

# MEMORIAL CONCERT



(Vienna, April 2, 1905 - Ross, California, February 9, 1988)

*Paul Miller Halsey*

*"Wenn ihr die Kunst so hoch schon ehrt,  
da galt es zu beweisen,  
dass, wer ihr selbst gar angehört,  
sie schätzt ob allen Preisen."*

Wagner, *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*  
Hans Sachs's Act III address

(If you value art so highly,  
you must show it by honoring it above everything.)

War Memorial Opera House • Monday, April 11, 1988, at 4 p.m.

**Artists and staff of the San Francisco Opera, Terence A. McEwen, general director, offer this memorial concert in honor of Kurt Herbert Adler, who led the Company through 28 years of remarkable achievements.**

Donna Petersen, *mezzo-soprano*  
Leontyne Price, *soprano*  
Susan Quittmeyer, *mezzo-soprano*  
Carol Vaness, *soprano*  
Frederica von Stade, *mezzo-soprano*

*1988 Adler Fellows of the San Francisco Opera Center:*

Kevin Anderson, *tenor*  
Craig Estep, *tenor*  
Ann Panagulias, *soprano*  
Thomas Potter, *baritone*  
Patricia Spence, *mezzo-soprano*  
Dale Travis, *bass*

with

Current and past members of the San Francisco Opera Chorus  
Current and past members of the San Francisco Opera Orchestra  
Members of the San Francisco Symphony Chorus  
San Francisco Girls Chorus, Elizabeth Appling, director  
San Francisco Boys Chorus, Louis Magor, director

Ian Robertson, conductor  
Willie Anthony Waters, conductor

Presented in cooperation with the American Federation of Musicians, Local 6  
American Guild of Musical Artists  
International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, Locals 16 and 784  
*San Francisco Examiner* Charities, Inc.  
and the San Francisco War Memorial and Performing Arts Center

## PROGRAM

- Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* — Prelude to Act III and "Wach' auf!" Chorus  
San Francisco Opera Chorus  
Ian Robertson, *conductor*  
Richard Wagner  
(1813-1883)
- La Clemenza di Tito* — "Parto, parto"  
Frederica von Stade, *mezzo-soprano*  
Joanne Burke Eisler, *clarinet*  
Willie Anthony Waters, *conductor*  
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart  
(1756-1791)
- Les Troyens* — Septet "Tout n'est que paix et charme"  
Donna Petersen, *mezzo-soprano*  
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Craig Estep, *tenor*  
Ann Panagulias, *soprano*  
Thomas Potter, *baritone*  
Patricia Spence, *mezzo-soprano*  
Dale Travis, *bass*  
San Francisco Opera Chorus  
Ian Robertson, *conductor*  
Hector Berlioz  
(1803-1869)
- Ariadne auf Naxos* — Composer's Aria "Sein wir wieder gut"  
Susan Quittmeyer, *mezzo-soprano*  
Willie Anthony Waters, *conductor*  
Richard Strauss  
(1864-1949)
- Nabucco* — Chorus "Va, pensiero"  
San Francisco Opera Chorus  
Ian Robertson, *conductor*  
Giuseppe Verdi  
(1813-1901)
- Così fan tutte* — Trio "Soave sia il vento"  
Carol Vaness, *soprano*  
Frederica von Stade, *mezzo-soprano*  
Dale Travis, *bass*  
Willie Anthony Waters, *conductor*  
Mozart
- Hansel and Gretel*—Children's Prayer and Dream Pantomime  
San Francisco Girls Chorus  
San Francisco Boys Chorus  
Ian Robertson, *conductor*  
Engelbert Humperdinck  
(1854-1921)
- Four Last Songs* — "Im Abendrot"  
Carol Vaness, *soprano*  
Willie Anthony Waters, *conductor*  
R. Strauss
- St. Matthew Passion* — "Erbarme dich, mein Gott"  
Frederica von Stade, *mezzo-soprano*  
Zaven Melikian, *violin*  
Willie Anthony Waters, *conductor*  
Johann Sebastian Bach  
(1685-1750)
- La Forza del Destino* — "La Vergine degli angeli"  
Leontyne Price, *soprano*  
Men of the San Francisco Opera Chorus  
Willie Anthony Waters, *conductor*  
Verdi

The death of Maestro Adler could not have been unexpected, but it nonetheless has been a blow to all of us, even if we knew him only casually. This is because we recognize that a most unusual and remarkable man is no longer with us.

He was remarkable because he was a magician: He created one of the two or three greatest opera companies in the world, with only a fraction of the resources available to the general directors of the other great companies. How this was possible will remain a mystery; nevertheless, he did it. Andrew Porter, himself a European and now one of America's leading music critics, said of Adler's creation, "Internationally, the San Francisco Opera has the reputation of being America's first . . ."

Adler was perhaps not the easiest man to work with. His temper was legendary; singers knew him well for driving a tough bargain; he sometimes terrified his staff; he pushed everyone, often beyond their limits. He was not known as "Mr. Nice Guy." Yet he was widely respected and even loved because he accomplished so much more of value than any ordinary human.

Compare the list of new singers he introduced to America; compare his trail-blazing in taking opera away from only the privileged few and bringing it to the multitudes; compare his championing of new and unusual repertory; compare the consistently high quality of his productions; compare everything this man did; compare him with anyone else in the opera world.

We in San Francisco became quite spoiled by this wonderful man: we complained when a performance was only a little better than almost anything else in America. We came to expect the most spectacularly supreme from Kurt Adler. And he rarely disappointed us.

He was one of those rare members of the species who have enormous ambition and dreams that border on the wild; but he went out and caused it all to happen. Those of us with more modest pretensions can only stand in awe of Dr. Adler's accomplishments.

Of greatest impact on us, his audience, is the incontrovertible fact that he brought so much pleasure to so many for such a long period of time. We enjoyed, although perhaps we did not recognize it at the time, a Golden Age from 1953 until 1982. He established standards of quality and quantity that we can hardly hope will ever be equaled.

We will all miss Kurt Herbert Adler not a little; we are all grateful that we had the privilege to be around while he was here.

— Robert S. Fisher in *Leitmotive*, Journal of the Wagner Society of Northern California

