

San Francisco Opera

Terence A. McEwen, *General Director*

Sir John Pritchard, *Music Director*

presents

LEONA MITCHELL

Soprano



with

LAWRENCE J. WONG

Piano

Saturday, May 21, 1988, at 8:30 p.m.
War Memorial Opera House • San Francisco

PROGRAM

Ah, perfido!, Op. 65

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770-1827)

(Extended concert aria in operatic style, composed in 1796.)

Ah, perfidious one! Barbarous traitor! You flee? And are these the last parting words? Can any tyranny be more cruel? Go, villain! Run away! You cannot escape the wrath of the gods. If there is justice in heaven, if there is mercy, both will conspire to punish you! And I, an ever-present pursuing shade, I will see vengeance wrought. I savor it now in my thoughts; I see lightning flash around you! Ah, no! Stop your wrath, avenging gods! Spare him and strike me! Though he is changed, I am constant; I lived for him—for him let me die!

For pity's sake, don't say goodbye. Deprived of you, how shall I live? You know well, my dear beloved: I shall die of grief. Ah, cruel one! You wish for my death! Have you no pity for me? Why do you repay my love with such a barbarous reward? Tell me, in this affliction, don't I at least earn your pity?

Verborgtheit (*Obscurity*)

Hugo Wolf
(1860-1903)

Leave, o world, o leave me be! Tempt me not with gifts of love, leave this heart to have its bliss, its agony alone! Why I grieve, I do not know; my grief is unknown grief; all the time, I see the sun's delightful light through tears. Often, barely aware of it, pure joy flashes through the oppressing heaviness—blissful flashes in my heart.

Der Gärtner (*The Gardener*)

Wolf

On her favorite horse, as white as snow, the fairest princess rides through the trail. The path where her steed so delightfully prances, and the sand that I strewed, they sparkle like gold. Little pink hat, bobbing up and down, oh, throw a feather secretly down! If you, in return, want a flower from me, for one, take a thousand, for one, take all!

Das verlassene Mägdelein (*The Forsaken Girl*)

Wolf

Early in the day, when roosters are crowing, before the stars have faded, I have to stand by the fireplace, have to light the fire. The glow of the flame is beautiful; the sparks leap up. I gaze into them, overcome with grief. Suddenly it comes to me, faithless lad, that last night I was dreaming of you! Then, tear upon tear streams down, and so the day starts—if only it were gone!

Ich hab in Penna einen Liebsten (*I Have a Lover in Penna*)

Wolf

I have a lover living in Penna, another in the plain of Maremma, one in the lovely port of Ancona, for the fourth I have to go to Viterbo; another lives there, in Casentino, the next—where I live, and I have yet another in Magione, four in La Fratta, ten in Castiglione.

Anakreons Grab (*Anacreon's Grave*)

Wolf

Here, where the rose blooms, where the vine twines around the laurel, where the turtledove calls, where the cricket delights—what grave is here, that all gods should plan and ornament it with beauty and life? Here rests Anacreon. Spring, summer and autumn that happy poet has enjoyed; from winter, at the last, this mound has protected him.

Er ist's (*It Is You*)

Wolf

Spring lets its blue ribbon flutter once more in the breeze; sweet, familiar fragrance drifts portentously through the land. Violets are dreaming; soon it will be here. . . Listen, softly, from afar, a harp! Yes, Spring, it is you! I have caught your sound!

Il Trovatore—Tacea la notte placida . . . Di tale amor

Giuseppe Verdi
(1813-1901)

(Leonora, a Spanish noblewoman, is in her garden with her lady-in-waiting, Ines, who asks about her infatuation with a stranger.)

The night was still, the sky serene, the moon full, when I heard a sound that filled the air. Sweet and soft chords of the lute accompanied the melancholy verses of a troubadour. The verses were humble and prayerful, as if the man was praying to God, and a name was repeated throughout: my name! I ran to the window. . . it was him! Joy filled my heart, such as can only be felt by angels! To my heart, the sight of him made earth resemble paradise!

(Ines expresses a sense of foreboding and she advises Leonora to forget him. Leonora is aghast.)

Such love as I now feel can not be expressed in words. Only I understand this love that has intoxicated my heart. My destiny can only be fulfilled at his side. If I will not be able to live for him, I will die for him!

INTERMISSION

Chanson triste (*Sad Song*)

Henri Duparc
(1848-1933)

The moon illuminated your heart with rays of bright summer, and I, escaping from life's troubles, bathe myself in its clear light, forgetting past sorrows when your loving arms cradle my wounded heart with their warm embrace. You often soothe my aching head in your lap and sing lullabies of our love. From your sad eyes I will drink so much tenderness and love that perhaps I will recover.

Le Manoir de Rosemonde (*Manor of Rosemonde*)

Duparc

With ferocious teeth, like a dog's, love has bitten me. Following my spilled blood, go! You can follow my arduous way, in bogs or lost paths, if the course doesn't daunt you. In passing where I have passed, you will see how, alone and wounded, I went through this sad world, and that I went to die far, far away, without discovering the blue manor of Rosemonde.

L'Invitation au voyage (*Invitation to a Journey*)

Duparc

My child, my sister, dream of the sweetness of going away to live together! To love at leisure, to love and to die in a country that resembles you! These hazy skies evoke in my spirit a charm as mysterious as your betraying eyes shining through their tears. There, all is order and beauty, luxuriousness, calm, and sensuous delight. See, on these canals, there are sleeping ships whose nature it is to roam: it is to fulfill your every desire that they come from the ends of the world. The setting sun invests the fields, the canals, the whole town, with hyacinth and gold; the world falls asleep in a warm light.

Phidylé

Duparc

The grass is heavy with sleep beneath the cool poplar trees; the moss covers sloping rivers in the flowering meadows as a thousand branches lose themselves beneath the black thicket. O Phidylé, soft noontide on the foliage spreads and invites you to sleep. Through the clover and the thyme in the full sun, bees hum as they fly. A warm perfume wafts about the winding paths; the red flower in the grain bows down and the birds, brushing the hills with their wings, seek the shade of the woodbine. Rest, O Phidylé. But when the stars drift in their dazzling arc and see their ardor appeased, let your beautiful smile and loveliest kiss reward me for my waiting.

Otello—Willow Song and Ave Maria

Verdi

(Desdemona is preparing to retire for the night, assisted by Emilia, her maid. She tells Emilia about an old song she heard in her childhood that keeps coming into her mind. It describes a girl who, like herself, loved too well. After bidding good-bye to Emilia, Desdemona, full of ill presentiment, kneels before the image of the Madonna and recites the Ave Maria.)

Give Me Jesus

Arr. Hall Johnson

His Name So Sweet

Arr. Hall Johnson

Sweet Little Jesus Boy

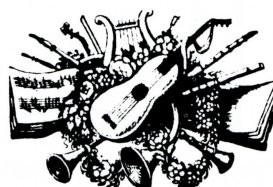
Arr. Robert MacGimsey

He's Got the Whole World in His Hands

Arr. Margaret Bonds

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Leona Mitchell, one of the most sought-after sopranos active today, appears regularly in the world's leading music centers and has in the course of a decade established a career that encompasses appearances on the opera stage, as well as in concert, in recital, and on television. She has recently emerged as America's leading soprano in the lyric-spinto Verdi and Puccini repertoire, and her roles at the Metropolitan Opera alone have included *La Bohème*, *Manon Lescaut*, *Turandot*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Gianni Schicchi*, *Ernani*, *La Forza del Destino*, *Aida* and *Il Trovatore*. Born in Enid, Oklahoma, Leona Mitchell began her early career with the San Francisco Opera, winning the 1971 Auditions and the first Kurt Herbert Adler Award. She returned in 1973 and made her Company debut as the Celestial Voice in *Don Carlo* and a Slave in *Elektra*. In 1977, she was Liù in performances of *Turandot* with Montserrat Caballé and Luciano Pavarotti, and she returned in 1981 as Micaëla in *Carmen*. She appeared twice with Spring Opera Theater, as Micaëla in 1973, and as Suzel in *L'Amico Fritz* in 1976. In Europe, she has been acclaimed at London's Covent Garden (*Simon Boccanegra*, *Tales of Hoffmann*, *Carmen*), and in a tour of the Orient with *The Magic Flute*, Vienna Staatsoper (*Il Trovatore*), Berlin Staatsoper (*Aida*, *Il Trovatore*), Rome Opera (*Un Ballo in Maschera*), at Brussels (*Il Trovatore*), Nice (*Hérodiade*) and the Australian Opera, where she has sung for many years in some of the operas listed above, as well as in the role of Ilia in *Idomeneo* and Desdemona in *Otello*. This season, she makes her Paris Opera debut in all three leading roles of Puccini's *Il Trittico*. Also this year, Miss Mitchell is slated for her first Toscas in Australia, and for a return to Italy where she will be heard as Aida at the Arena di Verona. In addition to a long list of recitals and appearances with the most prominent symphony orchestras, the soprano also appears frequently on television, and was most recently seen in the national telecast of the Met production of Puccini's *Turandot*. Her recording career began with the acclaimed complete recording of Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*, featuring Lorin Maazel and the Cleveland Orchestra, with whom she also recorded an operatic arias album. Another album features the soprano in operatic excerpts conducted by Kurt Herbert Adler.

Lawrence J. Wong is Professor of Music at Los Angeles Harbor College and at the University of Southern California. He received his Bachelor's degree from Claremont Men's College and his Masters in Accompanying from USC where he studied with Gwendolyn Koldofsky. He has appeared throughout the United States, Europe and Australia accompanying such artists as Jeannine Altmeyer, Judith Blegen, Brenda Boozer, Mary Costa, Justino Diaz, Elizabeth Hynes, Luis Lima, Spiro Malas, James McCracken, Robert Merrill, Marta Senn and Kiri Te Kanawa, in addition to being Leona Mitchell's regular accompanist. In 1976 he coached Barbara Hendricks in the solo role for the world premiere of

David Del Tredici's *Final Alice*. Lawrence Wong has performed in several of the leading recital halls of America, Europe and Australia, including the Geneva Opera House, Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, Kennedy Center, Ambassador Auditorium and Melbourne Recital Hall, and has appeared on the "Merv Griffin," "Mike Douglas" and "Tonight" television shows. In 1976 and 1979 he performed for Presidents Ford and Carter. His outstanding keyboard achievements have been recognized in the International Bach Competition, where he was a winner. Lawrence Wong is a native of Los Angeles, where he has his private studio in voice and piano.

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