

MARILYN HORNE AND FRIENDS



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Lotfi Mansouri
General Director

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Managing Director

presents

Marilyn Horne and Friends

A Celebration of

Marilyn Horne, *mezzo-soprano*

Sunday, October 3, 1999, 3:00pm
War Memorial Opera House, San Francisco

with

Renée Fleming, Ruth Ann Swenson, Benita Valente, Carol Vaness, *sopranos*
Catherine Cook, Sonia Ganassi, Frederica von Stade, *mezzo-sopranos*
Joseph Frank, Jerry Hadley, *tenors* • Christopher Robertson, *baritone*
Samuel Ramey, John Relyea, *basses*

and

Current Adler Fellows (Resident Artists) of the
San Francisco Opera Center

Elena Bocharova, *mezzo-soprano*

Todd Geer, Norman Shankle, *tenors*

Alfredo Daza, Armando Gama, James Westman, *baritones*

John Ames, *bass*

Richard Bonyngé, Donald Runnicles, and Patrick Summers

conducting the

San Francisco Opera Orchestra

Kay Stern, *Concertmaster*

Special appearance by

Dame Joan Sutherland

Hosted by

Frederica von Stade

Lotfi Mansouri

Kip Cranna

Narration Script by Matthew Gurewitsch

with additional material by Kip Cranna

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Cover Photo: MARTY UMANS



Marilyn Horne as Arsace in Semiramide in 1981.

MARILYN HORNE: A SAN FRANCISCO OPERA TRIBUTE

BY ARTHUR KAPLAN

When soprano Brenda Lewis was forced to bow out of the West Coast premiere of *Wozzeck* in 1960, San Francisco Opera General Director Kurt Herbert Adler called upon a relatively unknown singer to take over the role of Marie. Those attending the performance of Berg's opera on October 4th of that year witnessed the official American opera debut of one of the greatest vocal artists of the century. Her name was Marilyn Horne.

Two weeks later, she sang the contralto part of Zita in Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi*, simultaneously displaying her phenomenal low notes and her gift for comedy. Adler then tapped the young singer to appear during the Company's inaugural Spring Opera season in 1961 in the title role of *Carmen*, which she had previously ghost-dubbed for actress Dorothy Dandridge in Otto Preminger's 1954 film *Carmen Jones*.

Following her successful portrayal of the fiery Gypsy, Horne undertook two smaller mezzo-soprano roles in the 1961 international fall season, Hermia in the American premiere of Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and Marina in Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov*, along with the light soprano role of Marzelline in Beethoven's *Fidelio*. She received her first local opportunity in the bel canto repertory as Rosina in the 1962 Spring Opera production of *The Barber of Seville*.

Horne's fall assignments that year gave further evidence of her amazing versatility as well as a continuing flirtation with the soprano repertory. In addition to a reprise of Marie in *Wozzeck*, again opposite Geraint Evans in the title role, she sang Musetta in *La Bohème* with both Dorothy Kirsten and Victoria de los Angeles as Mimì, Nedda in *Pagliacci* with Mario del Monaco and Ettore Bastianini,

and another Marie, this time the title heroine of Donizetti's *The Daughter of the Regiment*. She once exclaimed, "I'm a throwback to another age, a soprano with mezzo qualities, or a mezzo with soprano qualities."

Although she was already an accomplished singer in both soprano and mezzo-soprano roles, few at that time could have predicted the direction her career was to take or the heights it would reach. In the early 1960s, she came into contact with musicologist/conductor Richard Bonyngne and his wife, coloratura sensation Joan Sutherland. Recognizing her solid technique and extraordinary vocal agility, Bonyngne encouraged her to specialize in the florid music of the 18th and early 19th centuries, then just coming back into vogue. Her success opposite the Australian diva in Bellini's *Beatrice di Tenda* and Rossini's *Semiramide* oriented her firmly toward the bel canto repertory in which she would enjoy her greatest triumphs.

Following Horne's 1964 Spring Opera performances as Isabella in *The Italian Girl in Algiers*, San Francisco Opera audiences would have to wait another 15 years to hear her in the Rossini mezzo-soprano roles in which she excelled, although an astounding all-Rossini Opera House concert with her husband and mentor Henry Lewis in 1968 went far to whet local appetites.

Starting in 1979 and for the next 14 years, Horne performed no fewer than eight different virtuosic roles here in the coloratura mezzo-soprano repertory. The first of three Rossini warrior heroines *en travesti* was the title role in a stylish, semi-staged production of *Tancredi* (1979). This was followed by Arsace in *Semiramide* (1981) and Calbo in *Maometto II* (1988). Who can ever forget an armor-clad Marilyn Horne marching in and

miraculously matching trills and roulades with Montserrat Caballé in the former and June Anderson in the latter?

Arguably the epitome of bel canto partnership in our times occurred in the opening days of Terence McEwen's first season as General Director of the San Francisco Opera in 1982. As a special favor to a friend who had been so instrumental in her recording career as artist and repertory director for London Records, Horne consented to reprise the role of her 1967 Covent Garden and 1970 Metropolitan Opera debut as Adalgisa, once more opposite Joan Sutherland's Norma, in Bellini's masterpiece. The ideal blending of two sublime voices in the duet "Mira, o Norma" brought down the house, occasioning prolonged shouts of *brave* and delirious applause.

Later that same season, the mezzo-soprano returned to the Rossini repertory with a relatively rare appearance as Angelina in *La Cenerentola* in the beguiling Jean-Pierre Ponnelle production. She twice portrayed the eponymous hero of Ariosto's celebrated epic poem in Handel's *Orlando* (1985) and the even rarer *Orlando Furioso* by Vivaldi (1989), again demonstrating the kind of vocal pyrotechnics upon which legends are made.

During three seasons when she wasn't performing any opera here, Bay Area fans could enjoy her golden voice in concert and recital at the War Memorial, presented by the San Francisco Opera. In 1986, she teamed with Montserrat Caballé in a series of bel canto arias and duets with Nicola Rescigno conducting members of the San Francisco Opera Orchestra and appeared as concert soloist the following year with the orchestra led by Bruce Farden. In 1990, she sang a solo recital with longtime associate Martin Katz at the piano. Immediately afterward, the acclaimed

mezzo-soprano received the San Francisco Opera Medal from General Director Lotfi Mansouri.

Another brief appearance stands out in memories of all who were there: In 1985, San Francisco Opera spearheaded a "San Francisco Arts for Life" AIDS benefit, at the conclusion of which Marilyn Horne spun out an "Ombra mai fu" from Handel's *Xerxes* that was as heart-stopping as it was perfectly and spectacularly sung.

Horne performed her signature role in *L'Italiana in Algeri* for her final operatic appearance at the War Memorial in 1992.

Those who know Jackie, as her friends call her, can attest to her keen, down-to-earth sense of humor and hearty laugh. She used these to great advantage on the stage as the Italian Girl throughout her career and as Mistress Quickly in Verdi's *Falstaff*, a part she assumed for the first time here in San Francisco in 1985 and repeated in 1989. Those present at the first performance in 1985 for her role debut as the cunning and conniving Quickly recall her acknowledging Ponnelle with a deep *reverenza* during the curtain calls, manifesting her wit, collegiality and respect for the famed director and San Francisco favorite.

So let us now bow in turn to the beloved artist whose career we celebrate today. Her bravura technique, astonishing range — from a baritonal low E to a bright high C — and gleaming, burnished timbre will long be remembered by those fortunate enough to have experienced her artistry. To modify the opening words of the famous aria from *Samson et Dalila* that she sang at her last appearance at the War Memorial during the 75th Anniversary Gala of the San Francisco Opera: "Nos coeurs s'ouvrent à ta voix" — "Our hearts open at thy voice." □

Arthur Kaplan, former co-editor of *San Francisco Opera* magazine, currently directs opera tours for Dailey-Thorp Travel, the Smithsonian Institution and the National Trust for Historic Preservation.



Marilyn Horne as Adalgisa in *Norma* at the San Francisco Opera in 1982.

SCHERL



JONES

(Left) Marilyn Horne's San Francisco Opera career began in 1960, when she sang Marie in *Wozzeck*. (Center) In 1961, she is seen studying a score on Market Street while on her way to the Opera House. (Bottom) The same year, she is captured outside the Opera House Stage Door.



JONES



JONES



JEANETTE

Two backstage images of Marilyn Horne, shot at the San Francisco Opera between acts: (Top) Hermia in the U.S. premiere of Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 1961; Musetta in *La Bohème*, 1962.



JEANETTE



Two more early San Francisco Opera Marilyn Horne roles: (Top) Marzelline in Fidelio, 1961; Nedda in Pagliacci in 1962.



"WE BUILD FUTURES FOR PEOPLE"

BY MARK HERNANDEZ

I regard her as a friend. In all the years I've known her, she has been remarkably un-diva like — a great person with her feet on the ground. There is no fuss about her, she is not flaky. Must be the Swedish in her!" It is not at all surprising that, in discussing her relationship with Marilyn Horne, Barbro Osher could make some kind of connection to her native Sweden. As Sweden's Consul General in California for several years, who better would know that Horne's great grandparents were Swedish immigrants?

It seems only natural that Mrs. Osher and her husband Bernard would play a leadership role as the Honorary Chairs of tonight's tribute to the legendary mezzo.

They were first introduced to Horne in the early 1980s, brought together by the late Terry McEwen, then General Director of San Francisco Opera. It is a friendship that has flourished for nearly twenty years. When Lotfi Mansouri asked the Oshers to serve as Honorary Chairs of "Marilyn Horne & Friends," the Oshers instantly agreed, and generously offered to underwrite the costs of the singers' suppers for the evening as well.

In describing Horne's down-to-earth nature and graciousness, Mrs. Osher fondly recalls the time Horne agreed to give a benefit recital at Gustavus Adolphus College, a Swedish-American institution with which the Oshers are affiliated. Taking time out of her busy schedule, Horne flew to the school located in the remote town of St. Peter, Minnesota. Her appearance inspired a community-wide celebration of Swedish-American pride, attracting people from throughout the state. The performance, held in the college's chapel, was filled to overflowing and is still talked about today. Horne was later awarded an honorary doctorate. With a smile, Osher notes, "That was Marilyn Horne's return to her roots!"

The Oshers and Horne share, among other things, a great passion for the life of their communities, and for young people in particular. For the Oshers, this passion finds form in their personal involvement with nonprofit organizations, as well as the activities of their three foundations:

- The Bernard Osher Foundation, which supports cultural, educational

and environmental education organizations to maintain and enrich life in the San Francisco Bay Area;

- The Bernard Osher Jewish Philanthropies Foundation, which is dedicated to Jewish-related giving in the Bay Area and Israel; and
- The Barbro Osher Pro Suecia Foundation, which promotes Swedish culture and education.

Mrs. Osher notes that the foundations exist primarily "to give back to society and to give young people a platform for jumping to the next level."

Proceeds from "Marilyn Horne & Friends," tonight's tribute performance

"The minute you walked through the door, I could tell you were a man of distinction..."

It's probably one of the few times that the singing of "Happy Birthday" has been a noteworthy musical event. Marilyn Horne took the stage at San Francisco's Florence Gould Theater to regale an astonished Bernard Osher with a surprise performance of the traditional ditty, marking the occasion of his 70th birthday. Among the other selections Horne performed that night was "Big Spender" from *Sweet Charity*.

and gala celebration, will benefit San Francisco Opera's artist development programs.

Young musicians who aspire to "jump to the next level" are a special focus for the Oshers. Not surprisingly, they support The Marilyn Horne Foundation, which is dedicated to young singers and the art of the song recital. Their support of San Francisco Opera includes specific funding for the Company's artist development programs. This year, they are co-sponsors of Adler Resident Artist Norman Shankle and, for the twentieth year in a row, they have underwritten the summer housing of all of the young singers of the Merola Opera Program. Mrs. Osher believes that their interest in young artists comes at least partly from Mr. Osher's life-long personal zeal for opera. "If he could relive his life, he would come back as a tenor," observes Mrs. Osher. "He wanted to be Franco Corelli. I think this led to his interest in

young singers, giving them the chances he didn't have."

In addition to their support of young SFO artists, the Oshers have sponsored 22 main stage productions over the past 20 seasons — an astounding figure. Their sponsorships have covered a wide range of repertoire, including *Cendrillon* (1982), *Jenůfa* (1986), *The Makropulos Case* (1993) and, this season, *Idomeneo*. Mrs. Osher explains their commitment to the Opera simply and directly: "I love theater and the symphony, but opera has it all. It has everything you could want on one stage: music, drama, costumes, sets. It is the major art form, everything you could ask for. That's why opera is so costly and why it is so wonderful that people are willing to give so much money." Nevertheless, the one SFO performance that she most looks forward to remains Opera in the Park. "That's my favorite," she notes, "because it's open to everyone and seems to bring out the civil best in the artists."

The unifying thread to the Oshers' philanthropic and volunteer efforts is education, whether it is of young people, audiences or communities. Among their numerous commitments, they are especially proud of the following:

- Full four-year scholarships to the University of California at Berkeley, awarded annually to one student from each high school in San Francisco, Oakland and Berkeley;
- Support of Dr. Stanley B. Prusiner, winner of the 1997 Nobel Prize for Medicine, who discovered Prions, a new biological principle of infection that contributes to the understanding of dementia-type illnesses;
- An endowment gift that supports one San Francisco Opera production annually; and
- An endowed fellowship at the Exploratorium in San Francisco that supports residencies for arts, science and education professionals.

Mr. Osher succinctly ties these varied interests together: "The frontier quality of [California] has attracted artists eager to participate in an environment hospitable to pioneers. Novel artistic visions in and of themselves do not necessarily connote quality, but joined with academic training and discipline, I think what we have here has been an extraordinary flowering."

"The real inspiration is not me, it is my husband," Mrs. Osher notes. "I had to learn about giving here. In Sweden, the government takes care of everything, whereas in the United States it's so much a part of American culture to give. The amount of time people here give of themselves and of their money is absolutely unmatched anywhere else in the world." She credits the role of nonprofits and the spirit of volunteerism in America with helping to "bridge the gap between experts and laymen.

Proceeds from "Marilyn Horne & Friends," tonight's tribute performance and gala celebration, will benefit San Francisco Opera's artist development programs.

Without these, the country would be a cultural desert."

If Mrs. Osher has had to learn about giving, she has quickly become well-versed in its importance and impact. She says simply, "We have a roof over

our heads, food on the table. Instead of building palaces, we build futures for people. It is much better to invest in minds and people than to invest in things. That's a much more gratifying way to live than to sit on heaps of money. As they say, 'The shroud has no pockets.'" □

Mark Hernandez joined San Francisco Opera's Development Department in 1992 and has served as Staff Writer since 1996.

SCHIERL



SCHIERL



MESSICK



(Top right) The 1979 San Francisco opera season included a semi-staged performance of Rossini's *Tancredi*, in which Marilyn Horne portrayed the title role. Two more Horne warriors followed later: (Center) the title role of Vivaldi's *Orlando Furioso* in 1989; (Bottom) Calbo in Rossini's *Maometto II* in 1988.



(Top) 1961, a busy year in Marilyn Horne's life, brought us her assumption of the title role of Carmen. Given as part of Spring Opera, she was partnered by the Don José of James King. (Bottom) Marilyn Horne as Princess Eboli, Peter Glossop as Rodrigo, with the San Francisco Opera Chorus in the 1966 Don Carlo.





Bellini's Norma, presented during our 1982 season, brought us Marilyn Horne's Adalgisa, as well as the Druid priestess of Joan Sutherland.

(Below) Marilyn Horne as Dalila in 1983's Samson et Dalila – about to enchant the Hebrew hero; At the opera's end, she gloats at his destruction during the Bacchanale.





In 1982, Marilyn Horne brought a different kind of Rossini role to the San Francisco Opera: Angelina in his Cenerentola, shown here with men of the San Francisco Opera Chorus.



In 1985, Marilyn Horne portrayed two highly different parts: the title role of Handel's Orlando (Top) and Mistress Quickly in Verdi's Falstaff, shown here with the Alice of Pilar Lorengar.



Marilyn Horne graced our 1992 "Celebration of Rossini" in the title role of L'Italiana in Algeri. She is shown here with the Mustafa of Simone Alaimo.



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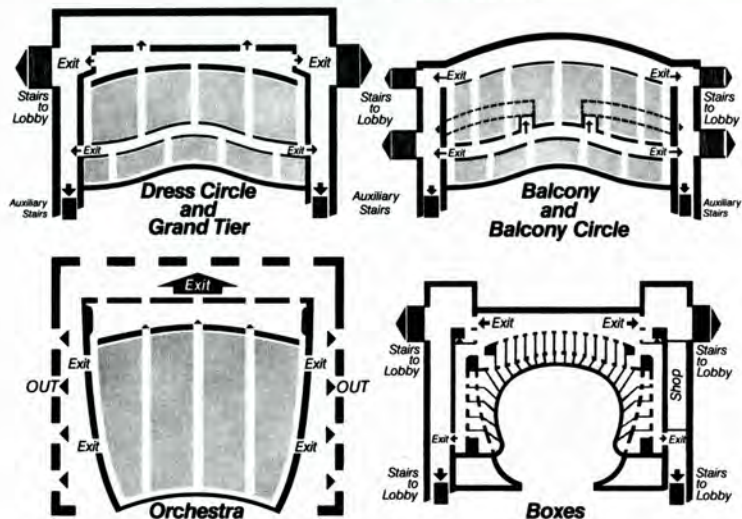
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A woman with long, wavy red hair is the central figure, wearing a white ribbed turtleneck sweater. She is looking slightly to her right with a gentle smile. The background is a bright, sunny outdoor setting with a clear blue sky and a field of golden grass. A red bicycle is partially visible in the background to the right. The overall mood is warm and inviting.

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Marilyn Horne and Friends

PROGRAM

L'Italiana in Algeri
Overture

San Francisco Opera Orchestra

Gioachino Rossini
(1792-1868)

Orlando
"Amor è qual vento"

Ruth Ann Swenson

George Frideric Handel
(1685-1759)

Rinaldo
"Lascia ch'io pianga"

Benita Valente

Handel

L'Italiana in Algeri
"O che muso!"

Marilyn Horne, Samuel Ramey

Rossini

Il Barbiere di Siviglia
"Una voce poco fa"

Frederica von Stade

Rossini

Semiramide
"Serbami ognor"

Renée Fleming, Marilyn Horne

Rossini

Il Barbiere di Siviglia
Act I Finale: "Fredda ed immobile"

Frederica von Stade, Catherine Cook
Norman Shankle, James Westman, John Relyea, John Ames
Todd Geer, Alfredo Daza, Armando Gama

Rossini

INTERMISSION

Falstaff
"Reverenza!"

Marilyn Horne, Christopher Robertson
Joseph Frank, John Relyea

Giuseppe Verdi
(1813-1901)

Samson et Dalila
"Printemps qui commence"

Camille Saint-Saëns
(1835-1921)

Elena Bocharova

"Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair"

Stephen Foster
(1826-1864)

Marilyn Home
Olga Rakitchenkov, harp

Porgy and Bess
"Summertime"

George Gershwin
(1898-1937)

Renée Fleming

Mignon
"Elle ne croyait pas"

Ambroise Thomas
(1811-1896)

Jerry Hadley

La Cenerentola
"Nacqui all'affanno...Non più mesta"

Rossini

Sonia Ganassi

Call Me Madam
"You're just in love"

Irving Berlin
(1888-1989)

Marilyn Home, Jerry Hadley

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CREDITS

Video:

- "Carmen Jones" – Courtesy of Twentieth Century Fox
- "The Carol Burnett Show" – Courtesy of Whacko, Inc.
- "The Ghosts of Versailles" – Metropolitan Opera Association; Available on DG
- "Orlando Furioso" – A production of San Francisco Opera and RM Arts
- "Semiramide" – Available on Kultur
- "Sesame Street" – Courtesy of Children's Television Workshop, New York

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