate carved boxes, "we cannot honor him in his bicentennial year. There is no money to open the theater."

The Tyl is the only theater having direct associations with Mozart that is extant today. Close by its now-scaffolded façade is the Three Golden Lions, where he stayed in 1787 and set to work on *Don Giovanni*. When Da Ponte arrived three days later, Bondini found him rooms across the street so that the two could easily confer from their respective balconies.

A third collaborator joined them there. Giacomo Casanova, now an ancient 62, was an old friend of Da Ponte's and was working at Count Waldstein's estate at Dux as librarian. Casanova, whose life was not unlike Don Giovanni's, served as a consultant as well as a companion during the weeks before the premiere. He attended the premiere, and among his collected papers was his

own version of Leporello's escape scene from Act Two.

The Mozart trail in Prague is easy to find. The city has aged more gracefully than other European capitals, so that her older sections along the Moldau have stood the test of centuries (the eighteenth-century quarter is in "new town").

Secondly, the people of Prague are clear about their Mozart legacy and possessive of *Don Giovanni* and *Clemenza di Tito*—both commissioned for the Tyl Theater—and *Figaro*, because the first audiences loved it so much and celebrated the composer until he professed that "Prague understands me."

After the Tyl, the focus of Mozart's Prague is Bertramka, a graceful little villa in the vineyard country outside the city. It belonged to Franz Duschek, a pianist friend from Salzburg days, and Josepha Duschek, a famous soprano whom, according to Prague sources, Mozart courted (more certain is that he wrote "Bella mia fiamma" for her).

It is a long carriage ride from the Tyl to Bertramka, winding through ancient streets of Staré Město (Old Town) and across the Charles Bridge, with its morose statuary, under Prague Castle in the Hradčany and out over golden fields to the countryside.

The yellow and white villa sits in a grove of maple, chestnut and locust, and our guide pointed out where Mozart played bols with the large company of visiting musicians, where he composed the Overture to *Don Giovanni* in the early morning hours on the day of the premiere, and where Constanze, far along in her pregnancy, strolled in the garden with the opera's Leporello. In Mozart's bedroom at Bertramka are several of the instruments played at the premiere performance of *Don Giovanni* and on the dappled terrace his ghost seems a real presence.

On our carriage ride back to the city we were reminded of other carriages that called at Bertramka on October 29, 1787, *Don Giovanni's* opening day, to pick up newly-written pages of music and take them to the stage door at the Tyl.

Next we visited sites associated with Mozart's third visit to Prague in the summer of 1791, when he was preparing *La Clemenza di Tito* for the coronation of Leopold II of Bohemia.

Mozart was working on *The Magic*



St. Gilgen burial plot of Mozart's wife, Constanze, his father Leopold and others.

Flute and the Requiem at the time, and had just a month to write *Clemenza*. Days before the opening, he heard one of his masses performed in the Gothic vastness of St. Vitus Cathedral, high above Prague, then *Tito's* successful premiere, after which he retired, already ill, to the quiet of Bertramka, before returning to Vienna in October.

For our last stop, the carriage rolled again over the Charles Bridge, passed the palace of Count Thun and the glowing streets of the Malá Strana, and came to a halt in front of the high-baroque church of St. Nicholas. There, late in December of 1791, Josepha Duschek arranged a memorial service for Mozart as Prague mourned. He had left the city only weeks earlier, and as Josepha Duschek sang and 120 musicians played under the steady gaze of the great St. Nicholas statue and the windowed dome of the nave, all of Prague—quite spontaneously—came to pay their last respects. ■

Caroline Crawford currently works on histories of musicians at the Oral History Department of the University of California, Berkeley. Between 1973 and 1979, she was Press Officer at the San Francisco Opera.

California Sparkling Wines: *They've Come of Age*

By ROBERT FINIGAN

Ever since Dom Perignon's discoveries in the 17th century, Champagne has rightfully enjoyed its unique image as the world's most elegant wine. The mind boggles at the numbers of romances (and ships) launched, weddings and anniversaries celebrated, New Years welcomed in over glasses and bottles of French bubbly.

Naturally, a product with the romance and magic associated with Champagne would be expected to spawn imitators, and there have been and are many. Despite the worthiness of some of these efforts, they are not *Champagne* for the simplest of reasons: they weren't made in the Champagne district of France, a comparatively small wine-growing district north of Paris. Beyond its precise geographical definition, Champagne imposes on its vintners some of the strictest grape-growing and wine-making regulations to be found in France or anywhere else. These governmental rules cover all aspects of production, from vineyard sites to allowed grape varieties to yields to winemaking procedure specified in the most exquisite detail, the sum total being known as the *méthode champenoise*.

California vintners, historically inspired by European models, until recently favored European names for

their American wines, as if to give them an extra boost of prestige. We have seen innumerable examples of "claret," "burgundy" and "chablis" with nothing but their color to associate them even vaguely with the French wines whose names they co-opted. The 1980s saw most producers with an orientation toward quality drop these so-called generic descriptors in favor of terminology such as "white table wine," a choice not only more appropriate but also reflective of a growing sense of confidence that the California product didn't need reliance on a European name to prove its excellence.

The same phenomenon became evident in California sparkling wines. Breezily called "champagne" both before and after Prohibition, such products were and are made from any grapes the producer chooses, the bubbles created by anything from quick-method bulk fermentation in huge tanks to careful, extended *méthode champenoise* secondary fermentation in the very bottle in which the wine is eventually sold. As one would expect, the bulk process saves a tremendous amount of labor and therefore money, and the wines can be sold at low prices. But they are by no means Champagne with that all-important capital "C," despite the label language the govern-

ment permissively has long allowed.

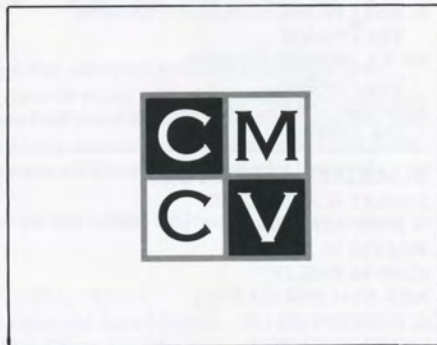
And for that matter, neither are their distant cousins made according to strict adherence to the *méthode champenoise*. They too are California sparkling wines, but most of them choose to call themselves just that, since they are proud of their individuality and opt away from the specific term "Champagne" in the same way that a producer of top-flight California Cabernet Sauvignon would never think of labeling his wine "California Bordeaux."

The trouble is that consumers tend to gravitate toward the term "champagne," whatever the California product may offer in terms of composition and method of production, because its cachet is more immediate than that of the more correct term "sparkling wine." What the consumer doesn't realize, and what governmental regulation doesn't address, is that buying a domestic product labeled "champagne" represents the classic pig in a poke: the choice might be satisfying if the producer is serious, disappointing if not, with price not always a reliable guide.

With this reality in mind, a group of California's best sparkling-wine producers decided to make 1990 their year to make the situation more clear. Banding together to form the CM/VC ("classic

method, classic varieties") Society, these nine wineries (none of which use "champagne" on the label) established their own standards, which go well beyond those imposed by governmental edict and are closer in spirit to those operative in Champagne. Member wineries Culbertson, Domaine Carneros, Domaine Chandon, Maison Deutz, Mumm Napa Valley, Piper Sonoma, Roederer Estate, Scharffenberger and Shadow Creek huddled for months in determination of what their mutually agreed-on criteria would be.

CM/CV members must, first of all, use only the classic grapes of Champagne—Pinot Noir, chardonnay, Pinot Meunier and Pinot Blanc (in a minor role). The fruit must come from the coolest growing regions as defined in the time-honored UC-Davis climate map-



ping scheme, principally from Regions I and II, with no more than 20% from Region III, still temperate indeed by table-wine standards. Yields per ton and even the types of gentle presses allowed are all specified, as is a year's minimum aging "on the yeast" during secondary fermentation, a standard routinely

exceeded in most CM/CV wines. The Society has also adopted definitions for *dosage*, or sugar content, in finished wines, so that the consumer will know accurately the nature of, say, a "Brut" versus an "Extra Dry" when purchasing a CM/CV product.

CM/CV members span California, from Roederer Estate and Scharffenberger in Mendocino County to Culbertson in southern but cool Temecula. It wouldn't be fair to say that CM/CV wines are the only well made *méthode champenoise* sparkling wines in the state. But just as the founders of "Gallo Nero" in the 1920s achieved for Chianti Classico the recognition the best of its wines deserved, so has the CM/CV Society committed itself to crafting sparkling wines at parity with the finest *méthode champenoise* bottlings in the world. ■



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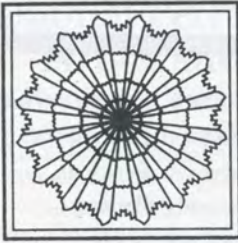
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OPERA



Corporate Council

Benefits & Privileges

The Corporate Council is an exclusive group of corporate supporters who invest in San Francisco Opera—and receive the many wonderful benefits associated with this support. Through their generosity, companies have enjoyed numerous benefits for their employees, distinguished customers and other corporate V.I.P.s.

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- V.I.P. Ticket Privileges with highest priority seating for all opera performances and special events
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- Listing in the Corporate Council section of Season Book and every Season Program Magazine, reaching more than 150,000 patrons
- Invitation to the Annual Awards Event
- Preferred seating for all open rehearsals
- Invitation to Corporate Council Members' Working Rehearsal and Reception
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- Invitation to two V.I.P. tours of the War Memorial Opera House stage, Scenery Shop, Costume Shop, or Wig and Make-Up Department for corporate employees and special guests

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Corporate Council



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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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- Invitation to a working rehearsal

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Medallion Society

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

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- Invitation to Annual Meeting and Reception

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

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Showcase

Sunday, June 30 2 p.m.
 Mozart, *La Finta Giardiniera*
 (in English)
 William Vendice, conductor
 Albert Takazauckas, stage director
 John Wilson, set designer
 Sigmund Stern Grove,
 San Francisco
 19th Avenue at Sloat Boulevard
 (Free admission)
 Presented as part of
 "Mozart & His Time,"
 a San Francisco Festival, 1991.

Merola Opera Program

Sunday, July 14 2 p.m.
 Smetana, *The Bartered Bride*
 (in English)
 Patrick Summers, conductor
 Frans Boerlage, stage director
 Jay Kotcher, set designer
 Sigmund Stern Grove,
 San Francisco
 19th Avenue at Sloat Boulevard
 (Free admission)

Friday, August 9 7 p.m.

(preview)
Saturday, August 10 3:30 p.m.
Sunday, August 11 3:30 p.m.
 Verdi, *La Traviata*
 (in Italian)
 William Vendice, conductor
 Linda Browsky, stage director
 Villa Montalvo, Saratoga
 Ticket information: (415) 565-6492

Sunday, August 18 7 p.m.

1991 Grand Finals
 Willie A. Waters, conductor
 War Memorial Opera House
 Ticket information: (415) 565-6492

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In order to increase the enjoyment of opera for hearing-impaired members of the audience, the War Memorial Opera House has installed a Sennheiser Listening System. Wireless headphones and induction devices (adaptable to hearing aids) are available in the coat check room at the south end of the main lobby. There is no charge, but an ID deposit, such as a driver's license or major credit card, is required.

Opera House Tours

Sponsored by the San Francisco Opera Guild, tours of the War Memorial Opera House will be conducted every half hour from 10 a.m. to 12 noon weekdays, and from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Sundays on the following dates:

- Thursday, June 13
- Wednesday, June 19
- Sunday, June 23
- Sunday, June 30

Tickets are \$5. Advance reservations required. For further information, please call (415) 565-6433.

If You Drive To The Opera . . .

. . . and park in the Performing Arts Garage, remember that you can avoid some of the traffic congestion by using the Gough Street entrance to the facility (between Fulton and Grove).

Special service for SFO patrons! Many operagoers who live in the northern section of San Francisco are regular patrons of the Municipal Railway special "Opera Bus." This bus is added to Muni's north-bound 47 line following all evening performances of the Opera and all Sunday matinees. Look for the "47 Special," after each performance in the bus zone at Van Ness Avenue and Grove Street—across Van Ness from the Opera House. Its route is: North on Van Ness to Chestnut, left to Divisadero and left to Union. It continues on Union over Russian Hill to Columbus, then left to Powell—then right to the end of the line at North Point.

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

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

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

Digital Watches Patrons are reminded to please check that their digital watch alarms are switched to OFF before the performance begins.

Ticket Information San Francisco Opera Box Office, Lobby, War Memorial Opera House, Van Ness at Grove; open 10 A.M. to 6 P.M. Monday through Saturday. 10 A.M. through first intermission on all performance days. Phone charge (415) 864-3330 10 A.M. to 6 P.M. Monday through Saturday (VISA and MasterCard). Tickets are also available on a limited basis through BASS and STBS outlets.

Unused Tickets Subscribers who find they cannot use their tickets may make a worthwhile contribution to the San Francisco Opera by returning the tickets they will be unable to use to the Opera Box Office or by telephoning (415) 864-3330, 10 A.M. to 6 P.M. or (415) 565-6485, 6 P.M. to ten minutes before curtain. The value of the returned tickets is tax deductible for the subscriber. If the tickets are re-sold by the Box Office, the proceeds will be used to benefit the San Francisco Opera. However, donated tickets are not considered a fund drive contribution and are not applied toward member benefits.

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

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

For **Lost and Found** information, inquire at check room No. 3 or call (415) 621-6600, 8:30 A.M. to 11:30 A.M. Monday through Friday.

For the safety and comfort of our audience all large parcels, backpacks, luggage, etc., must be checked at the Opera House cloakrooms.

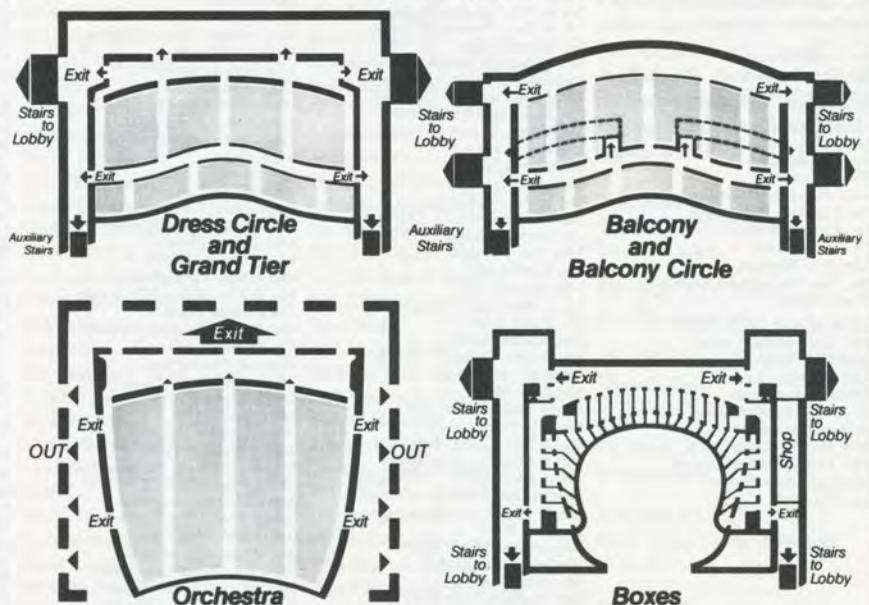
Opera glasses and Sennheiser listening devices are available in the lobby.

No cameras or tape recorders are permitted in the Opera House. Children of any age attending a performance must have a ticket.

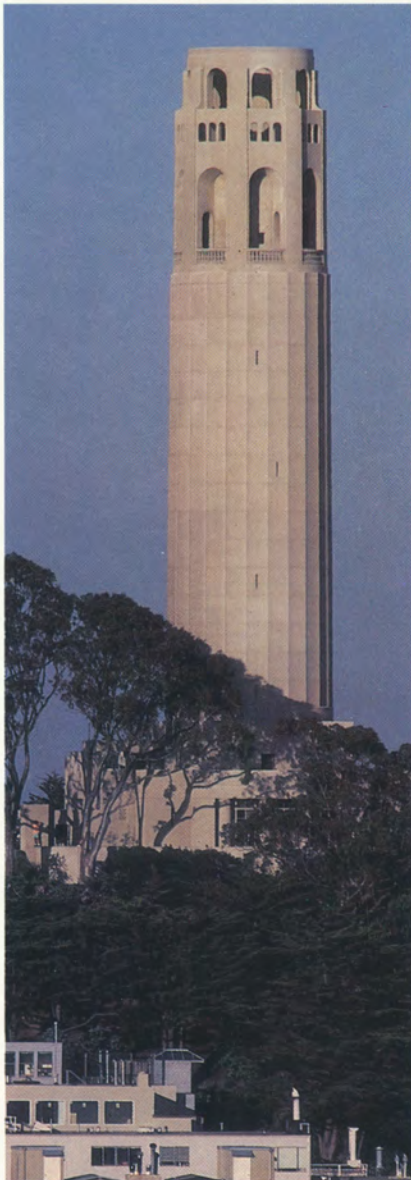
Management reserves the right to remove any patron creating a disturbance.

San Francisco War Memorial and Performing Arts Center

War Memorial Opera House



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



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fan
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**June 18, 20, 23,
26 and 29**

**Sung in Italian with
English SUPERTITLES**

Susan Patterson as Fiordiligi
Judith Forst as Dorabella
Janet Williams as Despina
James Michael McGuire* as
Guglielmo

Deon Van Der Walt* as
Ferrando

Dale Travis as Don Alfonso

Patrick Summers, Conductor
Harry Kupfer,** Production
Reinhard Zimmermann,** Set
Design

Eleonore Kleiber,** Costume
Design

Thomas J. Munn, Lighting
Design

*San Francisco Opera debut
**American opera debut

Physical. Intense. Startling. That's how insiders are describing director Harry Kupfer's interpretation of Mozart's many-layered romantic comedy. The controversial Kupfer makes his U.S. debut with this sparkling new production.

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Monica Bacelli** as Cecilio
Sally Wolf* as Giunia
Alexandra Coku as Celia

Julius Rudel, Conductor

*San Francisco Opera
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**American opera debut

This San Francisco Opera premiere is a rare—perhaps once-in-a-lifetime—opportunity for you to experience this early example of Mozart's genius. This *opera seria*, written by Mozart when he was just seventeen years old, vividly portrays the heroic side of the human character.

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