

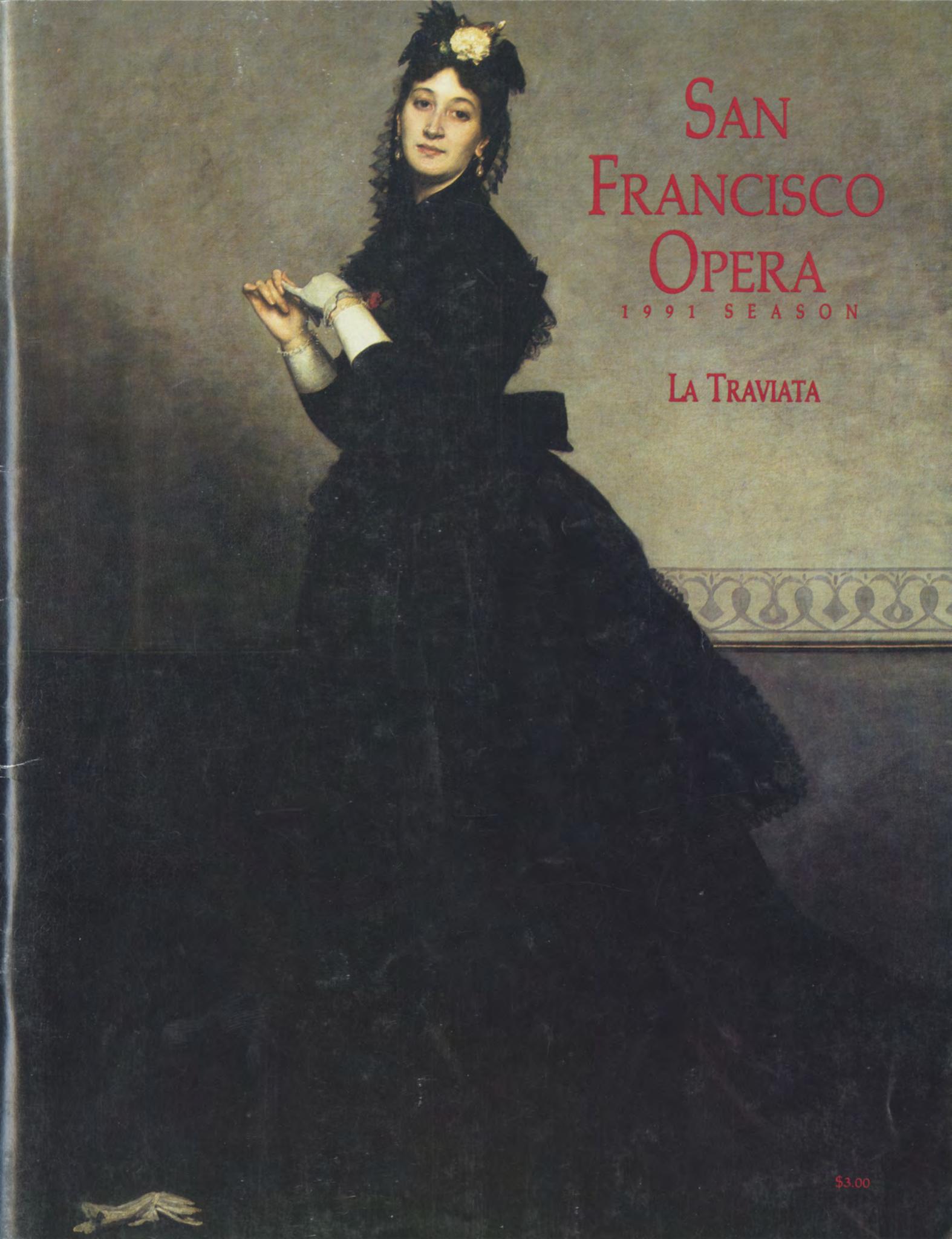
La Traviata
(The Fallen Woman)

1991

Friday, September 6, 1991 7:30 PM
Wednesday, September 11, 1991 7:30 PM
Saturday, September 14, 1991 8:00 PM
Wednesday, September 18, 1991 7:30 PM
Sunday, September 22, 1991 2:00 PM
Friday, September 27, 1991 8:00 PM
Sunday, September 29, 1991 8:00 PM
Monday, November 25, 1991 7:30 PM
Friday, November 29, 1991 8:00 PM
Thursday, December 5, 1991 7:30 PM

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OPERA
1991 SEASON

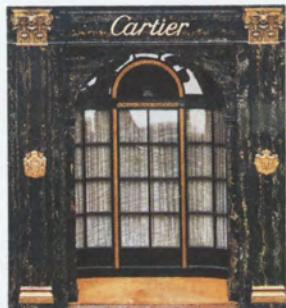
LA TRAVIATA

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Lotfi Mansouri, *General Director*

La Traviata

1991 FALL SEASON
Vol. 69, No. 5

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Lady With a Glove, 1869
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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*

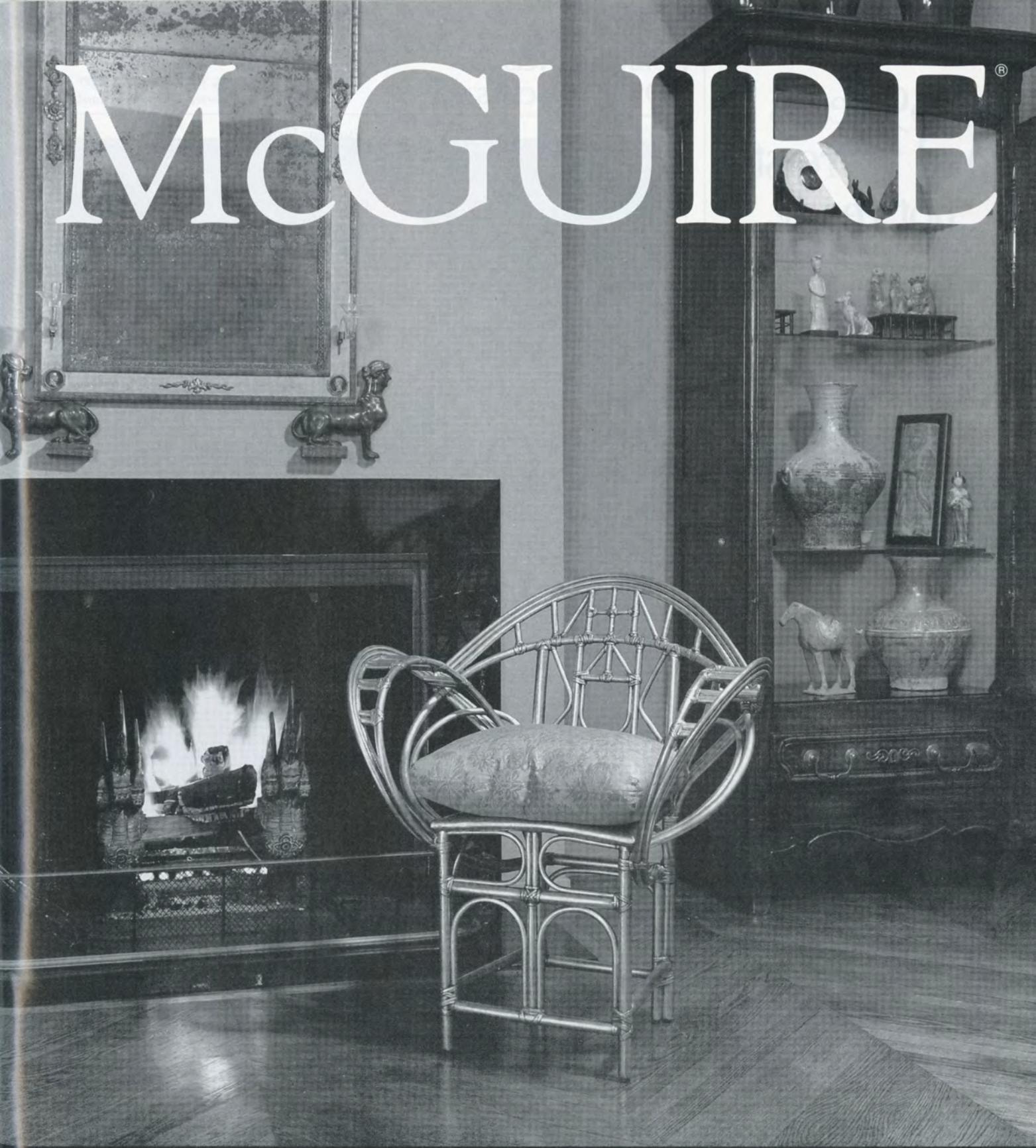
und Isolde; Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Tilton for our first presentation of *Attila*; and the American premiere of Henze's *Das Verratene Meer* is taking place here through the generosity of the Paul L. and Phyllis C. Wattis Foundation. It is thanks to individuals, foundations and corporations such as these 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.

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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!

Letif J. M. Ward

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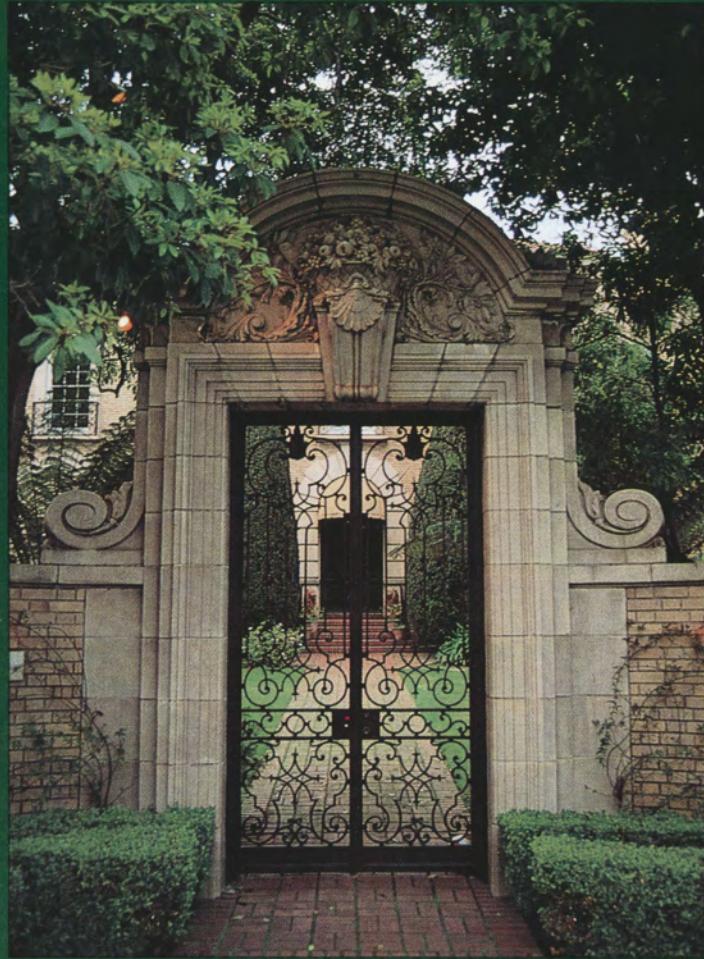
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Opening Night

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La Traviata Verdi
Vaness, Keen, Petersen; Giordani*, Coni*, Skinner, Travis, Wood*, McNeil, Swenson*
Arena/Copley/Conklin/Walker/Munn

Production originally made possible by Louise M. Davies.

Saturday, September 7, 7:00

San Francisco Opera Premiere

War and Peace Prokofiev
Panagulias, Zaremba*, Bogachova*, Keen, Markova-Mikhailenko**, Racette, Claycomb+, Guo+, Mills+, Jepson, Cook, Marsh, Mavrovitis; Kharitonov*, McCauley, Plishka, Marusin*, Alexeiev**, Skinner, Travis Naoumenko**, Hanedanyan**, Ognovenko**, Bezubenkova**, Storojev, Frank, Petersen, Estep, Ledbetter, Gruber+, Harper, Milne*, Gudas, Villanueva, Irmite, Wilborn, Halper*, Vasquez+*
Gergiev**/Savary**/Lebois**/ Schmidt**/Peduzzi**/Morgan/Munn

Made possible by gifts from the Columbia Foundation, Cynthia Wood and the Paul L. and Phyllis C. Wattis Foundation.

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 from Herman J. Miller and Edward J. Clarke. Production owned by the Lyric Opera of Chicago; created through a generous gift from Ameritech/Illinois Bell.

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

Tuesday, October 1, 8:00

Don Giovanni

(Giovanni: Quilico)

Wednesday, October 2, 7:00

War and Peace

(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, Orosez*

Sutej*/Ponnelle/Williams/Ponnelle/

Juerke/Munn

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



*Nelly Miricioiu in San Francisco Opera's
1987 staging of La Traviata.*





THE *Traviata* SAGA



By STEPHANIE VON BUCHAU

It was Marcel Proust who said that, with *La Traviata*, Verdi had lifted *La Dame aux Camélias* into the realm of art. Listeners have not always agreed. When it was first performed at Her Majesty's Theatre in London in 1856, *Traviata* was called "foul and fulminating in its subject matter..." Yet no true opera lover, except for the audience at the opera's disastrous premiere in Venice, has ever really disagreed with Proust. Today, *La Traviata* may have lost its power to *épater le bourgeois*, but it remains the most intimate and one of the most prodigiously melodic of Verdi's twenty-six operas.

Its heroine, Violetta Valéry, a *traviata* or "wayward one," invites our admiration, sympathy and finally our tears and love. She exercised the same fascination for the composer, who didn't alter his score as one might expect after the premiere's catastrophe. Instead, he wrote to a friend, "Am I wrong or are they? I myself believe that the final word on *La Traviata* was not heard last night." This tone of calm resignation shows the thirty-nine year old Verdi in complete control of his craft. The "years in the galley" were over; with *Rigoletto* (1851) and *Il Trovatore* (1853), Verdi had become a confident, mature composer. *La Traviata* is the masterpiece of his middle period.

Verdi first made the acquaintance of *La Dame aux Camélias* in Paris, sometime shortly after its February 1852 premiere. The play was based on a novel of the same title by Alexandre Dumas fils, illegitimate son of the famed author of *The Three Musketeers* and *The Count of Monte Cristo*. Young Dumas had been spurred to literary activity by the tragic end of his love affair with Marie Duplessis, a celebrated courtesan. His quasi-autobiographical novella electrified and polarized French society, which, for all its famed licentiousness, was as hide-bound as the Victorians across the Channel. The shocking suggestion that unmarried love could be idyllic and that a creature of the *demi-monde* (an expression actually invented by Dumas in a later play) could have a noble heart outraged bourgeois morality, while the animated intellectual world of Paris, graced by such exotics as George Sand, Alfred de Musset, Eugène Delacroix and Franz Liszt, one of Marie's real-life lovers, was delighted by it.

The truth, as usual, is considerably less romantic than Dumas's fiction. In fact, Marie Duplessis, born Alphonsine Plessis in humble

Stephanie von Buchau is the San Francisco correspondent for Opera News. She writes about music for many publications including the *Oakland Tribune* and *The Times (London)*.

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THE TRAVIATA SAGA

circumstances, appears not to have had a heart after all. ("Lying keeps my teeth white," was one of her cruel *mots*.) Dumas couldn't afford to keep her in the luxurious style to which she had become accustomed and was forced to share her favors with richer "protectors." For a few months after a flare-up of her consumptive illness, Marie and Alexandre seem to have led the idyllic life we witness in act two of *Traviata*. Yet it wasn't Dumas *père* who came between them, but Marie's greedy, insatiable desire for a life of pleasure. Rather than being a noble Violetta Valéry, Marie Duplessis seems to have been an amoral Manon Lescaut. The young Dumas finally wrote her a letter of farewell: "I am neither rich enough to love you as I would want, nor poor enough to have you love me as you would want."

Marie died of consumption at age 23, after marrying one of her wealthy lovers. Young Dumas was not at her bedside, but in Marseilles, having just returned from a trip with his father to Spain and Africa. (*Père* Dumas seems to have been considerably wiser than *père* Germont.) When Alexandre arrived in Paris, it is said that he stood for a few minutes at her graveside, perhaps receiving inspiration for one of the most powerful passages in the novel, where Armand Duval (note that the initials are the same as Alexandre Dumas) has the body of his beloved exhumed.

Dumas called his fictional heroine Marguerite Gauthier and endowed her with all the fragile beauty—the white skin, the shiny black ringlets, the expressive eyes—that the real Marie possessed, as well as with a tragic insight into the French code of honor that Duplessis never had: "A woman, once she has fallen, can never rise again. God may forgive her, perhaps; the world, never." Liszt, on the other hand, said of the real Marie, "Hers was a delightful nature in which practices commonly held to be corrupt, and rightly so, never touched her soul."

La Dame aux Camélias (or *Camille*, as it is called in English) became so popular in its novelized form that it was inevitable that Dumas should turn it into a play. He shut himself in his suburban villa at Neuilly and in a few weeks transformed his gripping lyrical novella into idealized romantic theater in which the heroine's few remaining flaws are expunged and she becomes that conventional cardboard figure: the repentant sinner. It was the kind of middle-brow sentiment later beloved of the movies, and it is not surprising that Dumas's tear-jerker has been

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made into films starring Sarah Bernhardt (1912); Theda Bara (1917); Pola Negri (1920); and, the most celebrated of all Camilles, Greta Garbo (1936).

At the same time, corny as it is, the play (not the novel) inspired Henry James to write, "Camille remains, in its combination of freshness and form and the feeling of the springtime of life, a singular, an astonishing piece of work. Give it a great place among the love stories of the world." This is the play that Verdi saw during the winter that he and Giuseppina Strepponi spent in Paris (1851-52). Most of Verdi's biographers seem uncertain as to whether he had read the novel before he saw the play. In any case, the story, a powerful contemporary myth, made an indelible impression on the composer and

he began work on *La Traviata* even though he was still preparing the first production of *Il Trovatore* for Rome.

In the same opera season—*Trovatore* appeared on January 19 and *Traviata* on March 6 of the same year; today, when it takes two to three years to get a new opera on the boards, such prodigality boggles the mind—Verdi had also contracted with Venice's La Fenice for a new work. He discussed subjects with his *Trovatore* librettist, Salvatore Cammarano, but also with his friend, the poet Francesco Maria Piave (librettist of *Ernani*, *La Forza del Destino*, *Macbeth*, *Simon Boccanegra*, *Rigoletto*, *Il Corsaro*, *Stiffelio* and *Aroldo*, as well as *Traviata*). Finally, it was decided that Piave, while staying at Sant'Agata, the Verdi country estate in Busseto,

would write a libretto based on the Dumas drama.

Piave (1810-1876) did his work well, keeping strictly to the outline of the original, but pruning scenes and cutting minor characters. In only one place, the break between the first and second acts, does this compression hurt the dramatic coherence of the libretto. At the end of act one, Violetta makes up her mind to stick to her life of heedless pleasure ("Sempre libera"), yet at the beginning of act two, without explanation, she and Alfredo have been living together in the country for several months. Still, Piave's compressions, like those of Boito in *Otello*, often strike the modern reader as an improvement on the original (*pace*, Shakespearean scholars!). For instance,

San Francisco Opera's very first Violetta was Claudia Muzio, who sang the role in the Company's 1924 season. The photo shows her on our stage in 1933, in Act I of La Traviata.

MORTON



when M. Duval, Armand's father, insults Marguerite, she reveals her breeding with a long and eloquent speech which Piave had reduced simply to: "I am a woman, sir, and in my own house. Allow me to leave you, more for your sake than for my own." It is not surprising that such terse dignity forces an admiring exclamation from the outraged Germont: "Quai modi!"

Verdi worked on *Trovatore* and *Traviata* simultaneously, writing music for the latter while supervising the premiere of the former. This feat of separation excites our admiration, for no two operas from the same hand could be more different than the romantic, fiery, heroic *Trovatore* and the gently, intimate, pathetic *Traviata*. Verdi scholars (notably Frank Walker, author of *The Man Verdi*, one of the first and most restrained "psycho-biographies,") speculate that the *Traviata* subject was so sharply clarified in the composer's imagination because its domestic milieu paralleled his own household arrangement.

By 1853, when *Traviata* had its world premiere in Venice, Verdi, thirteen years a widower, had been living for some time "in sin" with Giuseppina Strepponi, the original Abigaille in *Nabucco* (1842). For whatever convoluted psychological reasons, the composer refused to regularize their union, causing Strepponi, a devout Catholic, much distress. The censorious, provincial Bussetani, offering both slights and direct insults, made her life miserable. Between the couple, both of whom suffered ill health during that wet, dreary winter of 1852-53, stood the patriarchal figure of Antonio Barezzi, a wealthy land-owner and arts patron, Verdi's former father-in-law, financial adviser, father-surrogate and possibly the only person the composer ever loved unconditionally. Barezzi, as a bereaved father, naturally disapproved of Verdi's liaison with Giuseppina, though they were later reconciled and she came to love him as much as Verdi did. One can go too far in assigning real-life motivations to artistic inspiration, but it is not possible to dismiss the

similarities between the triangular relationship of Verdi, Giuseppina and Barezzi and that of Alfredo, Violetta and the elder Germont.

However, speculation on what the composer "felt" personally about the subject matter of his operas remains just that—speculation. Verdi was notoriously close-mouthed about his personal feelings. (If you want some amusement while stuck in a traffic jam, try to imagine Giuseppe Verdi as the "guest" on *Geraldo* or the subject of a Barbara Walters interview. Wagner, on the other hand, would have loved it!) The only facts we have about the composition of *Traviata* are sketchy. Apparently Verdi arrived in Venice alone only thirteen days before the scheduled opening. Giuseppina remained behind in Busseto, bored to death with a rigid diet for her dyspepsia. The story goes that Verdi orchestrated the entire opera in those two weeks. Creatively, this would have posed no problem—like Mozart, he conceived music in finished form in his head before writing it

(L. to r.) Richard Crooks (Alfredo), Lucrezia Bori (Violetta), John Howell (Marquis d'Obigny) and Louis D'Angelo (Dr. Grenvil) in San Francisco Opera's 1934 presentation of *La Traviata*.

MORTON



down—but his preoccupation with the score probably played havoc with his supervision of the production.

Reports had already circulated to Sant'Agata of the Fenice's inadequate cast. An anonymous letter from Venice warned that unless the tenor and bass [baritone] were changed, there would be a fiasco. But the tenor and baritone were the least of Verdi's problems. At one point, he officially asked for a new soprano, having Piave write to the Fenice management that the composer "insists with renewed firmness that to sing *Traviata* one must be young, have a graceful figure and sing with passion." Like Richard Strauss, Verdi as a man of the theater was as concerned with how singers looked and acted as with how they sang. When Piave was still working on the libretto, Verdi told him that the role of Violetta must be taken by an "elegante."

Instead, the company soprano at the Fenice was Fanny Salvini-Donatelli, about whom standard reference books are virtually mum; she goes down in history as the woman who single-handedly destroyed *La Traviata*, an unfair and inaccurate assessment. Salvini-Donatelli was born in Florence in 1815; made her debut as Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, which means she was probably a coloratura specialist; Violetta was her only major creation and she died in Milano in 1891. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Opera* enthuses: "Highly regarded as a Verdi interpreter," yet Julian Budden, whose three-volume work on Verdi's operas is the standard textbook, mentions Salvini-Donatelli only in the context of *La Traviata*. So much for "high regard."

It is safe to assume that an inadequate soprano could severely dampen the impact of an opera in which she is not only the leading character, but the only flesh-and-blood creation, yet *why* was she so bad? The critic of *La Gazzetta di Venezia* greatly admired both her singing and Verdi's opera, but the reason usually given is that Salvini-Donatelli was "troppo prosperosa," which means exactly what it sounds like—overweight. Supposedly when Dr. Grenvil sang in act four that Violetta had only a few hours to live, the theater erupted in cat-calls and laughter. Yet in our own era, robust sopranos such as Joan Sutherland, Beverly Sills and Pilar Lorengar have scored major successes as the consumptive heroine of *La Traviata*. A sensitive audience will accept most physical sizes and shapes if the artist is musical and exhibits intense identification with a role.

It seems likely that Salvini-Donatelli

was simply no Violetta, temperamentally, vocally or physically. Yet though the soprano has borne the blame for one of the blackest nights in the history of Italian lyric theater, there were other elements at work to fuel a disaster. The tenor, Lodovico Graziani, went hoarse in act two, probably at the thought of having to sing Alfredo's rigorous cabaletta, "O mio rimorso." Then the baritone, Felice Varesi, who had created Macbeth and Rigoletto, and simply hated the part of the elder Germont, gave a perfunctory performance and later had the bad taste to write

a letter to the editor of the *Gazzetta*, in which he pontificated that while he didn't intend "to set myself up as a judge of the musical worth of *La Traviata*, I maintain that Verdi has not known how to make proper use of the vocal resources of the artists at his disposal." Translation: not enough arias, especially for the baritone.

Whatever the unseemly wrangling afterward, the premiere itself started well. That is, Verdi was called out for bows after the prelude, brindisi and act one duet. Think about it. *La Traviata* is just about the point at which Italian opera



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stops being tied to "numbers" and becomes "music drama." Yet how could dramatic plausibility—even given a soprano as slender as Twiggy—possibly be maintained when the star-struck first nighters were constantly hooting for the composer, like baseball fans demanding that Will Clark take a "curtain call" after hitting one out of Candlestick Park? How Verdi must have *hated* it! No wonder he was such a Gloomy Gus about the state of musical theater in Italy.

The day after the premiere, the com-

poser penned obituaries to his close friends, telling Emanuele Muzio tersely, "*La Traviata* last night—fiasco." To Tito Ricordi, son of his publisher, Verdi wrote, "I'm sorry to give you sad news, but I cannot conceal the truth. *La Traviata* was a fiasco. Let's not inquire into the reasons." To the impresario of Rome's Teatro Apollo, he was a little more forthcoming: "The outcome is a fiasco. A definite fiasco. I do not know whose fault it is; it's better not to speak of it. I will say nothing to you of the music, and allow me to say

nothing about the performers, either." [Italics mine.] This latter, cryptic remark, given the maestro's typical dry tone, strikes me as an indication that he blamed the entire failure on the singers. Indeed, when Angelo Mariani, a distinguished conductor who was one of Verdi's closest musical associates until they had a falling out over the favors of the soprano Teresa Stolz, tried to secure a further performance of *Traviata* by informing the composer that he had the services of several of the original artists, including Fanny

Bidú Sayão as Violetta in her only San Francisco Opera assumption of the role, in 1942.



MORTON

*Beverly Sills in Act I of San Francisco Opera's 1973 *Traviata*.*



JONES

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Salvini-Donatelli, Verdi said absolutely not!

A final suggestion may account for the abject failure of the first *Traviata* performance. The composer envisioned the piece as a contemporary work. Only three months before the premiere, he had written excitedly, "I am doing *La Dame aux Camélias* for Fenice ... it is a contemporary subject. I can imagine another composer not wanting to do it—because of the manners [“costumi” in Italian, which also means costumes], the contemporary period and a thousand other awkward reasons. I am doing it with every pleasure." Yet when the curtain went up at La Fenice on March 6, it revealed a setting in the year 1700, in the reign of Louis le Grand. Can you imagine this swift, tender little romance smothered in the stiff formality of the Sun King's court? The artificial wigs and panniered skirts of the period would effectively nullify the reverse morality of Verdi's dazzling concept. For Violetta Valéry is no Mme. de Maintenon, and the point of *La Traviata* is that wealth, power and *respectability* do not necessarily go hand-in-hand with a noble heart and a pure soul.

Oddly enough, when the Gallo family of Venice approached the composer to suggest that *Traviata* be revived in their tiny Teatro Gallo di San Benedetto the following year, the work was still not presented in modern dress. Indeed, Verdi appears never to have insisted on it again. The 1850s did not become a popular period for staging *Traviata* until its fashions were so quaint that they appeared as much “costume” as did the dress of ancient Rome. Much ink has been spilled psychoanalyzing the cowardice of audiences who couldn't swallow Verdi's medicine if they saw themselves up there on stage—not, mind you, as the *demi-monde*, but as the narrow-minded burghers who condemn a woman to a lonely death merely because she does not bend to their ideal of chastity.

Never mind. Thoroughly rehearsed and starring Maria Spezia, who is described as young, pretty and full of passion, this second *Traviata* production was a triumph. Verdi, now in France, had the grim satisfaction of writing to an Italian friend: "Everything that was heard at the Fenice is now being heard at the San Benedetto. Last time it was a fiasco; this time it is a *furore*. Draw your own conclusions!" □

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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 guest 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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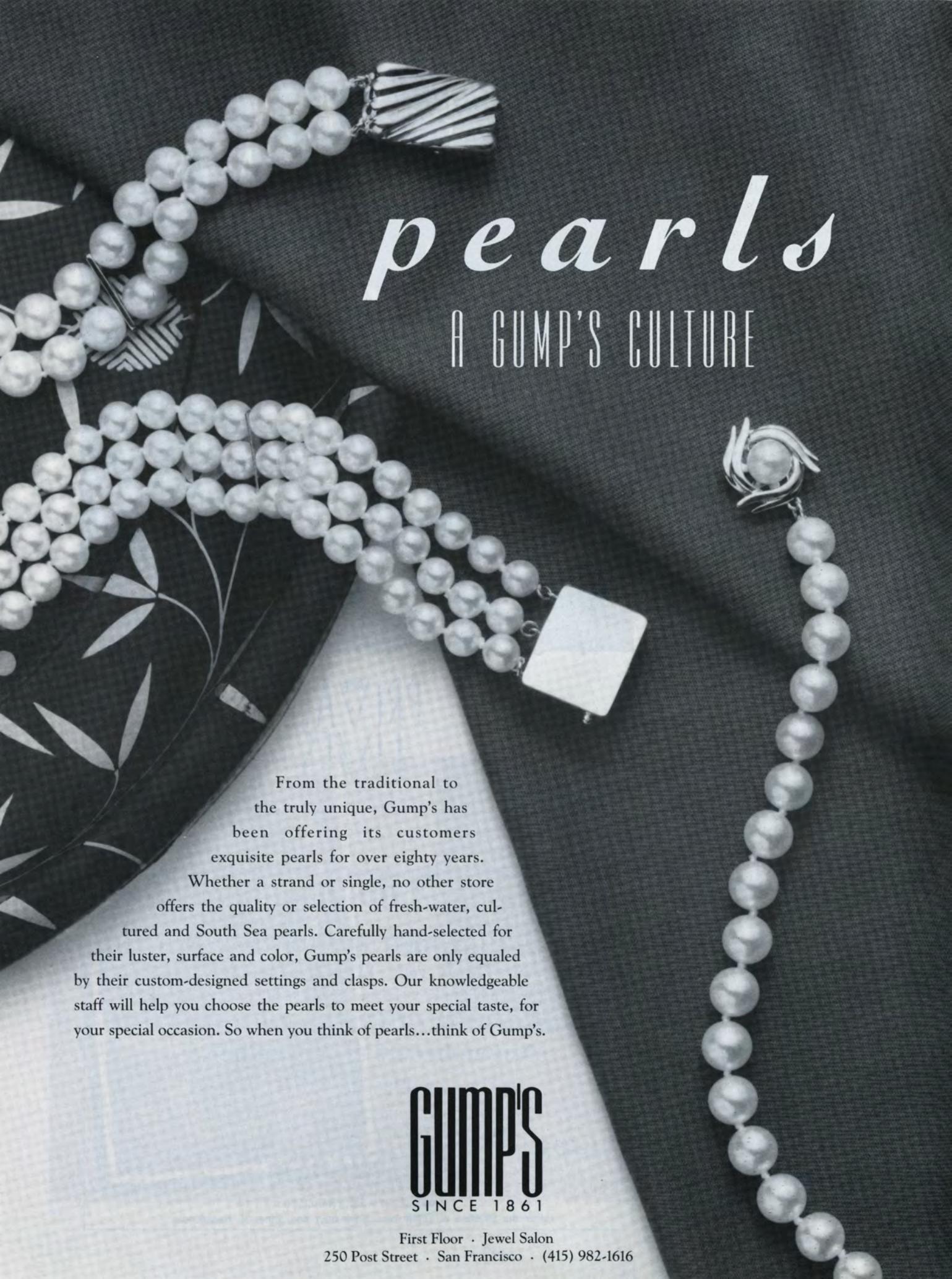
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MORTON

With Sincere Faith

By ARTHUR KAPLAN

Fifty years ago, on October 20, 1941, a largely unheralded young soprano from Bari, Italy made her first appearance on the stage of the War Memorial Opera House performing her signature role, Cio-Cio-San in Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*. She was to sing with the San Francisco Opera for the next twenty years, becoming one of the most beloved divas in the Company's history. This fall, she receives the San Francisco Opera Medal, commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of her debut, the first artist to be so honored. Her name, of course, is Licia Albanese.

Albanese had made her operatic debut in her "lucky opera," as she calls *Butterfly*, before the notoriously difficult public of Parma in 1935. It also served as her successful debut role at the Metropolitan Opera five years later. Her initial performance of Cio-Cio-San in San Francisco had local critics rivaling each other in superlatives to express their delight in discovering a new star in the operatic firmament.

Marie Hicks Davidson of the *Call-Bulletin* wrote, "[Licia Albanese] came, sang and conquered ... She gave one of the most gripping interpretations of the Puccini opera ever heard in San Francisco ... Miss Albanese, in her debut, proved to be a superb actress as well as

Arthur Kaplan, former co-editor of the San Francisco Opera magazine, currently directs opera tours for Dailey-Thorp Travel.

Licia Albanese as Cio-Cio-San and Frederick Jagel as Pinkerton pausing backstage during the dress rehearsal for the 1941 *Madama Butterfly*. The appearance represented the soprano's San Francisco Opera debut as well as the beginning of a 20-year association with the Company.



MORTON

Jan Peerce (Alfredo), Licia Albanese (Violetta) and San Francisco Opera founder Gaetano Merola who was also the evening's conductor, in a photo taken on stage just before the beginning of the 1946 *Traviata*.

a singer with a ravishing voice." The headline in the *Examiner* read: "New Soprano Declared Destined To Star Often in S.F. After Brilliant Performance." The *Examiner* critic, Alexander Fried, enthused, "... she enacted a *Butterfly* that was alive with vivacity, pathos and rending tragedy. Miss Albanese's voice glows evenly throughout a full soprano range. It has point and power. She sings with style and emotion." Alfred Frankenstein of the *Chronicle* perhaps summed it up best: "Her appeal is more than that of a lovely voice, although she has an amply beautiful voice. It is more than a very sympathetic personality and style. It is these things plus the utmost refinement and integrity in the large and the small, in the projection of the big outline and the modeling of the least motif and phrase ... Miss Albanese is really an artist."

The artist was to remain on the Company roster for the next two decades, giving more than 125 performances at the War Memorial and on tour. Licia Albanese holds the record for the largest number of leading roles performed by a soprano in the annals of the Company—an astounding 22. As might be expected, these span a wide spectrum of the Italian repertory, including six Puccini roles—another record—three Verdi and three Mozart roles. But she also interpreted five French parts: Marguerite in *Faust*, Micaëla in *Carmen*, Antonia in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, Massenet's *Manon* and Concepción in Ravel's *L'Heure Espagnole*.

"San Francisco has a special significance for me," the soprano stated in an earlier interview. "Not only because I felt the love of the audience so much, but also because I sang so many of my roles for the first time there: Maddalena in *Andrea Chénier*, Manon Lescaut, Norina in *Don Pasquale*, Martha, Donna Anna and Zerlina, Desdemona, Margherita in *Mefistofele*, Antonia, Suor Angelica, the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro* and Concepción in *L'Heure Espagnole*. This was made possible because of the faith and trust which Maestro [Gaetano] Merola had in young artists, a faith which was carried on with the same devotion by Maestro [Kurt Herbert] Adler." In addition to her performances at the War Memorial, Albanese often sang in summer concerts at Stern Grove under both Maestros Merola and Adler.

Even more than the title role in *Madama Butterfly*, which she performed in an unmatched ten seasons with the San Francisco Opera and with which she is indelibly associated, it is for an-

other heartbreaking title role, Verdi's *La Traviata*, that Albanese is most likely to be remembered by posterity. Unfortunately, her unforgettable interpretation of Cio-Cio-San was never committed to commercial disc. But in 1946, Albanese participated in historic broadcast recordings of both *La Bohème* and *La Traviata* under the baton of the legendary Arturo Toscanini with the NBC Symphony. One hopes these works will be re-released on CD in the current RCA series encompassing all of the maestro's recordings.

Listening afresh to the *Traviata* recording, which also featured Jan Peerce and Robert Merrill (and Toscanini, humming along in the most emotional passage of the score), one is struck anew by the qualities that distinguished the soprano's every performance on stage and disc: the exemplary diction; the instinctive feeling for every nuance of the text; the Italianate delivery; and, most important, the complete identification with the character. Albanese always sang with total and sincere conviction ("Sempre, con fè sincera," ["Always, with sincere faith"] a key phrase from Tosca's "Vissi d'arte," can be said to sum up the soprano's artistic credo).

Her Violetta is a living creation; passionate, vulnerable, desperate in her love for Alfredo and heart-rending in her sacrifice and death. To choose just a few passages which underscore her artistry: In the crucial Act II duet with Father Germont, her voice registers every emotional twist and turn of their conversation—the desperate, gasping "Giammai!" at the thought of renouncing Alfredo's love; the crushed and wounded pianissimo tones of "Dite alla giovine" as she resigns herself to her renunciation and loss; and, finally, the tears in the voice at "Conosca il sacrificio" ("Let him know of my sacrifice") as she bids farewell to Germont. There follows an all-stops-out performance of the heroine's emotional good-bye to Alfredo, which rises in despair to near-hysteria. In the last act, the reading of the letter that precedes "Addio del passato" for once sounds natural, and the little gasps in the recitative, "Oh, come son mutata!" ("Oh, how I've changed!") and "Ah, con tal morbo" ("Ah, with such a disease") carry exceptional force and significance. The aria itself is a gem of character study. Dynamic markings are scrupulously observed, phrases are tellingly broken in emotional response to the text and music, and the final realization of her defeat is rendered in a fragile, sorrowful thread of voice. The entire last scene is extraordinary in its intensity, from the

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growing excitement of her reunion with Alfredo, to the tremendous outpouring of grief in "Gran Dio! Morir si giovine," to the fading *parlando* effort of "Prendi, quest'è l'immagine," culminating in a heartbreakingly convincing delivery of Violetta's final surge of life as the pains and spasms of consumption cease just before death. It is impossible to listen to this consummate performance with a dry eye.

The soprano's first local *Traviata* came three years earlier, hard on the heels of her role debut at the Met in December of 1942 (Albanese holds the all-time record for performances of *Violetta* with the Met—an amazing 92 at the old house and on tour). After the October 10, 1943, performance at the War Memorial, *Chronicle* critic Frankenstein penned this encomium:

Licia Albanese sang the principal role, and if she is not Verdi's *Traviata*, it can mean only that Verdi did not have anyone so good to interpret his most important lyric soprano part.... For once the opera did not seem to have been written for different sopranos, a coloratura in the first act and a lyric in the remaining acts. Albanese's immense vocal skill encompassed everything with consummate musicianship and virtuosity. Add to that as beautiful a quality of voice as the great Italian tradition can produce—soft as silk, smooth as cream, subtle to the highest degree in nuance, magnificently opulent and without the slightest trace of the shrill or the exaggerated. Last of all, there was as fragile and delicate and moving a characterization as the finest speaking actress might provide.

Albanese went on to sing the role in a record eight seasons with the San Francisco Opera—five times in the years 1943 through 1948 alone—including a gala performance of Act II in Pasadena in 1955.

In 1947, she was granted the singular honor of opening the Company's silver anniversary season as *Violetta*, heading a stellar cast that included Jan Peerce and Leonard Warren. Of a subsequent performance that season, the *Chronicle* reviewer Spencer Barefoot wrote, "... [Miss Albanese's] radiant, brilliant characterization of *Violetta* is a matter of excellent musicianship, extraordinary histrionic ability and complete identification of every note, inflection and gesture with the essential meaning of both words and music."

With her distinctive timbre, her lirico-spinto voice, slightly darker at the bot-

tom and capable of rising to luxuriant, swelling climaxes at the top, and her heart-on-sleeve delivery, the petite soprano was ideally suited to the fragile heroines of the Puccini repertory. Albanese's *Mimi*, *Butterfly* and *Liù* were justly celebrated. But she also had great success in the *Trittico* roles (*Giorgetta* in *Il Tabarro*, *Suor Angelica* and *Lauretta* in *Gianni Schicchi*), not to mention *Manon Lescaut*, as attested by the famous RCA recording with Jussi Bjoerling as *Des Grieux* under the baton of Jonel Perlea.

She occasionally made forays into the more dramatic Puccini literature in concert, on disc (Albanese was the first soprano to record a complete recital album of the composer's arias), and on stage, whenever she could persuade the impresario to let her have a go at *Tosca*. She even expressed the desire to portray Minnie, the gun-slinging heroine of *La Fanciulla del West*, usually reserved for sopranos of a more physically and vocally commanding nature.

Following her sole performance of the Roman diva at the War Memorial on October 20, 1955, opinions were mixed regarding her vocal suitability for the role, although no one denied the dramatic intensity of her interpretation. *Examiner* critic Fried mentioned the extra scream Albanese emitted at the heroine's death leap, which was much in keeping with "the force and passion ... [of her] vivid *Tosca*." R.H. Hagen of the *Chronicle* spoke of her "warm, eminently human and pre-eminently Italian portrait ... if its visual and dramatic movement harkened back a little to the Nineteenth Century and the Delsartean theory of gesture, wherein all tragic gestures classically begin with the elbow, well I'm sure if *Floria Tosca* had been playing herself, she could not have made the role more authentically period. As for Albanese's voice, it has never been in better form this season, and never so good as in 'Vissi d'arte' ... which contained some of the most beautifully sustained pianissimos that any soprano has produced at the Opera House for a long, long time."

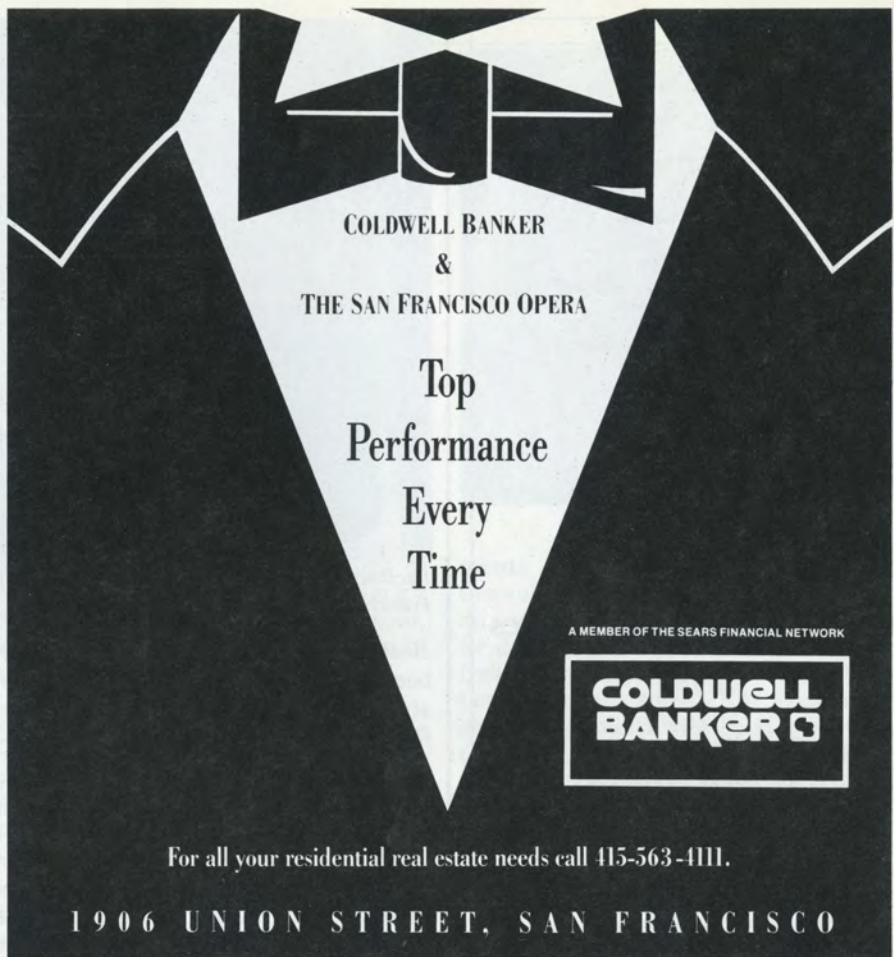
Hardly anyone ever complained about the soprano's soft voice, but some wondered aloud whether she possessed the vocal heft to sustain the more heroic passages of the heavier parts she attempted. Fried, who had found her miscast as *Desdemona* in the 1947 *Otello*, with a voice "simply too slender for the role," and had similar though lesser misgivings about her Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, was amazed by the results of her *Donna Anna* in the 1955 *Don Giovanni*. "Since *Donna Anna* is usually

a role for full dramatic sopranos," he stated, "and Miss Albanese's voice is somewhat lighter than that, her success in the role was as surprising as it was complete. She made the role emotionally real to an extraordinary degree Miss Albanese's singing projected her best, warmest musical qualities." Frankenstein, who had been an early supporter of the soprano in weightier assignments, waxed lyrical over her interpretation of the aggrieved Donna Anna. "Miss Albanese, who looks like a Murillo madonna, is the only singer I have ever heard both as the comic Zerlina and the tragic Donna Anna she sang with unparalleled warmth, purity and beauty of tone. Her floriture were not always as



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Licia Albanese (Maddalena) and Mario del Monaco (Chénier) during the first act of San Francisco Opera's 1950 presentation of Andrea Chénier.



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Luciano Pavarotti and Licia Albanese at the 1973 "Opera in the Park" concert in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park.

clear or accurate as they might have been, but somehow one didn't care, or at least not much. The heart of the role has seldom been so appealingly unfolded."

Getting to the very heart of a role is an Albanese specialty. She portrays each of her characters in a direct, no-holds-barred vocal and histrionic manner. There may not always be a great deal of subtlety in the Albanese approach, but it inevitably gets you right in the gut. She is one of the rare artists who not only sings the notes, but sings the meaning of the words behind the notes. There is never any doubt what her character is feeling; every phrase conveys a specific emotion. She makes you understand the text even if you don't understand a word of the language. It's all there in the voice.

The last time San Francisco audiences heard that unmistakable voice in public was on September 2, 1973, when Albanese, joined by Luciano Pavarotti, took part in the second "Opera in the Park" concert under the baton of the late Kurt Herbert Adler. Then general director of the San Francisco Opera, Adler chose the occasion to honor the memory of his illustrious predecessor and founder of the Company, Gaetano Merola, who had died with baton in hand leading a pre-season concert in Stern Grove almost exactly twenty years earlier. Who better to represent the legion of artists for whom Merola was a beloved friend, mentor and conductor than Licia Albanese, one of the late maestro's favorite singers?

For the estimated 14,000 opera aficionados in attendance that cold, foggy, windswept Sunday afternoon, memories of the event would linger for years to come. Pavarotti, in those pre-handkerchief days, had a wool scarf wrapped

tightly around his throat. Albanese, after shivering through her first solo clad only in a multicolored flower print dress, reappeared with a mink jacket around her shoulders. She performed three arias from her most dramatic repertoire: "L'altra notte, in fondo al mare" from Boito's *Mefistofele*, "Io son l'umile ancilla" from Cilea's *Adriana Lecouvreur* and, one of her most famous selections, "In quelle trine morbide" from Puccini's *Manon Lescaut*. The *Chronicle* reviewer wrote, "She is still marvelous to look at, and the years have been miraculously kind to that glorious voice. The tone is still round and flows quite effortlessly. And the manner in which she carries it forward to a resounding climax would be the envy of any singer in her prime." The two-hour concert closed with highlights from Act I of *La Bohème*. Pavarotti took the hand of his diminutive colleague as the wind whipped through the Golden Gate Park concourse. The opening words of his aria, "Che gelida manina" ("Your tiny hand is frozen"), were probably never more appropriate. The *Examiner* reviewer said that "the humanness of [Albanese's] 'Mi chiamano Mimi' was as tender as of yore." The audience then listened rapturously to the twice-familiar strains of "O soave fanciulla" and responded with "an air of controlled pandemonium."

During intermission, Albanese and Pavarotti received the keys to the city from then-Mayor Joseph Alioto. At the concert's end, the soprano was presented with a huge bouquet of red roses. She quipped to the adoring public, "Next time I will sing for you 'I Left My Heart in San Francisco.'" Move over, Tony Bennett. Licia Albanese is back. □



CAROL VANESS

Soprano **Carol Vaness** portrays Violetta in *La Traviata*. A first-place winner in the 1976 San Francisco Opera Auditions, she has had a close association with the Company since then. She was an Affiliate Artist for two years in the San Francisco/Affiliate Artists-Opera Program, during which time she appeared as Vitellia in Mozart's *Titus* and Cleopatra in *Julius Caesar* for Spring Opera Theater. She made her 1977 Company debut as the Priestess in *Aida* and appeared that same season in *Turandot* and *I Puritani*. During the 1978 season Miss Vaness sang Mimì in the English-language performances of *La Bohème*. She has since returned as Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*, Blanche in *Dialogues of the Carmelites*, and as guest soloist at the Kurt Herbert Adler Memorial Concert in 1988. A leading artist at the Metropolitan Opera, her debut was as Armida in Handel's *Rinaldo* during the company's 100th anniversary season. This was followed by Vitellia in *La Clemenza di Tito*, Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*, Tatyana in *Eugene Onegin*, the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Elettra in *Idomeneo*, Marguerite in *Faust*, Rosalinde in *Die Fledermaus*, the title role of *Manon*, and Donna Anna, which was also the role of her debut at the Glyndebourne Festival, Munich State Opera, Deutsche Oper Berlin, and the Vienna State Opera, among other companies. Additional debuts include Nedda in *Pagliacci* at the Paris Opera; Mimì in *La Bohème* at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden; Marguerite in *Faust* at the Rome Opera; and her debut at Milan's La Scala as Elettra in *Idomeneo* on the opening night of the 1990 season. In demand as a concert soloist, she has sung with the major orchestras of the world including the Philadelphia Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra, American Symphony, Seattle Symphony, Boston Symphony, Bavarian Radio Orchestra, and the English Chamber Orchestra. She is a veteran of numerous television appearances whose growing discography includes two complete recordings of *Don Giovanni* (as Donna Anna under Haitink and as Donna Elvira under Muti), as well



SUSAN PATTERSON

as *Così fan tutte*, two solo albums of Mozart and Verdi arias, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and *Missa Solemnis*, Rossini's *Stabat Mater*, and an album of Haydn Masses.

Soprano **Susan Patterson** sings the role of Violetta in *La Traviata*. A 1986-87 Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, she has performed a number of roles with the Company: Inez in *Il Trovatore*, Mrs. Gobineau in *The Medium*, Thibault in *Don Carlos*, Marguerite in the student matinee performances of *Faust*, Violetta in a student matinee performance of *La Traviata*, Chloe in *The Queen of Spades*, Anne Trulove in *The Rake's Progress*, the First Flower Maiden in *Parsifal*, Angelica in *Orlando Furioso*, Constanze in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* and, this summer, Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*. As a member of the Merola Opera Program and Western Opera Theater, she sang roles ranging from Helen in *There and Back* and Lucia I/Lucia II in *The Long Christmas Dinner* (both by Hindemith), to Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni*. Since scoring a major success in her European debut as Violetta with the Welsh National Opera, she has repeated the role at the Lyric Opera of Chicago and Atlanta Opera. She has also performed Musetta in *La Bohème* in Atlanta, Rosalinde in *Die Fledermaus* with Marin Opera, all three soprano roles in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* in Palm Beach, and Constanze at the Carmel Bach Festival and at last summer's Aix-en-Provence Festival. Recent operatic engagements include her debut at Milan's La Scala in Cherubini's *Lodoiska*, Countess Adele in *Le Comte Ory* at the Netherlands Opera, her Canadian debut with the Vancouver Opera as Gilda in *Rigoletto*, and Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* for Opera Pacific. Miss Patterson is a popular concert performer and has appeared as soloist in Szymanowski's *Stabat Mater* and Mahler's Second Symphony with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, as well as in Handel's *Messiah* with the Minnesota Orchestra and the Honolulu Symphony. Future engage-



CATHERINE KEEN

ments include Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* and performances of *La Donna del Lago* at La Scala, Aspasia in *Mitridate*, *Re di Ponto* at the Netherlands Opera, *Lodoiska* at Italy's Ravenna Festival, *Le Comte Ory* with Rome's RAI Symphony, as well as Violetta with Palm Beach Opera. The soprano is a graduate of the universities of Samford and Florida State, and is currently working toward a doctorate at Indiana University.

Mezzo-soprano **Catherine Keen** portrays Flora in *La Traviata* and Sonya in *War and Peace*. A 1989-90 Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center and a Merola Opera Program participant in 1987 and 1988, she made her Company debut in the summer of 1989 as Kasturbai in *Satyagraha*, and has since sung numerous roles at the War Memorial. They include Mistress Quickly in the family performance of *Falstaff*, Schwertleite in *Die Walküre*, Maddalena in *Rigoletto*, Prince Orlofsky of *Die Fledermaus* and, this summer, the Third Lady in *The Magic Flute*. Opera Center credits include Leocasta in Handel's *Giustino*, The Dark Lady and The Cook in *The Ghost Sonata*, and Suzuki in *Madame Butterfly* for Western Opera Theater. Miss Keen made her European debut in 1989 with the Deutsche Oper Berlin as Dalila in *Samson et Dalila*, and was soloist with the Cincinnati Symphony in performances of *El Amor Brujo*. A Schwabacher Debut recitalist earlier this year, she recently appeared as soloist with the Sacramento Symphony in Prokofiev's *Alexander Nevsky* and in concerts at the Carmel Bach Festival. She has appeared as soloist with the San Francisco Symphony, Indianapolis Symphony, Columbus Symphony, Sinfonia San Francisco, and at the Cincinnati May Festival and the Hollywood Bowl Festival. Future assignments include a recording of *La Vida Breve* under the baton of Jesus Lopez-Cobos, as well as *Samson et Dalila* and *Luisa Miller* at the Netherlands Opera. Miss Keen is the recipient of a 1990 George London/William Sullivan Study Grant.



YANYU GUO

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 Conservatory 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 *Cosi 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 Washington Opera.

In her 23rd season with San Francisco Opera, mezzo-soprano **Donna Petersen** appears as Annina in *La Traviata*. Among her more than 30 roles with the Company are the Innkeeper in *Boris Godunov*, Sister Mathilde in *Dialogues of the Carmelites*, Mother Goose in *The Rake's Progress*, Marcellina in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Mrs. Sedley in *Peter Grimes*, Grimgerde in *Die Walküre* (a role she has performed in seven different San Francisco Opera stagings), Mary in *Der Fliegende Holländer*, Filipyevna in *Eugene Onegin*, the Sister Monitor in *Suor Angelica*, and Giovanna in *Rigoletto*. Miss Petersen has toured extensively with Western Opera Theater, has sung numerous seasons with Spring Opera Theater and appeared with the Lyric Opera of Chicago, San Diego Op-



DONNA PETERSEN

era and the Guild Opera of Los Angeles. Concert engagements include appearances with the San Francisco Symphony, Oakland Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Honolulu Symphony and the National Symphony Orchestra of Mexico City, as well as concerts in Europe and Australia. Miss Petersen recently celebrated 20 years as head of the Voice Department at Mills College. This May, she was soloist in the New York premiere of Schnittke's Requiem in Carnegie Hall.

Tenor **Marcello Giordani** makes his San Francisco Opera debut as Alfredo in *La Traviata*, a role he first performed to great acclaim at the Bilbao Festival in Spain during the 1989-90 season. Born in Sicily, winner of the Spoleto competition in 1986, Giordani made his professional stage debut to rave reviews in May 1987, having been called as a last minute replacement to sing the Duke in *Rigoletto*. 1988 saw him again as Verdi's Duke in Lucerne's new production, followed by Rossini's *Stabat Mater*, a Pacini Requiem in Lucca, and then his La Scala debut as Rodolfo in *La Bohème*. Additional Rodolfo's followed in Rio de Janeiro. The tenor's American debut role was Nadir in Portland Opera's *Pearl Fishers*, a role repeated this year for Opera Pacific. Giordani's first visit to Tokyo in October 1988 presented him as Pinkerton in Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*, repeated for his Seattle Opera debut in the spring of 1989. His Spoleto USA debut took place in Charleston, S.C. in May, 1990, as Arturo in Bellini's *La Straniera*. Baltimore then heard him as Gounod's *Faust*, as did Portland, Oregon. A Houston Grand Opera debut in early 1990 as the Duke in *Rigoletto* was followed by a spring production featuring his Pinkerton. Then it was Trieste for a first Nemorino in Donizetti's *L'Elisir d'Amore*. Further debuts were the Canadian Opera's season opening new production of *Madama Butterfly* followed by a first Edgardo in Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* for Lyric Opera of Chicago. Giordani's Arena di Verona debut, as the Duke in *Rigoletto*, took place in July 1991.



MARCELLO GIORDANI

Mexican tenor **Jorge Lopez-Yáñez** appears as Alfredo in *La Traviata*. Since his San Francisco Opera debut last season in which he sang the role of Alfred in *Die Fledermaus*, the tenor has been busy with *Le Postillon de Longjumeau* and Handel's *Alcina* for the Geneva Opera, Fenton in *Falstaff* at the Los Angeles Music Center Opera, his debut with the Lyric Opera of Chicago as Alfred in *Die Fledermaus*, and his debut at the Châtelet in Paris in *Alcina*. Also in his schedule were performances with Virginia Opera in *La Traviata* and *Anna Bolena*. Since his debut in Hannover in 1988 as the Duke in *Rigoletto*, he has been a regular guest with several German opera houses including Frankfurt, Cologne, Düsseldorf and Stuttgart. After earning an engineering degree in Mexico, Lopez-Yáñez came to the U.S. for vocal studies at California State University in Northridge. He began his professional career with the Los Angeles Music Center Opera, where he sang the Prince in student performances of *La Cenerentola*, and the Long Beach Civic Light Opera, where he gained experience in operetta, appearing in *The Merry Widow* and *The New Moon*. He won second and third prizes, respectively, in the 1985 and 1986 Metropolitan Opera West Coast Regional Auditions and was a finalist in several other competitions, including the San Francisco Opera Auditions and the Zachary Auditions, which awarded him first prize in 1987. The tenor has sung a number of recitals in California and has appeared in concert and on several television programs in Mexico.

Baritone **Paolo Coni** makes his San Francisco Opera debut as Germont, a role in which he has already appeared at the Metropolitan Opera and at La Scala, Milan. An Italian native now resident in Bologna, Coni has been heard at the Vienna State Opera, Rome Opera and Teatro San Carlo, Naples, as well as Florence, Bologna, Turin, Parma, Geneva, Cologne, Hamburg, Marseilles, Lyon and Barcelona. In May, 1988, he made his United States debut under James Conlon at the Cincinnati May Festival singing the Miller in Verdi's *Luisa Miller*. Marcello in

Continued on page 45

San Francisco Opera

ARTISTS

Harolyn Blackwell*	Cecilia Gasdia	Jane Marsh	Angela Randell
Irina Bogachova*	Denise Graves*	Reveka Mavrovitis	Gabriele Schnaut**
Jacalyn Bower	Yanyu Guo+	Mary Mills+	Hanna Schwarz
Laura Claycomb+	Cynthia Haymon*	Marilyn Mims	Nadine Secunde*
Elizabeth Connell	Kristine Jepson	Ann Panagulias	Carol Vaness
Catherine Cook*+	Gwyneth Jones	Susan Patterson	Elena Zaremba**
Helga Dernesch	Catherine Keen	Donna Petersen	Delores Ziegler*
Kallen Esperian*	Kathleen Kuhlmann	Ashley Putnam	
Maria Fortuna+	Olga Markova-Mikhailenko**	Patricia Racette	
Valery Alexeiev**	Micah Gruber+	Frank Lopardo*	Gino Quilico
Brian Asawa*	Paul Gudas	Jorge Lopez-Yáñez	Samuel Ramey
Gennadi Bezubenkov**	Robert Hale	Yuri Marusin**	Peter Rose**
Vladimir Chernov*	Ross Halper*	Barry McCauley	Timothy Sarris*
Stephen Condry*	Grier Hanedanyan**	Dennis McNeil	Michael Schade*
Paolo Coni*	Daniel Harper	Robert Milne*	Brian Schexnayder
John David De Haan	Kristopher Irmiter	Alfred Muff	Philip Skinner
Mark Delavan	William Johns	Alexandre Naoumenko**	Nikita Stoyejev
Stephen Dupont*	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
			James Wood*

CONDUCTORS

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

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	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	Joy Korst	Sharon Mueller	Shelly Seitz Saarni
Julianne Booth	Ann Hughes	Sharon Navratil	Sue Ellen Scheppke
Roberta Bowman	Christina Jaqua	Alexandra Nehra	Claudia Siefer
Pamela Dale	Dallas Lane	Rose Parker	Page Swift
Dottye 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

Jill Anderson	Marcia Gronewold	Christine Reimer	Susan McClelland Taylor
Candida Arias-Duazo	Linda Jaqua	Vyna Restell	Traci Tornquist
Joan Beal	Lise Lindstrom	Janine Bartalini Shafer	Delia Voitoff
Deborah Benedict	Wendy Loder	Bonnie Shapiro-Haroutunian	Darla Wigginton
Christine Callan	Ellyn Peabody	Diana Smith	Susan Witt
Ellen Glikbarg			
John Beauchamp	Peter Girardot	John P. Minagro	James Shields
William Berges	Gerald Hennig	John Musselman	Robert Steiner
Mario Dioneda	Craig Knudsen	William H. Neil	Erich Stratmann
Dale Emde	Gregory Marks	John Owens	Grant Thompson
Tim Enders	Walter Matthes	William Pickersgill	Bill Tredway
Mats Ernmark	Donald Matthews	Robert V. Presley	James G. Weaver
Dario Di Maria Fraticelli	Tom McEachern	Lawrence Rush	

DANCERS

Carolyn Houser Carvajal	Marina Hotchkiss	Debra Rose
Nora Heiber	Michele Nichols	Katherine Warner
Lee Bell	Vincent Cowart	Danny Furlong
James Conlin	Gregory Dawson	Gideon Mijo

MIMES

Dudley Brooks	Loren Nordlund
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SUPERNUMERARIES

San Francisco Opera gratefully acknowledges the support of its many supernumeraries who have volunteered their services for this year's production of *War and Peace*.

Susan Anderson	Renée DeJarnatt	Ann Paras	Carolyn Waugh
Phyllis Blair	Joan Imbeau	Stephanie Salter	Caper Whitfield
Regina Bustillos	Andrea Kohlruss	Beverly Terry	Deidre Whitfield
Thomas Abels	Jim Ensign	Frank Kulesza	Laurel Winzler
Edward Alexander	Richard Fehler	Dan Kyte	Dennis Reichard
Brett Allen	Angelo Festa	Steve Lavezzoli	Tyler Ribera
Gene Angell	C.J. Figueroa	Greg Lawrence	Bill Roehl
John Atkinson	H.T. Fish	Bruce Lawrence	Steven Rosen
Allan Benson	Ted Foster	Sherman Lee	Louis Schilling
Michael Berkowitz	Michael Giles	Virgil Lee	Robert Schwei
Stephen Bloom	Jeffrey Gillman	James Lesko	Eric Schwier
Walter Blumst	Harold Ginsberg	Michael Luque	Harold Scott
Tom Burroughs	John Giosso	Dan MacDuff	Lloyd Seevers
Roy Cairo	Tom Giuliano	Dave Manning	Bruce Sharlow
Peter Cannon	Frank Glennon	Toby Marton	Jeffrey Sheeder
Tom Carlisle	David Grant	Seth Meisler	Thomas Sherwood
Chip Carman	Stephen Greengard	Daniel Melia	Philip Shulman
Al Carrie	Dan Greenleaf	Leo Menashe	John Sinclair
Joe Castrovinci	Vincent Guilin	Belden Menkus	Geoff Skidmore
Bernard Cherin	Felix Gulman	Ed Meyers	Francis Sommers
William Chiles	Stephen Guthrie	Kenneth Mielen	Roy Souza
David Clover	Neil Hale	Jim Miller	John Stein
Joseph Cohen	Jesse Hargus	Ian Mishkin	Kevin Stich
Scott Colby	Scott Hendrickson	Steven Moulds	Don Stoddard
Rudy Cook	Bill Higgins	William Mulder	Lawrence Stotter
Douglas Couture	Albert Hilbert	Mark Ndjesandjo	Malcolm Stouse
Brian Lee Cronk	Ted Hlavac	Jeremiah O'Connor	Michael Strickland
Copley Crosby	Allan Hubacker	Kieran O'Sullivan	Raymond Sullivan
Vincent Cruz	Larry Hunnicutt	Richard Pallowick	Tom Tillman
Francis Danielson	Don Hyde	Fernando Parces-Enriquez	Martin Toggweiler
Peter de Petra	Bruce Jewett	Alex Pattison	Robert Tuller
Kelly Decker	Bob Johnson	Stephen Pennington	Allen Tusting
Charles Democko	Robert Jones	Leo Pereira	George Weiss
Mark Depke	Frank Jorgensen	Andre Persidsky	C. Murray Wellons
Brian Devine	Ron Kakiki	Mike Pesavento	Gary Wendt-Bogear
Joe Dial	Keith Kamrath	Oliver Pollard	Kevin Wewerka
Jim Diederick	Mike Kane	Brian Pori	Silas Wheaton
Mikko Disini	Bill Klaproth	Mark Purcell	Daniel Wilson
Russ Dotter	Andrew Korniej	Tom Purcell	Leslie York
Jim Dyvad	Ron Kos	Brian Rawlinson	Jerry Zall
			Jerry Zientara
			Arthur Zigas

This production was originally made possible by Louise M. Davies.

Opera in four acts by GIUSEPPE VERDI

Libretto by FRANCESCO MARIA PIAVE

Based on the play *La Dame aux Camélias* by ALEXANDRE DUMAS fils

La Traviata

(in Italian)

Conductor

Maurizio Arena

Ian Robertson (Nov. 25, 29; Dec. 5)

Production

John Copley

Set Designer

John Conklin

Costume Designer

David Walker

Lighting Designer

Thomas J. Munn

Chorus Director

Ian Robertson

Choreographer

Adela Clara

Musical Preparation

Robert Morrison

Bryndon Hassman

Susan Miller Hult

Ernest Fredric Knell

Svetlana Gorzhevskaya

Philip Eisenberg

Prompter

Philip Eisenberg

Susan Miller Hult (Nov. 25, 29; Dec. 5)

Assistant Stage Director

Paula Williams

Stage Manager

Jerry Sherk

Scenery constructed in

San Francisco Opera Scenic Studios

Costumes executed by

San Francisco Opera Costume Shop,

Dale Wibben and Jean Lamprell

First performance:

Venice, March 6, 1853

First San Francisco Opera performance:

October 4, 1924

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 6 AT 7:30

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11 AT 7:30

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 14 at 8:00

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 18 AT 7:30

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 22 AT 2:00

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 27 AT 8:00

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 29 AT 8:00

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 25 AT 7:30

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 29 AT 8:00

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5 AT 7:30

CAST

(in order of appearance)

Sept. 6, 11, 14, 18, Nov. 25, 29; Dec. 5
22, 27, 29

<i>Violetta Valery</i>	Carol Vaness	Susan Patterson
<i>Doctor Grenvil</i>	Dale Travis	James Wood
<i>Baron Douphol</i>	Philip Skinner	Philip Skinner
<i>Flora Bervoix</i>	Catherine Keen	Yanyu Guo†
<i>Marquis d'Obigny</i>	Mark Delavan	Mark Delavan
<i>Annina</i>	Donna Petersen	Donna Petersen
<i>Gastone</i>	Dennis McNeil	Dennis McNeil
<i>Alfredo Germont</i>	Marcello Giordani*	Jorge Lopez-Yáñez
<i>Giuseppe</i>	John Swenson*	John Swenson
<i>Giorgio Germont</i>	Paolo Coni*	Gaétan Laperrière
<i>A messenger</i>	Raymond Murcell	Raymond Murcell
<i>A servant</i>	Jere Torkelsen	Jere Torkelsen

Demimondaines, gentlemen, servants

Solo Dancers: Suzanne Mendieta*, Paula Reyes, Antonio Lopez

*San Francisco Opera debut

†1991 Adler Fellow

TIME AND PLACE: Mid-19th century Paris and environs

ACT I Violetta's house

INTERMISSION

ACT II A country house near Paris

INTERMISSION

ACT III Flora's house

INTERMISSION

ACT IV Violetta's house

Supertitles by Jerry Sherk, San Francisco Opera.

The Opening Night performance is sponsored by Lexus,
a Division of Toyota Motor Sales U.S.A., Inc.

*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 three hours and twenty five minutes.

La Traviata / Synopsis

ACT I

A party is taking place at the home of Violetta Valery, a beautiful Parisian demimondaine. Gastone arrives and presents his friend, Alfredo Germont, telling Violetta that Alfredo has long been a silent admirer and had even called daily during her illness to ask about her. Baron Douphol, one of Violetta's "protectors," is angered by the conversation and refuses to propose a toast when invited to by Gastone. Alfredo then accepts the invitation, and sings an impassioned tribute to beauty and love. Later, as the others go to another room to dance, Violetta is overcome by a fainting spell. Alfredo stays behind and confesses that he has been in love with her for a year. Violetta offers him friendship instead of love and gives him a flower, bidding him return when it has withered. Alfredo joyously accepts and bids her goodnight. When her guests have gone, Violetta muses thoughtfully on Alfredo's proffered love, but finally returns to her true character and declares that she must remain forever free to pass from pleasure to pleasure.

ACT II

Violetta is living with Alfredo in the country, having abandoned her life of ease and luxury in town. Annina, Violetta's maid and confidante, enters and tells Alfredo she has been sent to arrange the sale of Violetta's property, which must be sold to pay their debts. Alfredo suddenly understands the sacrifices which Violetta has made in order to live with him and leaves for Paris, determined not to be shamed by her sacrifice. Violetta enters. She receives an unexpected visitor, Giorgio Germont, Alfredo's father, who declares that Alfredo is ruining himself to keep her as his mistress. When Germont comments on the luxury of the country retreat, Violetta shows him the papers which have been prepared for the sale of all her possessions. He asks her to give up Alfredo, explaining that by continuing the liaison, Alfredo is endangering the impending marriage of his younger sister. Germont's insistence finally convinces Violetta, who agrees to leave Alfredo forever. She is preparing a letter as Alfredo returns. Germont has gone out into the garden. Alfredo, not realizing his father has already arrived, explains that Germont has written him a severe letter but that he feels sure he will approve of Violetta as soon as he sees her. Pretending to leave so as not to be present during the meeting of father and

son, Violetta goes out. A messenger returns with her letter of farewell. Alfredo is stricken with grief at the loss of Violetta, and when his father tries to persuade him to return to his family, Alfredo refuses. Finding on the table an invitation which Flora had sent Violetta, he resolves to go to Flora's in the hope of finding Violetta.

ACT III

Alfredo arrives at Flora's house as the guests are beginning to gamble. Then Violetta arrives, escorted by Baron Douphol. Alfredo is incredibly lucky at cards, and explains that he who is unlucky in love is lucky at cards. The Baron, incensed at Alfredo's insolence, challenges him to play. Alfredo accepts and beats the Baron repeatedly at high stakes. When all the others go in to dinner, Violetta remains behind to entreat Alfredo to leave lest the Baron challenge him to a duel. Alfredo answers that he will leave, but only if she accompanies him. Unwilling to reveal that she must break off with him because of his father, Violetta declares that she is in love with the Baron. Alfredo, in a frenzy of jealousy, calls all the guests into the room and announces that without knowing it he has been living with Violetta at great sacrifice on her part. In a rage, he throws money at her feet and calls upon all to witness that he has paid her in full. Germont has entered just in time to witness Alfredo's caddish behavior and joins the others in reviling him for his conduct. Alfredo, realizing the lengths to which his jealousy has carried him, is contrite, but realizes that he is helpless to make amends. The Baron assures Alfredo that he must answer for the insult on the field of honor.

ACT IV

Violetta's illness has brought her to the point of death. Her physician, Dr. Grenvil, calls at her home, examines her and tells Annina that she has but a few hours to live. Violetta reads a letter from the elder Germont, in which she learns that Alfredo has gone abroad after wounding the Baron in a duel. He knows now of the great sacrifice which Violetta has made and is returning to beg her forgiveness. Alfredo returns and the two are reunited at last. But it is too late. Violetta, comforted by the presence of the man whom she has so tragically loved, dies in his arms.

The performance of Monday, November 25, is sponsored by Andersen Consulting.

La Traviata

Photos taken in rehearsal
by Marty Sohl

Carol Vaness





Carol Vaness



Carol Vaness, Paolo Coni

Carol Vaness



Catherine Keen



Carol Vaness, Philip Skinner





Marcello Giordani



Carol Vaness

Photo: Morris, Courtesy, Portland Opera



Paolo Coni



(L. to r., top) Mark Delavan, Dale Travis, Dennis McNeil;
(Bottom) Catherine Keen, Carol Vaness

(L. to r.) Suzanne Mendieta, Antonio Lopez, Paula Reyes



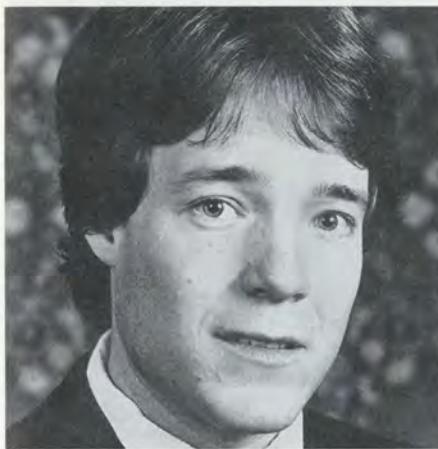


Donna Petersen, Carol Vaness



Carol Vaness





JORGE LOPEZ-YÁÑEZ

Puccini's *La Bohème* served him well for debuts with both the Metropolitan Opera and the Royal Opera, Covent Garden. In addition to Verdi's Germont and Miller, Coni's repertoire includes roles in *I Vespri Siciliani*, *Falstaff*, *Don Carlo*, *Simon Boccanegra*, *Un Ballo in Maschera*, *Il Trovatore* and *Ernani*. Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* was the opera of his professional debut at Viterbo's "Festival Barocco." Other bel canto operas in which he has appeared are *Roberto Devereux*, *I Puritani* and *La Favorita*. In addition, the baritone sang Belcore in *L'Elisir d'Amore* for the Metropolitan Opera's Concerts in the Park prior to his house debut, while Bellini's *Il Pirata* represented his debut with the Opera Orchestra of New York. For Bologna he has also performed in Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*.



PAOLO CONI

Baritone **Gaétan Laperrière** performs Germont, a role he first sang with Canadian Opera, Toronto, where he won that company's Young Mozart Singers competition in 1984. The native of Laval, Quebec, made his San Francisco Opera debut during the 1989 season as Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly*, which he has performed with great success in Washington, D.C., Seattle, and Houston. In recent seasons, he has appeared with Canadian Opera as Valentin in *Faust*, Macheath in



GAÉTAN LAPERRIÈRE

The Beggar's Opera, Eisenstein in *Die Fledermaus*, and with L'Opéra de Montréal in *Werther* and *Rigoletto*. He made his New York debut at Carnegie Hall with the Toronto Symphony in a concert performance of *Daphne* by Richard Strauss. Highlights of the 1990/91 season include Silvio in *Pagliacci* for both Toronto and Montréal, Mozart's Count Almaviva for Toronto, and the title role of *Don Giovanni* in Nova Scotia. In 1989/90, in addition to his Sharpless in San Francisco and Houston, Laperrière was heard as Marcello in *Santa Fe* and Guglielmo in Winnipeg. The taxing role of Thomas's *Hamlet* was successfully chosen for his Miami Opera debut in the 1986/87 season. Other roles in the baritone's repertoire include Mercutio in *Roméo et Juliette*, Enrico in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Lescaut in Massenet's *Manon*, Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte*, Figaro in *The Marriage of Figaro*, Zurga in *The Pearl Fishers*, Posa in *Don Carlo*, Belcore in *L'Elisir d'Amore*, and The Forester in *Cunning Little Vixen*.

In his seventh consecutive season with San Francisco Opera, bass-baritone **Philip Skinner** appears as Baron Douphol in *La Traviata*, Dolokhov in *War and Peace*, and Leone in *Attila*. He made his Company debut as Quinault in the 1985 production of *Adriana Lecouvreur*, and has since appeared here in over 20 different operas in such roles as Ferrando in *Il Trovatore*, Méphistophélès in the student/family performances of *Faust*, Colline in the family performance of *La Bohème*, Don Diego in *L'Africaine* and, last fall, Monterone in *Rigoletto* and Count Horn (Sam) in *Un Ballo in Maschera*. As part of this summer's Mozart Festival, he was seen as the Second Armored Man in *The Magic Flute*. Skinner participated in the 1985 Merola Opera Program and went on to tour with Western Opera Theater in the title role of *Don Giovanni*. He was a 1986-87 Adler Fellow and appeared in several Opera Center Showcase productions. He has sung with Kentucky Opera, Edmonton Opera, Seattle Opera, Canadian Opera



PHILIP SKINNER

Company, the Minnesota Orchestra, the Columbus Symphony, San Jose Symphony, San Francisco Symphony, Atlanta Opera, the New York City Opera National Company, Baton Rouge Opera, Sacramento Symphony, Honolulu Symphony, at the Spoleto and San Antonio festivals, and made an acclaimed debut last year with Houston Grand Opera in the title role of *Le Nozze di Figaro*. A Schwabacher Debut recitalist last season, Skinner received a London/Sullivan grant from OPERA America earlier this year.



DALE TRAVIS

Bass-baritone **Dale Travis** sings Doctor Grenvil in *La Traviata* and the roles of Denisov and General Bennigsen in *War and Peace*. A 1988-89 Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center and a member of the Merola Opera Program in 1986 and '87, the artist is quickly earning a growing reputation as a talented young performer specializing in the character repertoire and has appeared with the Company in numerous roles since his 1988 debut. They include Lord Krishna in *Satyagraha*, the Imperial Commissioner in *Madama Butterfly*, the Chief Bandit in *Don Quichotte*, Frank in the Family Performance of *Die Fledermaus* and, this summer, Don Alfonso in *Così fan tutte*. Opera Center credits include Don Alfonso, the three bass roles in *La Bohème* (a production which was also presented



MARK DELAVAN

in the Peoples Republic of China), and the title role of *Don Pasquale* for Western Opera Theater's 1987-88 tour. Travis has also appeared with Marin Opera, San Jose Opera, the Opera Festival of New Jersey, and at the Carmel Bach Festival, and has sung in concert with the San Francisco Symphony and Sacramento Symphony. Future engagements include Masetto in *Don Giovanni* and Ottone in Handel's *Agrippina* for his Washington Opera debut, and his first appearance with Santa Fe Opera in a new production of Hans-Jürgen von Bose's *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers*. He was chosen by *Musical America* magazine as a "Young Artist of 1990" in its annual survey of rising talent in the U.S.

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. Rising quickly in the ranks of young American singers, 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



DENNIS McNEIL

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.



JOHN SWENSON

Tenor **Dennis McNeil** performs the roles of Gastone in *La Traviata*, a Ship's Mate in *Das Verratene Meer*, and a Young Servant in *Elektra*. He made his San Francisco Opera debut last fall as a Servant in *Capriccio*, Amelia's Servant in *Un Ballo in Maschera*, and Eisenstein in the family performance of *Die Fledermaus*. A member of the 1989 Merola Opera Program, he sang Don José in *Carmen* both at Villa Montalvo and on Western Opera Theater's 1989-90 national tour. In 1989, he made his debut with the Los Angeles Music Center Opera as Ferrando in their student outreach production of *Cosi fan tutte*, followed by performances with the main company as the Second Jew in *Salomé*. Equally comfortable on the musical theater stage, he has performed the role of Mr. Snow in *Carousel* over 140 times. In Los Angeles recently, he appeared as Niko in *Zorba*, with John Raitt in the title role. In 1988, McNeil toured with Sammy Cahn in the lyricist's hit musical review *Words with Music*, which completed its run at San Francisco's Marines' Memorial Theater. A fifth generation Californian, he is a graduate of the American Center for Musical Theater where he was trained in both opera and musical comedy.



JAMES WOOD

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 in concert at the Martin Brothers Winery. He made his debut with the Berkeley Symphony last season, singing the title role of Messiaen's *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 Douphol in *La Traviata* with the New York City Opera's 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.

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



SUZANNE MENDIETA

performed the role of Figaro in *The Barber of Seville* at Northwestern and for Chamber Orchestra Chicago, and has also sung the roles of Eisenstein in *Die Fledermaus* and Pinkerton in *Madame Butterfly*.

Suzanne Mendieta, a classically trained dancer, makes her first appearance with San Francisco Opera in *La Traviata*. Currently a member of San Francisco's Theatre Flamenco, she has performed and toured with that group since 1988. She has also performed with the San Francisco Dance Theatre, as well as with numerous other Bay Area dance companies, and was recently seen as a featured dancer in an MTV video which was shown in the U.S. and Europe. Miss Mendieta graduated magna cum laude from San Francisco State University with a bachelor's degree in Health Science.



PAULA REYES

Paula Reyes made her first appearance with San Francisco Opera as a dancer in the 1987 presentation of *La Traviata*. She has performed internationally for Theatre Flamenco of San Francisco and the Ballet Español and has appeared as guest artist in Honolulu and with the Milwaukee Fine Arts Association. She made her stage debut in 1973 at Berkeley's Zellerbach Hall with Ballet Español. Miss Reyes has studied locally with Rosa Montoya, Adela Clara and Miguel Santos, and with Carmen Mora and Pepe

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE ST. FRANCIS AND OTHER CATERERS HAS ALWAYS BEEN BLACK AND WHITE.



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ANTONIO LOPEZ

Rios in Spain. Raised in the Hawaiian Islands, she is noted for her expressive style which incorporates some of the hand movements used in hula dancing.

Dancer **Antonio Lopez** returns to San Francisco Opera in *La Traviata*. The Albuquerque native made his SFO debut as a solo dancer in *Aida* during the 1984 summer season. He has appeared also in 1987 in the role of Hymen in *The Queen of Spades*. Lopez joined the San Francisco Ballet School in 1975 and was named a company apprentice in 1977. Since becoming a company member in 1979, he created the lead role of the protagonist in Michael Smuin's *Song For Dead Warriors* and repeated his performance in Smuin's award-winning television special, "Dance in America—Song For Dead Warriors," in 1984. Lopez has danced lead roles in most of the Lew Christensen repertoire and has created roles in many of the works of Smuin and San Francisco Ballet resident choreographers Val Caniparoli, Robert Gladstein and Kirk Peterson.

Maestro **Maurizio Arena** is on the podium for *La Traviata*. He made his San Francisco Opera debut with *Manon Lescaut* during the 1983 Fall Season and returned in 1985 to lead acclaimed performances of *Adriana Lecouvreur* and *Falstaff*. He conducted *La Forza del Destino* and *La Bohème* during the 1986 Fall Season, *Nabucco* in 1987, 1988's opening night production of *L'Africaine*, *Mefistofele* in 1989, and *Un Ballo in Maschera* last fall. Born in Messina, Italy, he studied music in Palermo and Perugia, where he was trained in conducting by Franco Ferrara. After many years of collaboration with Tullio Serafin and Antonino Votto, he began his operatic training as repetiteur and assistant conductor at the Teatro Massimo in Palermo from 1960 to 1963. From 1963 to 1969, he was permanent conductor at that theater, where he led performances from the Italian operatic repertoire in addition to many modern and contemporary operas. Since 1969, he has been a guest conductor at the important opera capitals in Eu-



MAURIZIO ARENA

rope, including Milan's La Scala, Rome, Trieste, Brussels, Lyons, Paris and Venice, in addition to the Chorégies d'Orange, the Dubrovnik Festival and the Aix-en-Provence Festival. Arena's extensive list of recordings includes *Adriana Lecouvreur* and *Francesca da Rimini*. His many honors include the first international "Luigi Illica" prize in 1979, and the first "Antonello da Messina" award in 1982.

Ian Robertson is on the podium for the final three performances of *La Traviata*. Chorus Director and Conductor with the San Francisco Opera since 1987, he made his Company conducting debut with the 1988 production of *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, and has since returned to lead performances of *Falstaff* and *Lohengrin* in 1989, and *Rigoletto* last fall. Acclaimed for his work with the Opera Chorus, he has led the San Francisco Opera Orchestra in the 1987, '88 and '89 Fol-de-Rol programs, the Kurt Herbert Adler Memorial Concert in 1988, *Carmina Burana* and Mozart's *Coronation Mass* at the opening concert at Stern Grove in 1988, and the opening concert of the 1990 Stern Grove Festival in an all-Wagner program with soloist Dame Gwyneth Jones. He also conducted the Opera Center's *The Italian Girl in Algiers* and *The Impresario* with the Santa Rosa Symphony, and led *Don Giovanni* for the Sarasota Opera. Before joining the Company, he was Head of Music and Chorus Director of the Scottish Opera, where he made his conducting debut with *The Barber of Seville* and led *The Secret of Susanna* for Scottish Television's award-winning film. He went on to conduct several productions for that company including *The Pearl Fishers*, *The Abduction from the Seraglio*, *Idomeneo*, *Die Meistersinger*, *My Fair Lady*, *The Magic Flute*, *L'Elisir d'Amore* and *Rigoletto*, as well as concerts with the Scottish Opera Orchestra. A native of Scotland, Robertson trained as a concert pianist and accompanist at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music, where he won numerous awards and prizes. He won a scholarship to the University of Glasgow, where he graduated with a



IAN ROBERTSON

Bachelor of Music with Honors, and subsequently completed a research course in 20th-century piano music. His recital career led to appearances at the Edinburgh International Festival and the Wigmore Hall and Purcell Room in London. He has recorded recitals for the BBC and appeared as pianist with the New Music Group of Scotland in contemporary works.



JOHN COBLEY

John Copley continues his ninth season with San Francisco Opera in recreating his 1987 production of *La Traviata*. A SFO veteran, Copley restaged his 1986 production of *Le Nozze di Figaro* for this summer's Mozart Festival. He made his Company debut during the 1982 summer season with Handel's *Julius Caesar* and returned in the fall of 1983 for the U.S. premiere of Tippett's *The Midsummer Marriage*. Subsequent SFO engagements were *Don Giovanni* (1984), Handel's *Orlando* (1985), *Eugene Onegin* (1986), *La Traviata* (1987), *Idomeneo* (1989), and *Suor Angelica* (1990). Early in his career Copley was a stage manager for musicals in London's West End before becoming assistant and then principal resident director of the Royal Opera at Covent Garden where his many productions included *La Bohème*, *Werther*, *Cosi fan tutte*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *L'Elisir d'Amore* and Handel's *Semele*, as well as the three largest royal galas mounted at



JOHN CONKLIN

Covent Garden, marking the occasions of England's entry into the Common Market, Queen Elizabeth's Silver Jubilee and 60th birthday celebrations. Copley's work has been seen at the English National Opera, the Théâtre de la Monnaie in Brussels, the Geneva Opera, the Munich Staatsoper, Deutsche Oper Berlin, La Scala in Milan, the Welsh National Opera, Scottish Opera, Netherlands Opera, the Greek National Opera and festivals at Drottningholm, Aix-en-Provence, Ottawa, Munich, Athens, Wexford and Wiesbaden. He has also directed over 25 productions in Australia. In North America his credits include the Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Dallas, Washington, Houston, Santa Fe, New York City Opera, Canadian Opera and Vancouver Opera.

John Conklin designed the sets for *La Traviata*, a production which was originally seen here in 1987. His first San Francisco Opera assignment was the sets and costumes for the 1977 *Un Ballo in Maschera*, a production that also opened the 1982 Fall Season and which was repeated in 1985 and 1990. Local audiences first saw his work in Spring Opera Theater productions of *Orfeo* (1972), *Death in Venice* (1975 and '79), and *Julius Caesar* (1978). After his debut with the Company in 1977, he returned for *Don Pasquale* (fall 1980, summer 1984), and for the new production of *Idomeneo* in 1989. He created designs for the four operas of Wagner's *Ring of the Nibelung*, which had been unveiled in 1983 (*Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*), 1984 (*Siegfried*) and 1985 (*Götterdämmerung*). He also served as production consultant for the Company's presentation of the *Ring* last summer. Conklin's designs have been seen in numerous opera, ballet and legitimate theater productions. He has worked for such companies as the New York Shakespeare Festival, the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis, the Goodman Theatre in Chicago, the Long Wharf Theater in New Haven and the Hartford Stage Company. His long association with Santa Fe Opera has resulted in American premieres of Henze's *We*

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ADELA CLARA



THOMAS J. MUNN

Come to the River, the three-act version of *Lulu*, Sallinen's *The King Goes Forth to France*, and Penderecki's *The Black Mask*. Other U.S. opera projects have been for the Metropolitan Opera, New York City Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Dallas Opera, Seattle Opera, and Opera Theatre of St. Louis, among others. On the other side of the Atlantic, Conklin has been responsible for production designs for the Holland Festival, Scottish Opera, and the Munich Opera. He teaches at the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University.

British designer **David Walker** made his San Francisco Opera debut in 1987 with the costume designs for *La Traviata*. In addition to his work for opera, theater, film and television, he is also an illustrator who has had his designs exhibited at the Victoria and Albert Museum and other London sites. Born in Calcutta, he studied at the Central School of Arts and Crafts, and made his operatic design debut with *Così fan tutte* at the Dublin Festival. His designs have been seen at opera houses in Palermo, Venice, Lisbon, Stockholm, and at the English National Opera, Welsh National Opera, Edinburgh Festival, Glyndebourne Festival, Royal Opera at Covent Garden, and the Metropolitan Opera. Operas designed for these companies include *Carmen*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Werther*, *Don Giovanni*, *La Bohème*, *William Tell*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Semele*, and *Die Meistersinger*. Costume design credits for television include *Hamlet* (with Richard Chamberlain), and *The Corn is Green* (with Katharine Hepburn, directed by George Cukor). His film credits include *The Charge of the Light Brigade* for Tony Richardson, and *Lady Caroline Lamb* for Robert Bolt.

Choreographer **Adela Clara** made her 1987 San Francisco Opera debut with the dances for *La Traviata*. She studied Spanish dance with some of the world's greatest masters, including Maraquita Flores, Roberto Ximinez and Manolo Vargas in this country, and Victoria Eugenia, Maria Rosa Merced and Martín Vargas in Spain. She founded Theatre Flamenco, the San Francisco Spanish dance company, and served as its artistic director until 1983. She has received numerous awards and recognition from the National Endowment for the Arts and the California Arts Council, and has served as a panelist for the dance programs of both of those agencies. In 1985, she received the first choreographer's award given by the San Francisco Bay Area Dance Coalition Isadora Duncan Awards, and for several seasons acted as a judge for San Francisco's popular Ethnic Dance Festival. In addition to her work as a choreographer, Miss Clara teaches the art of Spanish dance throughout the U.S.

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 Verratene 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 *Andréa 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.

Pacific Overtures

By STEPHANIE SALTER
Photos: Lisa Kohler



(Above) Opera Center singers Craig Estep, Mark Moliterno and Patricia Racette are serenaded by a handful of Morioka school children. (Below) Christine Bullin, Director of the San Francisco Opera Center.

A former Peace Corps volunteer, Christine Bullin of the San Francisco Opera Center gets a tad uncomfortable when people start tossing around high-falutin' notions about music serving as a magical and universal form of communication between disparate peoples.

"You hear it so much, you really hate the cliché of it," said Bullin, who has been the director of the Opera Center since its formation in 1981.

The only problem is, how can Bullin describe the undeniable magic that takes place when the Opera Center hits the road? From Chico, California to Morioka, Japan, exciting, amazing and heart-warming things just keep happening to and because of the Opera Center's young singers.

They are things that look suspiciously like, well—you should excuse the phrase—a universal form of communication between disparate peoples.

Take the Center's 1991 tour of Japan, Guam, Micronesia and the People's Republic of China. In the Japanese cities of Nagaoka, Morioka and Sendai, scores of people who had perhaps never listened to a western opera, and certainly never seen one, joined nine Opera Center sing-



ers and music director Patrick Summers to perform in Bizet's *Carmen*.

In Nagaoka, that meant the chorus parts were sung in Japanese while the principals' roles were sung in French.

Rather than detract from the production, this bi-lingualism underscored two of the most important elements of the visit to Japan: Exchange and collaboration. As Nagaoka's daily newspaper, *Niigata Nippon*, put it:

"(*Carmen*) was a great success not only because it gave citizens much joy to receive this novelty but also to have been given the opportunity for them to partici-

cate in creating a musical work of art."

With no major opera company of its own, Japan is the most recent Pacific Rim Center destination. (The "mission" began in 1987 with the company's historic trip to Shanghai.) In many ways, Japan already has become one of the Center's most stimulating partners.

Similar to the United States in several ways, chief among them finance and technology, Japan is also very much a product of its own culture and traditions. From its respectfully silent audiences to its dismay at the western habit of "winging it," Japan presents a challenging but fascinating environment in which a hybrid flower such as the Center's *Carmen* can bloom.

"The way we rehearse—altering schedules at a moment's notice, changing stage direction—that is something the Japanese just do not do. Consensus is extremely important to them," said Bullin. "We Americans get so used to our way, we assume our system has an apparent logic, but it doesn't."

As if to signal that fact at the outset, the Center's prop guns and knives for the fight scenes in *Carmen* were confiscated by customs officials upon the troupe's

Stephanie Salter is an opinion page columnist for the San Francisco Examiner and a supernumerary for the San Francisco Opera.



*"If music be
the food of love,
play on."*

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.



arrival in Sendai. But, representative of the collaborative spirit of the entire tour, Japanese pruning knives were suggested as a solution, quickly procured from a hardware store and pressed into service for all performances. The drama—including Carmen's demise—never suffered.

"We didn't have any famous names to attract support—and the Japanese are very conscious of high-profile Western personalities—but I think that, in the end, they were quite intrigued by these young singers and their willingness to go anywhere and do anything with their talent. Especially the political officials and corporate sponsors, whom you might not expect to be so enthusiastic. They got personally involved and it meant a lot to us. I never got over being impressed by how hard everyone worked to make a niche for our product in their country."

(Funding for the trip was provided by

Opera Center Music Director Patrick Summers during a Panapé coaching session.

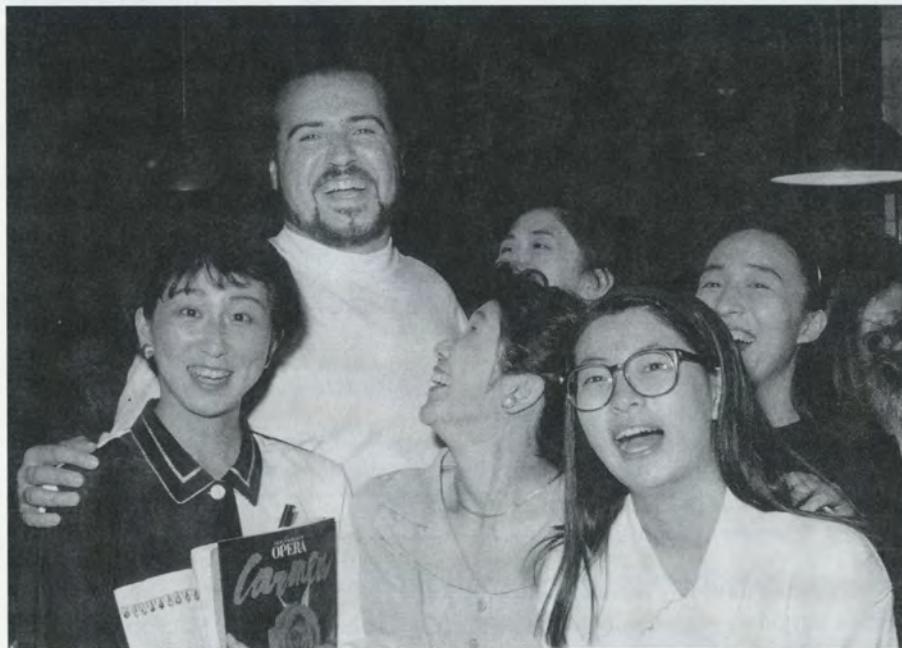
In Morioka, Patricia Racette has a difficult time in trying to shake all the little offered hands.

Continental Air Micronesia, the InterPacific Foundation, Japan Rail and the Pioneer Corporation.)

In Morioka, a city of approximately 232,000, north of Tokyo, rice farmers, teachers, housewives and students turned out 100-strong to portray cigarette girls, soldiers and ragamuffins of Carmen's 19th-century Seville.

"One woman performed with her baby in a sling on her back," said Bullin.

In another town the juvenile singers appeared for rehearsals in their self-styled ragamuffin costumes, which



Baritone Hector Vasquez in two different Morioka locations: (Top) Listening to the singing of "Do Re Mi"; (Above) With new friends after a performance.

turned out to be about as soiled, disheveled and ragamuffin as the new fall line from Esprit Kids.

"We were told: Japanese children don't have dirty clothes," said Bullin. "And to get them to be rowdy on stage—well, it was very different for them and for us. Japanese kids aren't remotely accustomed to being rowdy."

What they are accustomed to are impeccable manners, discipline and paying

close attention to whatever their elders tell them. Music director Summers was particularly taken with a children's choral teacher who invented exercises on the spot to help her charges understand and employ each production note that Summers gave to the children.

Said baritone Hector Vasquez, "We performed at eight grade schools in the Iwate Prefecture in addition to the productions of *Carmen*. At one, the children, their teachers and their parents had learned 'Do Re Mi' from *The Sound of Music*, which they sang for us in English.

"At another school, we were the first foreigners ever to visit in its 115-year history. I asked for directions to the restroom and was sort of pausing and looking for it in the hall when all these kids swarmed out just to look at me.

"I ran out of scraps of paper to sign for them and ended up signing little kids' hands and arms."

Mezzo-soprano Reveka Mavrovitis, who was moved to tears more times than she can remember on the tour, was thrilled in an Iwate Prefecture town situated high in a mountainous area where foreigners almost never stray.

"The look of surprise on the faces of the children when we started to sing was wonderful," she said. "Not because it

Continued on page 60

Opera Nights

By Sandra Macleod White

Photography by Ray "Scotty" Morris

The fashion industry has greeted the 1991-92 fall/winter collections from Rome with a renewed sense of excitement and passion which has not been felt in years.

Fashion editors everywhere are reporting that the new styles are original, fun and very flirtatious. This is certainly good news to an industry struggling with a sluggish economy and a continuing recession. Every designer, department store, boutique and retailer has had to rethink their position and approach to the growing number of cautious customers who are now looking at their wardrobes as no longer luxury items but long-term investments. Smart shoppers world-wide are demanding high quality, and designers and stores alike got the message. Says Rose Marie Bravo, CEO of I. Magnin, "As a result of the recession, leading designers have created secondary lines which are affordable and fashionable--i.e. Emanuel by Emanuel Ungaro, A Line by Anne Klein, Company by Ellen Tracy." Continued Bravo, "These new collections have filled the needs of today's consumer."

Evening styles are not only provocative and seductive, but extremely elaborate as well. Accents include the thick glitter of jeweled embroidery of bright colors and luscious fabrics and sensational textures of all types. "High quality workmanship is incorporated into designs which are deceptively simple--which makes them timeless," said one local department store buyer.

This fall, during San Francisco's annual charity fashion shows, runways were filled with elegant opening night evening dresses featuring everything from the conservative to the short and sassy. Entering the arena now are evening dresses with see-through skirts worn with leather bomber jackets--such as Karl Lagerfeld's newest designs for Chanel. The hemline is not only extremely short, or very long



Ryan Willson of Belvedere is pictured here with his fiancée Kimberly Quinlan-Bakker of Ross. Both are University of Southern California students majoring in communications and international business. For their night at the opera, Willson is sporting a black leather blazer with matching pleated leather pants, and Miss Quinlan-Bakker is wearing a black suede off-the-shoulder sequin dress. Both are from North Beach Leather, San Francisco. Miss Quinlan-Bakker's gold and amber drop earrings and braided gold fresh water pearls (Biwi) and gold bangle necklaces are by Sallie Bell Kelly.

Continued on page 58



Below: Businessmen Andrew McMicking Hall, of San Francisco and London, and his cousin Robert Anthony McHugh III, also of San Francisco, are long-standing lovers of the San Francisco Opera and prefer the casual elegance of Brooks Brothers' newest international suits for the young executive. Both styles shown here are double-breasted traditional suits. Hall is wearing a wool navy blue suit, and McHugh in gray wool. Both suits from Brooks Brothers, San Francisco.

Left: A recent communications graduate of San Francisco State, Monique Athearn, is elegantly dressed for the opera in her Escada multi-colored beaded and embroidered jacket with royal blue non-pleated satin trousers. Miss Athearn's jeweled drop earrings and matching necklace are also at Escada, San Francisco.

Right: San Francisco debutante and UC Berkeley student, Katherine Post, is looking sleek for her night at the opera in a Donna Karan black wool crepe side-slit column dress with a gold lycra shoulder. Miss Post's accessories are Donna Karan's brush gold cuff bracelets, earrings and black satin shoes, at I. Magnin, San Francisco.





University of Southern California business student, Marlene Marsten of San Francisco, who loves the opera, is wearing Chanel's newest beaded evening ensemble in green and black glitter tweed with a black transparent skirt worn with a black leather bomber jacket, and Chanel's black stain strap pumps. Miss Marsten's emerald, pearl and rhinestone earrings, chokers and emerald cuff bracelet are also at Chanel Boutique, San Francisco.

Chairman of the Opera's Opening Weekend Parade Walk and member of the San Francisco Opera Guild Board, Pam Valeski is wearing a short black Vicky Tiel chiffon dress, from Neiman-Marcus. Mrs. Valeski's magnificent jewelry includes yellow-gold diamond and sapphire earrings, necklace, bracelet and ring--at Neiman-Marcus Precious Jewels Salon, San Francisco.



Hair Styles by David Oliver
Make-up Artist: Jennifer Mayol
Production Assistant: Martha MacLeod

and everything in between--but it includes pants as well.

The old truism has it that if the stock market is down, hemlines are up, and vice-versa. However, this year's international barometer seems to be a mixed bag of predictions. Stockbrokers are hard-pressed to explain the significance of such extremes, but they all agree that hemlines are as unpredictable as the fluctuations of the stock market.

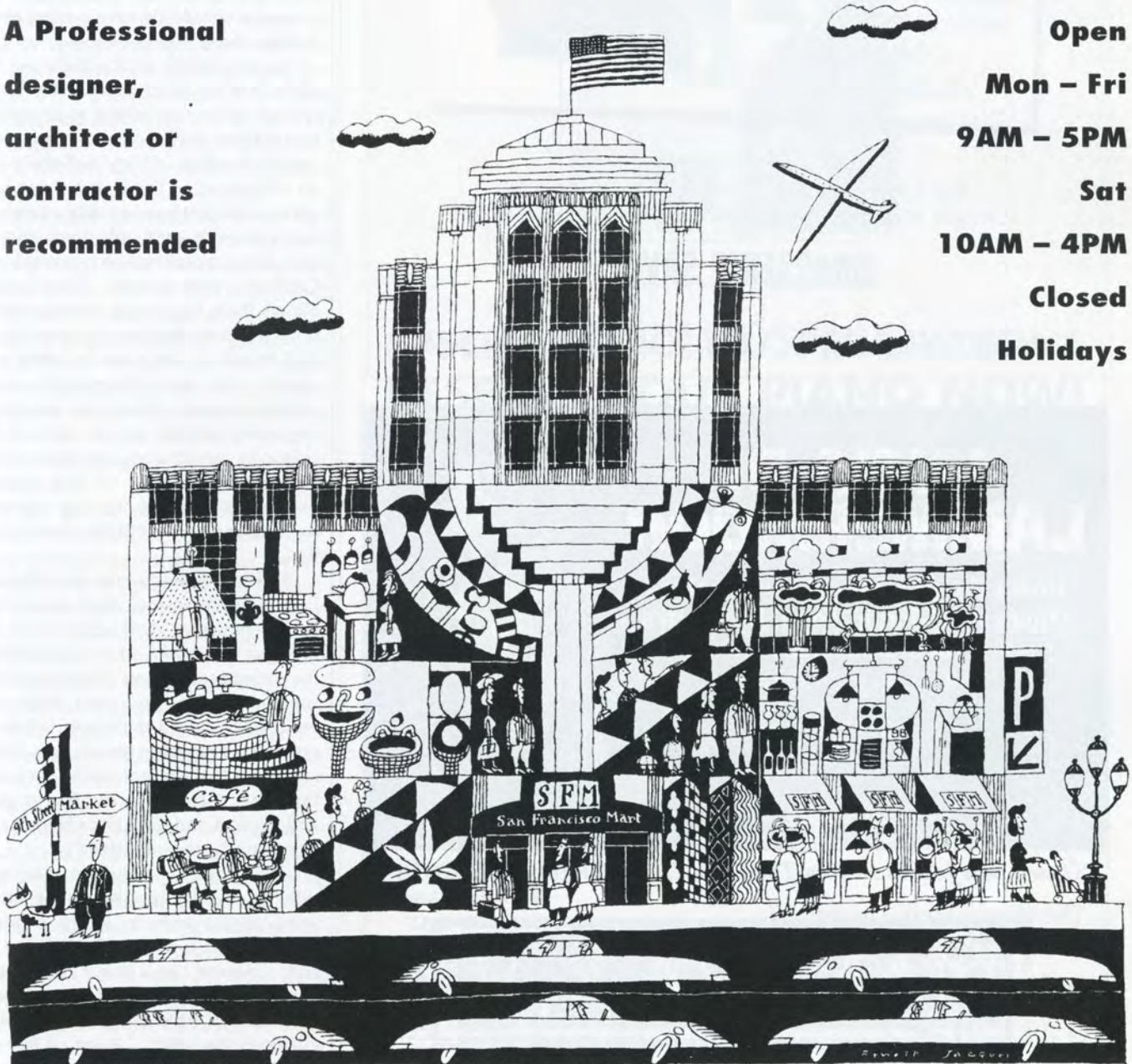
Original styles of easy elegance are everywhere, to the relief of one Parisian fashion editor who recently declared an editorial *au revoir* to the old fashions of the "prim day dress, the severely tailored suit, and the traditional ball gown." Wrote another, "Luxury comes in other guises." *Oui?*

Operagoers have frequently been singled out as the most passionate music lovers in the world. With their unique mixture of passion for music, and the renewed passion for dress, this year's opera lovers should be as exciting to watch during intermission as the performance on stage. □

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was western music, it was simply the volume and register of the sounds that came out of us. These were sounds they had never heard or even imagined."

"Opera is a very powerful symbol of the ability to communicate, person to person," said Bullin. "We've seen that opera is opera in any language. Chinese and Japanese opera is about filial loyalty, love, death, betrayal—the same dramatic themes we see in western opera."

"People everywhere in the world want something from music, and to bring it to them, as we have done in China and Japan and Guam, is to regain a sense of the surprising power of music—whatever the setting. We in the San Francisco Opera Company are extraordinarily lucky to be situated where we can do that and also be influenced by the creative talents of these countries."

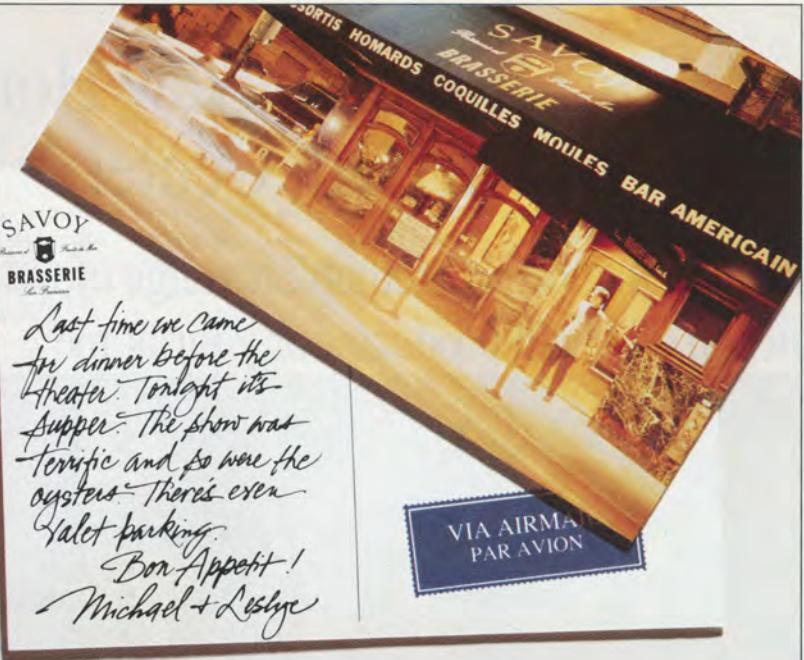
If that sounds as though Christine Bullin believes the musical street from East to West runs two ways, that is exactly the way she means for it to sound.

"I have always loved the fact that our Opera House is across from City Hall," she said. "The opera *should* represent the community, and this is a highly diverse region. Look at the changing demographics of the city. What are we going to do to match that in the opera house, to broaden our constituency and cultivate more people who find us necessary? I would love to see everybody get something inside of this building, see it be a meeting place for the community."

Next spring Bullin's wish will take a giant step toward realization with Pacific Voices, an intensive two-week study and performance program involving young singers from countries all around the Pacific Rim. Auditions for the singers will be held in Australia, China, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Mexico, New Zealand and Taiwan in February and March, and from those tryouts, 20 young people will be selected for instruction at the Opera Center.

On June 7, 1992, their talents and newly-learned techniques will be showcased in a concert at the Opera House.

"One thing that has become so obvious on tours is that governments don't necessarily represent individuals. Individuals represent themselves," said Bullin. "Even if the number of people in exchanges like these seems minuscule, they are vital to our understanding of one another. Our going out into the bigger Pacific region, our efforts to open the doors and let others see in here, that creates an important symbol."



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SF Chronicle

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Tenor Craig Estep in a Morioka school.

"The kind of singers we like to produce at the Opera Center are musicians with a conscience who are aware of the world around them. When you have singers of this kind, willing to make music wherever people want to hear it, well, you see them and you think, maybe there's hope for the world."

No doubt there are some cynical souls who would consider such optimistic sentiments just the sort of cliché Bullin dearly wants to avoid. A better world through opera? Come now.

However, such an assignment will not be made by anyone in Sendai, Nagaoka or Morioka, Japan—especially not a middle-aged woman who lives in Morioka who sang in the chorus of the first western opera on the stage at Morioka Kenmin Hall, April 12, 1991.

Ebullient at the cast party after *Carmen*, the woman threw her arms around Christine Bullin and cried.

"This is the most wonderful thing that ever happened in Morioka," she said. "Please come back before we're too old."

□

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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.

<i>I Capuleti e i Montecchi</i>	9/16
<i>Das Verratene Meer</i>	11/4
<i>Attila</i>	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.

<i>I Capuleti e i Montecchi</i>	9/18
James Keolker	
<i>Tristan und Isolde</i>	10/16
Blanche Thebom/Jess Thomas	
<i>Das Verratene Meer</i>	11/6
William Huck	
<i>Elektra</i>	11/13
Pamela Potter	
<i>Attila</i>	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.

<i>I Capuleti e i Montecchi</i>	9/17
James Keolker	
<i>Tristan und Isolde</i>	10/15
Blanche Thebom/Jess Thomas	
<i>Das Verratene Meer</i>	11/5
William Huck	
<i>Elektra</i>	11/12
Pamela Potter	
<i>Attila</i>	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.

<i>I Capuleti e i Montecchi</i>	9/17
James Keolker	
<i>Tristan und Isolde</i>	10/15*
Blanche Thebom/Jess Thomas	
<i>Das Verratene Meer</i>	11/5
William Huck	
<i>Elektra</i>	11/12*
Pamela Potter	
<i>Attila</i>	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.

<i>I Capuleti e i Montecchi</i>	9/16,
James Keolker	12:30 p.m. lecture, luncheon following
	1000 Buckeye Rd., Kenwood
<i>Tristan und Isolde</i>	10/17,
Blanche Thebom/Jess Thomas	10:30 a.m. lecture, lunch following
	Sonoma Mission Inn
	18140 Sonoma Highway, Sonoma
<i>Das Verratene Meer</i>	11/4
William Huck	2:30 p.m. lecture 2988 Sunridge Dr., Santa Rosa
<i>Elektra</i>	11/11, 10:30 a.m. lecture
Pamela Potter	lunch following La Provence
	140 Stony Pt. Rd., Santa Rosa

<i>Attila</i>	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.

<i>I Capuleti e i Montecchi</i>	9/18
James Keolker	
<i>Tristan und Isolde</i>	10/16
Blanche Thebom/Jess Thomas	
<i>Das Verratene Meer</i>	11/6
William Huck	
<i>Elektra</i>	11/13
Pamela Potter	
<i>Attila</i>	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.

<i>I Capuleti e i Montecchi</i>	9/16
<i>Tristan und Isolde</i>	9/30
<i>Das Verratene Meer</i>	10/7
<i>Elektra</i>	10/14
<i>Attila</i>	11/12
The Season in Review	12/9

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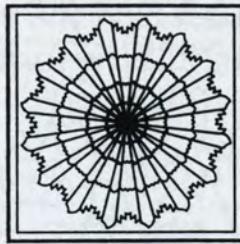
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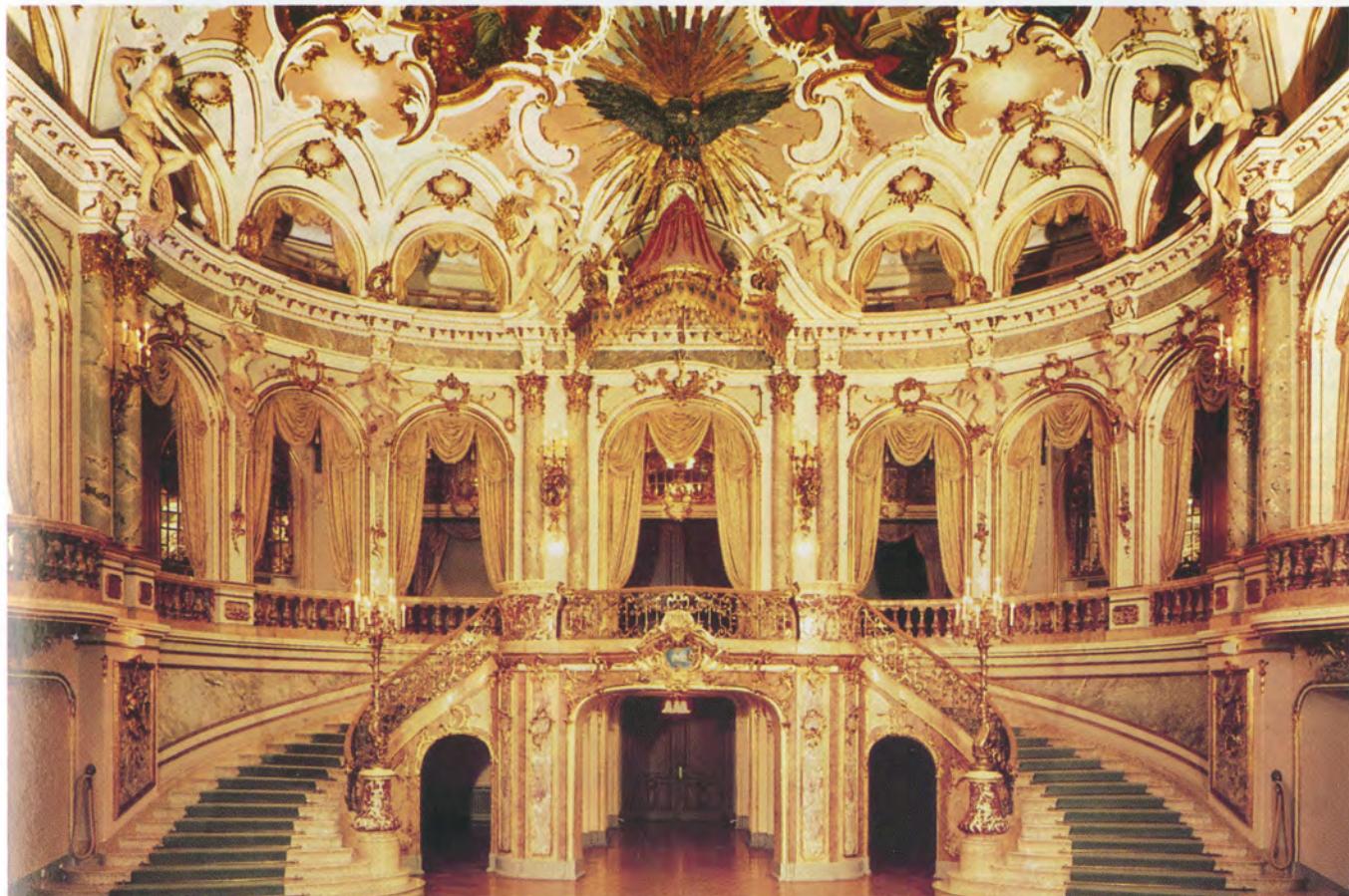
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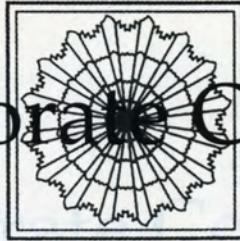
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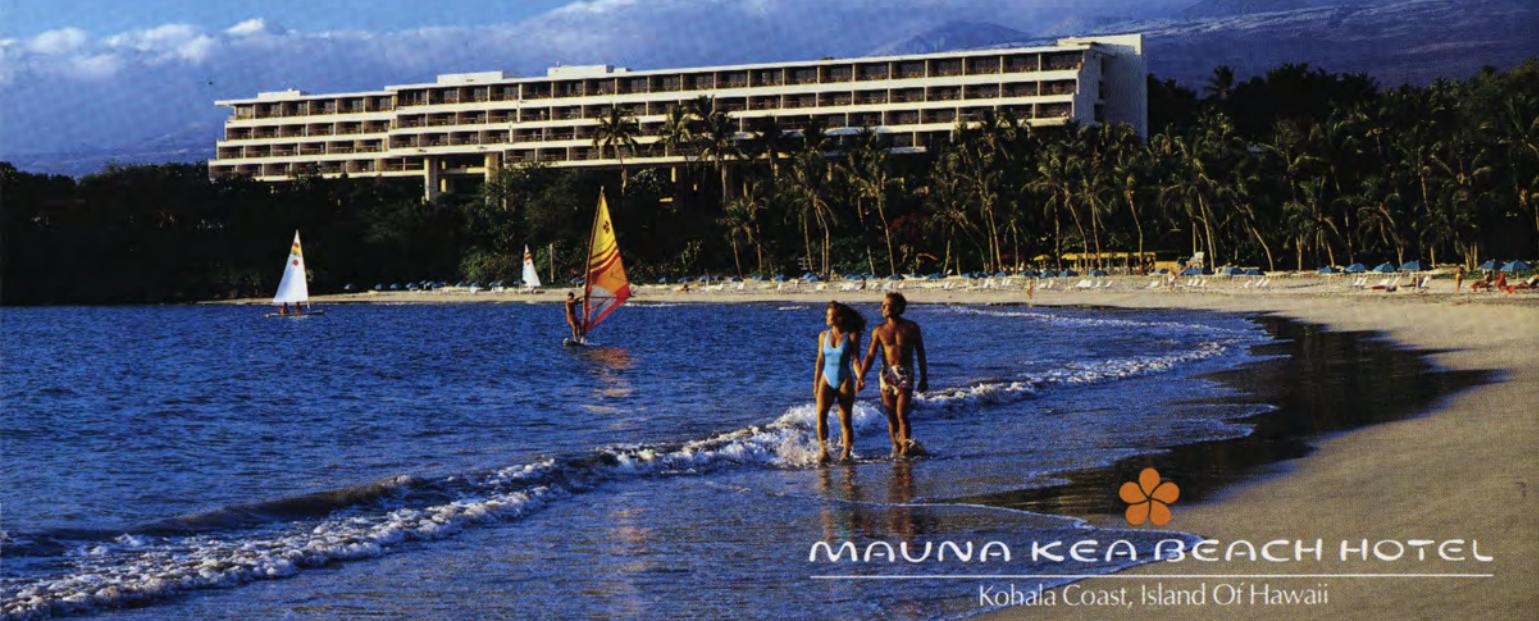
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Opera House Tours

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:

Saturday, October 12
Wednesday, October 16
Thursday, October 24
Saturday, November 2
Tuesday, November 5
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Tickets for Guild members \$2; non-Guild members \$5. Advance reservations required. For further information, please call (415) 565-6433.

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Food Service The lower lounge in the Opera House is open one and one-half hours prior to curtain time for hot buffet service. Patrons arriving before the front doors open will be admitted at the carriage entrance.

Refreshments are served in the box tier on the mezzanine floor, the grand tier and dress circle levels during all performances.

Emergency Telephone The telephone number 431-4370 may be used by patrons for emergencies only during performances. Before the performance, patrons anticipating possible emergencies should leave their seat number at the nurse's station in the lower lounge, where the emergency telephone is located.

Digital Watches Patrons are reminded to please check that their digital watch alarms are switched to OFF before the performance begins.

Ticket Information San Francisco Opera Box Office, Lobby, War Memorial Opera House, Van Ness at Grove; open 10 A.M. to 6 P.M. Monday through Saturday. 10 A.M. through first intermission on all performance days. Phone charge (415) 864-3330 10 A.M. to 6 P.M. Monday through Saturday (VISA, American Express and MasterCard). Tickets are also available on a limited basis through BASS and STBS outlets.

Unused Tickets Subscribers who find they cannot use their tickets may make a worthwhile contribution to the San Francisco Opera by returning the tickets they will be unable to use to the Opera Box Office or by telephoning (415) 864-3330, 10 A.M. to 6 P.M. or (415) 565-6485, 6 P.M. to ten minutes before curtain. The value of the returned tickets is tax deductible for the subscriber. If the tickets are re-sold by the Box Office, the proceeds will be used to benefit the San Francisco Opera. However, donated tickets are not considered a fund drive contribution and are not applied toward member benefits.

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For the safety and comfort of our audience all large parcels, backpacks, luggage, etc., must be checked at the Opera House cloakrooms.

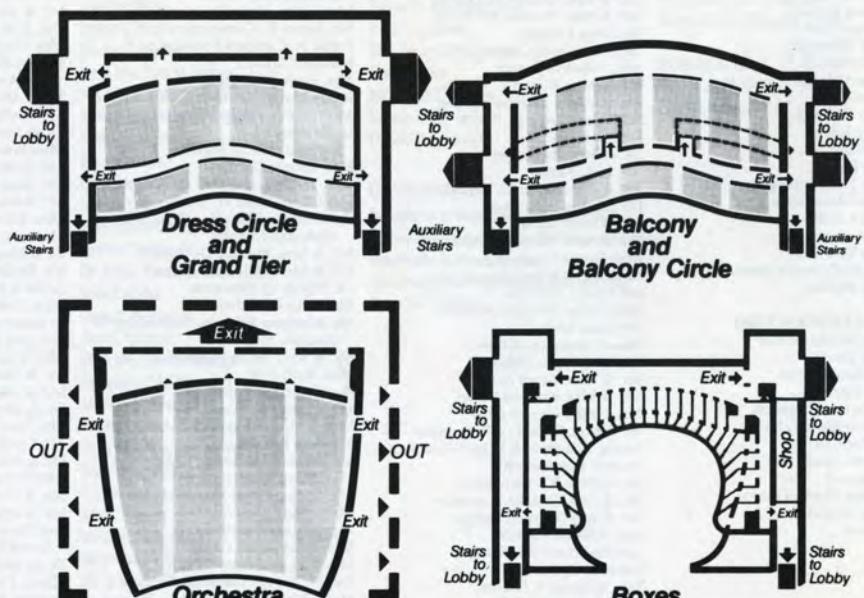
Opera glasses and Sennheiser listening devices are available in the lobby.

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

San Francisco War Memorial and Performing Arts Center

War Memorial Opera House



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The role of Violetta in tonight's performance of *La Traviata* will be sung by Mariana Nicolesco.

Romanian soprano **Mariana Nicolesco** has been acclaimed for her performances at the world's major opera houses, including Milan's La Scala, the Metropolitan Opera, the Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona, in Munich, Berlin, Vienna and Paris, as well as at the Salzburg Festival and the Rossini Opera Festival in Pesaro. She has also been applauded in concert at Carnegie Hall, the Accademia di Santa Cecilia in Rome, the Royal Festival Hall, and Amsterdam's Concertgebouw under such conductors as Carlo Maria Giulini, Wolfgang Sawallisch, Riccardo Muti, Seiji Ozawa and Lorin Maazel. Not only a major Mozart interpreter (Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* with Sawallisch in Munich and with Muti at La Scala; Cinna in Patrice Chéreau's production of *Lucio Silla* also at La Scala; Vitellia in *La Clemenza di Tito* and Elettra in *Idomeneo* with Ozawa in Tokyo and Salzburg), Miss Nicolesco has also been praised for her performances in the baroque repertoire. She has distinguished herself in Luca Ronconi's productions of Rossi's *L'Orfeo* and Jommelli's *Fetonte*, again at La Scala. Also a noteworthy interpreter of the bel canto repertoire, she portrayed the title role of Bellini's *Beatrice di Tenda* at La Fenice in Venice. Since her debut in *La Traviata*, she has sung the role of Violetta over 200 times throughout the world. In addition to her recordings of *La Rondine*, *Simon Boccanegra*, *Beatrice di Tenda* and Donizetti's *Maria di Rohan*, Miss Nicolesco stars in the MGM film of the operetta *The Merry Widow*. She was recently named Officer of the Order of Arts and Letters by the French government. This performance marks Miss Nicolesco's debut with San Francisco Opera.

