

Carmen

1991

Saturday, October 12, 1991 7:30 PM
Wednesday, October 16, 1991 7:30 PM
Sunday, October 20, 1991 1:30 PM
Wednesday, October 23, 1991 7:30 PM
Friday, October 25, 1991 7:30 PM
Saturday, October 26, 1991 7:30 PM
Tuesday, October 29, 1991 7:30 PM
Friday, November 1, 1991 7:30 PM
Thursday, November 7, 1991 7:30 PM
Sunday, November 10, 1991 1:30 PM

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San Francisco Opera Archives

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

1991 SEASON



CARMEN

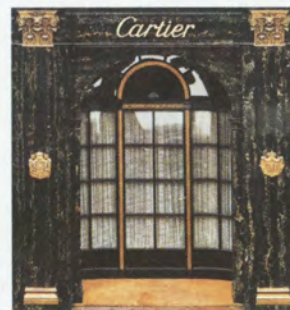
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Carmen

1991 FALL SEASON
Vol. 69, No. 9

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Sargent, John Singer, 1856-1925
Study for "Spanish Dance," ca. 1883

Oil on canvas; 28 7/16 x 19 in.

The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art,
Kansas City, Missouri

Gift of Julia and Humbert Tinsman

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FROM THE PRESIDENT AND THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

Welcome to our 69th Fall Season! This is a wonderful season our general director has planned, and aside from the excitement of new repertoire and artists that distinguish our fall schedule, we have other reasons to celebrate as well.

This year we have seen our subscription base grow—it is up nearly five percent over last year's total. That this could happen in a year when a general recession has taken its toll in almost every sector of the economy, is genuinely heartening to us. Our loyal subscribers are the bedrock on which the Company is based, and we shall continue to do all we can to keep you enthusiastic and happy.

We are also delighted to see the new leadership role being taken by various corporations in helping us to cover the staggeringly enormous costs of producing grand opera in the style to which our audiences have become accustomed. Three organizations have earned special recognition: Lexus, a division of Toyota Motor Sales U.S.A., Inc., is the Official Automotive Sponsor of San Francisco Opera; Delta Air Lines, Inc., has become the Official Airline of San Francisco Opera; and R. Kassman Pianos has contin-

ued to provide us with high-quality Kawai pianos, the Official Piano of San Francisco Opera.

Lexus, which has had an on-going sponsor relationship with San Francisco Opera since they underwrote our 1989 presentation of the Kirov Ballet, is also sponsoring this year's Opening Night performance of *La Traviata*. Our new production of Prokofiev's monumental *War and Peace* has been underwritten by a major grant from the Columbia Foundation, the Paul L. and Phyllis C. Wattis Foundation and a generous gift from Cynthia Wood. We are all tremendously excited by this major Company premiere, and are deeply grateful to these generous benefactors.

Other individuals and private foundations have also given generously: our Company premiere production of Bellini's *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* was made possible by a major gift from Herman J. Miller and Edward J. Clark; our newly refurbished *Don Giovanni* has been underwritten by a gift from the Bernard Osher Foundation; we gratefully acknowledge the L.J. Skaggs and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation for underwriting our new mounting of *Tristan*

and *Isolde*; Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Tilton for our first presentation of *Attila*; and the American premiere of Henze's *Das Verratene Meer* is taking place here through the generosity of the Paul L. and Phyllis C. Wattis Foundation. It is thanks to individuals, foundations and corporations such as these that an adventurous season of opera can be realized, and we are all in their debt.

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

Reid W. Dennis
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GENERAL DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

I am always delighted to welcome you to a new season of San Francisco Opera, but this year I am particularly so. This is the first season for which I have planned all of the elements, and I feel justifiably proud of what we have to offer you.

First of all, an opera that is especially dear to my heart — our Company premiere of Prokofiev's epic *War and Peace*, a project that for me is a dream come true. When I first accepted the appointment as San Francisco Opera's fourth general director, I immediately expressed my desire to mount this important masterpiece, and this year happily coincides with the centennial of the composer's birth. It is also the first Prokofiev opera ever presented by San Francisco Opera.

Another milestone event is a major American premiere of Hans Werner Henze's gripping music drama, *Das Verratene Meer*, based on Yukio

Mishima's acclaimed novel *The Sailor Who Fell From Grace With the Sea*. We are honored to be the first American opera company to present this major musical event, and I am even more pleased to be able to announce that the composer will be here for this auspicious premiere.

For aficionados of bel canto, we are offering our Company premiere of Bellini's ravishing setting of the Romeo and Juliet story, *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*; and our first performances ever of Verdi's *Attila* will be heartily welcomed by fans of Giuseppe Verdi as well as those of Samuel Ramey — a very large group, indeed.

Several familiar operas will be seen in productions new to San Francisco Opera: the transcendent passion of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*, and the shattering drama of *Elektra* by Richard Strauss. Mozart's masterpiece *Don Giovanni* will

be seen in a reworking of our own production, and we will bring back two of our most lavish stage spectacles, our productions of Verdi's *La Traviata* and Bizet's *Carmen*.

With so much that is new happening this fall, I don't even have room to begin listing the spectacular artists who will be making their debuts, and the favorite stars who will be returning to our stage. Perhaps even more important are the numbers of you, our devoted audience, who are returning to the War Memorial. We have an exciting season of discovery ahead of us; it is your participation that makes it all complete.

Enjoy the season!

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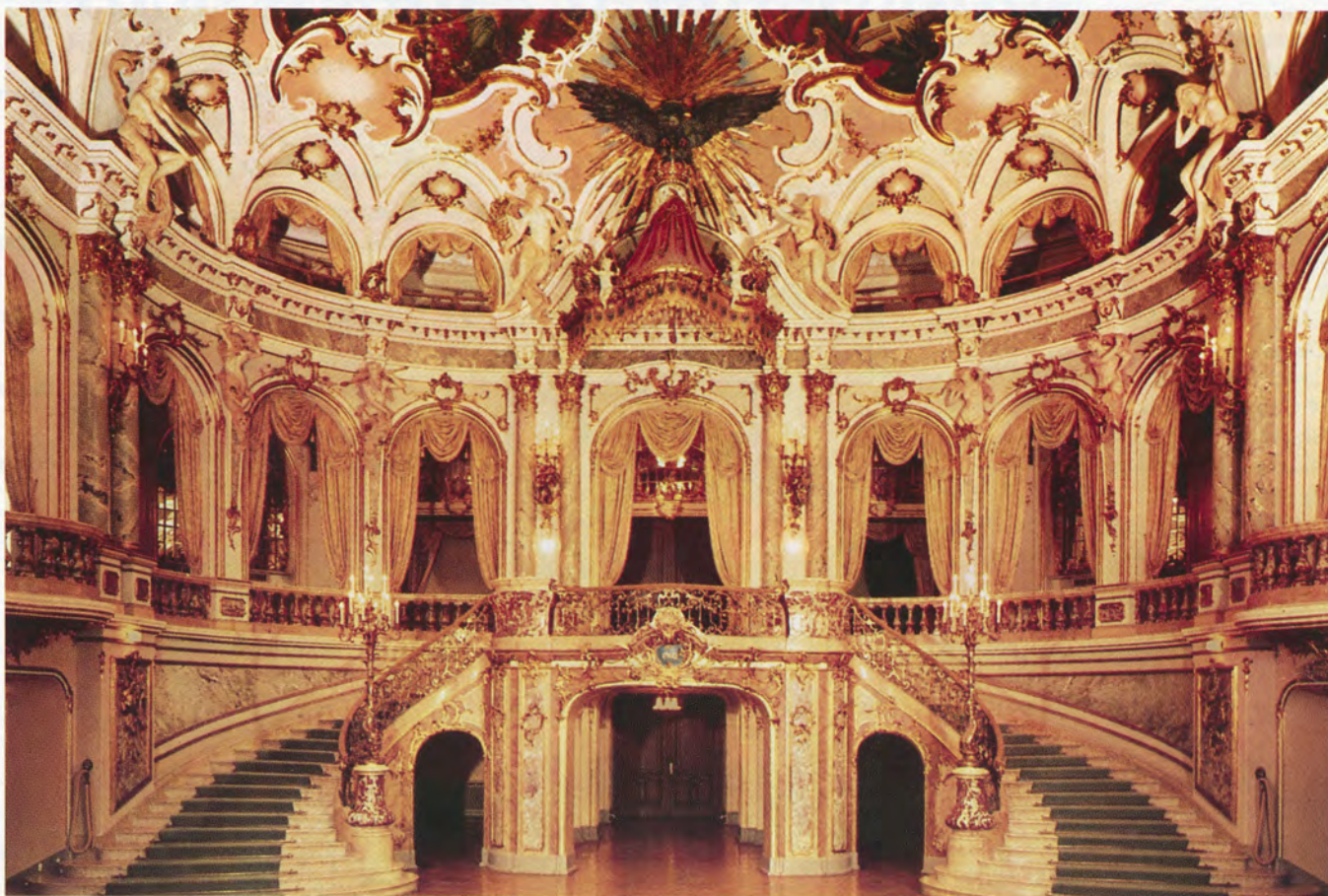
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*Production originally made possible by
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Saturday, September 7, 7:00

San Francisco Opera Premiere

War and Peace Prokofiev
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Claycomb+, Guo+, Mills+, Jepson,
Cook, Marsh, Mavrovitis; Kharitonov*,
McCauley, Plishka, Marusin*,
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Tuesday, September 10, 7:00

War and Peace Prokofiev

Wednesday, September 11, 7:30

La Traviata Verdi

Thursday September 12, 7:00

War and Peace Prokofiev

Saturday, September 14, 8:00

La Traviata Verdi

Sunday, September 15, 1:00

War and Peace Prokofiev

Wednesday, September 18, 7:30

La Traviata Verdi

Thursday, September 19, 7:30

San Francisco Opera Premiere

I Capuleti e i Montecchi Bellini

Gasdia, Ziegler*; La Scola** (Sept. 19,
21, 25), Li (Sept. 29; Oct. 5, 8, 10);
Plishka, Skinner*

Pappano*/Chazalettes*/Santicchi*/
Sund*/Arhelger

*Underwritten in part, by a generous gift
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Friday, September 20, 7:00

War and Peace Prokofiev

Saturday, September 21, 8:00

I Capuleti e i Montecchi Bellini

Sunday, September 22, 2:00

La Traviata Verdi

Wednesday, September 25, 7:30

I Capuleti e i Montecchi Bellini

Thursday, September 26, 7:00

War and Peace Prokofiev

Friday, September 27, 8:00

La Traviata Verdi



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Don Giovanni Mozart

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Ramey, Gallo**, Lopardo*, Villanueva,
Rose**

Hager*/Hampe/Feldman/Businger/
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Sunday, September 29, 1:00

I Capuleti e i Montecchi Bellini

Sunday, September 29, 8:00

La Traviata Verdi
(Violetta: Nicolesco*)

Tuesday, October 1, 8:00

Don Giovanni Mozart
(Giovanni: Quilico)

Wednesday, October 2, 7:00

War and Peace Prokofiev
(Conductor: Anisimov**)

Thursday, October 3, 7:30

Don Giovanni Mozart

Saturday, October 5, 8:00

I Capuleti e i Montecchi Bellini

Sunday, October 6, 2:00

Don Giovanni Mozart

Tuesday, October 8, 8:00

I Capuleti e i Montecchi Bellini

Thursday, October 10, 8:00

I Capuleti e i Montecchi Bellini

Friday, October 11, 8:00

Don Giovanni Mozart

Saturday, October 12, 7:30

Carmen Bizet

Kuhlmann, Racette, Fortuna+, Guo+;
McCauley, Kharitonov, Vasquez+,
Delavan, Swenson, Wood, Oropeza*
Sutej*/Ponnelle/Williams/Ponnelle/
Juerke/Munn

*Production originally made possible by the
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Sunday, October 13, 2:00

Don Giovanni Mozart

Tuesday, October 15, 8:00

Don Giovanni Mozart

Wednesday, October 16, 7:30

Carmen Bizet

Saturday, October 19, 8:00

Don Giovanni Mozart

Sunday, October 20, 1:30

Carmen Bizet

Monday, October 21, 7:00

Tristan und Isolde Wagner

Schnaut**, Schwarz; Johns, Muff,
Welker*, De Haan, Schade*, Li
Schneider/Mansouri/Pagano/Munn

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Wednesday, October 23, 7:30 Carmen	Bizet	Wednesday, November 13, 8:00 Das Verratene Meer	Henze	Friday, November 29, 8:00 La Traviata	Verdi
Thursday, October 24, 7:00 Tristan und Isolde	Wagner	Saturday, November 16, 8:00 Elektra	Strauss	(Same cast as November 25)	
Friday, October 25, 7:30 Carmen	Bizet	Jones, Secunde*, Dernes, Carla Cook, Guo+, Jepson, Catherine Cook+, Randell, Racette, Fortuna+, Mavrovitis; Pederson, King, Wood, McNeil, Graber Thielemann**/Serban*/Kokkos*/Munn		Saturday, November 30, 8:00 Attila	Verdi
(Carmen: Graves*; Don José: Ordoñez*)				Sunday, December 1, 2:00 Elektra	Strauss
Saturday, October 26, 7:30 Carmen	Bizet	<i>Original production from Grand Théâtre de Genève.</i>		(Orest: Fox)	
Kuhlmann, Haymon*, Claycomb+, Guo+, McCauley, Hale, Vasquez+, Delavan, Swenson, Wood, Oropeza Sutej/Ponnelle/Williams/Ponnelle/Juerke/Munn		Sunday, November 17, 2:00 Das Verratene Meer	Henze	Tuesday, December 3, 8:00 Attila	Verdi
Sunday, October 27, 1:00 Tristan und Isolde	Wagner	Wednesday, November 20, 7:30 Das Verratene Meer	Henze	Wednesday, December 4, 7:30 Elektra	Strauss
Tuesday, October 29, 7:30 Carmen	Bizet	Thursday, November 21, 7:30 <i>San Francisco Opera Premiere</i>		(Orest: Fox)	
(Same cast as October 25)		Attila	Verdi	Thursday, December 5, 7:30 La Traviata	Verdi
Wednesday, October 30, 7:00 Tristan und Isolde	Wagner	Connell; Ramey, Chernov* (Nov. 21, 24), May* (Nov. 27, 30; Dec. 3, 6, 8), Ordoñez, Estep, Skinner Ferro*/Mansouri/Alley*/Lee/Peterson*/Arhelger		(Same cast as November 25)	
Friday, November 1, 7:30 Carmen	Bizet	<i>Production from New York City Opera. Sponsored, in part, by a generous gift from Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Tilton.</i>		Friday, December 6, 8:00 Attila	Verdi
(Same cast as October 25)		Friday, November 22, 8:00 Elektra	Strauss	Saturday, December 7, 7:30 Elektra	Strauss
Saturday, November 2, 7:00 Tristan und Isolde	Wagner	Saturday, November 23, 8:00 Das Verratene Meer	Henze	(Orest: Fox)	
Tuesday, November 5, 7:00 Tristan und Isolde	Wagner	Sunday, November 24, 2:00 Attila	Verdi	Sunday, December 8, 2:00 Attila	Verdi
Thursday, November 7, 7:30 Carmen	Bizet	Monday, November 25, 7:30 La Traviata	Verdi		
(Same cast as October 26)		Patterson, Guo+, Petersen; Lopez-Yañez, Laperrière, Skinner, Delavan, Wood, Swenson, McNeil Robertson/Copley/Conklin/Walker/Munn		**United States opera debut *San Francisco Opera debut +1991 Adler Fellow	
Friday, November 8, 8:00 <i>United States Premiere</i> Das Verratene Meer	Henze	Tuesday, November 26, 8:00 Elektra	Strauss	All performances are in the original language with English Supertitles.	
Putnam; Fox, Estep, Villanueva, Asawa*, Sarris*, Graber+, McNeil Stenz**/Alden*/Steinberg*/Munn		Wednesday, November 27, 7:30 Attila	Verdi	Repertoire, casts and dates subject to change.	
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Saturday, November 9, 7:00 Tristan und Isolde	Wagner				
Sunday, November 10, 1:30 Carmen	Bizet				
(Same cast as October 26)					



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CARMEN- Tragedy and Triumph

By JOHN ARDOIN



SCHERL

With the distance of more than a century, it is still puzzling as to why the fire of George Bizet's *Carmen* initially failed to ignite. But fail it did. After six months of tiring and frequently stormy rehearsals the premiere was a howling fiasco. To understand this better, we have to consider the mores of the theater-going public of his day, or at least that of the public which habitually frequented the Paris Opéra-Comique, where *Carmen* was first played. It was essentially a family theater, where betrothals were arranged and where social veneer took precedent over musical matters. The patrons of

the Comique wanted only to be entertained, not moved or challenged. It was a shock for them to be unexpectedly confronted with a vibrant, amoral Gypsy who seduces a simple soldier and then discards him for a more attractive lover.

John Ardoin is music critic of The Dallas Morning News and author of the newly revised, compact disc edition of The Callas Legacy being published this fall by Charles Scribner's Sons of New York, and author of the soon-to-be-published Furtwängler, a study of the art of this influential German conductor.

That was bad enough for the middle-class sensibilities of the day, but along with it there was no sense of remorse on the part of Bizet's heroine, only steely defiance. Perhaps even worse was the unvarnished portrait Bizet presented of the disintegration and degradation of Don José, the soldier who risked dishonor for Carmen's love. The final straw, of course, was the violent stabbing of Carmen by José. Death, while not alien to the Comique's stage, was usually presented in a poetic way, a sort of Romeo-and-Juliet happening that was geared to bring tears to the eye and envelop a listener in a misty glow.

So much for *Carmen's* first audience. What of the press? It did little to lend respect or credibility to the pronouncements of music critics then or later. *Carmen* was judged by one writer as "a slavish imitation of Wagner, without form or melody, obscure and pretentious." To another, the opera was "an inferno of ludicrous and boring corruption, with only one decent and sympathetic character—Micaëla." And a further member of the press took the curious tack that the opera lagged behind the times! That it was

(Opposite page) William Johns as Don José, Victoria Vergara in the title role of San Francisco Opera's 1983 *Carmen*.

(Below) Hanna Schwarz and Plácido Domingo in the final scene of the Company's 1981 presentation of the Bizet opera.



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merely "an insipid, conventional work in the antiquated style of Auber." Yet the historic significance of *Carmen*—which Brahms declared to be "the perfect opera," and whose score he kept on his piano—is bound up in those very qualities that so offended at its premiere.

Bizet brought to opera a new realism. He was breaking down old barriers that had been erected between grand opera and *opera comique*, a high-class form of operetta. Of course, iconoclasm is no assurance of quality; ultimately it is the flash, excitement and originality of Bizet's music that defines *Carmen's* greatness. The alluring tunes he fashioned reflect precisely the emotions of the opera's characters; his orchestrations are brilliant and crystalline and conjure up an atmosphere of reality and of Spain (didn't someone once remark that the best "Spanish" music was written by Frenchmen?).

But, as Spanish as *Carmen* is, it is also possessed of an amazing universality. No opera has proved to be more adaptable to other sensibilities or inspired more offshoots or appeared in more varied guises than has *Carmen*. Some of the most notable forms it has taken are Eduard Strauss' "Carmen" quadrille, a dance piece written to capitalize on the work's popularity at the time of its Viennese premiere; Pablo Sarasate's "Carmen" Fantasy for violin and orchestra; Ferruccio Busoni's Sonatina No. 6 for Piano, a "chamber-fantasy" on music from *Carmen*; two orchestral suites that draw on the opera's instrumental and vocal highlights; and a bravura piano arrangement of the Gypsy Dance devised and popularized by pianist Vladimir Horowitz.

In 1929, a sound film of *Carmen* called *Gypsy Blood* was made with soprano Marguerite Namara; Billy Rose's *Carmen Jones*, an all-black version of the opera was produced on Broadway and then filmed in 1954 by Otto Preminger with a young Marilyn Horne dubbing the singing voice for its Carmen, Dorothy Dandridge; director Peter Brook made an acclaimed adaptation of *Carmen* as *La Tragédie de Carmen*, an eighty-minute, one-act stage work with the opera's music rescored and reordered; and Roland Petit created a "Carmen" ballet for Zizi Jeanmaire, while another was fashioned by Alberto Alonso for ballerina Maya Plisetskaya, the latter to a freely adapted version of the score for strings and per-

cussion by Plisetskaya's husband Rodion Shchedrin.

More recently, composer John Corigliano has made a phonographic fantasy on music from the opera titled "The Naked Carmen"; there was a movie version with Julia Migenes and Plácido Domingo; and, finally, we have Carlos Saura's remarkable dance film starring flamenco dancer Antonio Gades that used Regina Resnik's recording of the opera. A piece of music has to be enormously sturdy and resistant to survive this many free-wheeling adaptations. I might point out that *Aida*, for example, didn't make it as a piano fantasy, a Broadway show or a film; all were tried, none succeeded. One

Ninon Vallin and Mario Chamlee as *Carmen* and Don José at the San Francisco Opera in 1934.



MORTON

would have thought that *Aida* was as equally indestructible, but it turned out to be less universal and flexible.

What the Parisian press destroyed was not the opera but the confidence of an extremely sensitive man. Pierre Berton, a well-known actor and eventually librettist of Ruggero Leoncavallo's *Zazà* met Bizet one day in the street shortly after the opera's premiere, and expressed his disgust with the stupid notices *Carmen* had received. Bizet listened in stony silence and then muttered, "Perhaps they are

right," and he turned and fled. Where could he turn? He had, after all, confessed to Saint-Saëns, "I am helpless without the stage."

It was a sad measure of how far *Carmen*'s composer had come from his early promise as a child prodigy. He was born with absolute pitch and much was expected of him. Certainly he made a superb start (first prizes at the Paris Conservatory in piano, organ, composition and solfège, then a Prix de Rome at the age of nineteen). From the beginning, as his airy *Symphony in C* testifies, he had elevated taste and a refined, exceptional gift for melody. "I have the courage to prefer Raphael to Michelangelo," he wrote, "Mozart to Beethoven, Rossini to Meyerbeer."

When he returned from Rome, surprisingly enough, his career did not develop along predictable, successful lines. What he heard and chose to write was out of step with the times right from the beginning. He must have felt like an alien, trapped on the one side by the heroics of Berlioz and on the other by the confessions of Gounod and Massenet. By comparison, his music was too exotic in a work like *The Pearl Fishers*, his second best-known work for the stage, and too tough in his masterpiece, *Carmen*.

The bourgeois audience of his time wanted its theater, be it spoken or sung, to idealize life. It was tired of historic and mythological figures and their trappings in grand opera as practiced by Meyerbeer. Sentiment, or what has been termed "romantic naturalism," was the thing. With Gounod, Massenet and their contemporary Ambroise Thomas, opera had become, with few exceptions, soap opera, despite the undeniable charm with which it was turned out. Its perfume, sometimes subtle, sometimes overwhelming, was not for Bizet, and he paid dearly for pursuing a different, less compromising course.

With its honesty of expression, lack of stylization and forceful originality, it is hardly surprising that *Carmen* was initially a disaster. History in turn has linked its failure to Bizet's premature death the same year (1875), in fact, just three months after *Carmen*'s premiere. Debussy later labeled this the greatest tragedy that ever befell French music. But at least one important person—the great Englishman of musical letters, Ernest Newman—has refused to accept the idea

Bruna Castagna and Charles Kullman
in the fourth act of S.F. Opera's
1936 *Carmen*.



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that Bizet's demise was in any way linked to *Carmen's* failure. It was his assertion that "the legend that Bizet's death was the result of a broken heart over his failure must be dismissed as just one more delusion of the sentimental musical biographer."

Yet, one wonders if in this instance Bizet's biographers had not hit the nail on the head. Ernest Guiraud, the man who later provided sung recitatives for *Carmen's* original spoken dialogue, walked with the composer long into the night after *Carmen's* first performance

Eleanor Steber was Micaëla; George Cehanovsky, Moralès, at San Francisco Opera's 1945 performances of Carmen.



STROHMEYER

and wrote that Bizet poured out to him the bitterness and frustration he had experienced because of the hostility of the press and the public to his music. Worse was still to come, however. In the days ahead, Bizet was treated with growing discourtesy at the Comique. "From the director to the concierge, everyone cold-shouldered Bizet," Vincent d'Indy reported.

All of this had a marked effect. Three weeks after the premiere, a visitor in Bizet's home was struck by the look of suffering on the composer's face and was taken aback when he slammed his fist on his desk exclaiming, "I've had enough of writing music for three or four of my friends who thumb their noses at me behind my back! I now see what the public wants. Very well then, I'll give them what they want." But, little by little, this formerly good-natured man seemed to become drained of vitality and prone to deep depressions. He was overcome by lethargy and began to isolate himself more and more. It was obvious to everyone that he had lost the will to work. "I must get away," he wrote to a friend. "The air of Paris is poisoning me."

On May 28, he left for his country home five miles south of the city. He was suffering at the time from acute muscular rheumatism. The next day, on a sudden impulse, he plunged into the cold Seine River and swam until exhausted. Was this a desperate act of a man who no longer cared what happened to him, or did he, because of his belief in therapeutic effects of cold water, think that this gesture might restore his flagging energy?

Whatever his reason, the consequences came swiftly. During the night, racked with pain, he lost consciousness, and he suffered several heart attacks. For some reason, his doctor seemed unperturbed (the last, stupid, defeating gesture Bizet would be forced to endure). Ironically, the next day a letter arrived from the Vienna Opera. The company had reached a decision to mount *Carmen*, a production for which Guiraud would provide the recitatives that became standard in *Carmen* for a long time and which helped to rehabilitate the opera and lead to its worldwide acceptance. Bizet had only enough strength left to sign the agreement with Vienna. In the early hours of June 3, he died. His last words, almost inaudibly spoken were, "This is the sweat of death. How are you going to tell my

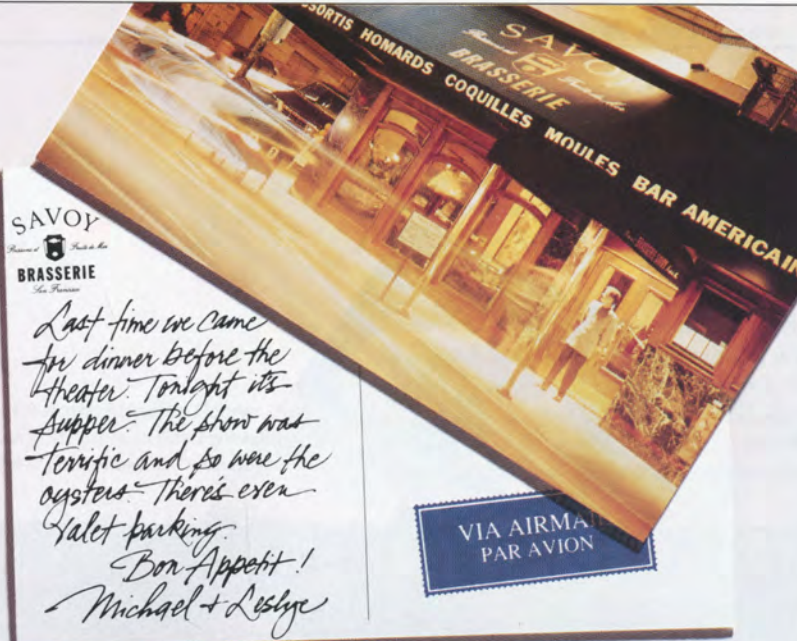
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CARMEN—TRAGEDY AND TRIUMPH

poor father?"

At approximately the moment Bizet lost consciousness, according to Bizet's biographer Mina Curtiss, the curtain fell on the last act of the thirty-third performance of *Carmen*. Célestine Galli-Marié, who created the role of Carmen, had arrived at the theater "in a state of indescribable hyper-excitement and enervation; before going onstage ... she had great difficulty in restraining her tears (but) ... apparently managed to collect herself sufficiently to go through the first two acts without difficulty.

"But in the third act, when Carmen foresees her own death in the card trio, Galli-Marié's heart beat, she said, as though it would break, and she seemed to feel a threatening chill in the air. She mustered enough self-control to finish the scene and then fainted in the wings. After she had been revived, when other cast members tried to calm and reassure her, she insisted it was not for herself she feared." In a matter of hours Bizet was dead. To Camille Saint-Saëns, Bizet's tragic death was caused by "guilty men," who went out of their way to persecute Bizet and to reject a work that was to become the glory of French opera.

A reappraisal of *Carmen* came quickly on the heels of its triumph in Vienna. Next, Brussels, St. Petersburg, New York and London all produced the opera successfully. In a letter to his patroness Nadezhda von Meck, Tchaikovsky wrote: "*Carmen* is a masterpiece in every sense of the word; that is to say one of those rare creations which expresses the efforts of a whole musical epoch ... I am convinced that in ten years *Carmen* will be the most popular opera in the whole world."

Praise was also heaped on *Carmen* from non-musical quarters. German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche wrote that "Bizet's music seems to me perfect. It comes forward lightly, gracefully, stylishly. It is loveable, it does not sweat ... Have more painful, more tragic accents ever been heard on the stage? And how are they obtained? Without counterfeiting of any kind! ... I become a better man when Bizet speaks to me. Also a better musician, a better listener. With Bizet's work, one bids farewell to the damp north and to all the fog of the Wagnerian ideal ...

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S.F. PALM GALLERY FEATURES EXHIBITION ON EARLY CALIFORNIA OPERA *FAY-YEN-FAH*

What was the first grand opera written by Americans to be produced outside this country? What American opera stopped traffic in San Francisco in 1926? What 1920s Californian was the first American dancer to partner Anna Pavlova? What flamboyant Berkeley graduate played opposite Greta Garbo and made one of the first movies set in the ballet world?

The answers to these questions will be found in "Theatrical Splendor," an exhibition documenting a little-known but fascinating chapter in California's musical history. Presented by the San Francisco Performing Arts Library & Museum (SF PALM), the display chronicles the creation of the opera *Fay-Yen-Fah*, and the life and work of Hubert Julian Stowitts (1892-1953), who designed the original sets and costumes.

Fay-Yen-Fah was a grand opera set in legendary China, with music by California composer Joseph Redding and libretto by Templeton Crocker, grandson of California railroad and banking magnate Charles Crocker. The opera, which began life in 1917 as a Bohemian Club presentation called *The Land of Happiness*, was one of the very first West Coast operas, and was indeed touted as the earliest opera composed and written by Americans. Choreographed by a very young George Balanchine, and conducted by Victor de Sabata, the opera had its premiere in Monte Carlo in 1925, and was revived there in 1932. The American premiere took place in San Francisco on January 11, 1926 at the Columbia Theater, conducted by Gaetano Merola, founder of the San Francisco Opera.

The exhibition, featuring a rarely-seen portfolio of 34 diachromie lithographs, depicting the sumptuous costume designs commissioned by Crocker and created by Hubert Julian Stowitts, runs from September 20 to January 3rd at the SF PALM Gallery, 399 Grove Street, San Francisco. Gallery hours are Monday and Friday, noon-5 p.m. and Tuesday through Thursday, noon-6 p.m. Saturday hours will be instituted in early October; visitors may call for complete information.

There will be a lecture by Guest Curator Anne Holliday on "The Life and Adventures of Hubert Julian Stowitts," on Tuesday, October 22, at 6:00 p.m. at SF PALM. For further information call (415) 255-4800.

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CARMEN—TRAGEDY AND TRIUMPH

sudden, without reprieve. I envy Bizet for having had the courage of this sensitive-ness, the southern, tawny, sunburned sensitiveness that hitherto in the cultured music of Europe has found no means of expression." In part, he was echoing Bizet's words expressed in a letter of 1865 to his friend Edmond Galabert: "Long live the sun and love!" If ever an opera had a motto, this was one.

In 1883, *Carmen* finally returned to the stage of the Comique. By the end of that year it had received its one hundredth performance in Paris alone, and by 1904 the theater where *Carmen* failed had given the work one thousand times. In 1938, as the centenary of Bizet's birth was being celebrated throughout the world, *Carmen* was played for the 2,271st time at the Comique. Eventually it moved to the stage of the Palais Garnier, long the seat of the French operatic life. By then, Tchaikovsky's prediction had been richly fulfilled.



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Carmen's appeal was best summed up by Newman when he wrote, "It is the most Mozartean opera since Mozart, the one in which enchanting musical invention goes hand-in-hand, almost without a break, with dramatic veracity and psychological characterization and with the maximum of speed and grace and the minimum of visual effort." As much as any nineteenth-century opera, *Carmen* provided a portal to the twentieth century. The work paved the way for a new realism that found its principal advocates not in France but in the South—in Italy. With Bizet, the ground was sown for Puccini. English critic Martin Cooper has even said that "If Violetta opened the door to Massenet's *Manon*, *Carmen* prepared the way for Berg's *Lulu*." After *Carmen* and its eventual far-flung successes, there could be no easy retreat to a more superficial way of writing and listening to opera. □



JONES



JEANETTE

Carmen at the San Francisco Opera in the 1960s:

(Left) Jean Madeira in the title role in 1960;

(Above) Ettore Bastianini as Escamillo on tour in Los Angeles in 1962;

(Right) Regina Resnik as Carmen in 1964.

ROBERT WATT MILLER SAN FRANCISCO OPERA ARCHIVE

By ELIZABETH ZIMMER

During the summer of 1991, the San Francisco Opera and the San Francisco Performing Arts Library & Museum came to an agreement whereby SF PALM became the official repository and archive of the San Francisco Opera, the San Francisco Opera Center, and their affiliate programs. Margaret Norton, Executive Director of the San Francisco Performing Arts Library & Museum, responded to questions about this project, to be called The Robert Watt Miller San Francisco Opera Archive.

MN: When I first came to PALM in 1988, I wanted very much to see if it would be possible to add the San Francisco Opera to those organizations for whom we serve as an archive. I had an eighteen-year association with the San Francisco Opera, and I knew from firsthand experience that there had been no real steps taken to preserve the company's history, an honorable and important history in this country and certainly in this city. The Opera's new general director, Lotfi Mansouri, had just come from a company which had a fully-functioning archive, and was equally interested in the project. We agreed to seek the funding that would allow us to create a complete San Francisco Opera archive.

EZ: Has special support been found?

MN: Thanks to funding from members of the Robert Watt Miller family, we will be able to begin this important undertaking. It seems particularly fitting, as Robert Watt Miller was for many years the President of the San Francisco Opera Association, and very much the personification of opera here. The collection will be named the Robert Watt Miller San Francisco Opera Archive.

EZ: What's in the archives?

MN: The history of a company which presented the debuts of many of the major opera artists—the American debuts of



Birgit Nilsson, Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, and Leontyne Price, to name only a very few. A company that has done many American premieres, that instituted a training program which has been duplicated around the country and around the world, and has given birth to many of the top performers in the opera world today. SFO has never systematically documented its history.

EZ: Is it all paper, or are there other things as well?

MN: Well, we're not sure. We have a great deal of material, and there is a fair amount of material which has been given to SF PALM by the Opera over the years, much of which is still in off-site storage that has to be sorted through. We understand that the Opera has boxes of documents in the basement, in the attic, in the warehouse. We don't really know what's in them. The first

thing we need to do is find out what we have, and in so doing, find out what we don't have, and then try to fill in the holes, contacting people throughout the city who have been involved with the company over the years and who may be able to fill some of those gaps. We'll take a very systematic approach and begin to put together a well-documented history of the San Francisco Opera in time for its seventy-fifth anniversary (1998).

EZ: This material is now scattered around San Francisco?

MN: The Opera has several storage areas, not only all over

Elizabeth Zimmer, an arts writer newly arrived in San Francisco, recently joined the staff at the San Francisco Performing Arts Library and Museum.

the Opera House, but also in outlying warehouses. And we have, in the course of this project, tried to identify where some of these things are. Plus, as I said, we have a number of things in PALM's storage warehouse that need to be gone through.

We're trying to pull all these pieces together. We have a nearly full collection of Opera programs, and we have several shelves full of other materials that have been given to us by individuals over the years, and some costumes. We have some photographs.

EZ: Who are the people likely to be using this material?

MN: Well, certainly the staff of the Opera. As with so many companies these days, staff members don't stay twenty, thirty, forty years the way they used to. Until recently the Opera has had a number of people on staff who were "walking archives." That's less true these days, as it is with all institutions.

Both the Opera and PALM get letters from people all over the world—people writing books about singers, wanting to know what performances they did here, people writing a history of an opera, where it was premiered and who sang it—we can fill all that in. We assure that San Francisco's contribution to all this will go into the record and be known, instead of being left out. So many histories of the arts are written from New York, and often San Francisco's role has been neglected.

EZ: Is the company in a situation where it is reprising operas that it did long ago? Are the archives helpful in that situation?

MN: No, not so much for that, because if they're fairly recent productions, the Opera has the technical records of where the

scenery went, and so forth. If they're very old productions, the records probably don't exist anymore. The archives are really the record of what the company has done: who sang what, where, when, and why it was important. We plan to add oral

interviews with people who can flesh out those statistics with the behind-the-scenes story, or the untold story, or the story that you wish had been told.

EZ: Will the collection include either audio or video tape recordings?

MN: Yes. The Opera broadcast performances live on radio for several seasons, and has also done several television productions that have aired nationally. We hope these will be in the archive. There are, of course, union agreements to be considered, and we will honor any required restrictions on the use of these recordings.

EZ: Will the general public be able to have access to the Opera's archive?

MN: Yes. The public is welcome. If there's a project or a paper they're doing, or if someone in the media is writing something on the Opera, we will work with them to provide the appropriate materials and

information. If the Opera wishes to restrict certain files from public use, we will honor their wishes.

EZ: How do people go about using the materials?

MN: The Opera Archive, like the rest of our collection, is always available to the public. We do ask people to make an appointment, so that our librarians can prepare the material. It's not an open stack situation, so we do need to arrange research visits in advance, but we certainly welcome members of the public.



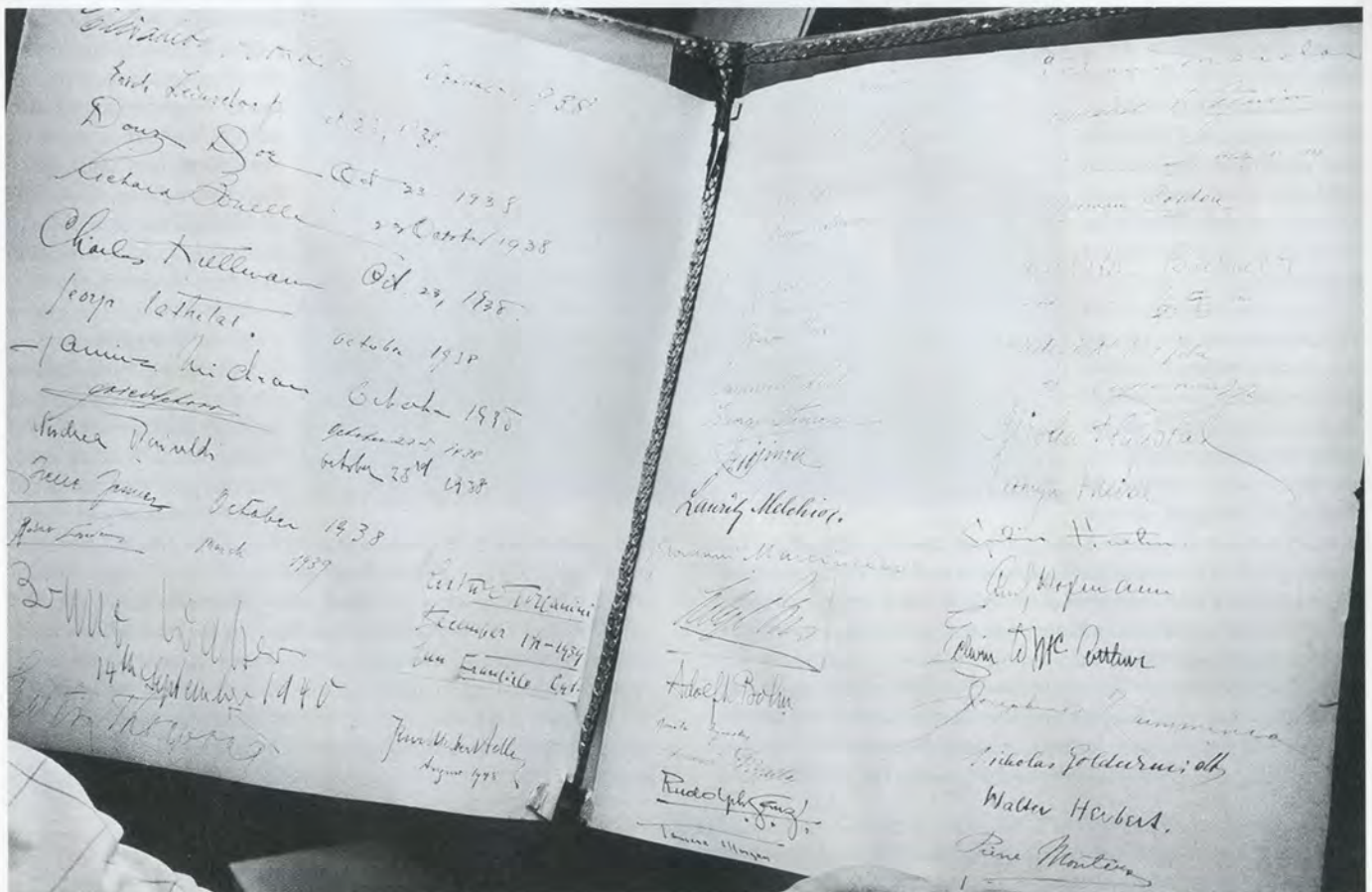
(Opposite page) Margaret Norton in the archives, checking on the Kurt Herbert Adler personal photo collection.

(Above) S.F. PALM's chronological files, created by Russell Hartley, documenting all aspects of the performing arts in San Francisco since 1849. Volumes include primarily newspaper clippings giving performance information, also original and copied programs, as well as reviews.

MN: Most definitely. The San Francisco Ballet and the San Francisco Symphony are the two major ones, and also the Stern

We also hope that by the end of 1992 the materials in our catalog will be included on a national database, so that people anywhere in the United States who are looking for information in connection with the San Francisco Opera or any of the other companies in our collection will be able to find it through our catalog. It will make the Opera's whole history available nation-

MN: You're looking at shelving, you're looking at materials, you're looking at people to organize them, at library assistants and people who find the answers to the questions as they come in. Some of these searches can take hours, and some of them take ten minutes.



EZ: Who picks up the tab for all of this?

MN: The companies whose materials we hold pay us a nominal fee. Their resources are obviously stretched, as ours are. The fee doesn't begin to cover what it costs to do it, but fortunately there are a number of foundations in the community who believe in what we're trying to do and have been very supportive of SF PALM. I think the longer we do this, and the more we're able to provide this service and document how many people use it, the more support will become available. We're very hopeful that individuals who believe in these arts organizations and who have the means will also add their support.

We hope, in time, to establish endowment funds which will help provide ongoing resources to underwrite the cost of maintaining the archives. The quantities of materials can be enormous. The San Francisco Symphony's collection is huge, as is that of the San Francisco Ballet, which was very much the foundation of this collection, because it was Russell Hartley, working with the San Francisco Ballet, who simply rescued things when he would find them on their way out to the trash. It's only because of his obsession with and love for these materials that the city has these records. Ever since the Archives of the Performing Arts first moved into an accessible place, things have come steadily

through the door. We have been given boxes of materials, and actual collections, the Lew Christensen Collection for instance, the Kirsten Flagstad Collection ...

EZ: But the Opera collection is fairly unusual because of the accompanying gift to endow the care of it.

MN: The Miller family's gift does not provide an ongoing "endowment" of the Opera's collection. Rather, the funds will go toward establishing the Opera's archives. This is the first company archive that we have raised money to establish, because it's simply no longer possible for us to function otherwise. There must be some initial funding to put these pieces together.

We're delighted to take on this responsibility and provide the associated services and information. We hope that there are other organizations in town for whom we can provide the same service, such as the American Conservatory Theater. We hope eventually to find a similar funder who will make it possible to rescue their archives out of their basement, where I have seen them piled up and getting very dusty.

EZ: In a building that's been damaged by the earthquake ...

MN: Well, fortunately not in that building; in an adjacent building, but the materials are badly in need of attention.

EZ: Why is it important to PALM to have these archives? We certainly know why it's important to the Opera.

MN: First of all, we get so many questions about the Opera, and the Opera is obviously one of the major institutions in this town. S.F. Opera refers many questions to us, and we get questions from people all over the world because of our name and what we are. We want to be able to give the answers.

We know there is material around that doesn't need to be kept at all; we know there is material that must be protected. It's important for San Francisco, and it's important for the company, and it's important for us because it's what we do. These archives document the company's history. As our work is carried out, the community will have better access to that history. □

(Opposite page) A group of autographs, collected in the Opera House, and showing, among others, signatures of Friedrich Schorr, Bruno Walter, Kerstin Thorborg, Arturo Toscanini, Kurt Herbert Adler, Bruna Castagna, Alexander Fried, Emanuel List, Ezio Pinza, Lauritz Melchior, Giovanni Martinelli, Lily Pons, Adolph Bolm, Romola Nijinski, Gaetano Merola, Kirsten Flagstad and Walter Herbert.

(Left) Library assistant Kirsten Tanaka with some of the nearly 6,000 volumes of performing arts-related books.



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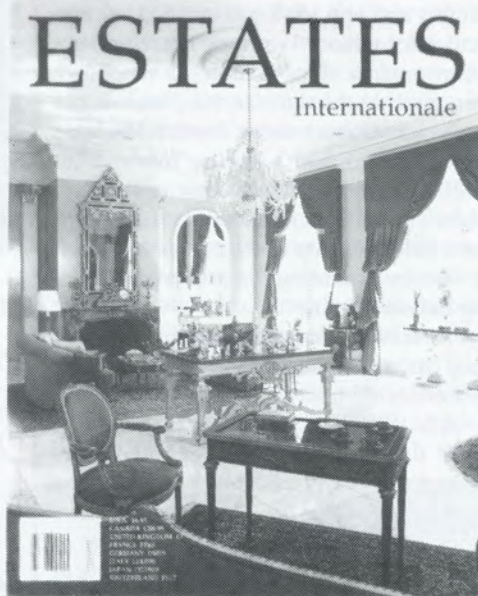
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KATHLEEN KUHLMANN

Mezzo-soprano **Kathleen Kuhlmann**, who made her San Francisco Opera debut in the summer of 1982 as Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, and who was seen here in 1989 as Alcina in *Orlando Furioso*, sings the title role of *Carmen*. Born in San Francisco, she studied at the Chicago Lyric Opera School, where, in a park performance, she sang her first *Carmen*, a role which she has also sung in Sydney, Montreal, Tel Aviv, Cologne, Hamburg, Naples, Vienna and, most recently, in a new production at the Royal Opera Covent Garden. She has sung numerous roles at the Cologne Opera since her 1980 debut, including Charlotte in *Werther*, the title role of *La Cenerentola*, Orfeo in Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice*, and Rosina. Other European credits include Rosina, and Ino/Juno in Handel's *Semele* at Covent Garden; Rosina at the Vienna State Opera, in Bilbao, Lucca and Hamburg; Arsace in *Semiramide* in Parma, Naples, Bilbao, Vienna, Bonn, Toulouse and Munich; *La Cenerentola* at the Glyndebourne Festival and in Stuttgart; Bradamante in Handel's *Alcina* in Geneva and Paris; and the role of Charlotte throughout Germany, most recently in a new Harry Kupfer production at the Hamburg State Opera. Appearances in the U.S. include her Metropolitan Opera debut in 1989 as Charlotte, Rosina at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, and Faliero in Rossini's *Bianca e Faliero* at Miami Opera. As concert soloist, she has sung the Mozart Requiem with the English Chamber Orchestra, *Roméo et Juliette* for Radio France, *Le Nozze di Teti e di Peleo* for the Rossini Festival, Mozart's *Coronation Mass* with The Philharmonia, Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius* in Dublin and London, and has appeared numerous times at the BBC Proms. During the Rossini bicentennial next year, Miss Kuhlmann will sing the title role of *La Cenerentola* in Dresden; Isabella in a new production of *L'Italiana in Algeri* in Berlin; Malcolm in *La Donna del Lago* at Amsterdam's Concertgebouw; the *Stabat Mater* in Duisburg; and will take part in two Rossini Gala concerts which will be televised world-wide from the Kennedy Center. Additional future en-



DENYCE GRAVES

gagements include *Alcina* at Covent Garden, Ottavia in *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria* in Cologne and at the Schwetzingen Festival, and *Carmen* in Cologne, Barcelona and Parma.

Mezzo-soprano **Denyce Graves** makes her San Francisco Opera debut in the title role of *Carmen*, a part which she sang to great acclaim in her first appearance at the Minnesota Opera earlier this year. A native of Washington, D.C., she received her education at the Oberlin College-Conservatory of Music and at the New England Conservatory. As a member of the Houston Grand Opera Studio from 1988-90, she appeared with the parent company as Emilia in *Otello*, Sister Mathilde in *Dialogues of the Carmelites*, Mercédès in *Carmen*, Hansel in *Hansel and Gretel*, and Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly*. The latter role also served as her debut with Opera Omaha. Additional operatic appearances that season included Mallika in *Lakmé* with Washington Concert Opera, as well as the Sorceress in *Dido and Aeneas*, Tisbe in *La Cenerentola* and Marcellina in *Le Nozze di Figaro* at Wolf Trap Opera. Engagements during the 1990-91 season included her first appearance with the Washington Opera as Maddalena in *Rigoletto*, a debut at the Spoleto Festival U.S.A. as Giulietta in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, and the role of Julie in concert performances of *Show Boat* for Opera Grand Rapids. In honor of Martin Feinstein's 10th anniversary as general director at the Washington Opera, she sang the final scene from *Carmen* with Plácido Domingo. She most recently made her debut at the Opéra de Metz as Dulcinée in *Don Quichotte*. Upcoming operatic engagements include Lola in *Cavalleria Rusticana* at the Washington Opera, debuts at the Vienna State Opera, Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, Genoa Opera and the Grand Théâtre de Genève in the title role of *Carmen*, and her first appearance at the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie in Brussels as Smeton in *Anna Bolena*. A popular concert soloist, she has appeared with numerous ensembles including the Houston Symphony and Choral Arts Society of Wash-



PATRICIA RACETTE

ington, D.C. Miss Graves has won a number of significant vocal awards, including the Grand Prize in the 1990 Concours de Chant de Paris, the Grand Prix Lyrique in the 1991 Monte Carlo Vocal Competition, and a Jacobson Study Grant from the Richard Tucker Music Foundation. She was invited by the Tucker Foundation to take part in the 1990 Gala Concert which was broadcast nationally on the PBS Great Performances series. She was most recently honored earlier this year as the recipient of the 1991 Marian Anderson Award.

Soprano **Patricia Racette** appears this season as Dunyasha in *War and Peace*, Micaëla in *Carmen*, and the Fifth Maidservant in *Elektra*. A 1989-90 Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, she made her Company debut in 1989 as Mistress Ford in the family performance of *Falstaff*, and also performed in *Aida*, *Idomeneo* and *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. She appeared as Anastasio in the Opera Center's 1989 production of Handel's *Giustino*, and was seen last summer as Freia in *Das Rheingold* and Helmwig in *Die Walküre* in SFO's Ring cycle. Last fall she appeared here as Rosalinda in the family performance of *Die Fledermaus*, and was heard this summer as the First Lady in *The Magic Flute*. A native of New Hampshire, she received a Bachelor of Music degree in Voice from North Texas State University, where she sang Diana in *Orpheus in the Underworld*, also appearing in the title role of Carlisle Floyd's *Susannah* at the Metro Opera Works in Fort Worth. Miss Racette was a National Finalist in the 1988 Metropolitan Opera National Auditions, first place winner in the New York region of the 1988 San Francisco Opera Auditions, and received the Poetz Memorial Award at the 1988 Grand Finals. She recently appeared as Mimì in *La Bohème* and as Micaëla with Marin Opera, and as Nedda in *Pagliacci* at Miami Opera. Next year, Miss Racette will portray the three heroines in *The Tales of Hoffmann* for Boston Lyric Opera.



CYNTHIA HAYMON

Cynthia Haymon makes her first appearance with San Francisco Opera as Micaëla in *Carmen*. Since her acclaimed 1985 performance in the title role of Thea Musgrave's *Harriet, A Woman Called Moses* for the Virginia Opera, the young soprano has made debuts at the Royal Opera Covent Garden, Glyndebourne, Hamburg, Munich and Paris under such conductors as Zubin Mehta, Seiji Ozawa, Bernard Haitink, and Michael Tilson Thomas. She made her European debut in 1986 as Bess in *Porgy and Bess* at Glyndebourne, and the following season made her Royal Opera, Covent Garden debut as Liù in *Turandot* on the company's tour of the Far East, and repeated the role at the Royal Opera House in a performance that was telecast live throughout Europe. She has also performed Mimì in *La Bohème* at Covent Garden. Additional European appearances include her debuts in Munich and Hamburg as Liù, at the Théâtre de la Monnaie in Brussels as Amor in a new production of Gluck's *Orfeo*, and with the Israel Philharmonic as Micaëla in a fully-staged production of *Carmen* directed by the late Jean-Pierre Ponnelle. In 1989, she appeared as Eurydice in a new production of *Orfeo and Eurydice* at Glyndebourne, and created the role of Coretta King in the musical *King* which opened in London's West End last year. On this side of the Atlantic, Miss Haymon has portrayed Micaëla and sang her first Susanna in *Le Nozze di Figaro* for Seattle Opera, made her Canadian Opera debut as Micaëla, and brought her critically acclaimed portrayal of Liù to the Baltimore Opera, Michigan Opera Theater, Dayton Opera and Boston Concert Opera. Most recently, she collaborated with Simon Rattle as Bess in Glyndebourne's acclaimed Trevor Nunn production of *Porgy and Bess*. A recording of this production won a 1990 Grammy award. This summer, the soprano was applauded at the Paris Opera as Pamina in Robert Wilson's controversial staging of *Die Zauberflöte*, and recorded her first solo album of art songs by American composers. In concert, she has performed with the Israel Philharmonic, Boston Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra and London Symphony Orchestra. Born in Jacksonville,



MARIA FORTUNA

Florida, Miss Haymon is a graduate of Northwestern University.

A member of the 1989 Merola Opera Program and a 1990-91 Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, soprano **Maria Fortuna** sings Violetta in the student matinee performances of *La Traviata*, Frasquita in *Carmen*, and The Confidante in *Elektra*. She made her Company debut in 1989 in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, and was seen here last fall as the First Alms Sister in *Suor Angelica*, Countess Ceprano in *Rigoletto*, a Turkish Woman in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, and Emma in *Khovanshchina*. She received her Bachelor of Music degree from the Eastman School of Music, where she studied with Marcia Baldwin and Jan DeGaetani. The Niagara Falls native received her Master of Music degree from the Curtis Institute of Music, where she began her studies with her present teacher, Marlena Malas. Roles she has performed include Pamina in *The Magic Flute*, Anne Trulove in *The Rake's Progress*, Amelia in *Amelia Goes to the Ball*, Susanna in *Il Segreto di Susanna*, Lauretta in *Gianni Schicchi*, and the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro*. She made her debut with the Opera Theatre of St. Louis as the Mermaid in Weber's *Oberon*, and sang with Arkansas Opera Theatre in Argento's *Postcard from Morocco*. Miss Fortuna has been a soloist with Riccardo Muti and the Philadelphia Orchestra in Bruckner's *Te Deum* and Verdi's *Quattro Pezzi Sacri*, as well as with the Berkeley Symphony in Benjamin's *A Mind of Winter*. Recent appearances include Anna in *Nabucco* and the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro* with Long Beach Opera, Musetta in *La Bohème* for Marin Opera, as well as The Young Lady in Reimann's *The Ghost Sonata* and Sandrina in *La Finta Giardiniera* for the Opera Center. Future plans include performances with the Sacramento Symphony, Oakland East Bay Symphony, Van Cliburn Foundation and Marin Opera.

Laura Claycomb, a 1991 Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, appears as the First French Actress in *War and Peace* and Frasquita in *Carmen*. The native of



LAURA CLAYCOMB

Dallas attended Southern Methodist University, where she received her bachelor's degree in vocal performance and foreign languages. At SMU, she sang the roles of Cissie in *Albert Herring*, Grilletta in *The Apothecary*, and Lauretta in *Gianni Schicchi*. She won the scholarship division of the National Opera Association's competition, and was a semifinalist in the Washington International Competition. Competing one year ahead of her grade division, Miss Claycomb won the Texoma Region of the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) competition for the past six years. In 1989, she also won second place in the Shreveport Opera's Singer of the Year Competition and performed the role of Adele in Shreveport Opera's production of *Die Fledermaus*. As a member of the 1989 Merola Opera Program, she appeared as Frasquita and, as a Merola participant last year, sang the role of Ann Page in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* at Stern Grove and won the Cenacolo Award at the Program's Grand Finals. She made her Company debut last fall as The Novice in *Suor Angelica*, also appearing in a San Francisco Symphony Pops concert with Victor Borge. Earlier this year she had the honor of traveling to Japan and Guam as Frasquita in the Opera Center's production of *Carmen*, and subsequently sang Papagena in the Company's Mozart Festival production of *The Magic Flute*.

A 1990 Merola Opera Program participant and currently an Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, mezzo-soprano **Yanyu Guo** appears as Flora in *La Traviata*, Murat's aide-de-camp in *War and Peace*, Mercédès in *Carmen*, and a Servant in *Elektra*. She made her Company debut last fall as the Second Alms Sister in *Suor Angelica*, a Turkish Woman in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, and received critical acclaim when she stepped in for an ailing colleague as Penelope in a performance of *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria*. For this summer's Mozart Festival she portrayed the Second Lady in *The Magic Flute* and Don Ramiro in *La Finta Giardiniera*. The native of Beijing, China, studied at the Beijing Central Conserva-

Continued on page 45

San Francisco Opera

1991 FALL SEASON

ARTISTS

Harolyn Blackwell*	Cecilia Gasdia	Jane Marsh	Patricia Racette
Irina Bogachova*	Denyce Graves*	Reveka Mavrovitis	Angela Randell
Jacalyn Bower	Yanyu Guo+	Mary Mills+	Gabriele Schnaut**
Laura Claycomb+	Cynthia Haymon*	Marilyn Mims	Hanna Schwarz
Elizabeth Connell	Kristine Jepson	Mariana Nicolesco*	Nadine Secunde*
Catherine Cook*+	Gwyneth Jones	Ann Panagulias	Carol Vaness
Helga Dernes	Catherine Keen	Susan Patterson	Elena Zaremba*
Kallen Esperian*	Kathleen Kuhlmann	Donna Petersen	Delores Ziegler*
Maria Fortuna+	Olga Markova-Mikhailenko**	Ashley Putnam	
Valery Alexeiev**	Paul Gudas	Jorge Lopez-Yañez	Samuel Ramey
Brian Asawa*	Robert Hale	Yuri Marusin**	Peter Rose**
Gennadi Bezubenkov**	Ross Halper*	Barry McCauley	Timothy Sarris*
Vladimir Chernov*	Grier Hanedanyan**	Dennis McNeil	Michael Schade*
Stephen Condy*	Daniel Harper	Robert Milne*	Brian Schexnayder
Paolo Coni*	Kristopher Irmiter	Alfred Muff	Philip Skinner
John David De Haan	William Johns	Alexandre Naoumenko**	Nikita Storejev
Mark Delavan	Dimitri Kharitonov*	Vladimir Ognovenko**	John Swenson*
Craig Estep	James King	Antonio Ordoñez*	Dale Travis
Tom Fox	Gaétan Laperrière	Luis Oropeza*	Hector Vasquez*+
Joseph Frank	Vincenzo La Scola**	Monte Pederson	LeRoy Villanueva
Lucio Gallo**	Victor Ledbetter	Dennis Petersen	Hartmut Welker*
Marcello Giordani*	Hong-Shen Li	Paul Plishka	Kip Wilborn
Micah Graber+	Frank Lopardo*	Gino Quilico	James Wood*

CONDUCTORS

Alexander Anisimov**	Valery Gergiev**	Ian Robertson	Patrick Summers
Maurizio Arena	Leopold Hager*	Peter Schneider	Vjekoslav Šutej*
Gabriele Ferro*	Antonio Pappano*	Markus Stenz**	Christian Thielemann**

STAGE DIRECTORS

Christopher Alden*	Giulio Chazalettes*	Laurie Feldman	Jérôme Savary**	Paula Williams
Laura Alley*	John Copley	Lotfi Mansouri	Andrei Serban*	

PRODUCTIONS DESIGNED BY

Toni Businger	Yannis Kokkos*	Ming Cho Lee	Mauro Pagano	Ulisse Santicchi*
John Conklin	Michel Lebois**	Thomas J. Munn	Jean-Pierre Ponnelle	Paul Steinberg*

COSTUME DESIGNERS

Werner Juerke	Walter Mahoney	Emmanuel Peduzzi**	Jacques Schmidt**	David Walker
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CHOREOGRAPHERS

Adela Clara	Victoria Morgan	Kirk Peterson*	Robert Sund*
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**U.S. opera debut *San Francisco Opera debut +1991 Adler Fellow

CHORUS

Deanna Barraza	Ann Hughes	Sharon Mueller	Shelly Seitz Saarni
Julianne Booth	Christina Jaqua	Sharon Navratil	Sue Ellen Schepke
Roberta Bowman	Joy Korst	Alexandra Nehra	Claudia Siefer
Pamela Dale	Dallas Lane	Rose Parker	Page Swift
Dotty Dean	Marcie Lawer	Virginia Pluth	Donna Turchi
Paula Goodman	Tamaki McCracken	Laurel Rice	Michelle Ziegelman
Daniel Becker-Nealeigh	Timothy Foster	Jim Meyer	Robert Rutt
Richard Brown	Alex Guerrero, Jr.	Raymond Murcell	Sigmund Seigel
Ric Cascio	Cameron Henley	Daniel Pociernicki	Dan Stanley
Frank Daniels	Gerald Johnson	Valery Portnov	Jere Torkelsen
Henryk De Rewenda	Ken Johnson	Kenneth Rafanan	Don Tull
Robert Delany	Frederick Matthews	Tom Reed	Richard Walker

EXTRA CHORUS

Candida Arias-Duazo Joan Beal Marcia Gronewold	Lise Lindstom Wendy Loder Ellyn Peabody	Christine Reimer Janine Bartalini Shafer Bonnie Shapiro-Haroutunian Diana Smith	Traci Tornquist Delia Voitoff Darla Wigginton Susan Witt
John Beauchamp William Berges Mario Dioneda Tim Enders	Dario Di Maria Fraticelli Peter Girardot Gregory Marks Walter Matthes	Donald Matthews Tom McEachern John Musselman William Pickersgill Robert V. Presley	Lawrence Rush Robert Steiner Erich Stratmann Grant Thompson James G. Weaver

CHILDREN'S CHORUS**San Francisco Girls Chorus**

Hannah Appel Anna Bergman	Melanie Escopete Amy Harris	Rachel Herbert Caitlin McClune Kristin Oei	Emily Ryan Dana Shaps Jennifer Terry
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Golden Gate Boys Chorus

Roberto Barrueto Gabriel Coffrey	Jonathan Napier-Morales Michael Null	Adrian Paredes Pieter Van Buskirk	Darien Wentworth Michael Wood
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San Francisco Boys Chorus

Nicholas Allen Niels Bradshaw Jordan Davis Colin Delaney	Jeremy Faust Laslo Gyulassi John Haddick Bellos Hadjirassiliow	James Locke David Samas Nicholas Sanders Brandon Sherman	Eric Sparks Kevin Traugott Josh Trevorrow Cole Thomason-Redus
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Ragazzi, the Peninsula Boys Chorus

Conrad Frank	John Harrison	Rigel Kilston Jeremy Mascia	Juan Carlos Quinones Michael Watts
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Additional Boy Chorister

Darryl Temple

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Bob Acker David Altman Ted Alves Gene Angell John Atkinson Frank Bauer Steve Bauman Don Bechtel Rich Bechtel Austin Bergin Robert Black Mark Burstein Brian Busta Peter Cannon Tom Carlisle Rey Carolino Frank Cisek David Clover Rudy Cook	Doug Couture Copley Crosby Vincent Cruz Nick Doxey Robert Dunn John Durocher Milko Encinas Angelo Festa David Finger John Gilbert Harold Ginsberg Richard Goldman Terry Gordon Bill Higgins Willard Holden Allan Hubacker Larry Hunnicutt John Janonis Clint Jennings Bruce Jewett	Bob Johnson Frank Jorgensen Andrew Korniej Dan Kyte Sherman Lee Dave Manning Oscar Manzanares Oren McEwen Dan Melia Ed Meyers Jim Miller Ian Mishkin Michael Molina Robert Morgan-Wilde Steve Moulds James Munn Paul Newman Dick Pallowick Bill Perasso Mike Pesavento	John Plotz Paul Ricks Bill Roehl William Ruff Louis Schilling Paul Schoenkopf Donald Share Bruce Sharlow Jon Spieler Travis Springer Malcolm Stouse Mike Strickland Stan Strosser Robert Tuller Rick Weil Gary Wendt-Bogear Kevin Wewerka Joe Willis Daniel Wilson John Wong

This production was originally made possible by the San Francisco Opera Guild and Friends of Kurt Herbert Adler.

Opera in four acts by GEORGES BIZET

Text by HENRI MEILHAC and LUDOVIC HALÉVY

Based on the novella by PROSPER MÉRIMÉE

Critical edition by Fritz Oeser by arrangement with Foreign Music Distributors for Alkor-Edition,
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Carmen

(in French)

Conductor
Vjekoslav Šutej*

Production
Jean-Pierre Ponnelle

Stage Director
Paula Williams

Set Designer
Jean-Pierre Ponnelle

Costume Designer
Werner Juerke

Lighting Designer
Thomas J. Munn

Chorus Director
Ian Robertson

Musical Preparation
Christopher Larkin
Bryndon Hassman
Susan Miller Hult

Prompter
Susan Miller Hult

Assistant Stage Directors
Sandra Bernhard
Laurie Feldman

Stage Manager
Gretchen Mueller

Golden Gate Boys Chorus
Stephen Meyer, Director

Ragazzi, the Peninsula Boys Chorus
Joyce Keil, Director

San Francisco Boys Chorus
Eugene Pierce, Director

San Francisco Girls Chorus
Elizabeth Appling, Director

Scenery constructed in
San Francisco Opera Scenic Studios

Principals' costumes executed by
Boerye Edh of the Royal Opera,
Stockholm

Other costumes executed by
San Francisco Opera Costume Shop

First performance:
Paris, March 3, 1875

First San Francisco Opera performance:
October 1, 1927

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12 AT 7:30
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 16 AT 7:30
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 20 AT 1:30
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 23 AT 7:30
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 25 AT 7:30
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 26 AT 7:30
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 29 AT 7:30
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 1, AT 7:30
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 7 AT 7:30
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 10 AT 1:30

CAST (in order of appearance)

<i>Moralès</i>	Mark Delavan
<i>Micaëla</i>	Patricia Racette (10/12, 16, 20, 23, 26) Cynthia Haymon* (10/25, 29; 11/1, 7, 10)
<i>A Gypsy girl</i>	Bryn McAfee*
<i>Don José</i>	Barry McCauley (10/12, 16, 20, 23, 26; 11/7, 10) Antonio Ordoñez* (10/25, 29; 11/1)
<i>Zuniga</i>	James Wood
<i>Carmen</i>	Kathleen Kuhlmann (10/12, 16, 20, 23, 26; 11/7, 10) Denyce Graves* (10/25, 29; 11/1)
<i>Manuelita</i>	Darla Wigginton
<i>Frasquita</i>	Maria Fortuna+ (10/12, 16, 20, 23, 26) Laura Claycomb+ (10/25, 29; 11/1, 7, 10)
<i>Mercédès</i>	Yanyu Guo+
<i>Le Dancaire</i>	Hector Vasquez+
<i>Le Remendado</i>	John Swenson
<i>Lillas Pastia</i>	Luis Oropeza*
<i>Escamillo</i>	Dimitri Kharitonov (10/12, 16, 25; 11/7, 10) Robert Hale (10/20, 23, 26, 29; 11/1)
<i>A guide</i>	Dobromir Montauk* (10/12, 16, 20, 23, 26) Teddy Miller* (10/25, 29; 11/1, 7, 10)
<i>A vendor</i>	Page Swift
<i>A bohemian</i>	Frederick Matthews

Soldiers, townspeople, children, cigarette girls, Gypsies

*San Francisco Opera debut
+1991 Adler Fellow

TIME AND PLACE: 19th century; Seville, Spain

ACT I A street in Seville
INTERMISSION

ACT II Lillas Pastia's tavern
INTERMISSION

ACT III In the mountains
INTERMISSION

ACT IV Outside the arena

Supertitles by Christopher Bergen, San Francisco Opera.

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

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

The performance will last approximately four hours.

Carmen / Synopsis

ACT I

1. INTRODUCTION Corporal Morales and his men are resting outside the guardhouse as Micaëla comes looking for Don José.

2. MARCH AND CHORUS OF STREET URCHINS The change of guard arrives, among them Corporal José and Lieutenant Zuniga. Zuniga questions José about the nearby cigarette factory and the girls who work there.

3. CHORUS OF CIGARETTE GIRLS The cigarette girls leave the factory for a break. The men await a glimpse of Carmen.

4. HABANERA When Carmen appears, she flirts with them and gives a flower to José.

5. SCENE The girls return to work and José is left alone.

6. DUET Micaëla returns and gives José a letter from his mother. She leaves when he begins to read the letter, which advises him to marry and settle down.

7. CHORUS Screams are heard from the cigarette factory. Zuniga sends José to find out the cause of the disturbance. José returns with Carmen and another girl, Manuelita, who has a knife wound on her face inflicted by Carmen.

8. SONG AND MELODRAMA When Carmen refuses to speak, Zuniga orders José to tie her hands and take her to prison. Zuniga leaves to make out the warrant for Carmen's arrest.

9. SEGUIDILLA AND DUET Carmen hints to José about a rendezvous at her friend Lillas Pastia's tavern, and José agrees to let her escape.

10. FINALE When Zuniga returns with the warrant, Carmen breaks free as she is being led off to prison. José is arrested.

ACT II

11. GYPSY SONG Carmen and her Gypsy friends Frasquita and Mercédès sing and dance at Lillas Pastia's tavern. At closing time the innkeeper begs the soldiers to leave. Zuniga tells Carmen that José has been released from prison.

12. CHORUS AND ENSEMBLE A torchlight procession announces the arrival of the torero, Escamillo.

13. TOREADOR SONG Escamillo acknowledges the soldiers' toast and describes the excitement of the bullfight. He is attracted to Carmen, who entices him. As the soldiers leave, Zuniga promises to return to see Carmen.

14. QUINTET Dancaire and Remendado come to ask the three Gypsy girls to join them in a smuggling expedition.

15. CANZONETTA José arrives and gives Carmen the gold piece she sent him along with a file while he was in prison. He explains that his soldier's honor prevented him from trying to escape.

16. DUET Carmen dances for José, but when retreat sounds, he starts to leave for the barracks. She taunts him and challenges him to follow her to the mountains.

17. FINALE Zuniga returns. The two soldiers fight and are disarmed by the smugglers. José has no choice but to join the band of smugglers.

ACT III

18. INTRODUCTION The smugglers are at work in the mountains. Carmen has become fed up with José's jealousy.

19. TRIO Frasquita and Mercédès read their own good fortune in the cards. When Carmen takes her turn, she finds only death. Dancaire asks the girls to distract the customs men on duty.

20. ENSEMBLE The girls agree and depart, leaving José alone on guard.

21. AIR Micaëla appears with a mountain guide looking for the Gypsies. She runs off as Escamillo arrives.

22. DUET José challenges Escamillo to a duel. Carmen intervenes as the smugglers re-enter and break up the fight.

23. FINALE Escamillo invites the band of smugglers to his next bullfight. Micaëla is discovered hiding. She tells José that his mother is dying. He leaves with her, but warns Carmen that they will meet again.

ACT IV

24. CHORUS The crowd gathers outside the arena for the bullfight.

25. CHORUS AND SCENE When Carmen and Escamillo appear, Frasquita and Mercédès warn her that José is in the crowd. Carmen waits alone outside the arena.

26. DUET AND FINAL CHORUS José confronts Carmen and begs her to return to him. She refuses and returns his ring. Realizing that Escamillo is her new lover, he kills her.

The performance of Sunday, October 20, is sponsored by J.P. Morgan & Co., Inc.

The performance of Saturday, October 26, is sponsored by the C & B Consulting Group.

The performance of Thursday, November 7, is sponsored by McCutchen, Doyle, Brown & Enersen.

Carmen

Photos taken in rehearsal by Marty Sohl, except as noted.

*Barry McCauley, Denyce Graves;
Members of the San Francisco Opera Chorus*





Kathleen Kuhlmann

Patricia Racette, Barry McCauley



Barry McCauley, Denyce Graves

Denyce Graves



James Wood





Dimitri Kharitonov



Barry McCauley



Mark Delavan

(Top) Yanyu Guo, Maria Fortuna; (Bottom) Hector Vasquez, Denyce Graves, John Swenson





Kathleen Kuhlmann

Soloists; San Francisco Opera Chorus



Denyce Graves

Patricia Racette





YANYU GUO

tory and continued her studies in the U.S. at the Eastman School of Music and at the Juilliard School. The recipient of numerous prizes and awards, she has appeared with the Minnesota Orchestra, Columbus Symphony, New York Choral Society, the Opera Orchestra of New York, the Ashland Opera Festival, Chattanooga Opera, Virginia Opera, Opera Carolina, Augusta Opera, and at the Spoleto Festival. Roles she has performed include Dorabella in *Così fan tutte*, the title role of *La Cenerentola*, Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, and Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly*. Later this season she will portray Nicklausse in *The Tales of Hoffmann* for the Washington Opera.



BARRY McCAULEY

American tenor **Barry McCauley** appears as Pierre Bezukhov in *War and Peace* and Don José in *Carmen*. A Merola Opera Program participant in 1975 and '76, and an Affiliate Artist with the Company in 1977 and '78, he made his professional opera debut as Ferrando in Tucson Opera's 1976 production of *Così fan tutte*. He returned to San Francisco for Spring Opera Theater performances as Don José (1977) and Ruggero in *La Rondine* (1978). He made his 1977 Company debut with three roles: the title role of *Faust* for the student/family performances, Vanya in *Katya Kabanova*, and Froh in *Das Rheingold*. Subsequent appearances here have been Edgardo in the 1986 summer production of *Lucia di Lammermoor* and Alwa in the 1989 presentation of *Lulu*. He is frequently engaged by



ANTONIO ORDOÑEZ

the leading theaters of the U.S. and Europe and has appeared in leading roles at the Paris Opera, Metropolitan Opera, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Netherlands Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Vancouver Opera, Berlin Staatsoper, Santa Fe Opera, the Théâtre de la Monnaie in Brussels, and New York City Opera, and is a frequent performer at major international music festivals. McCauley recently sang Don José in Marseille and Toronto, Maurizio in *Adriana Lecouvreur* in Trieste, the title role of *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* in Seattle and Geneva, and undertook the title role of *Parsifal* for the first time with the Netherlands Opera.

In his debut season with San Francisco Opera, Spanish tenor **Antonio Ordoñez** sings the roles of Don José in *Carmen* and Foresto in the Company premiere of *Attila*. He began his career in zarzuela in Madrid and made his operatic debut as Macduff in *Macbeth* in Las Palmas, subsequently making a debut at the Liceo in Barcelona as Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly*, and appearing in new productions of *La Traviata* and *Simon Boccanegra* in Karlsruhe. The artist came to international attention after his debut in Berlin as Macduff, and important engagements followed in quick succession. In 1987 he made his debut in Paris in the title role of *Don Carlos*, and has also been heard in this role in Berlin, Rome, Barcelona and Bologna. He was acclaimed in the title role of *Stiffelio* in Venice, and bowed at the Torre del Lago Festival as Calaf in *Turandot*, a role he has also sung in Catania and Ravenna. Ordoñez made his 1987 American debut in Dallas as Cavaradossi in *Tosca*, and has since returned to the U.S. for *La Forza del Destino* and *La Bohème* at the Washington Opera. Most recently, he appeared as Des Grieux in *Manon Lescaut* at the Bastille Opera in Paris, and in a new production of the work with the Flemish Opera. Ordoñez has also been heard in Berlin as Manrico in *Il Trovatore*, Rodolfo in *La Bohème*, and Gabriele Adorno in *Simon Boccanegra*; in Basel as Manrico; in London as Cavaradossi; and in Tokyo as Don José. He has appeared in several productions at the Liceo in Barcelona including, in recent

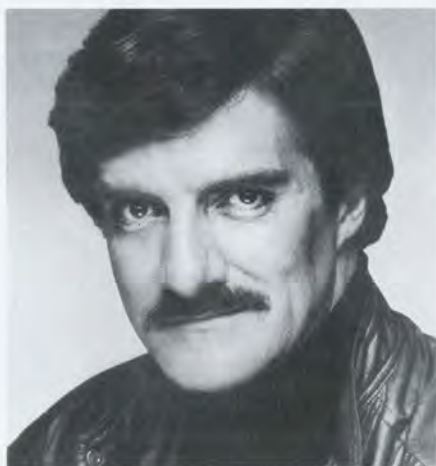


DIMITRI KHARITONOV

seasons, Pacini's *Saffo*, Respighi's *La Fiamma*, and in Boito's *Mefistofele*.

Dimitri Kharitonov makes his San Francisco Opera debut as Prince Andrei Bolkonsky in *War and Peace* and as Escamillo in *Carmen*. A leading baritone at Moscow's Bolshoi Theater since 1985, he began at an early age to study piano, composition and voice, continuing at the Leningrad State Conservatory of Music and the Nezhdanova State Conservatory of Music, Odessa. In 1984 he received a teaching diploma as well as diplomas for vocal studies, composition, and piano. Thereafter he became Principal Baritone of the Odessa State Opera Theater. Kharitonov has been the winner of numerous U.S.S.R. and international competitions. His Bolshoi Theater roles have included Germont in *La Traviata*, Count Di Luna in *Il Trovatore*, Figaro in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, The Prologue and Silvio in *Pagliacci*, the title role in *Eugene Onegin*, Prince Yeletsky in *Queen of Spades*, Duke Robert in *Iolanta*, the title role in *Tsar Saltan*, and Fernando in *The Duenna*. In 1989, he made his European debut at the Edinburgh Festival singing Jokanaan in *Salome*. Further international engagements include the Maggio Musicale in Florence, Lyric Opera of Chicago, the Glyndebourne Festival, and the English National Opera. Kharitonov also appeared in the "Arias For Peace" concerts last year.

Bass-baritone **Robert Hale**, who portrays Escamillo in *Carmen*, made his first appearance with San Francisco Opera last summer as Wotan in *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*, and the Wanderer in *Siegfried*. Born in the U.S., he completed his musical studies at Boston University and New England Conservatory of Music. After winning the "Singer of the Year" competition sponsored by the National Association of Teachers of Singing, he began his career as a recitalist, appearing in concert halls throughout the country. He later made his operatic debut with New York City Opera. In recent seasons, he has frequently sung in Europe at such major opera houses as the Vienna Staatsoper, Royal Opera, Covent Garden, Paris Opera, Munich State Opera,



ROBERT HALE

Deutsche Oper Berlin, Hamburg State Opera, and in Frankfurt, Stuttgart, Cologne, Düsseldorf, Zurich, Bologna and Florence. He appeared as Wotan and the Wanderer when the Deutsche Oper Berlin presented the *Ring* cycle in Tokyo and Washington, D.C. Additional performances of the *Ring* include the 1989 production by the Munich State Opera in a nationally televised presentation (which has also been released as a commercial video), and a new *Ring* in Cologne the same year. Hale's engagements last year included his Metropolitan Opera debut in the title role of *Der Fliegende Holländer* and, at the Salzburg Festival, Pizarro in *Fidelio*. Hale also performs extensively both as recitalist and soloist with leading orchestras including those of Boston, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Chicago, San Francisco, New York, Washington, D.C., Toronto and Montreal. He has appeared at the festivals of Ravinia, Tanglewood, Cincinnati and Wolf Trap in the U.S., and in Europe at the festivals of Salzburg, Bregenz, Bergen, Lausanne, Bordeaux and Orange. His discography includes the Verdi Requiem, Handel's *Messiah*, and a new recording of *Der Fliegende Holländer*. Future engagements include a new production of the *Ring* cycle in Vienna, as well as a new production of *Die Frau ohne Schatten* at the 1992 Salzburg Festival.

Baritone **Hector Vasquez**, a 1991 Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, makes his first appearance with the Company as the Second Madman, Métivier and Belliard in *War and Peace*, Giorgio Germont in the student matinee performances of *La Traviata*, and Le Dancaïre in *Carmen*. As a member of the 1989 Merola Opera Program, he portrayed Escamillo in *Carmen*, a role he repeated during Western Opera Theater's national tour. He returned to the Merola Program in 1990 and appeared as Enrico in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, a role he subsequently sang on WOT's 1990-91 tour. The native of California studied at Fullerton College and the University of Southern California. He has performed at the Berliner Festwochen, the



HECTOR VASQUEZ

Bach festivals of Los Angeles, Carmel and Long Beach, the music festivals of Aspen, Ojai, Lake Arrowhead and Long Beach, as well as with the Pacific Symphony, Los Angeles Baroque Orchestra, Long Beach Opera, Marin Opera, Los Angeles Philharmonic and the Aspen Opera Theater. Opera Center roles include Bengtsson in Reimann's *The Ghost Sonata*, Escamillo in *Carmen* which toured to Guam and Japan earlier this year, and Nardo in *La Finta Giardiniera* this summer.



JOHN SWENSON

Tenor **John Swenson** makes his first appearance with San Francisco Opera as Giuseppe in *La Traviata* and Remendado in *Carmen*. As a 1989 Merola Opera Program participant, he sang the Duke of Mantua in *Rigoletto* and Don José in *Carmen*, the latter a role he continued to sing with Western Opera Theater's national tour. He returned to the Merola Program last year and appeared as Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor* at Villa Montalvo, also performing the role on tour with Western Opera. Additional engagements last year included an appearance as soloist with the San Francisco Symphony Pops Concerts. Swenson received his bachelor's degree from Viterbo College in La Crosse, Wisconsin, and continued his education at Northwestern University where he received his master of music degree. He performed the role of Figaro in *The Barber of Seville* at Northwestern and for Chamber Orchestra Chicago, and has also sung



MARK DELAVAN

the roles of Eisenstein in *Die Fledermaus* and Pinkerton in *Madame Butterfly*.

Baritone **Mark Delavan** appears as Marquis d'Obigny in *La Traviata* and Moralès in *Carmen*. He made his San Francisco Opera debut in 1986 in *Don Carlos* and also appeared in *Faust*, *Eugene Onegin*, *Manon*, and as Valentin in student performances of *Faust*. In 1988, he was seen here as the High Priest of Brahma in *L'Africaine* (which was filmed for television and released commercially last year), and Schaunard in *La Bohème*. An Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center in 1986 and 1987, Delavan was a participant in the 1985 Merola Opera Program and performed the title role of *Don Giovanni* on Western Opera Theater's national tour. His most recent appearances include the High Priest of Dagon in *Samson et Dalila* and Senator Norton in the world premiere of Ulysses Kay's *Frederick Douglass* with the New Jersey State Opera; Marcello in *La Bohème* and Valentin in *Faust* with the New Israeli Opera; Escamillo in *Carmen* for Arizona Opera and Michigan Opera Theater; Belcore in *L'Elisir d'Amore* opposite Luciano Pavarotti with the Opera Company of Philadelphia, and his New York City Opera debut in Romberg's *The Desert Song*. On the concert stage, he has been soloist in the Fauré Requiem, Bach's *St. John Passion* and *Peasant Cantata*, Brahms's German Requiem, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, and Orff's *Carmina Burana*. Born in Princeton, New Jersey, Delavan was raised in Texas and Arizona. He received his Bachelor of Music degree from Oral Roberts University.

Bass **James Wood** makes his San Francisco Opera debut with three roles: Doctor Grenvil in *La Traviata*, Zuniga in *Carmen*, and Orest's Tutor in *Elektra*. A Merola Opera Program participant last year, he appeared as Raimondo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Dr. Caius in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and appeared in concert at the Martin Brothers Winery. He made his debut with the Berkeley Symphony last season, singing the title role of Messiaen's



JAMES WOOD

St. Francis of Assisi in a concert version conducted by Kent Nagano. A graduate of SUNY College at Oneonta, Wood has performed Masetto in *Don Giovanni* with Pennsylvania Opera Theater, Baron Douchol in *La Traviata* with the New York City Opera on tour and with National Grand Opera, Don Prudenzio in *Il Viaggio a Reims* with the Concert Opera of Manhattan and the Newport Music Festival, and made his Carnegie Hall debut in Richard Strauss' *Friedenstag* in 1989.



LUIS OROPEZA

Actor **Luis Oropeza**, Lillas Pastia in *Carmen*, began his career performing Chicano street theater in the barrios of East Los Angeles, and spent five years working with Luis Valdez and El Teatro Campesino. The role of the Fool in *King Lear* served as his 1987 debut with the American Conservatory Theater, where he continues in his fifth season. Additional Bay Area credits (which have earned him four Critics' Circle Awards and a Drama-Logue Award) include a five year old girl in *Cloud 9* and 21 different characters in *How I Got That Story*, both for Eureka Theater, and appearances with San Jose Repertory Theatre, Berkeley Shakespeare Festival, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, and Encore Theatre Company. Oropeza has also performed at San Diego Repertory Theatre, New Mexico Repertory Theatre, and the Denver Center Theatre Company. He has been featured on television's "Falcon Crest" and "Midnight



VJEKOSLAV ŠUTEJ

Caller," appeared in the film *Pacific Heights*, and most recently wrote and starred in the one-man *Assassination of Federico García Lorca* at the Climate Theatre. Oropeza is making his San Francisco Opera debut with these performances.

Vjekoslav Šutej makes his San Francisco Opera debut leading performances of *Carmen*. He began his career conducting most major ensembles in his native Yugoslavia, and since 1986 has made debuts with numerous U.S. and international companies. Last year, he was appointed Music Director at La Fenice in Venice, and named Principal Guest Conductor at Houston Grand Opera, where he will conduct two productions each season, beginning with *Andrea Chénier* next April. Earlier this year he was named Music Director of Spain's recently-established Orquesta Sinfonica de Sevilla. Maestro Šutej made his North American debut in 1986, conducting *Carmina Burana* for the Hollybush Festival, and subsequently led *L'Italiana in Algeri*, *Tosca*, *The Merry Widow*, *Die Kluge*, and *The Love For Three Oranges* for the Festival. In past seasons, he has appeared with Wolf Trap Opera, where he conducted *La Cenerentola* and *The Love For Three Oranges*. He was formerly Artistic Director of Yugoslavia's Split Festival and Resident Conductor of the Croatian National Theater in Zagreb, where he produced and conducted a new staging of *Boris Godunov*. He has also led the Yugoslavian National Orchestra and Romania's Bucharest State Opera on lengthy concert tours of Spain, and made the first recording of Mercadante's *La Vestale* with the Split National Theater orchestra and chorus. Šutej opened the 1989-90 season with two debuts: at Tulsa Opera where he conducted *La Bohème*, and at Houston Grand Opera for *Rigoletto*. He began the 1990-91 season at the Verdi Festival in Parma, where he conducted *Le Trouvère*, the French-language version of *Il Trovatore*, with the orchestra and chorus of the Paris Bastille Opera. This was followed by his debut at the Washington Opera with *La Bohème*, *Cavalleria Rusticana* for the Naples Opera, *Eugene Onegin* at La Fenice, *La*



JEAN-PIERRE PONNELLE

Fanciulla del West at Turin's Teatro Regio, as well as a series of concerts with the Seville Symphony. Future engagements include *Il Trovatore* to open the season at the Turin Opera, and a return to La Fenice for *Rigoletto*, *Turandot* and *La Traviata*.

One of the world's most noted and discussed directors and designers, the late **Jean-Pierre Ponnelle** conceived the production of *Carmen* which was first seen in San Francisco in 1981 and repeated in '83 and '84. He studied at the Sorbonne in Paris, his native city, and in 1952 created the scenery for the world premiere of *Boulevard Solitude*, Hans Werner Henze's first opera. During the 1950s, he designed for the principal German theaters, both opera and drama, and made his design debut at the Vienna State Opera, the Rome Opera, the Opéra-Comique in Paris and San Francisco, where his U.S. debut was marked by productions of Orff's *The Wise Maiden* and *Carmina Burana*. He returned to San Francisco in 1959 for the U.S. premiere of *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. The first American project both designed and directed by Ponnelle was San Francisco Opera's *La Cenerentola*. Additional Ponnelle San Francisco productions include *Rigoletto*, *Pagliacci*, *Der Fliegende Holländer*, *Così fan tutte*, *Lear*, *Cavalleria Rusticana*, *Otello*, *Falstaff*, *Gianni Schicchi*, *Tosca*, *Turandot*, *La Bohème*, *Il Prigioniero*, and *Idomeneo*. For the Zurich Opera, he mounted highly acclaimed cycles of operas by Monteverdi and Mozart. Other successes in past years include Wagner's *Liebesverbot* (Munich), *Così fan tutte*, *Le Nozze di Figaro* and *Don Giovanni* (Paris), *Aida* (Covent Garden), *La Clemenza di Tito* (Metropolitan Opera), *Tristan und Isolde* (Bayreuth), *Cavalleria Rusticana/Pagliacci* (Vienna), and *Lulu* (1985 Munich Opera Festival). Television viewers have been able to see many of his productions including *Idomeneo* and *Le Nozze di Figaro* from the Met, *The Magic Flute* from the Salzburg Festival, as well as filmed versions of *Madama Butterfly*, *Carmina Burana*, *Rigoletto*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *La Cenerentola*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *La Clemenza di Tito*, and the three extant Monteverdi operas.



PAULA WILLIAMS

Associated with San Francisco Opera since 1978, **Paula Williams** made her directorial debut with the Company this summer as stage director of *Die Zauberflöte*. This season she stages the student matinee presentation of *La Traviata* and recreates Jean-Pierre Ponnelle's production of *Carmen*. She has worked with a variety of renowned directors including Pier Luigi Pizzi, John Copley, John Cox, Gerald Freedman, Sonja Frisell, Lotfi Mansouri and Ponnelle. In addition to her San Francisco Opera credits, Miss Williams has worked with the Opera Company of Philadelphia (where she staged the SFO's production of *Un Ballo in Maschera* with the winners of the Luciano Pavarotti Vocal Competition in a televised performance over PBS), San Francisco Ballet, Tulsa Opera, Hawaii Opera Theatre, Artpark, Long Beach Ballet, Virginia Opera Theatre, Central City Opera, the Margaret Jenkins Dance Company, and both the Broadway and San Francisco productions of *Les Misérables*. The recipient of three San Francisco Opera and Opera Guild Study Grants, Miss Williams completed her education at the University of Denver on a full four-year scholarship.



WERNERJUERKE

The late German set and costume designer **Werner Juerke** made his debut as costume designer at the War Memorial with *Carmen* in the 1981 fall season. His collaboration with Jean-Pierre Ponnelle on this opera originated with the 1973 production of Bizet's masterpiece at the Stockholm Opera and the Frankfurt Opera. In the late 1950s he assisted Ponnelle on the designs for Orff's *The Wise Maiden* and Strauss' *Die Frau ohne Schatten* at the San Francisco Opera and for productions at the Deutsche Oper Berlin, the Munich Staatsoper, the Opéra-Comique in Paris and theaters throughout Germany. Juerke created his first solo designs for the Berlin Ballet in 1957. In the early 1960s he worked as designer for theaters in Berlin and Düsseldorf on such works as the musical *Bells are Ringing*, Anouilh's *General Quichotte* and Pinter's *The Caretaker*, and collaborated with choreographer Tatiana Gsovsky on numerous ballets. For the Deutsche Oper am Rhein in Düsseldorf, he created designs for the ballet *Sleeping Beauty*, for Puccini's *Turandot* and *La Bohème*, and Strauss' *Ariadne auf Naxos*. Juerke did extensive work for television, for which his credits include over 200 productions.



THOMAS J. MUNN

Thomas J. Munn, Lighting Director and Design Consultant for San Francisco Opera since 1976, designed the lighting for the new productions of *War and Peace*, *Tristan und Isolde*, *Elektra* and *Das Verraten Meer*, and for the revivals of *La Traviata* and *Carmen*. He has created the lighting and special effects for over 140 productions for the Company, including the highly acclaimed Ring cycle last year, as well as this past summer's presentations of *The Magic Flute* and *Così fan tutte*. As scenic adviser, he has designed scenery for SFO productions of *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, *Roberto Devereux*, *Pelléas et Mélisande*, *Billy Budd* and *Nabucco*, as well as for this fall's revival of *Don Giovanni*. Munn has designed scenery and lighting for Broadway, Off-Broadway, regional theater, ballet, and films. His television credits include San Francisco Opera productions of *La Gioconda* (for which he received a 1979 Emmy Award), *Samson et Dalila*, *Aida*, *L'Africaine*, *La Bohème*, *Orlando Furioso* and *Mefistofele*. This past April, he toured Japan with the Opera Center production of *Carmen* as scenic supervisor and lighting director. Credits for other companies include *Madama Butterfly* for the Netherlands Opera, and scenery and lighting for Hartford Ballet's productions of *Coppélia* and *The Nutcracker*. Next year he will light productions of *Andrea Chénier* and *Mefistofele* for the Houston Grand Opera. In addition to his many theatrical endeavors, Munn is often engaged as consultant for architectural projects, the Muziektheater in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, being one of his most notable achievements.

This on-going series of interviews introduces our readers to a cross-section of San Francisco Opera Company members who seldom get to take a curtain call, but whose activities are very important in the process of making opera happen.

COMPANY PROFILE: ZAVEN MELIKIAN

Photos by Marty Sohl

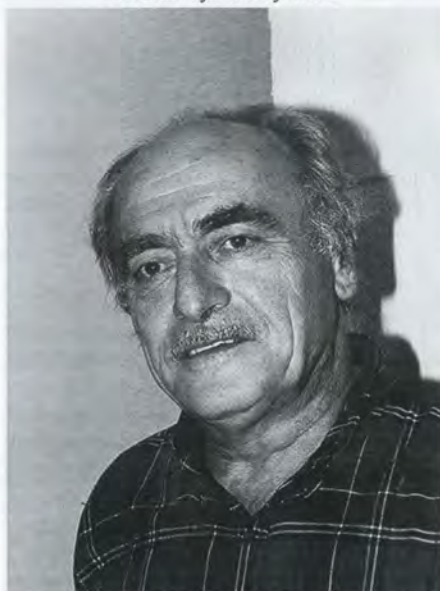
"Take an Armenian born in Yugoslavia, educated in France, and transplanted to the United States — put them in a bag and shake them up — and you get Zaven Melikian," the robust, mustachioed man says on the crescendo of a laugh with a characteristically devilish twinkle in his eye. Add generous dollops of musicianship, diplomacy (international as well as internal), and you get the San Francisco Opera Orchestra concertmaster.

Entering his 34th season with the orchestra and his 14th as its leader, the 62-year-old Melikian retains as clear a perspective on his long history with the orchestra as on the retirement he sees a few short years (if long seasons) off. An innocent question about his appointment as concertmaster, in 1977, elicits one of the more savory legends.

"In the mid-'70s, after I had served as assistant concertmaster for eight years, I left the orchestra for three years. In those days, many of us played with the San Francisco Symphony as well, and I had also undertaken a fairly strenuous teaching schedule at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. It was getting to be too much, so I went to Kurt Adler, who was General Director at the time, and told him I wanted some operas off. We had one of our many disagreements: he said no, and I quit. Now Adler never liked it when the good people quit on him, and you always had the feeling he was going to get you for it. You see how he got me: he brought me back as concertmaster three years after I left."

Like his very emigration to the U.S., which he undertook with similar reluctance for not dissimilar professional reasons, Melikian now counts it "among the best moves I have ever made."

That Melikian was born to play the violin is clear. He was taken into the Belgrade Philharmonic, one of his country's top orchestras, at the age of 15 and shrewdly wagers he may have been



Zaven Melikian

the only high-schooler in Europe in a leading orchestra. He has since supported two families, the one he was born into and the one he has made for himself, as a fiddler. But the trajectory of his personal destiny from the Belgrade Philharmonic to the bands by the Bay could hardly be as clearly charted.

"As a teenager," he explains, "I was part of an underground student organization dedicated to the overthrow of the Communist regime of Tito!" A roll of his eyes at the very audacity of the idea interrupts him for a moment. "We got caught. I was arrested at 19 and sent to prison with a sentence of a year's hard labor. I ended up serving only 11 months of my sentence for the oddest reason imaginable."

"When I was playing with the Philharmonic, my teacher was always getting after me to quit, thinking it was keeping me too busy to pursue a solo career. I resisted for a while, essentially because I was earning a living for my family, but eventually I did quit. Then Oskar Danon, the director of the opera in Belgrade, told me he wanted me for the opera orchestra. I felt I couldn't, so I refused. Now Danon, who was Jewish, had earlier actually

joined Tito's guerilla forces in order to survive. In addition to being the opera director, he was a major in the Army and knew Tito personally. When he heard I was arrested, he tried to get me out — to serve my sentence in the pit!

"There I was unloading ships on the Danube in the middle of winter, and sleeping on hay, and on January 5, a month before my sentence was to run out, I was told I was being paroled and to report immediately to the opera house. Think of it. Of course when I got there, I couldn't even *touch* a violin; my hands were nothing but calluses. But the director simply said to me, 'Go home and rest. When you feel you can play again, report back.' Two months later I did. My first opera was *Faust*, in 1950. I felt that I had to do it, and stayed with the opera, and at the end of the year, it turned into another opportunity."

"Really, all of Yugoslavia was a prison at that time. After Tito broke with Stalin in 1948, he tried to deport all the White Russians in Yugoslavia, who had accepted Soviet citizenship only because it was forced on them in the first place. There were about 120 of us Armenians, and one, a clever young bachelor, had gone to the passport office to apply for an exit visa. There was chaos because of all the deportations, and he just went in with a map, pointed to Armenia to the east, and convinced some dumb clerk to issue him the papers to return there. The clerk did, but the man went west, to Italy, instead of east. Word of his escape got back to the rest of us within 24 hours, and within three weeks, we all were out."

"As a professional, I of course had to get special permission from the opera director to leave the country. All he said was, 'If you think that is best for you, go.' I did, and soon found myself in a refugee camp in Trieste."

The only country that would take them was Morocco, so Melikian next found



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William Shakespeare
Twelfth Night



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Sunday, September 8 - 4PM

"Vessels large may venture more, but little boats should keep near shore."

This segment will begin with an overture by Felix Mendelssohn "Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage." The next piece will be "Dialogue du vent et de la Mer" from Claude Debussy's "La Mer" followed by an excerpt from Benjamin Britten's "Four Sea Interludes" also, "Seascape" . . . from "The Sea" by the British composer Frank Bridge and closing with "Water Music Suite" by George Frideric Handel.

Sunday, September 15 - 4PM

"They that can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety."

The selections in this program will center on the ideals of liberty and freedom. We'll hear the "Liberty Bell March" by John Philip Sousa, with Donald Hunsberger and the Eastman Wind Ensemble, Hector Berlioz's setting of Rouget de Lyle's "La Marseillaise", "The Gift" and "The Invitation" from Richard Adler's "The Statue of Liberty Suite", Antonin Dvorak's "From the New World" - Finale - and our closing work by American Composer Howard Hanson "Song of Democracy."

Sunday, September 22 - 4pm

"He has paid dear, very dear, for his whistle."

This line, from "The Whistle" suggests a cavalcade of pieces that feature the flute, piccolo, recorder, etc. We'll feature works for those instruments by Vivaldi, Mozart, Telemann, and others.

Sunday, September 29 - 4pm

"Human felicity is produced not so much by great pieces of good fortune that seldom happen, as by little advantages that occur every day."

In this one, we'll celebrate some of those little things that bring human felicity. . . Some of the selections will include: "The Pierrot of the Minute", "The Comedians" by Dmitri Kabalevsky, "The Jovial Ones" by Johann Strauss, Jr. and others.



Concertmaster Melikian in the orchestra pit, next to conductor Leopold Hager, during a rehearsal of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*.

himself in Casablanca, from which he managed a French connection that took him to L'Ecole Normale de Musique in Paris, a strong, performance-oriented school heavily populated by foreigners, since the Paris Conservatoire had rigorous quotas. The school, which was founded by Thibaud, Cortot, and Casals, reopened the possibility of a musical career. Left to his own devices, Melikian thinks he would have stayed in Europe, free to pursue that career at last.


Parental pressure prompted Melikian's emigration to the United States. His father, who had been to the U.S. in 1921, long wanted to return, and finally had. Realizing his parents were destitute, and his father gravely ill with diabetes, Melikian finally left Europe — "on the last day my exit visa was good" — to join them, soon realizing it was the best thing that could have happened to him.

Melikian soon began concertizing and, at what he ironically refers to as his "San Francisco debut recital," in 1957 in what

is now Herbst Theatre, he caught the attention of Naoum Blinder, San Francisco Symphony concertmaster and one of the city's most renowned musicians. "He talked to me after the recital and asked me what my plans were. Of course I had none. He advised me that I could do well here, and introduced me to the personnel manager of the Symphony. My first concert with them was during the 1957 Pops season, under Arthur Fiedler. During that season, Ralph Murray, manager of the Opera Orchestra, invited me to audition. I did, for Adler, and accepted a position, thinking it would be all right to do for a year or two. Here it is 34 years later."

He now sees his progress, from the last chair of the Opera Orchestra's first violins to the first, advancing about a chair a year, as crucial to his experience as concertmaster. "Now I know how every violinist here feels. Seating is different in the opera pit. The first violinists all sit in a row, which is hardly ideal and gives each

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During a rehearsal break, Zaven Melikian delights in a friendly game of backgammon. L. to r.: William Pynchon, assistant principal first violin, a kibitzer in this instance; Zaven Melikian; David Kadarauch, principal cello; and Shinji Eshima, bass.

person a different perspective, both visually and acoustically. Since there's little to be done about it, it helps that I know what it is like from every one of those chairs."

Melikian chuckles heartily at the memory of the first time he distinguished himself among the other players. "In my first season with the orchestra, we had three conductors — William Steinberg, Erich Leinsdorf, and Francesco Molinari-Pradelli. Steinberg was conducting *Masked Ball*. He conducted from memory and had a very small beat — and a habit of standing there looking as if he were almost asleep. In one passage, I inadvertently added a chord to a sequence of them the violins were playing. The minute I did, he jumped up to see who had made the mistake — and I got the reputation of the one who woke Steinberg up."

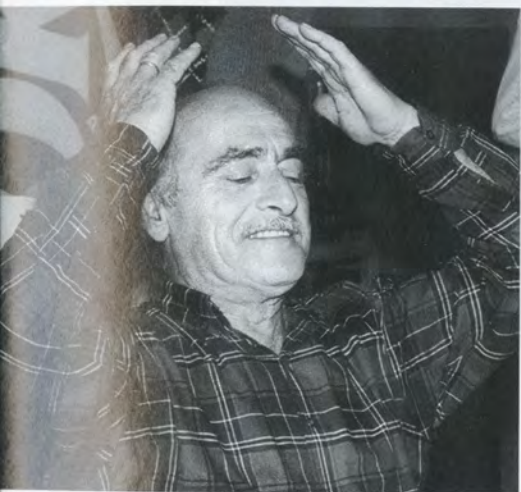


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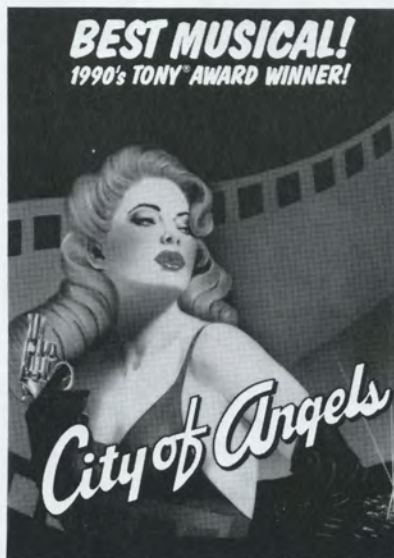
His memories of the early days under Adler — “The terms were simple: Adler could do anything he wanted” — are, predictably, characterized by a knotty nostalgia. “I always had the greatest respect for Kurt Adler,” he says, his warmth for the late General Director discernible in the wry smile so typical of Adler intimates. “He liked to play games. If he thought well of you, he would give you a much harder time than he gave the others. It was all part of a strategy. He didn’t want to let you know you were good, because then you’d start wanting things like raises and time off.

“It took a while to get used to his style. I remember during my second season, we were playing a rehearsal of the second act of *Carmen*. It wasn’t even a dress rehearsal, just an orchestra staging rehearsal. No big deal. And the violins don’t have much of importance to do at that moment. Out of nowhere, he stuck his head over the orchestra railing and

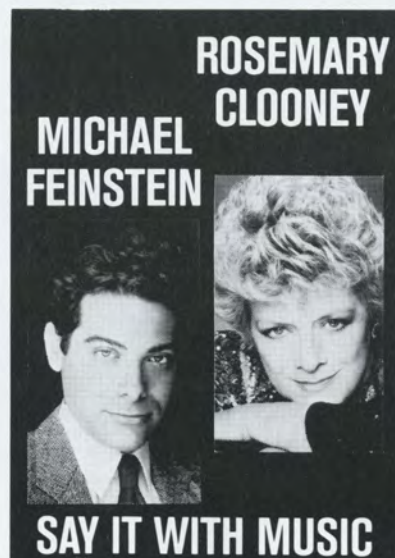
Continued on page 58

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By Sandra Macleod White
Photography by Michael Venera



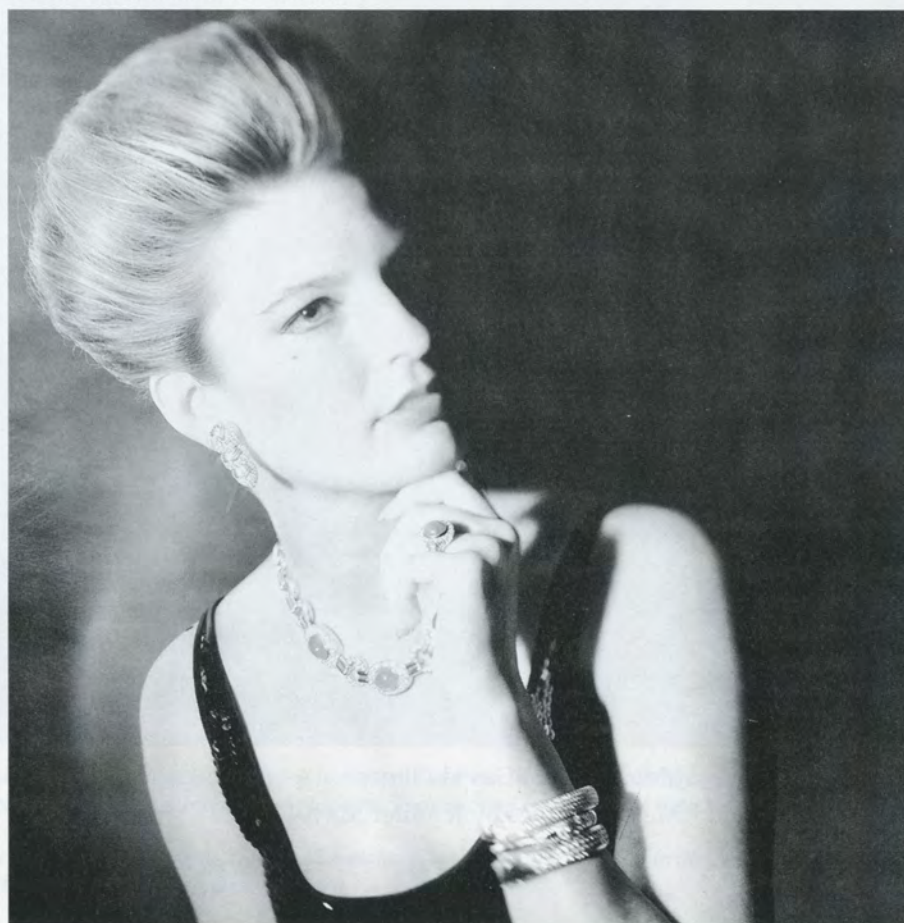
Flora Watts of San Francisco, an art history major at Barnard College in New York, is modeling a multi-strand cultured pearl "Masse" necklace with 18K gold, platinum and diamond "Calotte" clasp. Her earrings are platinum, diamond and cultured pearl. "Six Leaves" and "Four Rows" bracelet is set in 18K gold, with cultured pearls and diamonds. Her ring is a platinum and diamond "Natalie" ring of oval cut sapphire. All designed by Jean Schlumberger exclusively for Tiffany & Co., San Francisco.

This photo story, part of *Theatre Publications'* continuing series of fashion segments, portrays the special Bay Area blend of natural beauty and exquisite jewelry.

The team of professional makeup and hair stylists has joined with photographer Michael Venera, formerly of Czechoslovakia, but now living and working in San Francisco, in creating these pages which showcase gems selected from the area's best.



(Above) Dana Ellsworth of San Francisco is wearing an exquisite Gemlock diamond necklace with matching diamond earrings set in 18K yellow gold and custom-designed by Gemveto, at David Hurley Goldsmiths, Sausalito.



(Right) Mindy Fenton Henderson, a native San Franciscan, is posed here in a magnificent cabochon ruby and diamond necklace and matching cabochon ruby and diamond ring. Her diamond drop earrings and three diamond bracelets are set in 18K gold. At Gump's, San Francisco.

Elizabeth Mariani of San Francisco is shown here wearing a Cartier diamond Claudine necklace with baguette cut emerald clip set in 18K yellow gold, as are her diamond earrings, emerald and diamond ring, and "Chimera Bracelet" with emerald eyes; at Cartier, San Francisco.



Hairstyles by David Oliver
Makeup styles by Jennifer Mayol



Pictured here are Claudia and Cecilia de Quesada, both students at UC Berkeley, both from San Francisco. Claudia (left) is wearing a platinum, diamond and sapphire collar necklace with matching bracelet. Her earrings are platinum, diamond and sapphire with detachable diamond and sapphire drops. Cecilia (right) prefers the floral design of her platinum and diamond necklace with matching floral wrap-around diamond earrings, and her bracelet is platinum and diamonds. Both ensembles are from Shreve's, San Francisco.

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Marilyn Horne in her dressing room
backstage at San Francisco Opera.

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Zaven Melikian
Continued from page 53

shouted down to me and Robert Bloch, who was playing next to me, and said, 'Why can't the two of you play like everyone else?' Then he took off; he was a real hit-and-run artist. I was young and uncomprehending, so I jumped over the rail and chased him down. When I demanded — in French, which was the language we spoke at the time, because my English was not yet very good — what he meant, he asked me what I was so excited about, that it was nothing. I later learned that it was just his way of letting the good people know he was keeping his eye on them.

"When he finally brought me back as concertmaster, all that changed. We still argued, of course. When he returned to conducting, his great love, I remember having many arguments with him about his 'return' opera, *Traviata*. But the positive part of it was that we spent hours together going over the score, a luxury I seldom have with our many guest conductors."

Being the first person applauded come performance time is a job that comes at a price. Melikian is the first to point out that the superficial glamour of his job, from tuning the orchestra to playing the solos, is the easy, expected part. Less conspicuous are the trying hours spent with other members of the Company's music staff auditioning potential players for orchestra openings. Even taking part in the interpretation of the music — serving as the link between conductor and players by setting the tone (and often literally showing the way, by demonstrating to his fellow players) — has its gritty side. Far behind the scene and long in advance of rehearsals, Melikian begins to "set the tone" by providing the bowings for all the string parts. "Bowling is to the string players what breathing is to the singer," Melikian explains. "It's how the phrasing happens. It's something sufficiently important that George Szell, for example, always did his own bowings, but most conductors expect the concertmaster to do them, to assure that they are absolutely uniform throughout the section."

More difficult yet is being constantly in the position of a diplomat, providing the bridge between conductor and players and keeping peace, or a working facsimile of it, among the instrumentalists themselves. Working with conductors requires active intuition. "They're all different. Some you leave completely alone; others want to work closely with you. It's purely a matter of individual style. Over the years you learn patience. I've played

probably 500 *Bohèmes* under 50 conductors — and they all have direct links back to Puccini. That's why it's good to be able to have time with them before rehearsals begin, but often that's a luxury."

Working with colleagues in the pit has its, well, pitfalls, as well. "A fellow concertmaster once said something terribly true: If you ask the orchestra to seat itself, you'll find 34 people on two chairs. It takes enormous tact to work fairly with all your colleagues. And while it's important that you lead, and serve as an example, you have to be sensitive about how you do it. When you demonstrate an instrumental effect you know the conductor is after, you have to be careful not to be high-handed or sound too much like a teacher among your fellow professionals."

On the flip side of authority comes the responsibility to serve as the orchestra's spokesperson. "One is constantly reminding all kinds of people — not just the conductors — that between rehearsals and performances, it is not unusual for the orchestra members to play four different operas within 36 hours. It was gratifying for me when we were working with Edo de Waart on the full *Ring* in 1985. Naturally, he was conducting everything that summer, and at one point, about midway, he looked at all these same weary horses in the pit and said, 'I finally understand you guys. I'm exhausted.'"

"It's particularly hard in a season like this one, with *War and Peace* — which is a killer in its own right, two of the longest acts in opera with just one break — placed in the middle of a *stagione* repertoire. Just now we have gone, from Friday evening to Sunday, from a performance of *War and Peace* to rehearsals for *Don Giovanni* to performances of *Capuleti* and *Traviata*. That's draining."

"But things are improving steadily. [General Director] Lotfi [Mansouri] has made it clear that he is interested in getting away from the *stagione* system to a season spread throughout the year, which would relieve much of our fatigue. And this year each of us gets to take one opera off. For me it's *Carmen*, which runs ten performances this year, to say nothing of the rehearsals. This is very important for the players, at this point much better than more money."

Melikian is also cheered by the fact that the Company administration has attended to the matter he has long considered his top priority: the installation of a music director. "It's vital that the orches-

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tra, which is the backbone of the company, have a head. And it's helpful to me, because it gives me somewhere to go with the particular problems I face." Best of all, Melikian welcomes the new appointee, Donald Runnicles, as a "talented, intelligent young man. We like him very much, and need him very badly."

Three years from his anticipated retirement, Melikian can look back without a hint of regret at the solo career he never pursued. "I didn't like it when I was doing it," he says with a hint of a shudder. "All that touring is for a different kind of person, someone with not just the talent but the aggression and drive — and need — to do it. There are simply too many other things that matter to me at this stage in life — my golf swing, for example." Flicking on his micro-TV "Watchman" to catch a glimpse of the Niners before heading off the pit for a matinee *Traviata*, he adds, "I have lived a satisfied life, and I know for myself, and from watching others who do it other ways, that in the end that is what really matters." □

—Timothy Pfaff

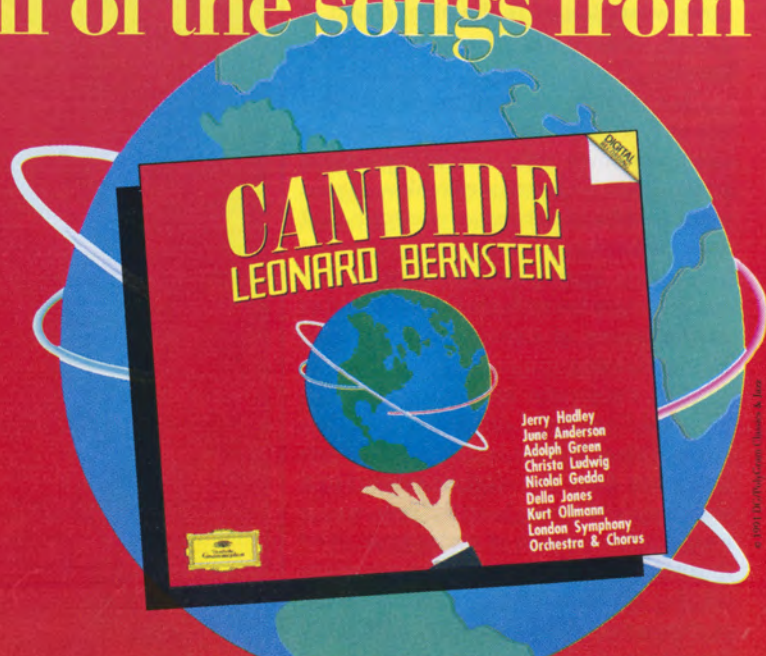
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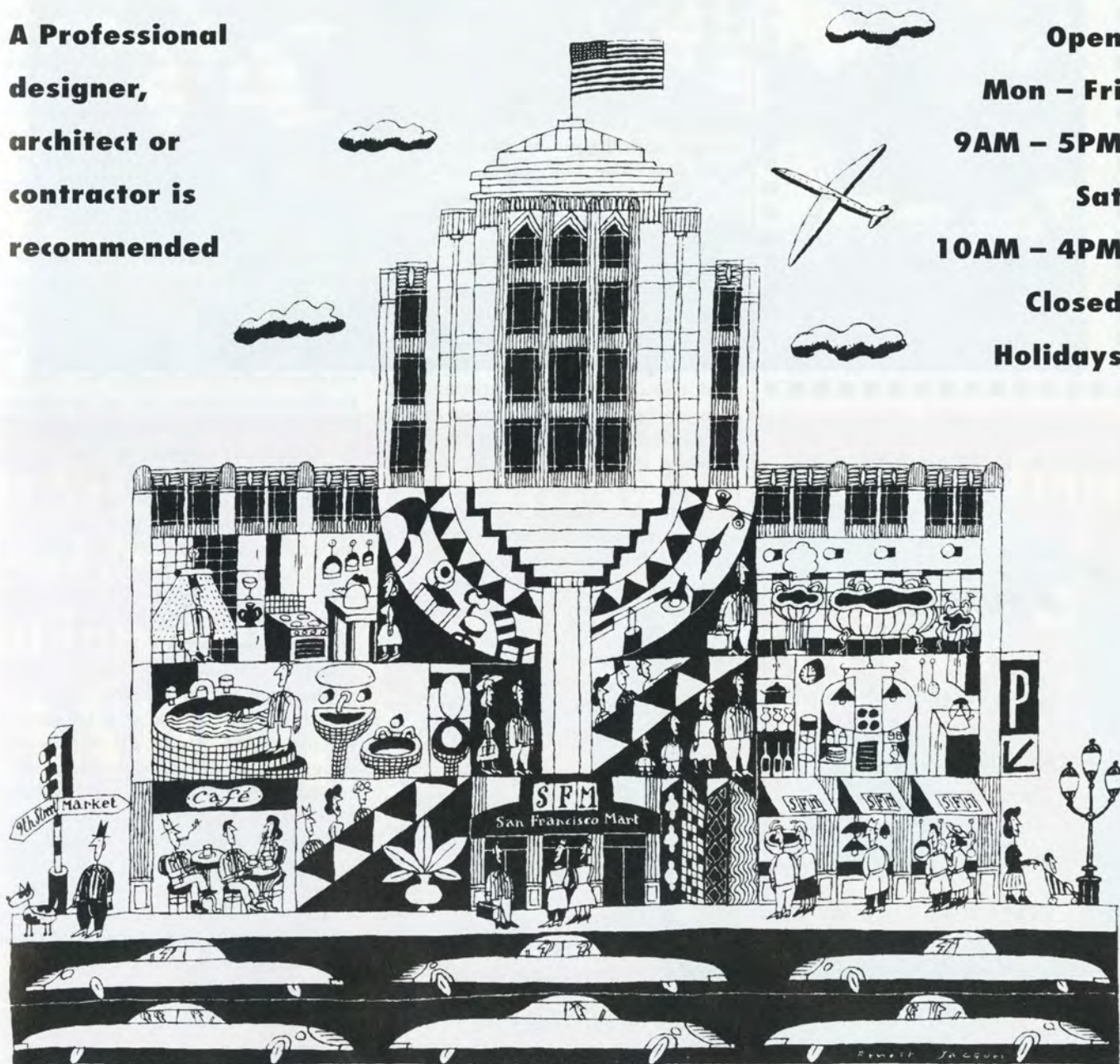
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1991 OPERA PREVIEWS

Information on opera previews and lectures is carried in San Francisco Opera Magazine in order to enable patrons to plan attendance in advance. The following is a list of current previews and lectures that are open to the public.

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD INSIGHTS

Renowned artists and personalities (to be announced) from the world of opera share their insights and experiences during informal interviews.

Held in Herbst Theatre, Veterans Building, 401 Van Ness Ave., in San Francisco. All discussions begin at 6 p.m.; doors open at 5:30 p.m. Complimentary to Guild members. Individual tickets may be purchased at the door for \$5. For further information, please call (415) 565-6432. Programs are subject to change.

Das Verratene Meer 11/4
Attila 11/18

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD PREVIEWS MARIN

Previews held at Mt. Tamalpais United Methodist Church, 410 Sycamore Ave. Mill Valley; refreshments served at 7:30 p.m., previews at 8 p.m. Series of 6 previews \$30; students and seniors \$25. Single tickets at door \$6; students and seniors at door \$5. For further information, please call (415) 388-6789.

Tristan und Isolde 10/16
Blanche Thebom/Jess Thomas
Das Verratene Meer 11/6
William Huck
Elektra 11/13
Pamela Potter
Attila 11/20
George Martin

SOUTH PENINSULA

Previews held at the Palo Alto Senior Center, 450 Bryant, at 8 p.m. Series of 6 previews \$27; students \$14. Single tickets at door \$5; students at door \$4. For further information, please call (415) 941-3890.

Tristan und Isolde 10/15
Blanche Thebom/Jess Thomas
Das Verratene Meer 11/5
William Huck
Elektra 11/12
Pamela Potter
Attila 11/19
George Martin

SAN JOSE OPERA GUILD

Previews held at the Los Gatos History Club, 123 Los Gatos Blvd., at 10 a.m. Series is open to the public at a cost of \$5 per lecture (free of charge to San Jose Opera Guild members). *Luncheon (\$6) will follow lecture. For further information, please call (408) 354-7525.

Tristan und Isolde 10/15*
Blanche Thebom/Jess Thomas

Das Verratene Meer 11/5
William Huck
Elektra 11/12*
Pamela Potter
Attila 11/19
George Martin

SONOMA COUNTY CHAPTER

Previews held at various times and locations (see below). Series registration is \$40 for 6 previews; single tickets \$8. Extra cost for luncheon following lecture. For further information, please call (707) 938-2432 or (707) 935-1957.

Tristan und Isolde 10/17,
Blanche Thebom/Jess Thomas
10:30 a.m. lecture, lunch following
Sonoma Mission Inn
18140 Sonoma Highway, Sonoma
Das Verratene Meer 11/4
William Huck 2:30 p.m. lecture
2988 Sunridge Dr.,
Santa Rosa

Elektra 11/11, 10:30 a.m. lecture
Pamela Potter lunch following
La Provence
140 Stony Pt. Rd., Santa Rosa

Attila 11/18, 2:30 p.m. lecture
George Martin 1579 North Castle Rd.,
Sonoma

JUNIOR LEAGUE OPERA PREVIEWS

Previews held in Herbst Theatre, Veterans Building, 401 Van Ness Ave., in San Francisco. Previews begin at noon, and there is no admission charge. For further information, please call (415) 922-3874 or (415) 435-0878.

Tristan und Isolde 10/16
Blanche Thebom/Jess Thomas
Das Verratene Meer 11/6
William Huck
Elektra 11/13
Pamela Potter
Attila 11/20
George Martin

ROBERT GOODHUE'S FALL OPERA COURSE

Robert Goodhue is offering previews of San Francisco Opera's season on Mondays at 6:15 p.m., beginning August 19 and ending on November 18. Sessions are held at the Marines' Memorial Building, 609 Sutter, in San Francisco. Admission is \$15 per class. For further information, please call (415) 956-1271.

SAN FRANCISCO CITY COLLEGE OPERA PREVIEWS

City College of San Francisco offers a music course in Opera Previews for the Fall 1991 semester. The course will concern all the operas being performed in the San Francisco Opera fall season. It is taught by Marvin Tartak every Thursday night from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. at the College, 50 Phelan Ave., Creative Arts Building, Room A-135, in San Francisco. The 17-week course costs \$15. For further information, please call (415) 239-3641.

FRIENDS OF THE KENSINGTON LIBRARY

A free lecture entitled "Verdi's *Attila*, An Experiment in Music Drama," given by Michael Barclay on November 18 at 7 p.m. at the Kensington Library, 61 Arlington Ave., Kensington. For further information, please call (415) 524-3043.

MERRITT COLLEGE OPERA LECTURE SERIES

Merritt College is offering an opera preview class, Introduction to Opera (Music 13A), with emphasis on the operas of the 1991 fall season, on Tuesday evenings at 7 p.m., beginning August 27 and ending in December. The enrollment fee is \$18. Classes will be held at the College, 12500 Campus Drive, Building R, Room 125, in Oakland. For further information, please call (415) 436-2430.

OPERA EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL PREVIEW SERIES

Previews of the operas of the 1991 season will be given by Michael Barclay, director of Opera Education International. Lectures will be presented at OEI, 400 Yale Ave., in Berkeley. Admission to the full series of 7 lectures is \$95; individual admission at the door is \$15. For further information, please call (415) 526-5244.

Das Verratene Meer 10/7
Elektra 10/14
Attila 11/12
The Season in Review 12/9

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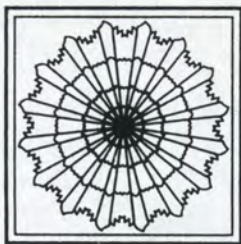
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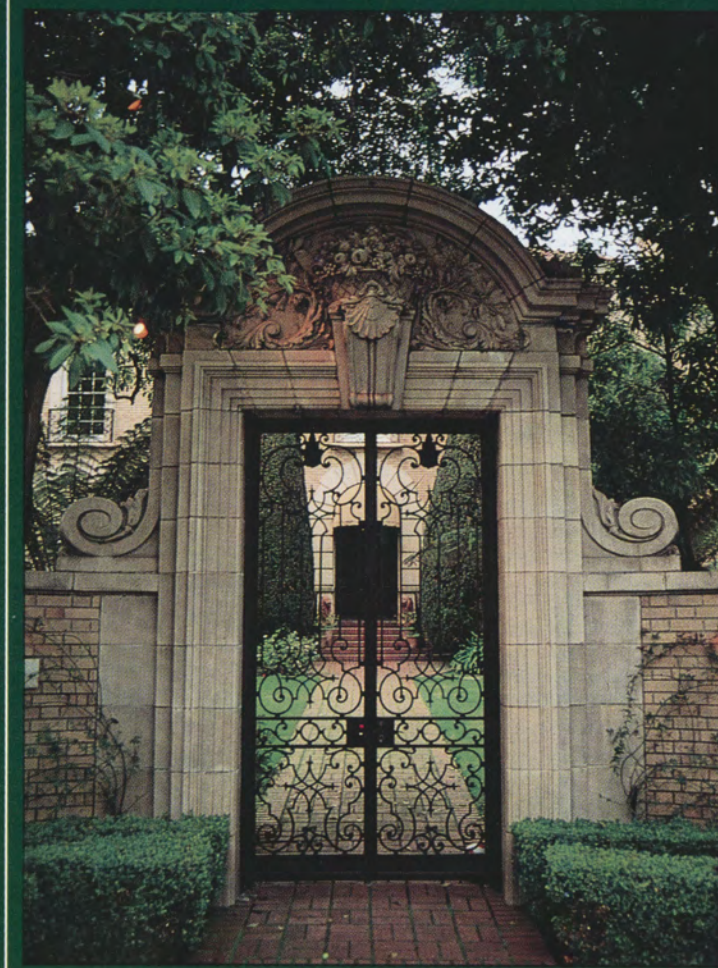
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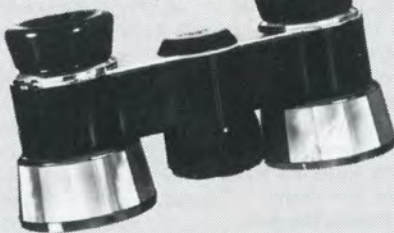
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Sponsored by the San Francisco Opera Guild, tours of the War Memorial Opera House will be conducted every half hour from 10 a.m. to 12 noon weekdays and Saturdays, and from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Sundays on the following dates:

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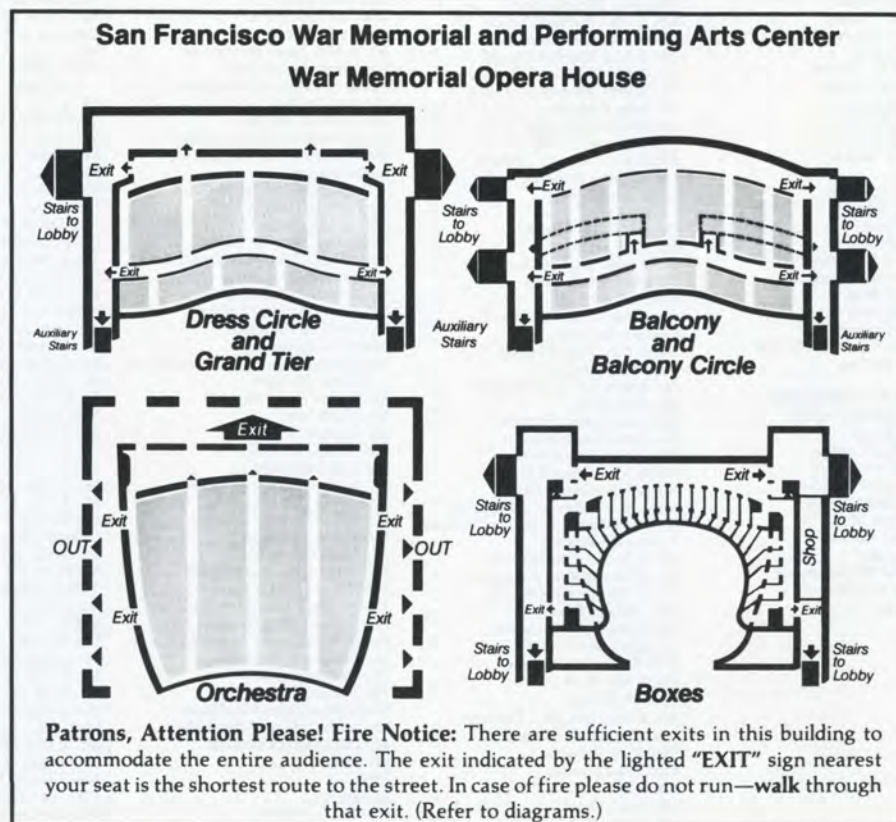
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