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Welcome Plácido Domingo as the new Artistic Director of Los Angeles Opera. You'll attend *Aida* (Deborah Voigt/Johan Botha) and *La Cenerentola* (Jennifer Larmore/Kurt Streit) and a once-in-a-lifetime concert featuring Plácido Domingo singing Act 1 of *Die Walküre* and Act 2 of *Parsifal* with the Kirov Orchestra conducted by Valery Gergiev. You'll visit the Getty Center, the Norton Simon Museum, and enjoy a party with operatic entertainment at Sherwin's home beneath the Hollywood sign.

Autumn and Opera in Prague, Dresden and Berlin September 30th to October 15th, 2000

See the leaves turn in these three beautiful cities by day and luxuriate in opera by night! In Prague enjoy *Aida* and *La Traviata* at the State Opera, *Jenůfa* at the National Theatre, and the program 'A Night with Mozart' at the Villa Bertramka. Then, on to Dresden and Berlin for more wonderful performances - repertoire to be announced. As always, Sherwin will arrange visits to museums, spectacular sightseeing, dinners and after-performance parties with the artists.

Our First-Ever Tour to the Wexford Festival in Ireland October 29th to November 8th, 2000

Sherwin Sloan will lead this exciting new tour to Ireland. Known for outstanding productions of rare masterpieces, the Wexford Festival is a must for the opera aficionado. The program includes Tchaikovsky's *The Maid of Orleans* (based on Schiller's *Joan of Arc*), Adam's *Si j'étais roi* (If I were King) and Zandonai's *Conchita* in Wexford, a play and a concert in Dublin, sightseeing in the villages and manor houses along the beautiful Irish coast, and so much more.

Autumn and Opera in Northern Italy Parma - Milan - Venice - Florence - Cernobbio October 14th to 26th, 2000

Tour the great opera houses with Sherwin Sloan and visit museums, cathedrals, villages in gorgeous Northern Italy, with a stop at Leonardo Da Vinci's newly restored fresco 'The Last Supper'. On our Spring Tour to Italy, we attended *Tosca*, *Idomeneo*, *Salome*, *Manon Lescaut*, and more. The schedule for the October tour is sure to be just as exciting!

Fall and Opera in New York October 27th to November 3rd, 2000

The list of operas to be presented in New York this Fall is spectacular: *Turandot*, *Carmen*, *Fidelio* and *La bohème* at the Metropolitan Opera as well as *La Traviata*, *Madama Butterfly* and *The Marriage of Figaro* at New York City Opera. And we will see them all! In addition, we'll arrange private lectures on the operas, a visit to the Metropolitan Museum of Art and a gala luncheon with invited artists. Truly rich fare for the opera lover!

Christmas in Prague, Salzburg and Vienna December 13th to 26th, 2000

Steeped in an age-old tradition of music and the arts, these beautiful cities offer great sightseeing, wonderful Christmas shopping, and, of course, magnificent opera! In Prague we'll attend a new Czech opera *Soldier and Dancer*, as well as *La Traviata*, *Rusalka* and Rameau's *Castor et Pollux*. And that's only the beginning - we'll enjoy more wonderful performances to be announced in Salzburg and Vienna. What a magical way to celebrate the festive season!

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PERFORMING ARTS

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA MAGAZINE

Parsifal

1999/2000 Season

Vol. 77, No. 11

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In an attempt to grasp the meaning of *Parsifal*, the author poses some interesting questions.
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Mondriaan, Pieter (Dutch, 1872–1944; later, Piet Mondrian)
Forest Landscape, 1898/1900
Watercolor/gouache on paper, 45,5 x 57 cm (17.7 x 22.4 in.)
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Koraljka Lockhart, Editor

Robert M. Robb, Publications Associate

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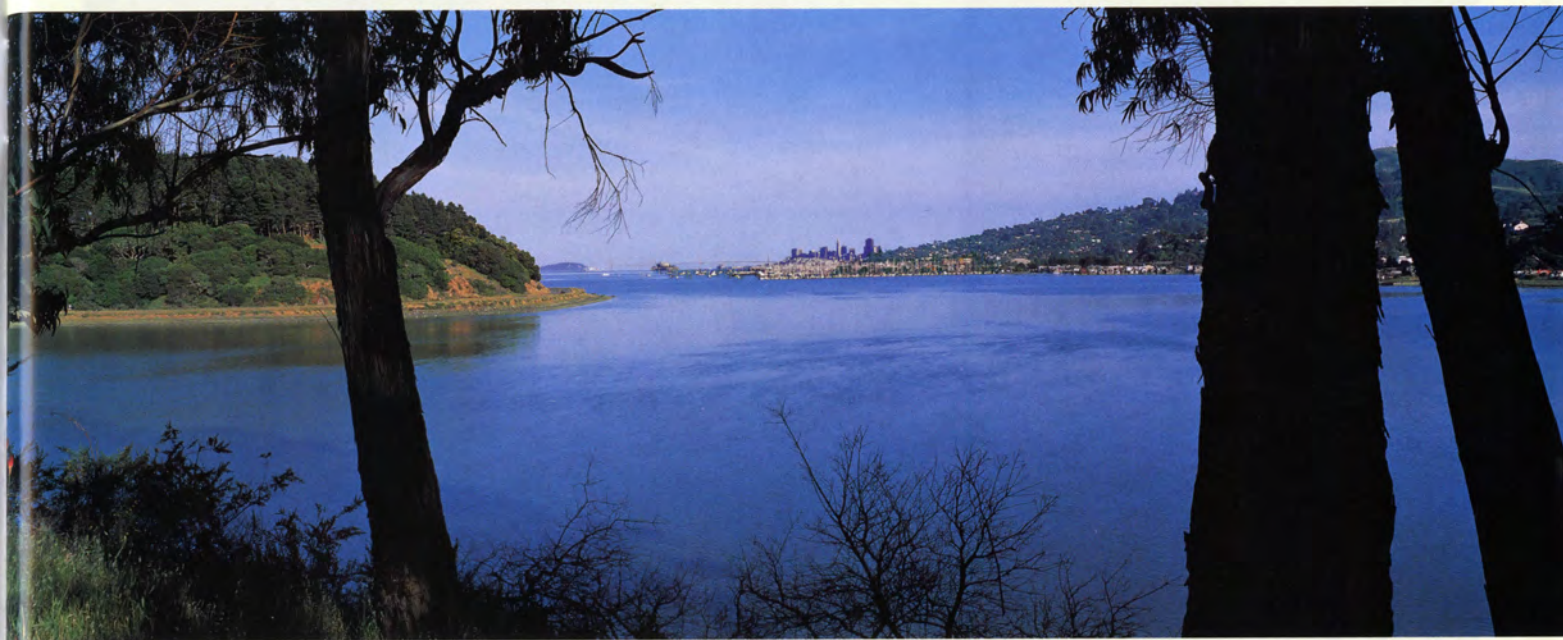
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A MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL DIRECTOR



SOHL

Welcome again, to San Francisco Opera's expanded 1999/2000 Season in the War Memorial Opera House. Running from September 11, 1999 through July 2, 2000, our season offers you more performances to choose from over a longer period of time — allowing you to enjoy your San Francisco Opera experience with greater ease than ever before.

We have so much to look forward to this season — a repertoire of 11 brilliant masterworks, five of which are presented in spectacular new productions: Charpentier's *Louise*, Donizetti's *La Favorite*, Verdi's *Nabucco*, Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and Wagner's *Parsifal*. Our 77th Season also features revivals of celebrated San Francisco Opera productions: Verdi's *Un Ballo in Maschera*, Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Mozart's *Idomeneo* (co-owned with Lyric Opera of Chicago), Puccini's *La Bohème*, Berg's *Wozzeck* and Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress*. Additionally, some of the world's finest singers and conductors will join in music to pay tribute to a very special member of the San Francisco Opera family, mezzo-soprano Marilyn Horne and then to the one and only Plácido Domingo.

Music Director Donald Runnicles and the San Francisco Opera Orchestra and Chorus will be on hand all season, joined by an illustrious group of international artists — singers, conductors, directors and designers — who will infuse each production with all the musical glory, vocal brilliance, dramatic fervor and visual splendor that grand opera has to offer.

Enjoy!

Lotfi Mansouri
General Director

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD AND FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE SAN FRANCISCO OPERA ASSOCIATION



MCCARTHY

Our 1999/2000 Season ushers in a new era for San Francisco Opera. Great opera is now being presented virtually all year round. This is an advantage for us all. Not only does it give our patrons more flexibility, but it also provides more opportunities to widen our audiences, develop artists, offer arts education, and enliven the operatic repertoire with new commissions and productions, thus helping to secure a vibrant future for the art form.

This season is made possible by our dedicated sponsors and contributors. We would like to acknowledge the contributions of our thousands of individuals whose support, large or small, is vital to our season. Equally important to us is the role of our year-round sponsors: Grants for the Arts/San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund, the California Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Arts, as well as the James Irvine Foundation and our 1999/2000 sponsors: Bank of America, American Airlines, and Kawai Pianos, provided by R. Kassman Pianos. Our great thanks also goes to our production sponsors: Friends in memory of Gorham B. Knowles (*Un Ballo in Maschera*), Mr. and Mrs. Edmund Wattis Littlefield and Lorna Talbot (*Louise*), Mrs. Gorham B. Knowles (*La Favorite*), The Bernard Osher Endowment Fund (*Idomeneo*), Fred and Peggy Furth and Wells Fargo (*La Bohème*), Mr. and Mrs. Marshall I. Wais (*Don Giovanni*), Mr. and Mrs. Reid W. Dennis and Mr. and Mrs. Franklin P. Johnson, Jr. (*Parsifal*).

We also wish to acknowledge San Francisco Opera Guild on the occasion of its diamond jubilee year. For 60 years, the Opera Guild has introduced hundreds of thousands of people in the Northern California community to opera, and has helped to support San Francisco Opera both financially and through the efforts of its myriad volunteers.

On behalf of the San Francisco Opera Association, we are pleased to welcome you again to San Francisco Opera's 77th Season, and we thank you for joining us.

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THE MYSTERY OF *PARSIFAL*

BY MICHAEL KENNEDY



The Flower Maidens as seen at London's English National Opera where the current production of Parsifal had its first presentation.

RAFFERTY

Few operas, perhaps none, have occasioned so much controversy among critics, scholars and the general public as Wagner's last music drama *Parsifal*. What is it and what is it about? There is no clear answer, and one suspects that Wagner intended there never should be. Is it about Christ and Christianity? The name Christ occurs nowhere in the libretto, but there are references to a cross and to Good Friday. Is it an anti-Semitic diatribe? Is it the seed of National Socialism? Is it, as Ernest Newman wrote, "the supreme song of love and pity"? Or, in Debussy's words, "one of the most beautiful edifices in sound ever raised to the glory of music"? Or is it something of all of these? Many writers have tried to supply the answer, but none has totally succeeded. The work evades definition, explanation and elucidation. One hundred and eighteen years after its first performance, it remains as challenging, as mystifying and as great as ever.

Wagner gave *Parsifal* the clumsy title of *Bühnenweibfestspiel*, literally "sacred festival drama" but more specifically "festival work to consecrate a stage"; in

other words the stage of Bayreuth where it had its first performance on July 26th, 1882, conducted by Hermann Levi, a Jew. Wagner wanted *Parsifal* to remain exclusive to Bayreuth, not because of some megalomaniac self-aggrandizement, but because he wanted to leave his wife and son a financial asset in an age when royalties and copyrights did not accrue as securely as they do today. Of course, the exclusivity ban was broken, as inevitably it would be. The first to break it was none other than Wagner's greatest patron, King Ludwig II of Bavaria, who ordered three performances of the Bayreuth production at the Munich Court Opera in 1884 and 1885. Concert performances were given in countries which were then not signatories to the Bern convention on copyright: London in 1884, New York in 1886, Boston in 1891, Amsterdam in 1896. It was staged at New York's Metropolitan Opera on Christmas Eve 1903 and in Amsterdam in June of 1905. Wagner's widow Cosima twice petitioned the German Reichstag (in 1901 and 1912) to extend the copyright for more than the statutory 30 years, but she was unsuccessful. After 1914, therefore, opera houses every-

where felt free to put it into their repertory. Richard Strauss, in the 1930s, tried to get the Bayreuth monopoly restored, but the door to the stable had long been open and the horse had bolted out of sight, beyond recall.

Some commentators on this mystifying opera insist that it is not a "Christian" work. That may be true, as we shall see, in one sense. But it is flying in the face of common sense not to acknowledge certain Christian elements in the plot and what has happened before the opera begins. Monsalvat, the Spanish castle where the Knights of the Grail live, was built by Titirel as a shrine to contain the chalice (grail) which was used at the Last Supper and in which Joseph of Arimathea caught the blood of Christ on the cross. Also, there is the spear with which Christ's side was pierced. On the other side of the mountain range from Monsalvat is a castle

Michael Kennedy is chief music critic of the London Sunday Telegraph and has been a music critic of the London Daily Telegraph since 1950. He is the author of books on Mahler, Strauss, Elgar, and Britten, and has written biographies of Sir John Barbirolli and Sir Adrian Boult.

belonging to Klingsor, once a holy hermit who surrendered to sexual desire, castrated himself and was rejected by the Knights of the Grail. He then became the enemy of Titurel, with his only aim to possess the grail and the spear. He has a group of seductive flower maidens whose purpose is to lure the holy knights into his magic garden so that they commit the same carnal sin that was his undoing. In his power is Kundry, the woman who laughed at Christ on the cross and is condemned to eternal life. She longs for death but it will not come to her. She spends part of her time as a prostitute in Klingsor's domain and the rest as a repentant slave in Titurel's castle. She seduced Titurel's son Amfortas when he entered Klingsor's castle with the intention of killing him with a spear. But Klingsor seized the spear and wounded Amfortas in the side (in some version in the genitals). Amfortas is led to safety by his loyal knight Gurnemanz, but the wound never heals and the ceremony of the unveiling of the grail, over which Amfortas presides, becomes a torture and is undertaken unwillingly. Amfortas dreams that he will be redeemed and succeeded by a new king, a "blameless fool." This is Parsifal. He resists Kundry who, in Act III, washes his feet on Good Friday. Parsifal remarks on how the fields and meadows glow in the morning light. "It is Good Friday's magic," Gurnemanz says. "All created things rejoice to see the Savior's sign of grace and raise a prayer to praise him. Himself, the Savior crucified, they see not: and so they raise their eyes to man redeemed, man set free from sin, set free from terror, by God's most loving sacrifice made pure."

If this is not about Christ, whether he is named or not, who is it about? But let us hear Wagner himself on this subject. To his follower Hans von Wolzogen he (using the royal "we") wrote: "Although we mercilessly relinquish the Church, Christianity and even the whole phenomenon of Christianity in history, our friends must always know that we do it for the sake of that *very same* Christ whom we want to protect in His pristine purity so that... we can take Him with us into those terrible times that will probably follow the inevitable destruction of all that now exists." Yet rabid German anti-Wagnerites of today such as Hartmut Zelinsky regard the theme of *Parsifal* as "the redemption of an Aryan Jesus from Judaism." No discussion of this opera can baffle a mention of the work's alleged racism. Those critics hold that



Richard Wagner, 1813–1883, in a photo taken in 1882.

Wagner's ideas (expressed elsewhere) on "racial purity" infected the opera, the belief that even the most degenerate races, who included the Jews, could be redeemed by the blood of Christ. They base their arguments on the fact that the grail knights in *Parsifal* are called "the race chosen to protect the grail," whose extinction is feared by the inhabitants of Titurel's castle.

Others who insist that the work is not Christian base their argument on those features which Christianity shares with pagan religions and myths. In the same way that Wagner diverged from his *Ring* source, the *Nibelungenlied*, where Siegfried is a medieval knight whose death occasions a cathedral mass, so he altered the character of Parsifal from how he is depicted in Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival*, the medieval text which was his primary source. It is also to be noted that in Scandinavian mythology Odin (Wotan) hung on a tree for three days in order to attain wisdom and that a spear is an important symbol in the *Ring*. We know, too, that Wagner was interested in Buddhism when *Parsifal* was first being planned, but none of this significantly alters the essentially Christian motive behind the opera.

Nevertheless, in a world where the Christian religion is less observed and where ecumenical attitudes are in favor, the temptation to regard *Parsifal* as an all-purpose morality becomes irresistible and, for instance, is at the heart of Nikolaus Lehnhoff's penetrating and controversial production. He seizes on the idea of the grail knights as a society in decay, brooding over the misfortunes of the past and doing nothing to remedy them. Gurnemanz is worried by Amfortas's

ennui and lack of militant vigor. Although when Parsifal first appears, having killed one of Titurel's swans, Gurnemanz thinks he may be the redeemer of the grail in the guise of "a blameless fool," he expels him from the castle after Parsifal has failed to register the significance of the grail ceremony. When Parsifal returns in Act III, having resisted the flower maidens but been awakened to the consequences of sexual longing by a kiss from Kundry and having destroyed Klingsor's castle by swinging the spear (seized from Klingsor) in the sign of the cross, he learns from Gurnemanz that the grail ceremony has for years been abandoned by Amfortas. Acknowledged as their new king, he tells the knights to "no more conceal that holy shrine, reveal now the grail, open the shrine!" It is, I suppose, this initiation of a new order that has led some writers to regard the opera as a closet precursor of National Socialism, but the view is surely far-fetched.

Parsifal, as we know from an earlier Wagner opera, has a son, by the name of Lohengrin. It was in 1845, while on holiday from Dresden at Marienbad, that Wagner, having finished scoring *Tannhäuser*, wrote the prose sketch of *Lohengrin*, made notes for a comedy about the guild of mastersingers in Nuremberg, and read Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival*. It was to be, respectively, 23 and 38 years before the latter two projects achieved completion on the stage. It is extraordinary how Wagner could maintain the genesis of a work over many years, even decades, until he knew the right moment had arrived to bring it to birth. *Parsifal* had the longest gestation of all his operas. Wolfram's *Parzival* — Wagner changed the spelling, just as he changed Amfortas to Amfortas — contains nearly 25,000 lines and is episodic in the manner of medieval romances. In letters to his mistress Mathilde Wesendonck in 1859, Wagner scoffs at Wolfram for "understanding nothing of the real content...he blunders about and leaves the reader wondering what he is really up to." This implies that only Wagner could, as it were, set the record straight but he must have been impressed by Wolfram's depiction of Parsifal's steadfast character and single-mindedness, for he scarcely modified it in any way in his own libretto.

The Parsifal idea was not mentioned by Wagner after 1845 until nine years later when he had the idea of introducing Parsifal into Act III of *Tristan und*

Isolde. On his wanderings in search of the grail, Parsifal would visit Tristan on his sickbed and say some compassionate words about how he understands Tristan's yearning because he too has felt the torments of erotic love as a result of his knowledge of Amfortas's wound. In *Mein Leben* Wagner wrote: "The picture of Tristan languishing, yet unable to die of his wound, identified itself in my mind with Amfortas in the romance of the grail." Perhaps we ought to be relieved that this idea was abandoned! But it is only another example of the interaction in his mind between the subjects and characters of Wagner's opera. As far back as 1848 in his essay *The Nibelungs*, Wagner associated the grail with the Nibelungs' gold. He wrote: "The quest for the grail now replaces a striving after the Nibelung hoard... Whereas, according to the oldest religious notions, the hoard appeared as the earth's splendor revealed to all by the light of day, we later see it in a condensed form as the hero's booty which gives him his power."

The connection between Tristan and Parsifal was derived from Wagner's obsession with the philosophy of Schopenhauer — that compassion (*Mitleid* in German) was the transcendence of suffering. There was also the ever-present question for Wagner of the power of sexual love and the need for redemption by abstaining from it. This was at the heart of Amfortas's problem with his wound, its cause. But how was he to link Parsifal to Amfortas by an identical experience? He found his solution in 1860, as he told Mathilde Wesendonck: "Have I told you before that the fabulous wild messenger of the grail [whom he had mentioned two years earlier] is to be one and the same being as the seductive woman of the second act?" Kundry is perhaps the strangest and most compelling of all the female characters in Wagner's operas. She is not entirely his invention, but evolves from several women in Wolfram's epic, among them Cundrie, the "Loathly Damsel" whom we also find in the tales of King Arthur's knights (who are, of course, another source for the mythology of *Parsifal*). She also derives from Mary Magdalene.

Wagner's predilection for relating the characters in *Parsifal* to those in his earlier works supports the view of the opera as a summation of all he had achieved, a compendium of Wagnerisms. Cosima's diaries for the period in which Wagner was writing the music in the late 1870s are full of illustrations of this point.



Kathryn Harries as Kundry at the English National Opera in 1999.

"Who is Titurel?" he asked, and answered himself: "Wotan. After his renunciation of the world he is granted salvation, the greatest of possessions [the grail] is entrusted to his care, and he guards it like a militant god." He compares Klingsor with Alberich and later sees a resemblance between Wotan and Kundry! ("Both long for salvation and both rebel against it. Kundry in the scene with P[arsifal], Wotan with Siegfried.") Later he remarked that "Siegfried ought to have turned into Parsifal and redeemed Wotan, he should have come upon Wotan (instead of Amfortas) in his wanderings." Truly wondrous are the ways of creation, as is further illustrated by the diary entry for November 30th, 1878: "R. Is pleased by the sublime and mysterious fact that he has not had to rearrange or alter a single word in *Parsifal*, melody and words fit throughout — what he wrote down in the prelude contains all he needs and it all unfolds like a flower from its bud. When he tells me this, I say nobody would even believe that the melody in *Die Meistersinger* was invented, not for the words *scheint mir nicht der Rechte* but at first for the orchestra. 'Yes,' he says, 'that overture was one of my most remarkable inspirations.'"

What matters all this today? Well, to understand so complex a work requires some knowledge of what went into its making if we are to draw the maximum satisfaction from listening to it. The music was the only Wagner score written specifically for Bayreuth and knowledge of that amazing acoustic enabled him to give the orchestration its wonderful luminosity — "as if lit from behind," Debussy said. Nor can one escape not only the ritualistic nature of the music in Acts I and III, but its spiritual voluptuousness in Act II, quite a different sensuality from that of *Tristan* but just as

potent. It is pertinent also to recall what the existence of Bayreuth meant to the 1882 premiere production of *Parsifal*. First of all, there was a run of 16 performances, very rare in those days. The singers and other musicians, specially selected from the leading German opera houses, assembled three and a half weeks before the first night. They were already virtually note-perfect. The orchestra had 107 players, the chorus numbered 135. The technical staff were efficiently trained. There was alternative casting for the roles of Parsifal, Kundry, Gurnemanz and Klingsor. It seems to be true that everybody worked well together in an exceptionally friendly and harmonious atmosphere. The outstanding singer proved to be Emil Scaria as Gurnemanz, later to be a celebrated Wotan.

Cosima's diary amusingly reveals the muddle, which persisted for years, over whether audiences should applaud *Parsifal*. Writing of the first performance on July 26th, she says: "When, after the second act, there is much noise and calling, R. comes to the balustrade, says that though the applause is very welcome to his artists and to himself, they had agreed, in order not to impinge on the impression, not to take a bow, so that there would be no 'curtain calls.' After our meal R. and I are together in a box. Great emotion overwhelms us. But at the end R. is vexed by the silent audience, which has misunderstood him; he once again addresses it from the gallery and when the applause breaks out and there are continual calls, R. appears in front of the curtain and says that he tried to assemble his artists, but they were by now half undressed. The journey home, taken up with this subject, is a vexed one." I'll bet it was! At the second performance, there was "reverent silence" after Act I. But after the second, the applauders were hissed and at the end Wagner presented the singers and asked the audience to express its gratitude to them.

The last of the 16 performances was on August 29th, 1882. Liszt was there. Cosima's diary relates what happened: "Everything on stage satisfies Richard and in the third act, after the transformation music, he takes the baton himself and conducts the end! Then from the orchestra he says farewell to his artists, after a storm of applause which threatens never to end. Not many of his words could be heard in the auditorium, and he himself tells me that he never knows what he has said." Six months later he was dead. □



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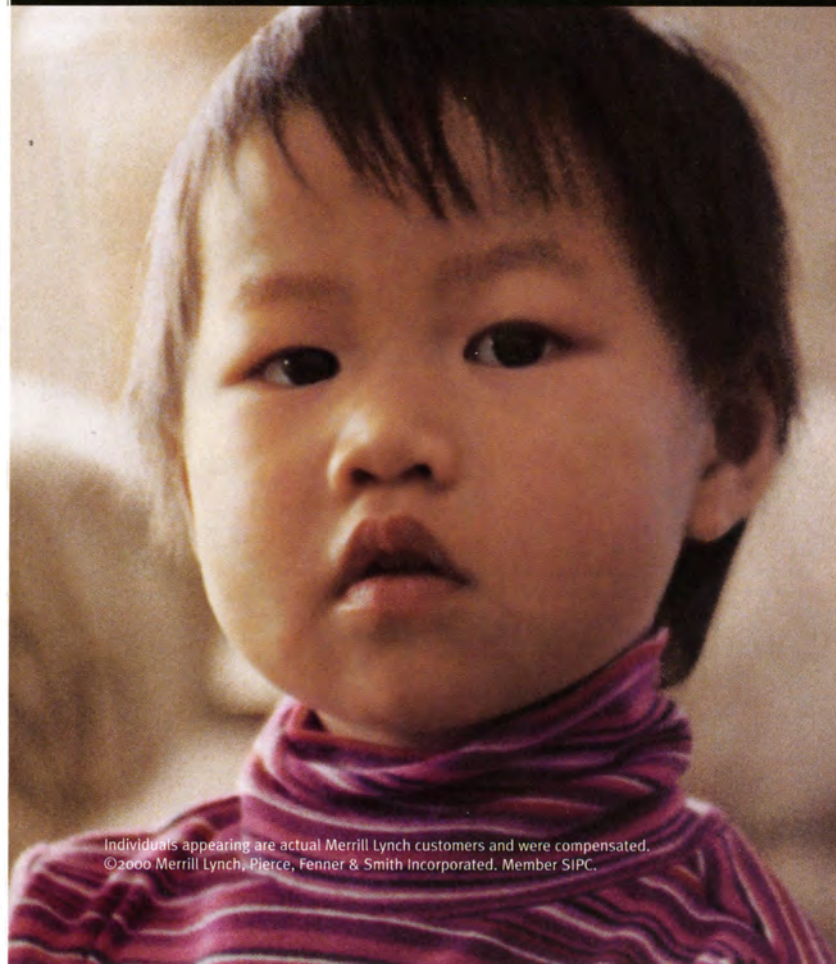
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ENDGAME IN THE WASTE LAND

A background to Nikolaus Lebnhoff's concept of Parsifal

BY WOLFGANG WILLASCHEK

But who is that on the other side of you?...
What is that sound high in the air
Murmur of maternal lamentation
Who are those hooded hordes swarming
Over endless plains, stumbling in cracked earth
Ringed by the flat horizon only...?

— T.S. Eliot, *The Waste Land*

A Drama of Modernity

This production of *Parsifal* does not seek to stage a sacred drama — a *Bühnenweihfestspiel*. Rather, it presents the drama of human consciousness split in two. The awareness of a rift running through all human beings, compelling them to question the mystery of their existence, is branded into the characters of the opera like the mark of Cain. In their quest for redemption they stumble, disoriented, through time and space, their world becoming transformed into a “waste land” in the course of the opera’s three acts. From medieval sources, Wagner fashioned a work whose relevance is timeless. His libretto relates one of the legends of the Holy Grail, but the music speaks of hopeless human destinies which are unending.

A Myth of the Present

Parsifal is a myth in music in which the eternal questions of human existence are presented in a new guise. No one who has ever asked himself the fundamental question “Why am I here?” — in the opera, the metaphor of Amfortas’s wound — can shut his eyes to the eternal conflict of life, love and death. Wagner wrote: “Where is the end to it, where is redemption? The sufferings of humanity endlessly drawn out!” and, in another passage, “The whole world — nothing but unstilled yearning. How should it ever be stilled?” What else does the Grail represent but the desperate human attempt to reassemble the fragments of the mystery of existence? In Wagner’s libretto, this quest is presented as a drama of redemption. The music, however, points to something more troubling. No opera before *Parsifal* had told so ruthlessly of man’s isolation and exposure at the center of an empty universe — notwithstanding the work’s religious framework. The “waste land” is situated

inside man himself. In this respect Wagner’s pure fool anticipates a Parsifal of the modern age — James Joyce’s Ulysses.

Images of Modernity

In the universe depicted in this production, the characters — distraught and rootless — run up against invisible walls. They are forever condemned to flee, with no chance of return. They long for death, yet are unable to find it. Blindly they seem to scrape and dig about in the “waste land” hoping to uncover some meaning there. Again and again, they lose their way. They long for the security of an embrace and yet are unable to comprehend the pain of others. Someone — Parsifal — has come to break the mold. While Wagner deleted almost everything in the way of plot, imagery and narrative from his source material, he nevertheless succeeded in distilling the essence of Wolfram von Eschenbach’s epic poem — the taking on of the suffering of others. The pain of alienation that the characters in *Parsifal* experience is expressed by Wagner in music that cuts straight into our consciousness.

Chaos in Music

Wagner’s *Parsifal* deals with the chaos of the modern world. After his great romantic redemption dramas, after the erotic mystery of *Tristan und Isolde* and after his universal drama *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, Wagner’s final legacy is an endgame. Prophetically, its characters foreshadow figures from the plays of Samuel Beckett: human existence is reduced to endless anticipation in a world that is a waiting room for eternity. Wagner’s music evokes life in an unending vacuum far more concretely than modern astronomy is able to describe “black holes.” Human life appears to be cut off, to be taking place “behind a wall” — a kind of living death. It is in fact just

a short step from the advanced musical language that Wagner employs in *Parsifal* to Schoenberg’s disintegration of the ordered world of tonality. The Knights of the Grail exist in a cycle of eternal torment, trapped between time and space. Parsifal penetrates this moribund world — exploding through the wall of consciousness — with the impact of a meteor. The hole this impact creates allows us a glimpse of a parallel dimension. In traveling there, as Gurnemanz tells Parsifal at the end of Act One, time becomes space (*zum Raum wird hier die Zeit*). That not only time becomes space, but that all life is ceaselessly subject to change — this is the dialectic of the opera, narrated as a science fiction fable.

Drama of Memory

Gurnemanz is driven through time and space as chronicler of the memory of Amfortas’s wounding. For Gurnemanz, history has become a curse — but for him the act of remembering also means reinterpreting history as ideology. He transmits the image of an enemy which precludes any form of reconciliation. Every prospective Knight of the Grail has to be an opponent of Klingsor. Thus we see Klingsor in Wagner’s first prose drafts as the black, mysterious, alien counterpoint of the white Amfortas — his inversion. But from a late-twentieth-century perspective, who is actually friend and who is foe depends on individual viewpoints and interests. Amfortas and Klingsor: theirs is the encounter of opposites, of western and eastern thought.

Mythical Representation

In Wolfram von Eschenbach’s narration of the Parsifal legend, we are told of an encounter between a Christian and an

Wolfgang Willaschek has worked as dramaturg on this production of Parsifal.

Islamic knight. "Amor" appears on the latter's standard, its inversion "Roma" on the standard of the Christian knight (Amfortas). The symbols are unequivocal. This is the decisive battle between Eros and Power. The epic poem was the ideal vehicle to demonstrate what threatened to destroy the West: power without love. The Christian knight kills his Islamic enemy, but returns with an incurable wound. His adversary's spear has been thrust straight into his genitals — a monstrous reworking of Christ's spear wound on the cross. Amfortas's wound is incurable because it so patently represents a taboo. The taboo surrounding free love together with the lust for power have become the ideology of a decaying community, blindly clinging to its defunct traditions. *Parsifal* is not a *Bühnenweibfestspiel*, but the music drama of the breaking of this taboo!

Mystical Awakening

A Parsifal who unties this Gordian knot must come from far away. He must come from a consciousness in which knowledge of the Fall — the moment of the sundering of the sexes, with which evil first entered the world — has been forgotten or is not yet born. This explains why in the first act of the opera Gurnemanz necessarily fails in his attempt to lead the innocent Parsifal to the world "behind the wall," to the mystic realm of the Grail. Without Kundry — without the knowledge of the original unity of the sexes and their subsequent split — Parsifal cannot cure Amfortas. It is only in his mystical encounter with Kundry — in which he rejects her seductive powers — that Parsifal experiences self-knowledge; at this crucial moment in the second act, Parsifal perceives, as it were instantaneously, the decisive phases of human life — birth, maternal love, awakening of consciousness, first love, first intimations of death. This focal moment is surely, after Mozart's *Magic Flute*, the most fascinating portrayal of a mystical awakening in the history of opera.

Reflections of Lost Paths: Amfortas, Titirel, Klingsor

Amfortas is plagued by the nightmare, the trauma, of eternally having to open the shrine of the Grail. In doing so he is forever condemned to break through the barriers of time and space. He is a kind of distorted Christ figure, impatient and wrathful, who carries upon his shoulders the whole of human suffering. If one looks into his face the associations one

sees there stretch far back beyond Christianity: Prometheus, Sisyphus and that holy man of Buddhism condemned to stand at the end of the world bearing a wheel of fire on his head for all time.

Titirel, Amfortas's father, stands as a living specter outside of time and space. This detachment, this isolation from the community, is represented by his stark musical motif — the deathly timpani strokes. There appears to be no relationship between father and son until the very end of the opera, when Amfortas's intense yearning for release makes him wish to follow his father into the grave.

Klingsor had to castrate himself in order to become master of time and space, to gain his magic powers. It is no accident that Wagner gives this character strident, modernistic music: an absence of melodic line allied to extreme chromaticism. Klingsor is a driving force with the power (he believes) to control humans through the gratification of the urges and desires. He sees through humans as if with X-ray vision, but ultimately is unable to fathom their mystery. Were he to set foot on earthly ground, to leave his aerial domain, his power would abruptly evaporate. Although she is compelled to serve as Klingsor's instrument, Kundry's laughter — as she mocks his sterility — shows that she would never recognize him as a creative force.

Parsifal: The Eternal Wanderer

Parsifal bursts into time and space, a hero of childish innocence. In his Act Two encounter with Kundry, it is his childhood and his mother, Herzeleide, that he remembers. His clear melodic motif harks back to the Baroque or Classical tradition, regardless of the crisis of form that is so apparent in *Parsifal* as nowhere else in Wagner's music dramas. Constantly, in Parsifal's musical lines, motifs and melodies break off. Silence here is as meaningful as sound. Human torment too painful to be expressed in words is portrayed in a quite distinctive musical language. At the end of his life, at the end of the Romantic era, Wagner was unable to chart entirely new musical waters; but without his clear sense of the dissolution of form — which in *Parsifal* reflects a splintering world — there would surely have been no true musical modernity. It is no wonder that Schoenberg was such a keen student of Wagner. The clearest example of the fractured tonal universe of *Parsifal* is to be found in the somber orchestral prelude to Act Three. In this musical depiction of desolation Wagner deftly supplants countless

pages of Wolfram von Eschenbach's, describing the hero's peregrinations. This is Parsifal's true music: the song of eternal wandering.

Kundry: Servant and Seductress

Kundry hurtles unceasingly through time and space. The music with which she is portrayed is the most extreme Wagner ever wrote, in terms of the frontiers it oversteps. Her motifs crash like cascades as she rebels against her eternal damnation. In the third act she is virtually silent, however, merely "serving" at Parsifal's side. Nonetheless, she is the central focus of the "Good Friday Magic," that moment of redemption in the third act where Parsifal and Kundry discover love. From the very outset Kundry can be seen as Parsifal's "twin": both of them endlessly in motion. Their three encounters — childish in the first act, erotic in the second, and redemptive in the third — are the focal and decisive moments of the plot. Only when Wagner realized that Kundry must embrace two characters in one — the doomed temptress who taunted Christ on the cross and the desperate penitent fluctuating between service of the Grail and of Klingsor — was he able to compose *Parsifal*. In Kundry he had found a means to close the rift running through nature, although the character herself pays the price of silence.

The Fascination of Ambiguity

There have been sinister chapters in *Parsifal*'s performance history. The abuse of the formula "Salvation to the Savior" (*Erlösung dem Erlöser*) which appears at the very end of the work is a case in point. Any contemporary production must recognize the potential ways in which *Parsifal* might be manipulated. The piece was and remains fertile ground for evil. Wagner and his ideologically crazed disciples knew very well what they were doing, and contributed in their own way to the "solution" of the Jewish Question. The legendary figure of Parsifal, condemned to journey through time and space, was transformed into the concrete, historical figure of the Christ — but a Christ purged of his Jewishness, whom Wagner proclaims as the new World King at the end of *Parsifal*. But here as well the music suggests another subtext: over and above his role as redeemer, Parsifal becomes the reflection of human dividedness, victor and victim in one. This ambiguity does not

Continued on page 46

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NEW PRODUCTION

A festival music-drama in three acts by RICHARD WAGNER
Text by the composer

Parsifal

(in German)

CAST

Conductor
Donald Runnicles

Production
Nikolaus Lehnhoff

Set Designer
Raimund Bauer**

Costume Designer
Andrea Schmidt-Futterer**

Lighting Designer
Wolfgang Göbbel*

Chorus Director
Ian Robertson

Choreographer
Denni Sayers**

Associate Stage Director
Daniel Dooner*

Musical Preparation
Adelle Eslinger
John Churchwell
William Hobbs
William Lacey
Ernest Fredric Knell
Sara Jobin

Supertitles
Christopher Bergen

Prompter
Jonathan Khuner

Assistant Stage Director
Laurie Henley

Stage Manager
Theresa Ganley

Gurnemanz Kurt Moll

First Knight of the Grail Richard Walker

Second Knight of the Grail Philip Horst†

Four Esquires Peggy Kriha Dye
Elena Bocharova†
Todd Geer†
Kyu Won Han*†

Kundry Catherine Malfitano

Amfortas Franz Grundheber

Parsifal Christopher Ventris**

Titirel Reinhard Hagen

A Voice Elizabeth Bishop

Klingsor Tom Fox

Klingsor's Flower Maidens Nicolle Foland
Peggy Kriha Dye
Zheng Cao
Tammy Jenkins
Donita Volkwijk†
Elizabeth Bishop

Knights of the Grail, Flower Maidens, Servants of the Grail, Klingsor's guards

**U.S. opera debut *San Francisco Opera debut †2000–2001 Adler Fellow

This production is a collaboration
with English National Opera and
the Lyric Opera of Chicago

First performance:
Bayreuth, July 26, 1882

First San Francisco Opera
performance: October 27, 1950

SUNDAY, JUNE 18 AT 1:00
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 21 AT 7:00
SATURDAY, JUNE 24 AT 7:00
TUESDAY, JUNE 27 AT 7:00
FRIDAY, JUNE 30 AT 7:00
SUNDAY, JULY 2 AT 1:00

ACT I Before the Sanctuary of the Holy Grail
INTERMISSION
ACT II Klingsor's domain
INTERMISSION
ACT III Before the Sanctuary of the Holy Grail

*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 five hours.*

PARSIFAL SYNOPSIS

Many years ago, two holy relics were placed in the safekeeping of Titurel: the spear with which Christ was wounded on the Cross, and the Holy Grail (the cup used at the Last Supper, into which his wounds then bled). Titurel established an order of chivalry to guard and serve the Grail, which had miraculous powers. Klingsor failed to gain admission to this chaste brotherhood. As the ultimate proof of his desire to be pure, he castrated himself; however, such self-mutilation earned him only the further scorn of the knights. In anger and despair, he vowed revenge upon them. He turned to sorcery, transforming a barren desert into a magic garden populated by beautiful women whose charms can beguile any errant knights. Many have succumbed and are now his prisoners, forming his army. He still longs to be guardian of the Grail. In old age Titurel abdicated and his son, Amfortas, was chosen by the community of knights to succeed him. Amfortas resolved to destroy Klingsor but failed to resist the temptress — whom he did not recognize as Kundry, messenger of the Grail — sent to ensnare him. Although he escaped, he lost the spear to Klingsor who wounded him with it. It has been prophesied that only a pure fool made wise through pity can heal Amfortas's wound. Until the fulfillment of that prophecy, Amfortas lives in continual agony and the fraternity of knights is weakened because, for all his penance, Amfortas can scarcely bear the pain of officiating in the ritual of the Holy Grail by which they live.

ACT I — Before the Sanctuary of the Holy Grail — Gurnemanz, oldest of the knights of the Holy Grail, wakes the squires who are meant to be guarding the sanctuary, and chides them for neglecting their duty. Together they say the morning prayer. They must prepare for the arrival of Amfortas, who will bathe his wound in the lake. Kundry, a strange wild woman whom the knights treat with suspicion, brings a soothing ointment for him. Amfortas longs for a time when he will be relieved of his intense pain, and reminds the knights of the prophecy: only an innocent fool enlightened through compassion can recover the sacred spear and end Amfortas's suffering.

Gurnemanz is recounting the history of the Grail when shouts from the knights interrupt him. A swan has been wounded by an unknown youth — Parsifal. He is reprimanded for his action; however, it quickly becomes clear that not only does he not realize that he has done wrong, but also that he has no understanding of the concepts of good and evil. To Gurnemanz's questions concerning his name and origins, Parsifal can only reply that he knows nothing of himself except his mother's name, Herzeleide. Kundry, however, is able to supply more details, including the fact that his mother is now dead. The squires return from the lake with news that Kundry's ointment has eased Amfortas's agony. Gurnemanz, already hopeful that Parsifal may be the fulfillment of the prophecy, invites him to share in the knights' ritual.

Gurnemanz leads Parsifal "through time and space" to the sanctuary's inner temple, where the fraternity of knights has assembled to have Amfortas expose them to the Grail's life-enhancing powers. In the course of the ritual, the holy blood of the Grail mystically enters Amfortas's body, expelling his sinful blood through his open wound and causing him unendurable pain. Amfortas begs the order not to make him open the shrine. At Titurel's insistence, however, the Grail is uncovered. The wound once again begins to bleed and the reinvigorated knights are then ready to set out on their holy missions. Unable to tell Gurnemanz that he has understood what he has witnessed, Parsifal is made to leave.

ACT II — Klingsor's domain — Klingsor watches over his lands. Seeing Parsifal approach, he summons Kundry, over whom he has reasserted his power, and commands her to seduce the unsuspecting youth as once she ensnared Amfortas.

In a magic garden, beautiful flower maidens attempt to entice Parsifal but are unsuccessful. Kundry enters, now transformed into a great beauty. She calls Parsifal by name, talks to him of his mother's love for him and how his departure had caused his mother so much anguish that she died from grief. Distressed at this final revelation, Parsifal is consoled by Kundry. Her embrace, intended to bring him into her power, has the opposite effect: as they kiss, Parsifal instantaneously understands the purpose of his mission — to end Amfortas's suffering — and he rejects Kundry.

Kundry appeals to Parsifal to use his redemptive powers to save and release her: for her blasphemous mockery of Christ on the Cross, she has been condemned to wander through the world for centuries. But Parsifal recognizes that salvation for them both depends on his resisting her allure. Realizing she has failed, Kundry reacts furiously to Parsifal's suggestion that by showing him the way to Amfortas she can be redeemed. She curses him, vowing that he will never find Amfortas again. She tries to block Parsifal's escape and appeals to Klingsor for help. The magician appears, brandishing the sacred spear taken from Amfortas. However, it cannot harm Parsifal: when he takes possession of the spear, Klingsor's power is at once destroyed and his domain collapses in ruins.

ACT III — Good Friday, before the Sanctuary of the Holy Grail — Gurnemanz, now living as a hermit, finds Kundry half-dead. No longer wild and untameable, she is eager only to serve. A black knight approaches them. It is Parsifal, who has been condemned to wander and struggle endlessly because of Kundry's curse. Gurnemanz rebukes him for being armed in this sacred place and on such a holy day, before recognizing Parsifal and the spear. Gurnemanz recounts that Titurel has died and the knightly community is on the point of collapse because of Amfortas's refusal to allow them access to the Grail. Parsifal blames himself for these misfortunes. Kundry bathes Parsifal's feet and Gurnemanz anoints him as guardian of the Grail. Parsifal's first act is to baptize Kundry.

The knights of the Grail try to force Amfortas to preside over the last rites of his father, and once again make available to them the Grail. Deranged with pain, Amfortas pleads with the knights to kill him and bring his agony to an end. Parsifal steps forward and restores the spear to the knights, thus healing Amfortas's bleeding wound.

The performance of June 18th is designated in honor of the sponsors of *Parsifal*, and participants in the "One Weekend, Three Centuries" Festival:

Mr. and Mrs. Reid W. Dennis, Mr. Paul M. Dorfman, Mrs. A. Barlow Ferguson, Ms. Anne Fisher, Mary Goodman, Mr. and Mrs. William R. Hewlett, Mr. and Mrs. Franklin P. Johnson, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Angus MacNaughton, Mr. Edmund R. Manwell, and Dr. and Mrs. John Zderic.

The performance of June 27th is designated in honor of

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ARTIST PROFILES



Acclaimed American soprano **CATHERINE MALFITANO** returns to San Francisco Opera for the first Wagnerian part of her career, Kundry in *Parsifal*. She previously appeared with the Company in 1995 and 1997 in one of her most celebrated roles, Cio-Cio-San in *Madama Butterfly*. The versatile artist's repertoire includes over 60 roles performed at the world's major opera houses.

Highlights of the 1999–2000 season have included Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth* and Beatrice in the world premiere of Bolcom's *A View from the Bridge* at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* at the Metropolitan Opera, and the title role of *Katya Kabanova* for Munich's Bavarian State Opera. Highlights from recent seasons include *Macbeth* (role debut as Lady Macbeth) in Houston; new stagings of *Mabagomny* (Jenny) in Chicago and at the Salzburg Festival; her first performances of *Katya Kabanova* at the Met and in a new staging at the Bavarian State Opera; *The Makropulos Case* (Emilia Marty) at the Met; *Stiffelio*, *Eugene Onegin* and *Tosca* for the Royal Opera/Covent Garden; *Wozzeck* (Marie) at the Vienna State Opera and Milan's La Scala; *Don Giovanni* (Donna Elvira) at the Salzburg Festival; *Fidelio* (Leonore) in Geneva, Berlin, Paris, and Jerusalem; as well as the title roles of *Salome* and *Madama Butterfly* which she has sung at most of the major opera houses and festivals of the world. In recital, she has appeared in San Francisco, Chicago, New York, Toronto, Houston, Zurich, Vienna and Bonn, as well as at the Salzburg Festival and London's Wigmore Hall. Future plans include *Der Fliegende Holländer* (role debut as Senta) at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, *The Makropulos Case* for the Met, *Katya Kabanova* with Houston Grand Opera, *Tosca* to open the season at the Royal Opera Covent Garden, and a recital tour throughout Europe.



A winner of the prestigious 1997 ARIA Foundation Award, **NICOLLE FOLAND** is establishing herself as a leading soprano in many prominent theaters. Associated with San Francisco Opera for many seasons, the former Adler Fellow has been seen here in over 10 productions, foremost among them *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Countess), *Carmen* (Micaëla), *Die Fledermaus* (Rosalinda), *Eugene Onegin* (one performance as Tatjana),

last summer's Ring cycle staging of *Das Rheingold* (Freia) and *La Bohème* (Musetta), which she first performed for the Company in 1996 and again earlier in this current season. In addition, she appeared as soloist in a concert with Plácido Domingo and made her San Francisco recital debut as part of S.F. Opera Center's 1997 Schwabacher Debut Recital series. Other Opera Center credits include Adele and Rosalinda in *Die Fledermaus*; Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*; and Tina in the 1996 Showcase production of Argento's *The Aspern Papers*. Last season she made debuts with Los Angeles Opera, Seattle Opera and Spain's Opera Bilbao as Musetta, and also was seen as Micaëla in Cincinnati, the First Lady (*Die Zauberflöte*) in Los Angeles, and in the title role of *La Traviata* at Festival Opera of Walnut Creek. In the current season she has made bows with Boston Lyric Opera and the Opera Company of Philadelphia (Mozart's Countess), Minnesota Opera (her first Desdemona in Verdi's *Otello*), with Lyric Opera of Chicago and Houston Grand Opera (*Traviata*'s Violetta), and with Baltimore Opera (Musetta). During the Company's

2000–2001 season, she will portray Kitty Hart in the world premiere of *Dead Man Walking* and the First Lady in *Die Zauberflöte*. The native of Des Moines received a master of music degree from the University of Northern Iowa and currently resides in San Francisco.



Former Adler Fellow **PEGGY KRIHA DYE** made her San Francisco Opera debut in the summer of 1996 as Musetta in *La Bohème*, subsequently appearing with the Company during the 1996–97 season in *Die Fledermaus* (Adele), the West Coast premiere of *Harvey Milk*, and *Salome*. She has also performed here in *Madama Butterfly* (1997); *Death in Venice* and *Le Nozze di Figaro* (1997–98); the 1998

Femmes Fatales staging of *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* (Damigella); *A Streetcar Named Desire* (one performance as Stella), *Manon*, *Peter Grimes* and *Betrothal in a Monastery* (1998–99); as well as in *Louise* (1999). She was also recently praised for her performances of Nannetta in *Falstaff* with Utah Opera, as well as for Despina in *Così fan tutte*, Susanna in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Musetta in *La Bohème* and Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* with Festival Opera of Walnut Creek. Upcoming engagements include Adina in *L'Elisir d'Amore* with Festival Opera, Stella in *Streetcar* with the Pittsburgh Symphony, in addition to Barber's *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* and Villa Lobos's *Bachiana Brasileira No. 5* with the Napa Valley Symphony. Winner of a prestigious scholarship grant from The Liberace Foundation, Kriha Dye was a participant in the 1993 Merola Opera Program who sang the role of Nannetta and her first *Fledermaus* Adele. In 1995, she appeared as Barbarina in the Merola Program staging of *Le Nozze di Figaro*, repeating the part and singing the role of Susanna on the subsequent Western Opera Theater tour. Additional Opera Center credits include Olympia in the Showcase production of *The Aspern Papers*, Fulvia in the Showcase presentation of Handel's *Ezio*, and a Schwabacher Debut Recital. A native of Brainerd, Minnesota, the soprano received an undergraduate degree in music from St. Cloud University, a master's degree from the Manhattan School of Music, and spent two years as a member of the Juilliard Opera Center.



Former Adler Fellow **ZHENG CAO** made her San Francisco Opera debut when she stepped in for an ailing colleague to sing two performances as Siebel in the 1995 production of *Faust*. She has subsequently performed in Company stagings of *Die Walküre*, *Rusalka*, *Salome*, *Elektra*, *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Cherubino, 1998), *Madama Butterfly* (Suzuki, 1997, '99) and *Idomeneo* (one 1999 performance as

Idamante). Opera Center credits include the Showcase production of *The Aspern Papers* (Sonia); Mahler's *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* as part of the Schwabacher Debut Recital series (a work she also performed with the San Francisco Ballet); and Dora-bella in the Merola Opera Program's staging of *Così fan tutte*. Engagements elsewhere include *Madama Butterfly* for the Grand Théâtre de Genève, San Diego Opera, Opéra de Lyon and New York City Opera; *Le Nozze di Figaro* at the European Opera Center in Ghent; *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* (Rosina) at Washington Opera and Michigan Opera Theatre; *Les Contes d'Hoff-*

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mann (Nicklausse/The Muse) for Opera Pacific; as well as *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria* (Penelope), *Fedora* (Dimitri) and *Don Giovanni* (Zerlina) with Los Angeles Opera. On the concert stage she has performed as soloist in Bach's *Magnificat*, Duruflé's Requiem, Handel's *Messiah*, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony (which she recently performed at Milan's La Scala under Muti), as well as the Requiem and *Coronation Mass* by Mozart. In addition, she was chosen by Seiji Ozawa to be one of the soloists for the opening ceremony of the 1998 Winter Olympics. The Shanghai native holds degrees from the Shanghai Conservatory and the Curtis Institute of Music.



Soprano **TAMMY JENKINS**, a former Adler Fellow, made her bow with San Francisco Opera as Frasquita in *Carmen* during the 1998 *Femmes Fatales* Festival. She has subsequently performed here in *Manon*, *Don Carlo* and *Peter Grimes* during the 1998-99 Season, and in *Louise*, *La Favorite* and *La Bohème* (one performance as Musetta) earlier this season. A native of Las Cruces, the soprano attended New

Mexico State University and has performed in productions of *Tartuffe* (Marianne), *Amahl and the Night Visitors* (the Mother), and *Carmen* (Micaëla). She has also appeared in concert presentations of Schubert's Mass in G and *Omnipotence* with Vos Vaqueros. Jenkins was a Metropolitan Opera Southwestern Regional Finalist in 1996 and received an Encouragement Award from the Met Auditions in 1997. A 1997 Merola Opera Program participant, she sang the role of Frasquita in the summer staging of *Carmen* and went on to repeat the role and also sing Micaëla in Western Opera Theater's national touring production. Additional credits include a Schwabacher Debut Recital, Showcase presentations of *Iphigénie en Tauride* (First Priestess, 1998) and *Così fan tutte* (Despina, 1999), as well as a concert with the Midsummer Mozart Festival.



Originally from Capetown, South Africa, second-year Adler Fellow **DONITA VOLKWIJN** made her San Francisco Opera debut earlier this season, appearing in *Louise* and as Mimì in one performance of *La Bohème*. She also recently made her professional U.S. recital debut as part of San Francisco Opera Center's Schwabacher Debut Recital series. Other Opera Center credits include Fiordiligi in last year's

Showcase production of *Così fan tutte* and Pamina in the 1998 Merola Opera Program staging of *The Magic Flute*. She has also performed with the Bronx Opera, where she sang Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*, Mariane in *Tartuffe*, and Adina in *The Elixir of Love*, a role she repeated with Milwaukee's Skylight Opera. The soprano made her European debut last season with concert performances at the International Opera Center of the Netherlands. A national winner of the Leontyne Price Vocal Arts Competition and a district winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, she was an apprentice with the Ezio Pinza Council for American Singers of Opera and with Lyric Opera Cleveland, where she appeared as Frasquita in *Carmen*. Volkwiijn earned her bachelor's degree in vocal performance from the Oberlin Conservatory and her Master of Music degree from the Cleveland Institute of Music. Roles she will sing for the Company in the forthcoming season include Gianetta in *L'Elisir d'Amore*.

ELIZABETH BISHOP, a 1994-95 Adler Fellow, was featured in four operas of San Francisco Opera's 1994 Fall Season, which included the role of Emilie in the world premiere production of *The Dangerous Liaisons*. (She sang the leading role of Marquise de Merteuil from the same opera for



the Washington Opera in 1998.) The artist most recently appeared here in *Lulu* (summer 1998), in several roles (Fricka, Wellgunde, Siegrune, Waltraute) during the 1999 *Ring* Festival, and as Fenena in *Nabucco* earlier this season. The mezzo has numerous credits for the Opera Center, among them the title role of Handel's *Ezio*, Helen in Tippet's *King Priam*, Meg Page in *Falstaff*, and Prince Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus*. Elsewhere, she has appeared in *The Ghosts of Versailles* at the Metropolitan Opera after having made her Met debut in the 1993 production of *Death in Venice*. Among her most recent engagements are her first Adalgisa in *Norma* and Suzuki for Opera Memphis, Ma Moss in Copland's *The Tender Land* with Virginia Opera, Gertrude in *Hamlet* for Washington Concert Opera, as well as the Hostess in Wolf-Ferrari's *Sly* and Emilia in *Otello* at Washington Opera (where she will sing her first Eboli in *Don Carlo* next season). In addition to being a featured soloist in the San Francisco Symphony Pops Concerts from 1992-95, Bishop has performed with other prominent orchestras singing such diverse repertoire as the Bach *Magnificat*, Ligeti's Requiem, Handel's *Messiah*, Mahler's Eighth Symphony, Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, and Mendelssohn's *Elijah*. A native of South Carolina, she earned a master of music degree from The Juilliard School and is the recipient of two grants from the Singers Development Foundation.



Second-year Adler Fellow **ELENA BOCHAROVA** made her Company debut as Flosshilde in last summer's *Ring* cycle and was seen here earlier this season in *Louise*, *Lucia di Lammermoor* and *Wozzeck*. A native of Magadan, Russia, she began her singing career as a choral soloist in regional Catholic and Russian Orthodox churches. After apprenticeships at Sonoma State University Opera Program and the Bay Area Summer Opera Theater Institute (BASOTI), she received her bachelor's degree from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. Roles performed at the school were Baba in *The Medium*, Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro* and Maggie in *The Gift of the Magi*. Additional credits include Venere in Monteverdi's *Il Ballo delle Ingrate* and Prince Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus*. The mezzo-soprano sang the roles of Annina in Western Opera Theater's 1998 production of *La Traviata* and Dorabella in the Opera Center's 1999 Showcase presentation of *Così fan tutte*.



CHRISTOPHER VENTRIS, making his U.S. debut in these performances of *Parsifal*, has been giving notable performances in opera and concert in the few seasons since his first appearance on stage. The British tenor has worked extensively for both Glyndebourne Festival and Touring Opera, having appeared as Števa (*Jenůfa*) on the national tour and as Janek (*The Makropulos Case*). With Opera North he has appeared as the Novice (*Billy Budd*), the Prince (*The Love for Three Oranges*) and Paris (Tippet's *King Priam*), a role in which he made his debut at Antwerp's De Vlaamse Opera, and which he sang at the English National Opera. Additional ENO assignments have included Scaramuccio (*Ariadne auf Naxos*), Count Hohenzollern (*The Prince of Homburg*), and the premiere of Judith Weir's *Blond Eckbert*. He has also appeared with Leipzig Opera (Steersman/*Der Fliegende Holländer*, Narraboth/*Salome*); Geneva Opera (Tamino/*Die Zauberflöte*); and with the Royal Opera at Covent Garden (Kudryash/*Katya Kabanova*, Jack/*The Midsummer Marriage*). He received critical acclaim for his portrayal of Lensky (*Eugene Onegin*) at De Vlaamse Opera,

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where he also sang his first Parsifal with great success. Highlights of his most recent engagements include *Parsifal* in Bonn, Antwerp and Santiago, Chile; *Leonore* (Florestan) in Lausanne and at the Paris Théâtre des Champs Élysées; *Der Freischütz* (Max) in Cologne and for his debut at Milan's La Scala; *The Bartered Bride* (Jeník) at Covent Garden; *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* (Sergei) in Madrid and at the Monnaie in Brussels; Martinů's *The Greek Passion* (Manolios) in Bregenz; as well as *Jenůfa* and *Der Fliegende Holländer* (Erik) in Antwerp. In concert, Ventris has performed Tippett's *A Child of Our Time*, Bruckner's *Tē Deum*, Mozart's Requiem, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, Penderecki's *Threni* and Britten's *War Requiem*, among others. Future engagements include *Parsifal* in Seattle, *Die Walküre* (Siegfried) in Cologne, *Boris Godunov* (Dimitri) in Amsterdam, and his debut at the Metropolitan Opera in *Jenůfa*.



Acclaimed German bass **KURT MOLL** made his U.S. opera debut with San Francisco Opera in 1974 as Gurnemanz in *Parsifal* and sang King Marke in our staging of *Tristan und Isolde* that same year. He has subsequently appeared with the Company as Baron Ochs in *Der Rosenkavalier* (1985), Gurnemanz (1988), and as Osmin in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (1990). He began his career with the

Cologne Opera, of which he became a member at the age of 20, and thereafter was invited to Aachen, where he sang such roles as Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte* and Daland in *Der Fliegende Holländer*. He sang his first King Marke and Ramfis in *Aida* in Mainz before becoming a member of the Wuppertal Opera for five years. His career took on international dimensions after he bowed with the Hamburg State Opera in 1969, followed by debuts in Paris, Munich, Vienna, Salzburg and Bayreuth. Moll made his 1972 Teatro alla Scala debut as Osmin and first appeared with the Metropolitan Opera during their 1979 season, appearing as Landgrave (*Tannhäuser*), Rocco (*Fidelio*) and Sparafucile (*Rigoletto*). Today, the renowned artist sings in all the world's major opera houses as well as with the major orchestras as a concert soloist. Engagements from his 1999–2000 season have included *Parsifal* in Paris (Bastille), Vienna, Dresden and Munich; *Tristan und Isolde* in Florence; *Der Rosenkavalier* in Munich and Dresden; *Der Fliegende Holländer* in London; *La Forza del Destino* (Padre Guardiano) in Hamburg; and *Die Meistersinger* (Pogner) in Munich. He has made innumerable recordings (among them *Parsifal*, *Fidelio*, *Der Freischütz*, *Der Fliegende Holländer*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Die Meistersinger*, *Tannhäuser*, *Tristan und Isolde*) under such conductors as Karajan, Solti, Kleiber, Bernstein, Kubelik, Haitink, Levine, Sawallisch and Harnoncourt.



FRANZ GRUNDHEBER, a native of Germany, studied in Hamburg and at Indiana University with Margaret Harshaw. He began his career at the Hamburg State Opera and is still a permanent guest there as well as at the Vienna and Munich State Operas. Performances in opera and concert have taken the eminent bass-baritone to most of the world's major houses and concert halls. He has performed at, among

others, San Francisco Opera (1998 debut as Mandryka in *Arabella*), the Metropolitan Opera, Royal Opera at Covent Garden, La Scala in Milan, the Monnaie in Brussels, the Opéra and Châtelet in Paris, Dresden's Semperoper, Deutsche Staatsoper Berlin, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Los Angeles Opera, Salzburg Festival, as well as in Amsterdam, Barcelona and Madrid. He has been acclaimed for his portrayal of the title roles of *Wozzeck*, *Der Fliegende Holländer*, *Cardillac*, *Rigoletto*, *Macbeth* and *Simon Boccanegra*, as well as for his Scarpia (*Tosca*),

Amfortas (*Parsifal*), Barak (*Die Frau ohne Schatten*), Iago (*Otello*), Amonasro (*Aida*) and Mandryka. Recent highlights include his bow at the Met in *Rigoletto* and *Wozzeck*; *Macbeth* in Chicago; *Otello* in Hamburg; *Simon Boccanegra* in Munich; in addition to *Palestrina*, *Elektra*, *Lulu* (role debut as Dr. Schön), *Wozzeck* and *Parsifal* for the Vienna State Opera. His discography includes *Arabella*, two recordings of *Wozzeck*, *Don Giovanni* (title role), *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, *Werther* (Albert), *Der Rosenkavalier* (Faninal), *Hänsel und Gretel* (Peter) and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. Grundheber was awarded the honorary title of "Kammersänger" by the Hamburg and Vienna State Operas.



Baritone **TOM FOX** made his acclaimed 1990 Company debut as Alberich in *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, and has since appeared here as Ryuji Tsukazaki in the U.S. premiere of *Das Verrätene Meer* and Orest in *Elektra* (1991); Jokanaan in *Salome* and Jaroslav Prus in *The Makropulos Case* (1993); Telramund in *Lobengrin* (1996); Dr. Schön/Jack the Ripper in *Lulu* and Kurwenal in *Tristan und Isolde* (1998); and

as Alberich in last year's Ring Festival. The native of Cincinnati was a resident member of Cincinnati Opera from 1976 to 1980. He was engaged the following year as principal guest artist at the Frankfurt Opera where his roles included Amonasro in *Aida*, Pizarro in *Fidelio*, Klingsor in *Parsifal*, Nick Shadow in *The Rake's Progress*, Escamillo in *Carmen*, as well as Orest and Alberich. Since leaving Frankfurt, he has sung in many of the world's leading opera houses. In addition to his San Francisco Opera engagements, he has appeared at the Metropolitan Opera and with the companies of Chicago, Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., San Diego, Pittsburgh, Toronto, Munich, Berlin, Paris, Montpellier, Milan (La Scala), Rome, Bologna, Turin and Brussels, among others. Roles in these houses have included the four villains in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, Scarpia in *Tosca*, Iago in *Otello*, the title roles of *Eugene Onegin* and *Der Fliegende Holländer*, in addition to Kurwenal, Alberich, Telramund, Pizarro, Prus, Orest and Jokanaan. Fox made his Salzburg Festival debut in 1995 as the Animal Trainer/Acrobat in *Lulu* and returned to Salzburg the following year as Pizarro in a new staging of *Fidelio* led by Georg Solti. Among the baritone's most recent engagements are *Tristan und Isolde* in Strasbourg and Buenos Aires; *Salome* in Buenos Aires; and *Parsifal* in Munich. Upcoming are *Elektra* in Baltimore, *The Makropulos Case* at the Met, and *Tosca* for Los Angeles Opera.



Bass **REINHARD HAGEN** is quickly becoming a regular guest artist at several of Europe's leading opera houses and with many prominent orchestras. Following studies in Karlsruhe, the German artist won several important international singing competitions and began his professional career in Dortmund. Since 1994, he has been a regular member of the Deutsche Oper Berlin, where he has appeared in such roles

as Titirel in *Parsifal*, the Commendatore in *Don Giovanni*, Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte*, Pogner in *Die Meistersinger*, Gremin in *Eugene Onegin*, Ramfis in *Aida*, and the Watchman in Enescu's *Oedipe*. He made his 1998 U.S. debut with San Francisco Opera in *Don Carlo*, returned to sing the roles of Fasolt and Hunding during our 1999 Ring Festival, and was seen earlier this season as Raimondo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*. Elsewhere, Hagen has performed at, among others, the Aix-en-Provence Festival, Hamburg State Opera and Munich State Opera (*Zauberflöte*), in Seville (the Landgraf in *Tannhäuser*), Geneva (Friar Laurence in *Roméo et Juliette*), and Venice (his first Rocco in *Fidelio*). Equally at home on the concert platform, he has appeared with the Bavarian Radio Symphony under Lorin Maazel, Gewandhaus Orchestra



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Leipzig led by Herbert Blomstedt and Marek Janowski, the Berlin Philharmonic conducted by James Levine, and he recently completed a European concert tour led by Neville Marriner. Works he has performed include Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and *Missa Solemnis*, Shostakovich's Fourteenth Symphony, and Haydn's *Creation*. Recent engagements include his San Diego Opera debut as Heinrich in a new production of *Lobengrin*, as well as *Tannhäuser*, *Fidelio*, *Aida*, *Don Giovanni* and *Macbeth* in Berlin.



In his second year as an Adler Fellow, **TODD GEER** made his San Francisco Opera debut earlier this season, appearing in *La Favorite* (Don Gaspar), *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Normanno), *Nabucco* (Abdallo), *Idomeneo* (High Priest) and *La Bohème* (one performance as Rodolfo). He has also performed in the Opera Center's Showcase productions of *Così fan tutte* (1999, Ferrando) and *Albert Herring* (2000,

title role). He participated in the 1998 Western Opera Theater national tour of *La Traviata*, in which he sang the role of Alfredo. Prior to that he appeared as Don José in the 1997 WOT tour of *Carmen*. After his professional opera debut with Syracuse Opera, the tenor was named a resident artist with Tri-Cities (Binghamton, N.Y.) Opera where he was heard as Nemorino in *L'Elisir d'Amore*, Rodolfo in *La Bohème*, Almaviva in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, the Duke of Mantua in *Rigoletto* and in the title role of *Faust*. He recently made his debut with the Lyric Opera of Chicago in *Salome* and his European debut in Paris and Geneva as Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte*. Additional credits include Tom Rakewell in *The Rake's Progress*, Ernesto in *Don Pasquale*, and Pollione in *Norma*. In concert, the young artist has been heard in *Carmina Burana*, *Messiah*, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, Haydn's *Lord Nelson Mass*, and Bruckner's *Te Deum*. Geer holds degrees from the Eastman School of Music and Binghamton University and is a former voice instructor at Cornell University.



A 1999 Merola Opera Program participant, **KYU WON HAN** was recently featured in the title role of *Don Giovanni* during Western Opera Theater's national tour. A native of Seoul, Korea, he studied at the Manhattan School of Music, where he earned both his Bachelor and Master of Music degrees. The baritone made his operatic debut in the role of Death in Gustav Holst's *Savitri*. Other roles in his

repertoire include Guglielmo (*Così fan tutte*), Mr. Page (*The Merry Wives of Windsor*), Germont (*La Traviata*), Riccardo (*I Puritani*), Malatesta (*Don Pasquale*) and Enrico (*Lucia di Lammermoor*). A winner of the 1998 DiCapo Opera Competition and the 1998 Connecticut Opera Guild Competition, Han's concert credits include Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms*, the Brahms Requiem, Handel's *Messiah* and Mahler's Eighth Symphony. The 2000–2001 Adler Fellow recently appeared as Mr. Gedge in S.F. Opera Center's Showcase production of *Albert Herring*.



Bass-baritone **PHILIP HORST**, a 1999 Merola Opera Program participant and currently an Adler Fellow, performed in the recent Western Opera Theater tour of *Don Giovanni*, in which he sang the title role as well as the part of Leporello. The native of East Lansing, Michigan, earned his bachelor's degree from Goshen College and his master of music in vocal performance at the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music.

His credits include Méphistophélès in *Faust*, Dr. Miracle in *The*

Tales of Hoffmann, Abimelech and the Old Hebrew in *Samson et Dalila*, Cesare in *Giulio Cesare*, Superintendent Budd in *Albert Herring*, Dulcamara in *L'Elisir d'Amore* and Older Rimbaud in the world premiere of Harold Blumenfeld's *Seasons in Hell*. He has performed with the Washington Concert Opera, Wolf Trap Opera, Dayton Opera, the Aspen Opera Theater Center, and the Opera Theatre of Lucca, Italy. A national winner in the 1998 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and a first place winner in the 1996 Corbett Opera Scholarship Competition, Horst's most recent credits include the Mozart Requiem with the Detroit Oratorio Society; *Così fan tutte* (Don Alfonso) and *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* (Bartolo) at Wolf Trap; *Gianni Schicchi* (title role) at Cincinnati's College-Conservatory; *Fedora* (Grech) with Palm Beach Opera; and *La Traviata* (Douchol) at Dallas Opera.



Music Director of San Francisco Opera since 1992, **DONALD RUNNICLES** is regarded as one of the finest conductors active today, with a distinguished series of international triumphs to his credit. The native of Edinburgh has conducted over 25 operas for the Company, highlights of which include televised productions of *Capriccio*, *Turandot*, and the 1994 world premiere of Susa and Littell's *The Dangerous Liaisons*; the

North American premiere of Tippett's *King Priam* with the S.F. Opera Center; and the 1996 West Coast premiere of Wallace and Korie's *Harvey Milk*. The maestro most recently led three highly praised cycles of the Company's Ring Festival last summer as well as *Un Ballo in Maschera* and *Idomeneo* earlier in our current season. He has led the San Francisco Opera Orchestra and Chorus for two recordings, one of which received a Grammy nomination (*Orphée et Eurydice*). His first commercial recording was Humperdinck's *Hänsel und Gretel*, and his most recent are a CD of Ring excerpts with the Dresden Staatskapelle and a Grammy-nominated disc of German Romantic opera arias with tenor Ben Heppner. Elsewhere, he has conducted opera productions at the Bayreuth Festival, Salzburg Festival, New York's Metropolitan Opera, Milan's La Scala, Bastille Opera, Berlin Opera, Vienna State Opera, Cologne Opera, Bavarian State Opera, Hamburg State Opera, Royal Opera Copenhagen, Zurich Opera, Netherlands Opera and the Vienna Volksoper. Symphonically, Maestro Runnicles has led many of the most prominent European orchestras, while in North America he has conducted the symphony orchestras of San Francisco, Chicago, Atlanta, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, Seattle, Minneapolis, Toronto, Miami and Cleveland. He also remains an active pianist, appearing regularly in a series of concerts with members of the San Francisco Opera Orchestra. Recently appointed principal guest conductor of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra (effective September 2001), Runnicles will retain his post as the Company's Music Director and continue his active international conducting schedule.



NIKOLAUS LEHNHOFF conceived the original production of Wagner's *Ring of the Nibelung* which was presented at San Francisco Opera in the summers of 1985, 1990 and 1999. His most recent Company assignment was in 1987, when he re-created his acclaimed production of *Salome*, first seen here during the 1982 season. He began his career as an assistant director at the Deutsche Oper in Berlin and at the Bayreuth Festival

under Wieland Wagner. This led to a contract at the Metropolitan Opera where he served as assistant director from 1966–1971. He made his directorial debut at the Paris Opera with the 1972 production of *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. Lehnhoff first came to San Francisco Opera to direct *Salome* in 1974 and returned here two

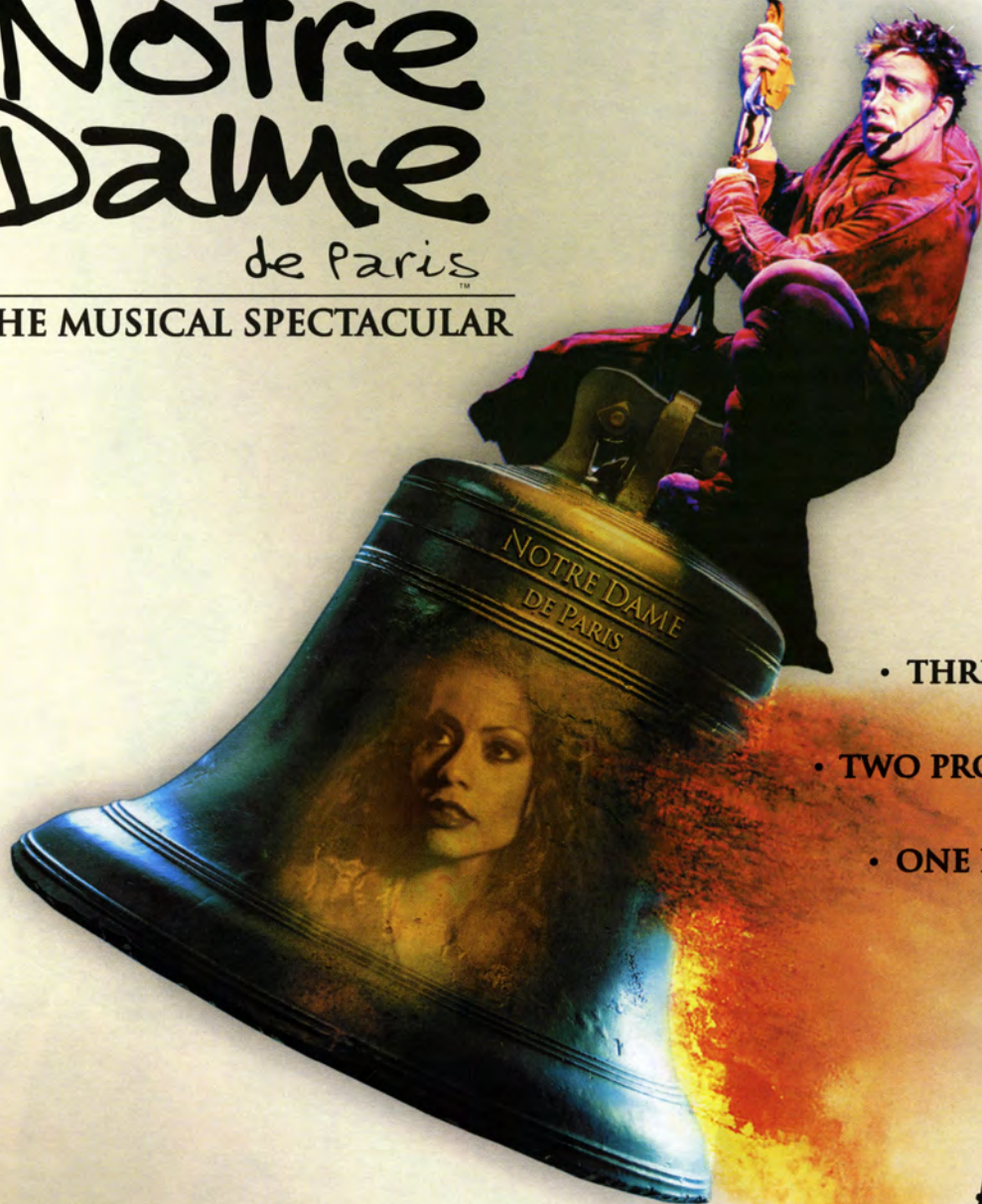
Continued on page 36

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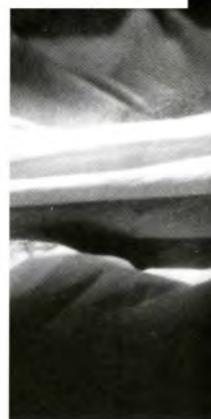
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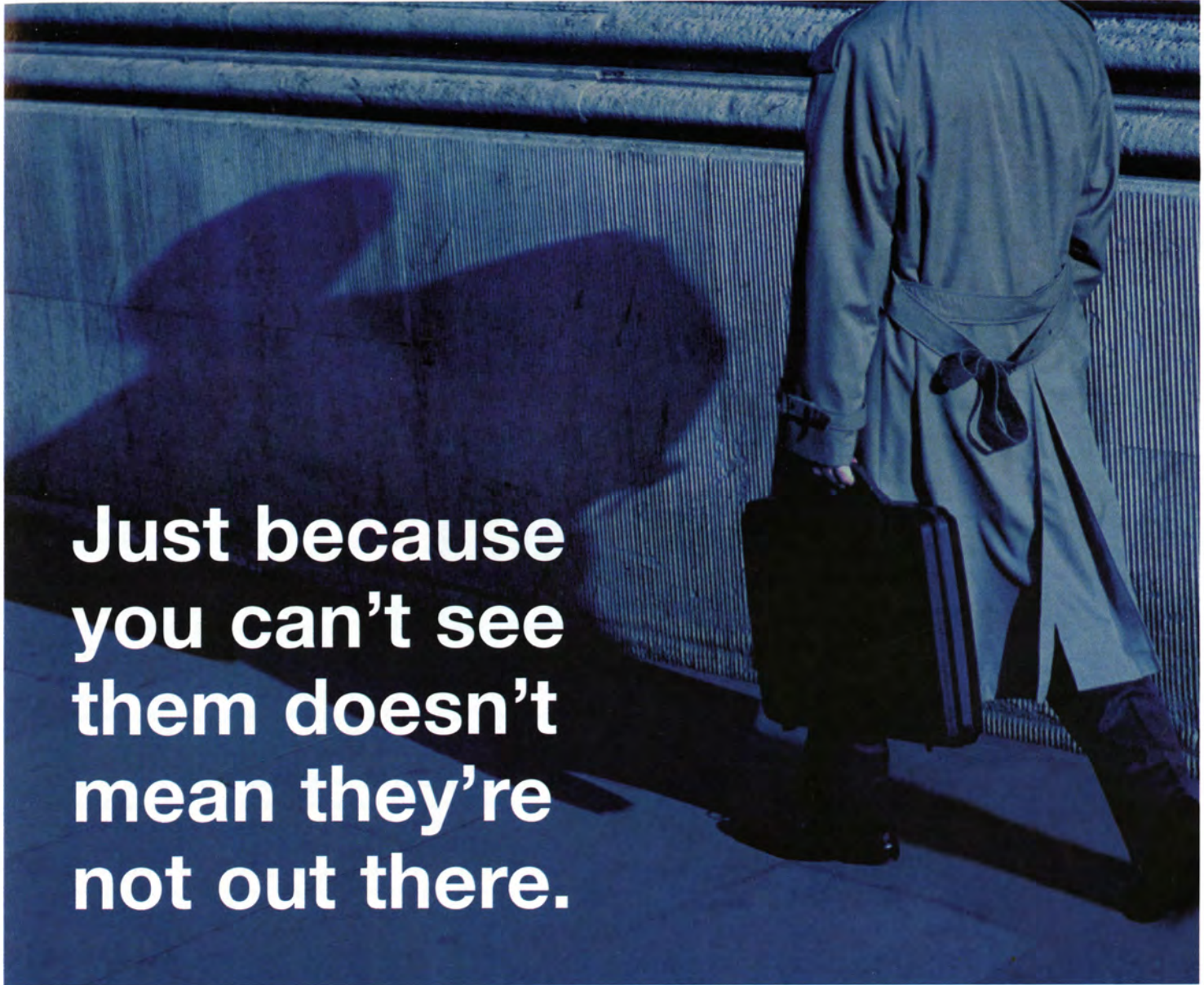
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ARTIST PROFILES

continued from page 28

years later to stage *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, a work he re-created here again in 1980. Highlights of his distinguished career include a new staging of the complete *Ring* cycle in Munich; *Katya Kabanova*, *The Makropulos Case* and *Jenůfa* at the Glyndebourne Festival; *Die Meistersinger* at La Scala in Milan; *Idomeneo* at the Salzburg Festival; a new staging of *Salome* at the Metropolitan Opera; Henze's *Der Prinz von Homburg* in Munich and Zurich; in addition to a highly praised new production of Pfitzner's *Palestrina* for the Royal Opera at Covent Garden. The German director's most recent engagements include a new staging of *Der Freischütz* for the Berlin State Opera; a repeat of *Palestrina* at New York's Lincoln Center Festival (marking the Royal Opera's first visit to the U.S.); *Tosca* in Amsterdam; a new mounting of *Parsifal* for English National Opera, San Francisco Opera and the Lyric Opera of Chicago; *The Bartered Bride* and *Jenůfa* at Glyndebourne; as well as *The Makropulos Case* in Barcelona and Hamburg. Among his future engagements are a new staging of *Der Fliegende Holländer* for the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Henze's *Boulevard Solitude* at Covent Garden, a new production of *Tristan und Isolde* at Glyndebourne, and *Turandot* (with a new finale composed by Luciano Berio) in Amsterdam.



German set designer **RAIMUND BAUER** was trained in Vienna and worked as an assistant to Erich Wonder and Robert Wilson in Cologne. Currently professor of stage design at the Hochschule für Bildende Künste, Hamburg, his most recent opera designs include *La Clemenza di Tito* and *The Consul* (Vienna); Henze's *Boulevard Solitude* (Basel); *Tristan und Isolde* and *I Due Foscari* (Zurich); *Rigoletto* (Essen); *Le Nozze di*

Figaro (Mannheim); *Katya Kabanova* (Leipzig); *Der Rosenkavalier* and *Robert le Diable* (Berlin Staatsoper); *Tosca* (Amsterdam, directed by Nikolaus Lehnhoff); and *Parsifal* (English National Opera, again with Lehnhoff). Among his recent designs for drama are *The Three Sisters* (Zurich), Schiller's *Don Carlos* (Hamburg), *Das Käthchen von Heilbronn* (Munich), as well as Gorky's *Children of the Sun* and Wedekind's *Music* (Vienna). Next season, his set designs for a new production of *Der Fliegende Holländer* will be seen at the Lyric Opera of Chicago.



Costume designer **ANDREA SCHMIDT-FUTTERER**, a native of Mannheim, began her career as costume assistant at the Schaubühne Berlin resulting in a long association with the Schauspielhaus Bochum. Since 1995, she has worked in Vienna, Berlin, Cologne, Zurich and Hamburg in collaboration with several leading directors. She has also been part-time professor of costume design at the Hochschule für Bildende

Künste, Hamburg. Most recently, her creations were seen at the Monnaie in Brussels (*From the House of the Dead*), Hamburg Staatsoper (*Armide*), Frankfurt Staatsoper (*Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Die Lustige Witwe*), Deutsche Staatsoper Berlin (*Lulu*), Munich's Bavarian State Opera (premiere of Manfred Trojahn's *Was ihr wollt*, *Fidelio*), English National Opera (*Parsifal*) and the Salzburg Festival (*Lulu*, Busoni's *Doktor Faust*). Among her forthcoming engagements are *Der Fliegende Holländer* for the Lyric Opera of Chicago and the Metropolitan Opera premiere of *Doktor Faust*.

DENNI SAYERS began her career as a dancer but now works extensively as choreographer and director in theater, musicals and opera. Her choreographic work in opera has been seen in Dublin (*Don Giovanni*) and Belfast (*The Beggar's Opera*), as well as at Opera North (*Medea*), Scottish Opera (*Maria Stuarda*), New Israeli Opera (*Orfeo ed Eurydice*) and English National



Opera (*Boris Godunov*). Most recently, she served as choreographer for Francesca Zambello's production of *War and Peace* at the Paris Opera/Bastille (which was also televised); *Misérable* at Glyndebourne; *Paul Bunyan* and *The Bartered Bride* with the Royal Opera at Covent Garden; and for Nikolaus Lehnhoff's stagings of *Parsifal* for the English National Opera, *Eugene Onegin* in Baden-Baden and *The Bartered Bride* at

Glyndebourne. Among her directing credits are *West Side Story* (Habimah National Theatre, Israel), *Carmen* (Royal Opera tour to the Jerusalem Festival), and a semi-staged production of *The Rake's Progress* (St. Endellion Music Festival, North Cornwall). Future choreographic assignments include *Parsifal* and *Der Fliegende Holländer* in Chicago, *Peter Grimes* in Amsterdam and *Boulevard Solitude* for London's Royal Opera.



Chorus director and conductor at the San Francisco Opera since 1987, **IAN ROBERTSON** made his Company conducting debut with the 1988 production of *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* and has since led performances of *Falstaff*, *Lobengrin*, *Rigoletto*, *La Traviata*, *Don Carlo*, *Turandot*, *Il Trovatore* and *La Bohème*. In addition to his highly praised work with the Opera Chorus, he has led the Opera Orchestra and Chorus in many

concerts. Additional assignments include San Francisco Opera Center's productions of *The Italian Girl in Algiers*, *Così fan tutte*, *La Pêricole* and *The Elixir of Love*, as well as Merola Opera Program's Grand Finale Concerts. He has also led *Don Giovanni* for Sarasota Opera; *The Magic Flute* and *Rigoletto* for Edmonton Opera; in addition to numerous operas at Philadelphia's Curtis Opera Theatre where he recently led *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Before joining the Company, Robertson was head of music and chorus director of Scottish Opera, where he led *The Barber of Seville*, *The Secret of Susanna*, *The Pearl Fishers*, *Rigoletto*, *The Magic Flute* and *Die Meistersinger*, among others. A native of Scotland, the maestro trained as a concert pianist and accompanist at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music, subsequently graduating with honors from the University of Glasgow. His recital career led to appearances at the Edinburgh International Festival and the Wigmore Hall and Purcell Room in London. He has recorded recitals for the BBC and appeared as pianist with the New Music Group of Scotland. He was appointed artistic director of the San Francisco Boys Chorus in 1996.



Berlin-based **WOLFGANG GÖBBEL** has created the lighting for numerous productions at the English National Opera including *Ariodante*, *Blond Eckbert*, *A Masked Ball*, *Beatrice and Benedict*, *Tristan und Isolde* (Olivier Award nomination), *The Damnation of Faust*, *The Tales of Hoffmann*, *Boris Godunov* and *Parsifal*. Elsewhere he has lit *Die Meistersinger*, *King Arthur*, *The Midsummer Marriage*, *Paul Bunyan* and *The Bartered Bride* for the Royal

Opera at Covent Garden; *Nabucco*, *Elektra* and *Ariodante* for the Welsh National Opera; *Katya Kabanova*, *Jenůfa* and *Ermione* at Glyndebourne; the *Ring* cycle and *Tosca* in Amsterdam; in addition to the world premiere of Berio's *Outis* at La Scala in Milan. Set and lighting designs include *Happy End* (Nottingham Playhouse), *Time and the Room* (Edinburgh) and *Faust* (Vienna Volksoper). Among his most recent assignments are *Sunday in the Park with George* in London, *Un Ballo in Maschera* in Bregenz, *Aida* for Scottish Opera, set/lighting for *Endgame* and *Krapp's Last Tape* in Nottingham, as well as lighting for the Metropolitan Opera's staging of *The Merry Widow* earlier this year.

1999-2000 SAN FRANCISCO OPERA COMPANY

Although our program magazines regularly list members of the Administration and Company (please see pages 40 and 42), we know that those lists are by necessity incomplete. In order to give recognition to the many skilled professionals whose work has contributed so greatly to the quality of San Francisco Opera productions, we provide, once a year, a list of everyone involved with our season. In this issue, department heads and regular staff are listed in front of the magazine, as usual; the many others, upon whom so much depends, are listed below.

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New Production

LA FAVORITE Donizetti
Ganassi*; Giordani, Chernov,
Langan
Armiliato/Graham/Coyne/
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Sept. 24, 30; Oct. 5, 10, 13, 16

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Oct. 3

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Michaels-Moore/Robertson (10/23,
26, 30, 11/3, 6), Hagen/Coliban
(10/23, 26, 30, 11/3)/Relyea (11/6)
Bonyng/Bernhard/Howland/Toms/
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Oct. 12, 15, 17, 21, 23, 24, 26, 29, 30
Nov. 3, 6

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Nov. 24, 27, 30; Dec. 3, 6, 10, 12

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Bayo*, Arteta*; Lima, Patriarco, Daza,
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Dec. 4, 7, 9, 11

LA BOHÈME Puccini
Gauci/Sutherland (1/9, 12, 14, 16),
Foland/Netrebko (1/9, 12, 14, 16);
Lima/Todorovich** (1/8, 11, 13, 15),
Okerlund/Westman (1/9, 12, 14, 16),
Relyea/Ames (1/15, 16), Daza/
Gama (1/9, 12, 14, 16), Trempont
Joel/Feldman/Yeargan/Mahoney/
Munn

Jan. 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16

New Production

DON GIOVANNI Mozart
Colonna**/Foland (6/17, 7/1m),
Vaness/Piscitelli** (7/1m),
Netrebko/Kriha Dye (6/17, 7/1m),
Hvorostovsky/Okerlund (6/17, 7/1m),
Turay*/Shankle (6/17, 7/1m),
Antoniozzi/Horst (7/1m)
Beckwith*/Mansouri/Sciutti/
Bosquet/Coyne/Whitfield

June 3, 7, 11, 13, 17, 22, 28;
July 1 (mat. and eve.)

*Production made possible by
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THE RAKE'S PROGRESS Stravinsky
Evans, Nicely*; Very, Terfel, Asawa,
Travis/Horst*
Stenz/Cox/Hockney/Munn

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June 10, 16, 20, 23, 25, 29

New Production

PARSIFAL Wagner
Malfitano; Ventris**, Grundheber,
Moll, Fox, Hagen
Runnicles/Lehnhoff/Bauer**/
Schmidt-Futterer**/Göbbel*

*Collaboration with English National Opera
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June 18, 21, 24, 27, 30; July 2

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The popular pre-performance lectures will take place in the War Memorial Opera House one hour prior to curtain time and will last approximately one-half hour. Lectures feature noted scholars and authorities and are presented free of charge to patrons with tickets to the corresponding performance. The lecture schedule is as follows:

Don Giovanni — June 11, 17, 22, 28;

July 1

The Rake's Progress — June 16, 20, 23, 25, 29

Parsifal — June 21, 24, 27, 30; July 2

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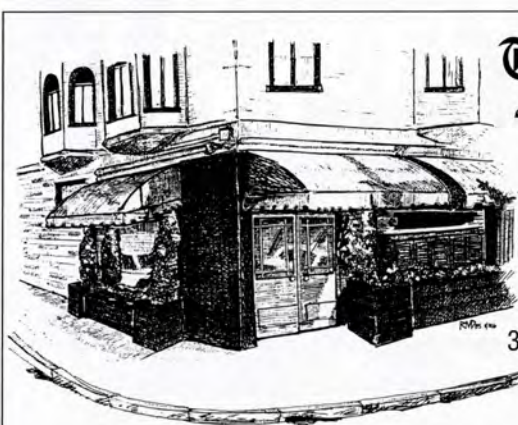


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ENDGAME IN THE WASTELAND

continued from page 18

justify the various stage interpretations of the opera, it merely shows the complexity of Wagner's characterization. It is this that makes *Parsifal* so modern, so topical, so immediate,

Endgame

In the third and final act of his journey through time and space Parsifal finally comes to a "waste land": Kundry has lost the power of speech; Gurnemanz's memories disintegrate into ever more incoherent fragments; Titurel is finally dead; Amfortas is being persecuted by the Knights of the Grail — a scene reminiscent of King Lear on the heath. The situation remains as it was, thus even more hopeless than before: the wound remains unhealed; desolation and yearning prevail. The world has been transformed into a no man's land. From this ruined landscape of "lost time," however, there is momentarily born the utopia of the "Good Friday Magic." Towards the very end of the opera Parsifal undergoes a transformation that is like the shedding of a skin: he casts off his knightly armor, the trappings of the world of the Grail, of a civilization that has caused so much destruction. He returns the spear to the Knights of the Grail — a symbol that still has the power to unite the scattered community. But, like any elite that concerns itself with the salvation of humankind, this community was questionable from the very start — the "celestial ending" with voices from on high should not delude us into thinking otherwise. Of what use to this Parsifal is the royal crown? The libretto at the end has Parsifal as the lord of a new kingdom. The music of the opera, however, portrays him throughout as a man driven endlessly hither and yon, who can never settle. For Amfortas there is but one solution, but one outcome: death. What in this world we might call suffering, could in another signify supreme bliss, wrote Kafka in one of his notebooks. Such a force for transformation radiated from Parsifal and Kundry at the end of the opera. This force demands the total renunciation of status quo and power. The opera concludes with an apotheosis, an exclamation point. But the music of the whole work leaves us with a question mark. Human existence is an unending tension between a state of belonging and one of not belonging. *Parsifal* is one of the first great lessons in twentieth-century man's rootlessness. □



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For more information contact Judson Gregory, Director of Corporate Partnerships at (415) 565-3206.

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The Opera Center is the Research & Development wing of San Francisco Opera, a training ground for the world's most promising opera artists. One of ten such professional artist development programs in the world, the Opera Center serves over 100,000 people annually through a progression of artist development programs, performance opportunities, and outreach and education programs. Following training through the Center, artists perform not only at San Francisco Opera, but also with major opera companies throughout the world.

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The Bel Canto Society honors those who have included Merola in their will, trust, or other estate plans.

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We are grateful to all donors who have made memorial and honorary contributions to Merola between October 1, 1999 and April 1, 2000.

IN MEMORY OF
Mr. Richard Barulich
Mr. Richard Dobbins

Mrs. Sammie Dunn
Mr. Edward H. Everett
Mr. Bob Hawes

Ms. Helen Loeb
Dr. Alan Rosenberg
Mr. Walter Skees

IN HONOR OF
Mr. James H. Schwabacher
Dr. A. Jess Shenson

The Merola Opera Program trains the stars of the future. We congratulate the following former Merola participants who are a part of the San Francisco Opera's 1999-2000 international season.

John Ames
Brian Asawa
Elizabeth Bishop
Elena Bocharova
John Churchwell
Catherine Cook

Kathryn Cowdrick
Tracy Dahl
Alfredo Daza
Peggy Kriba Dye
Adelle Eslinger
Nicole Foland

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Todd Geer
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Tammy Jenkins
Christina Lamberti
Kevin Langan

Anna Netrebko
David Okerlund
Earle Patriarco
John Relyea
Norman Shankle
Philip Skinner

Patrick Summers
Ruth Ann Swenson
Carol Vaness
Donita Volkwin
James Westman

SERVICES

FOOD SERVICE. The Opera House lower lounge 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, grand tier, dress circle and balcony circle levels.

DIGITAL WATCHES, PAGERS, CELL PHONES. Please switch them OFF before the performance begins.

For **LOST AND FOUND** information, inquire at the cloakroom at the south end of the main lobby or call (415) 621-6600, 8:30 to 11:30 a.m., Monday through Friday.

TICKET INFORMATION. Opera Box Office, 199 Grove at Van Ness, open 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Saturday. Opera House Box Office: open 2 hours before each performance through the first intermission on performance days only. Phone charge: (415) 864-3330, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Saturday (VISA, American Express, MasterCard).

MAKE A VALUED CONTRIBUTION TO SAN FRANCISCO OPERA. You can make an important contribution to San Francisco Opera by returning any tickets you cannot use to the Box Office for resale. These ticket returns are of great value to S.F. Opera and to other patrons who may be unable to obtain tickets to sold-out performances. If you are unable to use your tickets or exchange them for another performance of the same opera, you may make a full-value, tax-deductible contribution of your tickets to the Box Office or call (415) 864-3330, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Unfortunately, we are unable to apply the donations towards membership benefits.

TAXI SERVICE. Patrons needing a cab at the end of the performance should reserve one with the doorman at the taxi entrance on Grove Street before the end of the last intermission.

For the safety and comfort of our audience, all large parcels, backpacks, luggage, etc., must be checked at the Opera House cloakrooms (north and south ends of main lobby). No cameras or tape recorders are permitted in the Opera House. Children of any age attending a performance must have a ticket.

OPERA GLASSES are available in the cloakroom at the north end of the main lobby.

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

ACCESS FOR DISABLED PATRONS Wheelchair seating positions are located in the orchestra, mezzanine and dress circle

On permanent display in the Opera House lower bar:

A CELEBRATION OF SINGERS

Great artists at San Francisco Opera, 1962-1997
Stage photography by Robert Cahen

levels. Aisle seats with swing-up armrests are located in the orchestra, dress circle, balcony circle and balcony levels. Contact the S.F. Opera Box Office—(415) 864-3330—for more information.

Accessible restrooms are located on all floors except the orchestra (1st floor) and balcony (5th floor) levels.

Accessible public telephones are located on the orchestra, mezzanine, grand tier (2nd floor) and dress circle (3rd floor) levels. Public telephone with "TDD" is located on the orchestra level in the northeast corner of the lobby.

Accessible drinking fountains are located on all floors except the balcony level.

The Opera House is equipped with a Sennheiser Infrared Listening System. Patrons may obtain wireless headphones or induction devices in the cloakroom at the south end of the main lobby.

PERFORMING ARTS CENTER TOURS

Tours of the San Francisco Performing Arts Center include the War Memorial Opera House, Davies Symphony Hall and Herbst Theatre and take place as follows: Mondays, on the hour between 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Special group tours of Davies Hall only may be scheduled on Wednesdays and Saturdays by request two weeks in advance. All tours leave from the Grove Street entrance of Davies Symphony Hall. There are no tours on holidays. General \$5; seniors/students \$3. Information: (415) 552-8338.

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

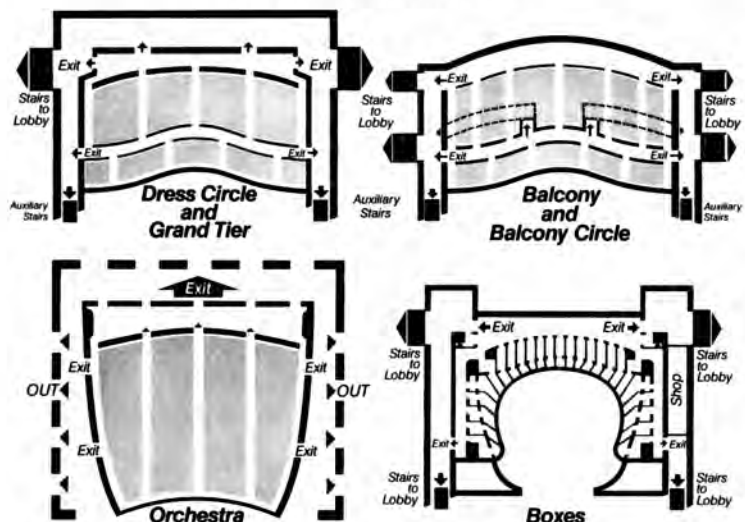
OPERA HOUSE TOURS

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

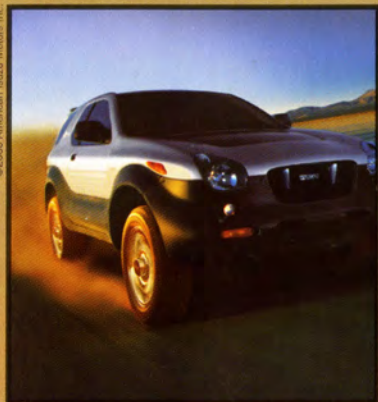
Saturday, June 3
Wednesday, June 7
Saturday, June 24

Tickets for Guild members, \$2; non-members \$5. Reservations required. Information: (510) 524-5220.

San Francisco War Memorial and Performing Arts Center War Memorial Opera House



Patrons, Attention Please! Fire Notice: Please note the nearest exit. In an emergency, WALK, do not run, to the nearest exit. Disabled patrons proceed to nearest elevator lobby and await assistance.



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