Tristan und Isolde
(Tristan and Isolde)

1991

Monday, October 21, 1991 7:00 PM
Thursday, October 24, 1991 7:00 PM
Sunday, October 27, 1991 1:00 PM
Wednesday, October 30, 1991 7:00 PM
Saturday, November 2, 1991 7:00 PM
Tuesday, November 5, 1991 7:00 PM
Saturday, November 9, 1991 7:00 PM

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1991 Season

Tristan und Isolde

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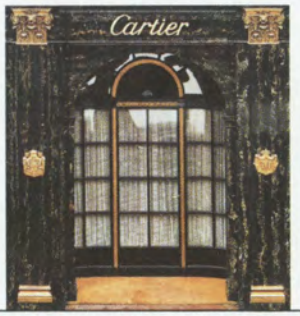

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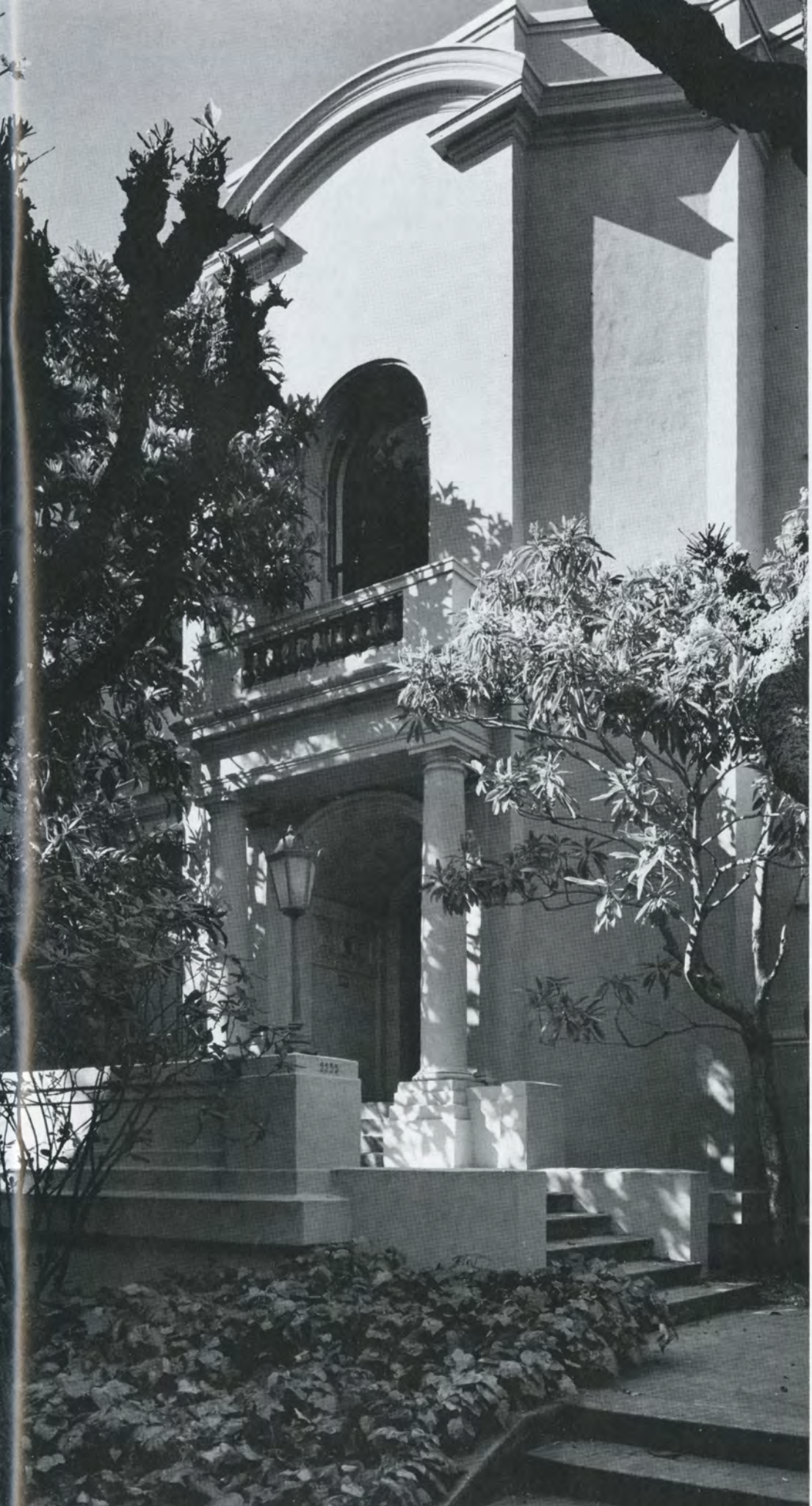

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SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

Lotfi Mansouri, *General Director*

Tristan und Isolde

1991 FALL SEASON
Vol. 69, No. 10

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COVER
Delville, Jean, 1867-1953
Tristan and Isolde
Charcoal; 17 x 29 1/2 in.

Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Bruxelles

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SOHL

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

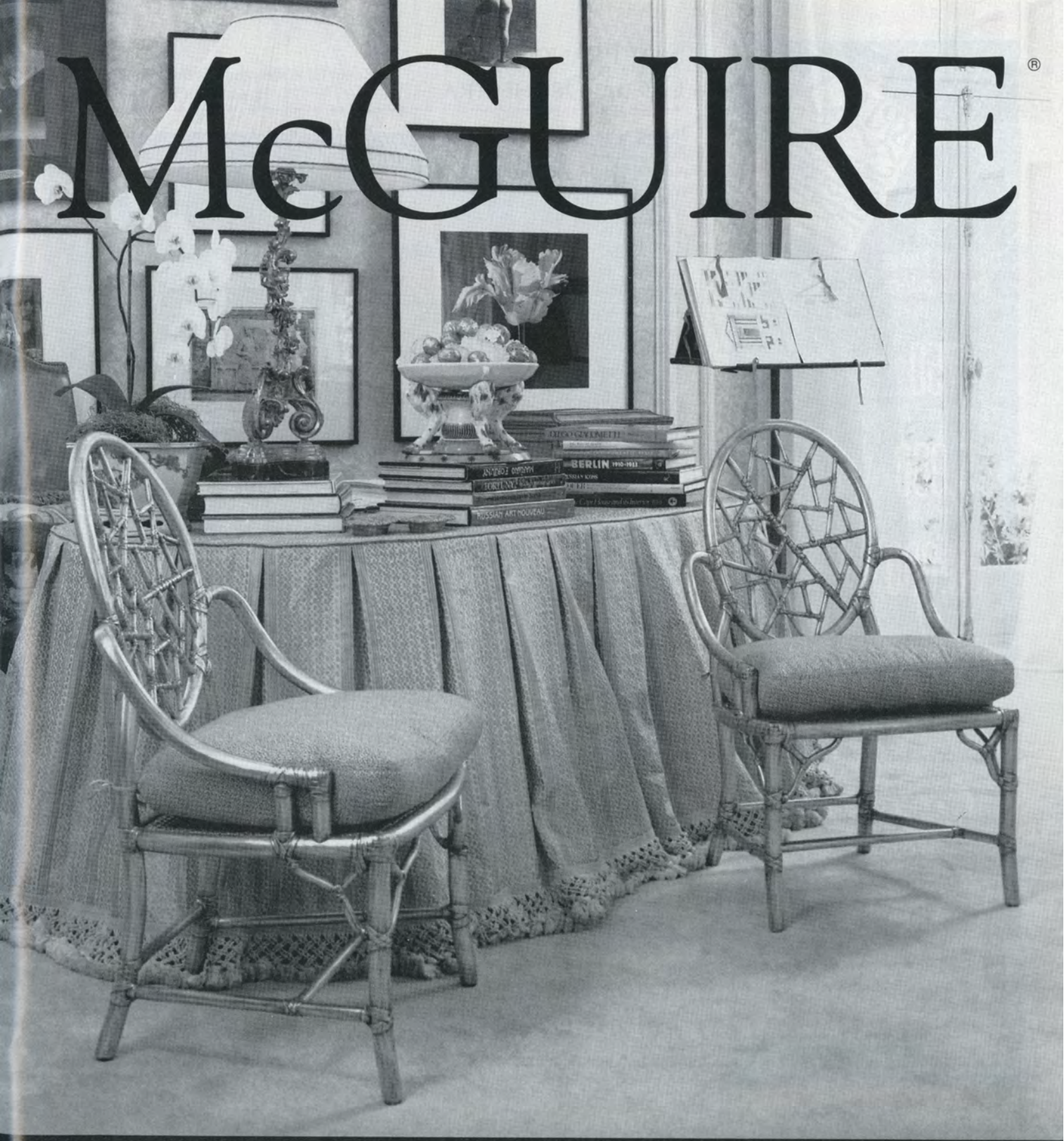
Lexus, which has had an on-going sponsor relationship with San Francisco Opera since they underwrote our 1989 presentation of the Kirov Ballet, is also sponsoring this year's Opening Night performance of *La Traviata*. Our new production of Prokofiev's monumental *War and Peace* has been underwritten 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.

Reid W. Dennis
Chairman

Thomas Tilton
President



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Agnes Vadas
Lev Rankov
Barbara Riccardi
Robert Galbraith
Janice McIntosh
Leonid Igudesman
Julia Skiff
Anthony Blea

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Martha Simonds *Associate Principal*
Eva Karasik
Lani King
Gerard Svazlian
Linda Deutsch
James Dahlgren
Maki Ishii
Joseph Edelberg

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Sergei Rakitchenkov *Acting Associate Principal*
Jonna Hervig
Natalia Igudesman
Thomas Heimberg
Paul Ehrlich
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*Principal for one or more operas of the season

The San Francisco Opera Orchestra uses Sabian cymbals exclusively.

SOHL

General Director's Message

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

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

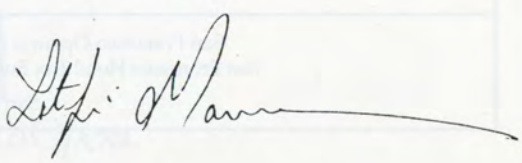
Another milestone event is a major American premiere of Hans Werner Henze's gripping music drama, *Das Verratene Meer*, based on Yukio Mishima's acclaimed novel *The Sailor Who Fell From Grace With the Sea*. We are honored to be the first American opera company to present this major musical event, and I am even more pleased to be able to announce that the composer will be here for this auspicious premiere.

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

Several familiar operas will be seen in productions new to San Francisco Opera: the transcendent passion of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*, and the shattering drama of *Elektra* by Richard Strauss. Mozart's masterpiece *Don Giovanni* will be seen in a reworking of our own production, and we will bring back two of our most lavish stage spectacles, our productions of Verdi's *La Traviata* and Bizet's *Carmen*.

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

Enjoy the season!



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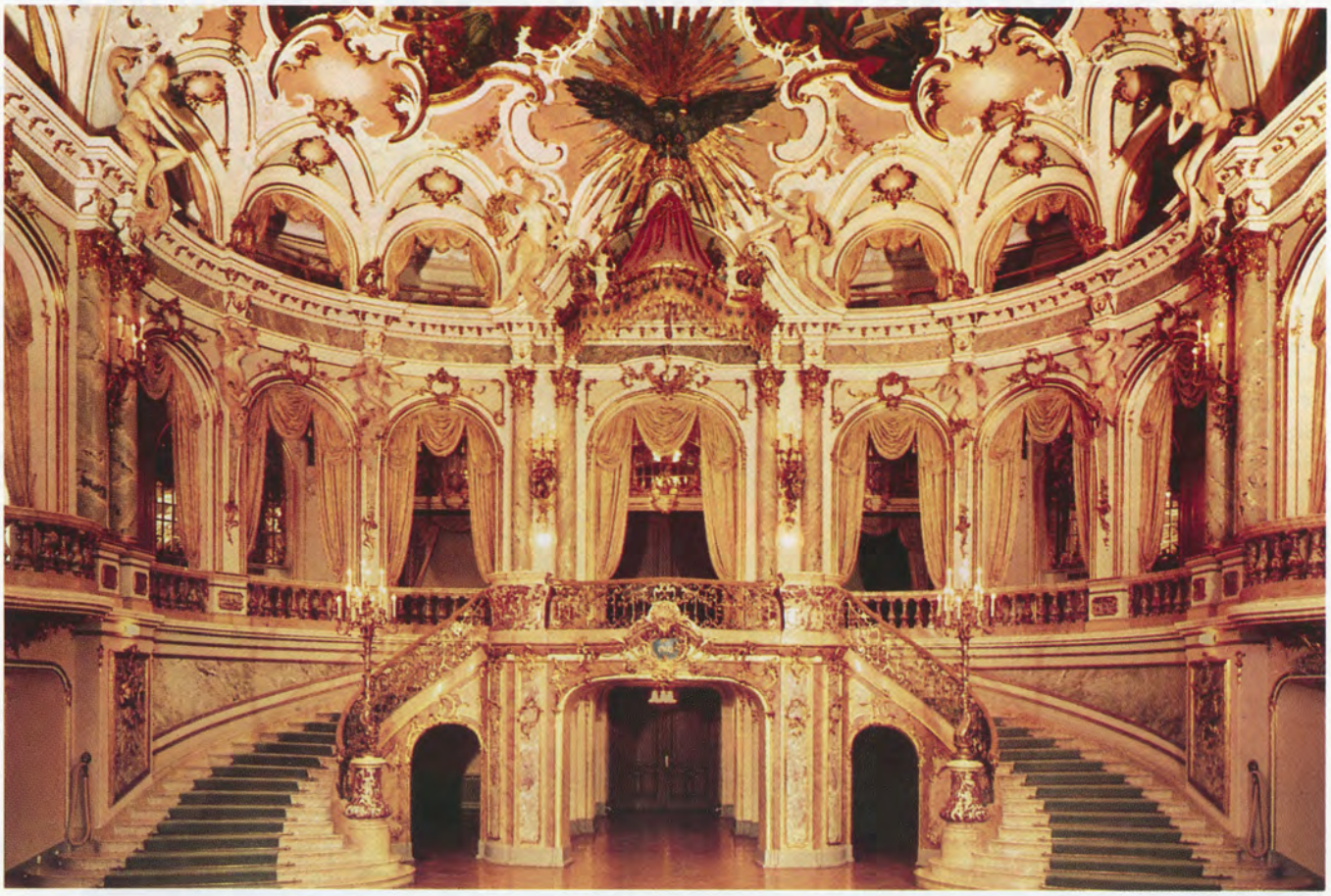

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San Francisco Opera

Lotfi Mansouri, *General Director*

1991 Season

Opening Night
Friday, September 6, **7:30**
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**, Bezubenkov**, Storojev, Frank, Petersen, Estep, Ledbetter, Graber+, Harper, Milne*, Gudas, Villanueva, Irmiter, 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

Saturday, September 28, 8:00
Don Giovanni Mozart
Mims, Esperian*, Blackwell*; Ramey, Gallo**, Lopardo*, Villanueva, Rose**
Hager*/Hampe/Feldman/Businger/Munn

Production originally made possible by James D. Robertson. Revival underwritten by a generous gift from The Bernard Osher Foundation.

Sunday, September 29, **1:00**
I Capuleti i e Montecchi Bellini

Sunday, September 29, 8:00
La Traviata Verdi
(Violetta: Nicolesco*)

Tuesday, October 1, 8:00
Don Giovanni Mozart
(Giovanni: Quilico)

Wednesday, October 2, **7:00**
War and Peace Prokofiev
(Conductor: Anisimov**)

Thursday, October 3, **7:30**
Don Giovanni Mozart

Saturday, October 5, 8:00
I Capuleti e i Montecchi Bellini

Sunday, October 6, 2:00
Don Giovanni Mozart

Tuesday, October 8, 8:00
I Capuleti e i Montecchi Bellini

Thursday, October 10, 8:00
I Capuleti e i Montecchi Bellini

Friday, October 11, 8:00
Don Giovanni Mozart

Saturday, October 12, **7:30**
Carmen Bizet
Kuhlmann, Racette, Fortuna+, Guo+; McCauley, Kharitonov, Vasquez+, Delavan, Swenson, Wood, Oropeza*
Sutej*/Ponnelle/Williams/Ponnelle/Juerke/Munn

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

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

Production from Cologne Opera, newly built by San Francisco Opera as a co-production with Washington Opera. Underwritten by a generous gift from the L.J. and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation.

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Wednesday, October 23, **7:30**
Carmen Bizet

Thursday, October 24, **7:00**
Tristan und Isolde Wagner

Friday, October 25, **7:30**
Carmen Bizet
(Carmen: Graves*; Don José: Ordoñez*)

Saturday, October 26, **7:30**
Carmen Bizet
Kuhlmann, Haymon*, Claycomb+, Guo+; McCauley, Hale, Vasquez+, Delavan, Swenson, Wood, Oropeza
Sutej/Ponnelle/Williams/Ponnelle/Juerke/Munn

Sunday, October 27, **1:00**
Tristan und Isolde Wagner

Tuesday, October 29, **7:30**
Carmen Bizet
(Same cast as October 25)

Wednesday, October 30, **7:00**
Tristan und Isolde Wagner

Friday, November 1, **7:30**
Carmen Bizet
(Same cast as October 25)

Saturday, November 2, **7:00**
Tristan und Isolde Wagner

Tuesday, November 5, **7:00**
Tristan und Isolde Wagner

Thursday, November 7, **7:30**
Carmen Bizet
(Same cast as October 26)

Friday, November 8, 8:00
United States Premiere
Das Verratene Meer Henze
Putnam; Fox, Estep, Villanueva, Asawa*, Sarris*, Graber+, McNeil
Stenz**/Alden*/Steinberg*/Munn
Underwritten by a generous gift from the Paul L. and Phyllis C. Wattis Foundation.

Saturday, November 9, **7:00**
Tristan und Isolde Wagner

Sunday, November 10, **1:30**
Carmen Bizet
(Same cast as October 26)

Wednesday, November 13, 8:00
Das Verratene Meer Henze

Saturday, November 16, 8:00
Elektra Strauss
Jones, Secunde*, Dernesch, Carla Cook, Guo+, Jepson, Catherine Cook+, Randell, Racette, Fortuna+, Mavrovitis; Pederson, King, Wood, McNeil, Graber
Thielemann**/Serban*/Kokkos*/Munn

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Sunday, November 17, 2:00
Das Verratene Meer Henze

Wednesday, November 20, **7:30**
Das Verratene Meer Henze

Thursday, November 21, **7:30**
San Francisco Opera Premiere
Attila Verdi
Connell; Ramey, Chernov* (Nov. 21, 24), May* (Nov. 27, 30; Dec. 3, 6, 8), Ordoñez, Estep, Skinner
Ferro*/Mansouri/Alley*/Lee/Peterson*/Arhelger
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Friday, November 22, 8:00
Elektra Strauss

Saturday, November 23, 8:00
Das Verratene Meer Henze

Sunday, November 24, 2:00
Attila Verdi

Monday, November 25, **7:30**
La Traviata Verdi
Patterson, Guo+, Petersen; Lopez-Yañez, Laperrière, Skinner, Delavan, Wood, Swenson, McNeil
Robertson/Copley/Conklin/Walker/Munn

Tuesday, November 26, 8:00
Elektra Strauss

Wednesday, November 27, **7:30**
Attila Verdi

Friday, November 29, 8:00
La Traviata Verdi
(Same cast as November 25)

Saturday, November 30, 8:00
Attila Verdi

Sunday, December 1, 2:00
Elektra Strauss
(Orest: Fox)

Tuesday, December 3, 8:00
Attila Verdi

Wednesday, December 4, **7:30**
Elektra Strauss
(Orest: Fox)

Thursday, December 5, **7:30**
La Traviata Verdi
(Same cast as November 25)

Friday, December 6, 8:00
Attila Verdi

Saturday, December 7, **7:30**
Elektra Strauss
(Orest: Fox)

Sunday, December 8, 2:00
Attila Verdi

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THE *TRISTAN* CHORD

By MICHAEL STEINBERG

SCHERL

Michael Steinberg serves the San Francisco Symphony as program annotator and lecturer. He is also artistic adviser to the Minnesota Orchestra and artistic director of that orchestra's Sommerfest.

(Opposite page) Gwyneth Jones in the final moments of San Francisco Opera's 1980 **Tristan und Isolde.**

(Below) Photo taken from the wings during a San Francisco Opera 1933 staging of **Tristan und Isolde**: *Gertrude Kappel, as Isolde, is addressing Tristan (Paul Althouse). Kathryn Meisle (Brangäne) and Richard Bonelli (Kurwenal) are on the far right.*

MORTON

An attractive widower, not yet old, but no longer young, is wooed by a passionate, unsettled girl, not yet a grownup, but no longer a child. No, he says, no, he knows a sad play about Tristan and Isolde, and he wants no part of the fate of King Marke. And as he speaks, the orchestra stabs us—quietly, but to the heart—with a chord unlike any we have heard in the three hours of music through which the story has unfolded so far.

A teen-age boy, pathetic, repressed, afraid, is slipped his first drink by two friends who count on a jigger of rum to be the key to his liberation. As the mysterious and unfamiliar essence invades his head, the same chord fills the orchestra like spreading smoke.

In a *tour de force* of musical cryptography, a string quartet becomes a love letter to a woman whose place in the composer's heart none must guess. Suddenly, in the lamenting finale, the four strands of sound sort themselves out into that chord.

In a carol to "lovely and soothing Death," when poet and musician

> ... joyously sing the dead,
> Lost in the loving, floating ocean of thee,
> Laved in the flood of thy bliss, O Death,

the chord ghosts for a moment through the room.

It is the first chord of *Tristan und Isolde*. It is also Wagner, quoting himself in the third act of *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg;* Benjamin Britten, injecting it into the comedy of poor Albert Herring's coronation as Albert the Good; Alban Berg, setting it as a secret reference in the *Lyric Suite* he wrote for Hannah Fuchs-Robettin; and Roger Sessions, reticently alluding to it in his setting of Walt Whitman's threnody for Abraham Lincoln, *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*. All four composers could be sure that they were making a reference that would be understood instantly and unmistakably.

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The *Tristan* Chord

Musicians—and not only musicians—know it as "the Tristan chord." Is there another composition so identified with a single sound? The historians discovered that Wagner got it, like so much else, from Franz Liszt. The point, however, is that Wagner perceived that what had been a colorful detail in a song by his future father-in-law could become the motor, the heartbeat, of a drama more intense, more erotic, more abstract, more involved intellectually, more allusive, than anything that had ever before been set on a stage.

The Tristan story, as Wagner distilled it from many strands of legend and literature, is nearly devoid of external event. A man and a woman drain a cup of drugged wine, a hunting party returns unexpectedly early, and twice, tempers and ideals collide so that a physical melee erupts briefly. But those are mere mechanisms in and of the *real* story, which is one of two people caught in hopeless love. Perhaps "hopeless" is by one degree too extreme a word; for what Tristan and Isolde come to realize is that there is indeed one place where their love can find fulfillment, their great yearning can be stilled. That is the Land of Death.

For this story, so plain and so baffling if we imagine dealing with it by means of ordinary stagecraft, Wagner found a stunningly simple musical metaphor. He constructed a network of dissonance whose resolution into consonance would come about only at the moment when Tristan and Isolde are joined in death. (*Dissonance*, I should perhaps add, is not synonymous with *discord*; rather, it is, in tonal harmony, the term for any chord that sets up the expectation or need of resolution to another, more stable chord.)

Here is how *Tristan* begins. "Slow and yearning," writes Wagner, and the cellos, pianissimo, heave themselves up from A to F, there to begin a slow, gradual descent. On the third note of that descent, a few woodwinds add their voices to produce that poignant and aromatic dissonance, the *Tristan* chord. Wagner treats it as a dissonance, as a sound that wants to move on to another sound. He does not, however, resolve it into consonance. The voices

MORTON

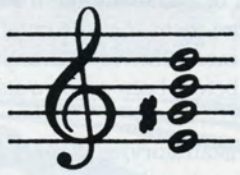
Kirsten Flagstad was San Francisco Opera's Isolde in 1936, 1937, 1939, 1949 and 1950. This photo was taken backstage, before a dress rehearsal, in 1936.

MORTON

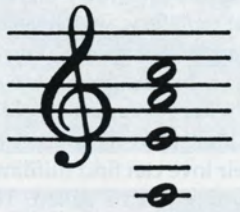
MORTON

fan out until they reach that most familiar and most restless of dissonances, the one known in the trade as the dominant seventh chord.

Our expectation, when we hear a dominant seventh, is that it will lead to a consonance. This particular chord



would normally resolve to



a chord of A minor. Instead, Wagner lets it dissolve into silence. Then, after a pause that few conductors have the nerve, patience, and sense of rhythm to hold through its proper duration, he begins the whole process again, a step higher. He repeats the phrase a third time, still more intensely, and this time the prolongation of the "dying" by means of ever more tenuous repetitions of ever shorter fragments serves notice that the expected resolution will not come, at least not yet. The prelude to *Tristan und Isolde* touches many chords and with many degrees of emphasis, but the one thing Wagner studiously avoids is anything like settling on a chord of his unstated tonic or home key.

(Left, top) Stage director Armando Agnini attends to Lauritz Melchior before the beginning of Act III of **Tristan und Isolde** *in 1936; (Left, bottom) Lauritz Melchior (Tristan) and Julius Huehn (Kurwenal) later, during the performance.*

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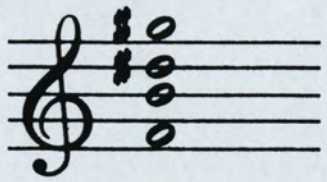
Wagner was working long past the time when an opera overture was simply a pleasant bustle designed to cover the noise of an audience settling down. Almost from the beginning of his career, he begins his dramas from the first note of music. As for *Tristan*, we know well what is coming even if our acquaintance is limited to the popular concert pairing of Prelude and "Love-Death," an expedient authorized and practiced by Wagner himself at a time when opportunities to see a complete *Tristan* were probably less plentiful than chances of seeing Schoenberg's *Moses und Aron* in the theater today. But even the first audience in Munich on June 10, 1865 must have perceived that a musical gesture so striking in itself and presented with so many marks of emphasis was bound to have consequences. Chekhov says somewhere that if you see a gun hanging on a wall in Act One, someone will fire it in Act Three.

No doubt someone has counted how many times the *Tristan* chord



appears, literally, or in some inversion, transposition, or other recognizable variant, between measure two of the Prelude and the moment, hours later, when Isolde has sunk "as though transfigured," lifeless, into the arms of her maid, Brangäne, and onto the body of the dead Tristan. (By the way, Wagner's own title for what we now call Prelude and "Love-Death" was "Love-Death and Transfiguration.") I, at

Cast of San Francisco Opera's 1947 **Tristan und Isolde:** *(L. to r.) Walter Olitzki (Melot), Blanche Thebom (Brangäne), Set Svanholm (Tristan), Helen Traubel (Isolde), Conductor William Steinberg, Lorenzo Alvary (King Marke).*

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any rate, have not done a chord-count, but the number must be well into three figures. *Tristan und Isolde* is a wondrously multifaceted work, and no *one* analytical approach will serve to reveal all of its nature. You could certainly do worse, though, than to trace the unfolding of its events than through the appearance of *the* chord.

Claude Debussy, another composer who was both so haunted by *Tristan* that he became nearly paralyzed in his effort to compose *Pelléas et Mélisande* and who also quoted the famous chord for humorous effect, was a wonderful writer about music, and, like all good critics, he was not always innocent of hyperbole and distortion. He was conspicuously unkind—and untruthful—when he complained of the behavior of Wagner's leitmotifs. The characters were tiresome, he remarked, the way they insisted on presenting their calling cards monotonously upon each appearance. At best this is partially true of early Wagner and of a few special cases like the trumpet call associated in *Der Ring des Nibelungen* with the sword Nothung.

Wagner in fact realized quite soon that these leitmotifs, as well as being telling associative devices, were wonderfully pliable musical entities with which he could build his unprecedentedly far-flung structures. He cared intensely about the firmness of his designs, and it was to Beethoven that he turned in order to learn how to achieve that firmness. It is not surprising to discover that the C-sharp minor String Quartet, Opus 131, so big, so multiform, and at the same time so compacted and rich in cross-reference and allusion, was the Beethoven work that, together with the Ninth Symphony, he most treasured.

Tristan und Isolde abounds in significant recapitulations of its opening measures, and their function in the matter of form is as crucial as their affective weight. Walter Pater's definition of form as the life history of an idea comes urgently to mind. By the same token, the span from the second measure of the prelude to the fifth measure from the end of Act Three is the great crossbeam that holds the immense edifice together.

This is not the place to write the biography of that chord whose sound and further resonance so saturate *Tristan und Isolde.* Who, anyway, would not ultimately want to make that voyage of discovery independently, to let the drama reveal its riches in

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

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

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

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

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

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

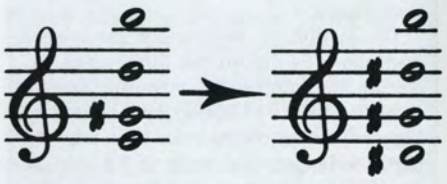
the theater, at the piano, on records, through some form of long living with it? But let me, by way of example, point to just a few such moments.

The drinking of the potion:

This, near the end of Act One, is the first great peripeteia of the drama. It sets in motion what we think of as the "real" action, but it also closes the chapter begun years before when Tristan slew Isolde's betrothed, Morold. It is the most explicit recapitulation of the opening to be found in the score, but, at the same time, how transformed it is! The chord itself enters as a cry of the whole orchestra. What were the long silences in the prelude are now filled with sounds that speak of racing pulses, of trembling and vertigo and confusion. And the phrase in which the prelude attains its real momentum is transfigured when Tristan and Isolde for the first time address each other by name. Can our hearing, our understanding of the prelude ever be the same once we have heard Isolde's shaken "Tristan!" and Tristan's passion-flooded response?

Tristan's response to King Marke:

Day has invaded night, the outer world has intruded into that world that excludes all but Tristan and Isolde. To King Marke, crushed by grief, incomprehension, and shame, Tristan can say only: "O King, I cannot tell you, and what you ask, you can never learn." As he speaks, the music of the prelude's opening bars sounds again, but in the chill sonorities of wind instruments, and with a subtle change of harmony that substitutes for the dominant seventh with its openness, tension, and expectation, a sound that musicians know as the six-four chord, also unstable, unfinal, but without energy or life.



Only when Tristan turns from Marke to Isolde do we again hear the warm sound of strings.

Tristan's death:

An event passionately longed for and with equal passion staved off until the arrival of Isolde. As Tristan sinks slowly to the ground in Isolde's arms, the music of the prelude sounds again, first urgently telescoped, then, with his last "Isolde!" disintegrating into silence.

Isolde's death:

The Love-Death is a massive recapitulation of the climax of the love music in Act Two. As Isolde expires, the chord—for the first and only time—is dissolved in beatific consonance. The drama is over. Tristan and Isolde have found death and thus each other. The chord has found its resolution.

(Below) Irene Dalis and Jess Thomas, performing their roles for the first time anywhere, in San Francisco Opera's 1967 **Tristan und Isolde.** *(Overleaf) The same moment, at the end of Act I, with Birgit Nilsson and Wolfgang Windgassen, in 1970.*

GALLOWAY

I have wondered sometimes how many in the audience at the first performance of *Die Meistersinger* caught the musical quotation that went with the reference to the *"traurig Stück"* of *Tristan und Isolde*. (In the pit that night was Hans von Bülow, an expert on cuckoldry: his wife had borne the first of her three children by Richard Wagner on the day of the first orchestral rehearsal of *Tristan*.) No doubt to some extent Wagner was writing into the future. It is silly to ask what Wagner would have thought of Alban Berg or Roger Sessions, though I can imagine that he might have approved of the seriousness of purpose behind their *Tristan* quotations. Of course when it came to humor he had a clear-cut and simple idea that the proper distribution of responsibilities was for him to make the jokes and for others to laugh. But perhaps he would have accepted even Albert Herring's hiccupy coronation insofar as it was evidence that, in one chord, he had created a totem so powerful that the briefest evocation of it could conjure, more than a thousand words, a world of magic and love and death. ❑

HOWARD

Wagner's Fluids

By SUSAN SONTAG

Richard Wagner, 1813 - 1883.

Water, blood, healing balm, magic potions—fluids play a decisive role in this mythology.

Wagner's stories are often launched from a water-world. An arrival by water and a departure by water frame the plots of *The Flying Dutchman* and *Lohengrin*. The *Ring* saga begins literally in the water, below the river Rhine's surface (to end, four operas later, with a cosmic duet of water and fire). Wagner's most delirious exploration of fluidity, *Tristan und Isolde*, begins and ends with journeys over water. Act I takes place on a noble vessel commanded by Tristan that is taking the Irish princess Isolde, who is affianced to Tristan's uncle, King Marke, to Cornwall. Preceding this journey was an earlier sea voyage, when Tristan, grievously wounded, had set off alone in a frail skiff for Ireland, in hope of being ministered to by Isolde, renowned for her healing arts. Since the foe who wounded him and whom he killed was Isolde's fiancé, he could not say who he was. (Solitary people with mysterious or disguised identities—Lohengrin, the Dutchman, the wounded Tristan at the Irish court—usually arrive by water.) Act III takes place on a rampart overlooking the sea, where Tristan, re-wounded mortally at the end of Act II, waits for a boat to arrive bearing Isolde, who has been summoned not as his lover but as his once successful healer. But as she appears Tristan dies, and she follows him in death. Journeys over water are associated in Wagner's mythology with a redemption that does not happen, as in *Lohengrin*, or happens in terms other than those originally sought, as in *Tristan und Isolde*, which has almost everybody die, either senselessly or beatifically.

Parsifal, like *Tristan und Isolde*, is very much a story of fluids. However, in this last of Wagner's thirteen

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Susan Sontag is the well-known novelist and essayist. Her books include The Benefactor, Against Interpretation, Styles of Radical Will, On Photography, Illness as Metaphor, *and* I, etcetera. *She has written and directed four feature-length films in Europe as well as directed plays here and abroad.*

operas, what is defined as redemption—finding someone who will heal, and succeed, the wounded king Amfortas—does take place, and in the hoped-for terms. A virgin, this time male, a holy fool, does appear. Perhaps this fulfillment of expectations makes it inevitable that the water-world is largely excluded from the opera. A majestic outdoors, the forest, and a vast sanctified indoors, the Grail Hall, are its two positive locations (the negative ones, Klingsor's domain, being a castle tower and a garden of dangerous flowers). To be sure, Act I has water just offstage: a lake to which the wounded king is brought for his hydrotherapy, and a spring where Kundry procures water to revive the fainting Parsifal after brutally announcing to him his mother's death; and in Act III, there is water for a consecration, for a baptism. But the main story of fluids is about blood ... the unstanchable hemorrhaging of the wound in Amfortas's side, Christ's blood that should stream in the Grail chalice. Amfortas's essential duty as king of the Grail knights, which is to make Christ's blood appear in the chalice on a regular basis, for the knights' eucharistic meal, has become agony for him to perform—weakened as he is by the wound, inflicted by Klingsor with the very spear that pierced Jesus' side while He hung on the Cross. The plot of *Parsifal* could be summarized as the search, eventually successful, for a replacement for someone who is having trouble making a fluid appear.

Several kinds of fluid enter the body in Wagner's stories but in only one form does fluid leave it, blood, and this in male bodies only. Women have bloodless deaths: usually they simply expire, abruptly (Elsa, Elisabeth, Isolde, Kundry) or they immolate themselves, in water (Senta) or in fire (Brünnhilde). Only men bleed ... bleed to death. (Therefore it doesn't seem too fanciful to regard semen as subsumed, metaphorically, under blood.) Though Wagner makes the prostrate, punctured, hemorrhaging male body the result of some epic combat, there is usually an erotic wound behind the one inflicted by spear and sword. Love as experienced by men, in both *Tristan und Isolde* and *Parsifal*, is tantamount to a wound. Isolde had healed Tristan but Tristan had fallen in love with Isolde; Wagner's way of signaling the emotional necessity of a new physical wound is to make it, shockingly, virtually self-inflicted. (Tristan drops his sword at the end of Act II and lets the treacherous Melot run him through.) Amfortas had already been seduced by Kundry; Klingsor's spear just made that wound literal.

In Wagner's misogynistic logic a woman, who characteristically doubles as healer and seducer, is often the true slayer. This figure, of whom Isolde is a positive version, appears in *Parsifal* with both the negativity and the eroticism made far more explicit. The person who flies in, early in Act I, bearing a vial of precious medicinal balm for the stricken king—it can relieve but not cure him—is the same person who caused the king's wound. Wagner makes Kundry systematically dual: in her service role, a bringer of fluids; in her seducer's alter ego, a taker of them.

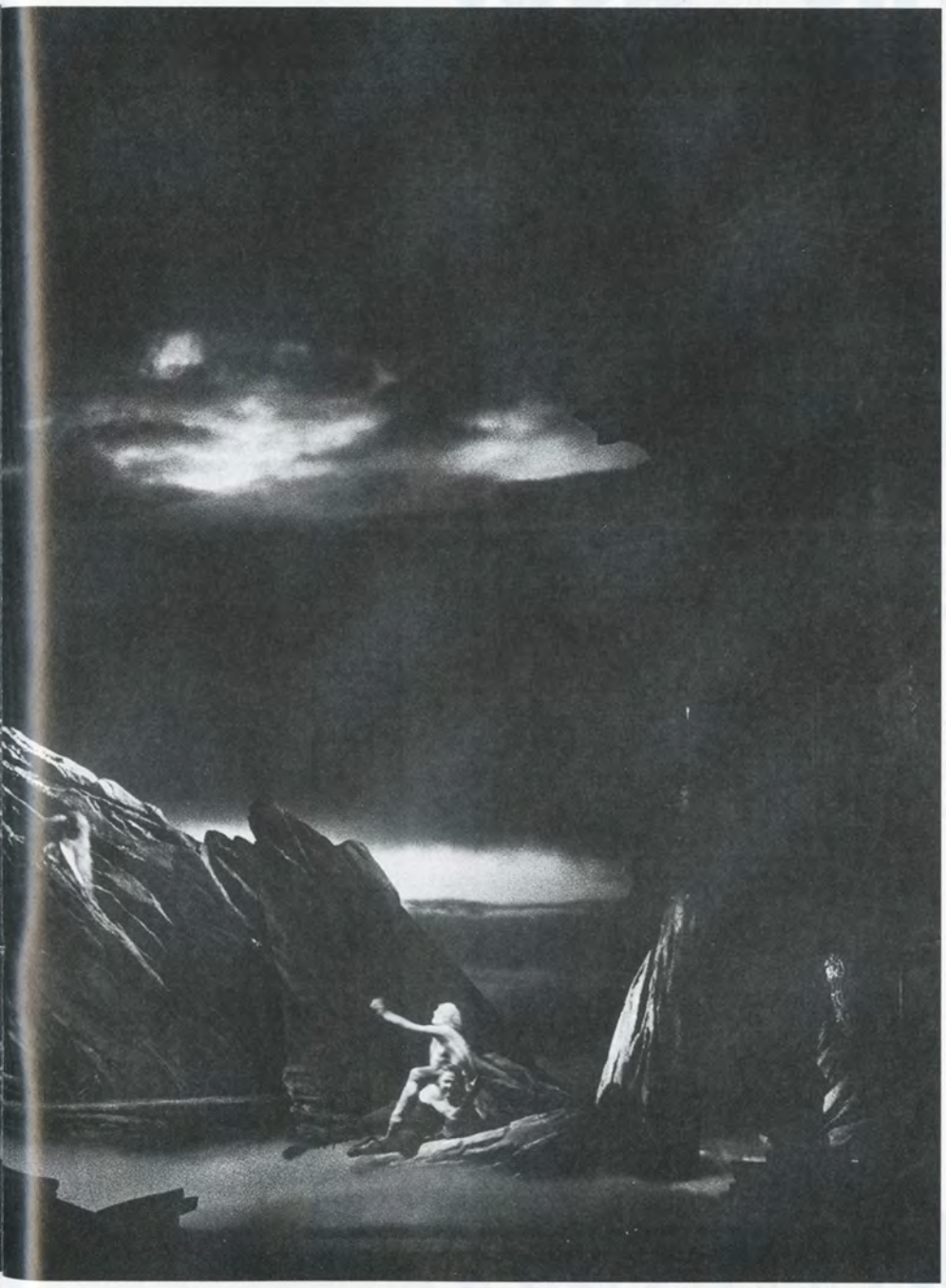
Seduction is eloquence; service is mute. After the failure of Kundry's maximal eloquence, her attempt to seduce Parsifal in Act II, she is represented as having nothing left to say. "Dienen! Dienen!" ("To serve! To serve!") are the only words she is allowed in all of Act III. In contrast, Isolde, who is characterized first as a healing woman, one who successfully administered balm (the background of the opera's

POWERS

story), and then as a focus of desire, becomes more and more eloquent. It is with Isolde's rush of ecstatic words that Wagner concludes the opera.

The fluid administered by Isolde in her role as healer is in the past. In the story Wagner has chosen to tell, the fluid she offers Tristan is what they both believe to be a lethal poison. Instead, it is a de-inhibitor, which makes them—just as the boat is about to land—confess their love for each other.

Continued on page 47



Opening scene of Wagner's **Das Rheingold,** *part of San Francisco Opera's complete cycle of* **Der Ring des Nibelungen.**

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GABRIELE SCHNAUT

One of the leading dramatic sopranos today, **Gabriele Schnaut** makes her U.S. opera debut as Isolde in *Tristan und Isolde*, a role in which she has been acclaimed in Dortmund, Cologne, Tokyo, and at the Hamburg State Opera. She began her musical career as a violinist, but switched to vocal studies at the Frankfurt Musikhochschule as a student of Elsa Cavelti. After graduation in 1976, she was immediately engaged at the Stuttgart Opera where she began her operatic career as a mezzo-soprano. She made her Bayreuth Festival debut the following year as Waltraute and the Second Norn in Patrice Chéreau's much-discussed production of *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, and has since been a regular guest at the Festival: as Venus in Wolfgang Wagner's production of *Tannhäuser*, as the Third Norn and Sieglinde in Peter Hall's staging of the *Ring*, and as Ortrud in Werner Herzog's production of *Lohengrin*. In subsequent seasons she sang regularly in Darmstadt, and later expanded her repertoire in Mannheim, where her roles included Kundry in *Parsifal*, Sieglinde in *Die Walküre* and Marie in *Wozzeck*. 1985 marked her initial assignment as a soprano: her first Isolde in concert in Dortmund, which was followed by successes in the role in Cologne (1987), in Ruth Berghaus's new production at the Hamburg State Opera (1988), and in Tokyo last year. Miss Schnaut is also well acquainted with 20th century music. The German composer Wolfgang Rihm has written the role of Ophelia in his opera *Hamletmaschine* specifically for her, as well as a cycle of seven *Lieder for Orchestra*. Compositions by Aribert Reimann, the early Hindemith operas, and Schreker's *Der Schatzgräber* and *Der ferne Klang*, which she has recorded with Gerd Albrecht, also belong to her repertoire. Outside of Germany, she was acclaimed as Ortrud and Sieglinde at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, as Kundry in Paris and Rome, and in her U.S. concert debut (as a

HANNA SCHWARZ

mezzo) with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra led by Georg Solti. Recent highlights include the three Brünnhildes in a new *Ring* cycle which is being jointly presented by the opera houses of Cologne and Düsseldorf, as well as Els in *Der Schatzgräber* in Hamburg. Miss Schnaut recently recorded the role of Leonore in *Fidelio* with the Vienna Philharmonic led by Christoph von Dohnányi, and will sing the title role of *Elektra* for the first time in her career at the Opéra de Bastille in Paris next year.

German mezzo-soprano **Hanna Schwarz**, seen here last fall as Clairon in *Capriccio* and Prince Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus*, appears this season as Brangäne in *Tristan und Isolde*. She made her U.S. debut with San Francisco Opera in 1977 as Fricka in *Das Rheingold*, returning to the War Memorial stage in the same role in the Summer of 1983 and in the 1985 *Ring* cycle, as well as Erda in *Siegfried*. She has also appeared with the Company as Octavian in *Der Rosenkavalier* in 1978, and in the title role of *Carmen* in 1981. The Hamburg-born singer, a leading artist at the Hamburg Opera since 1983, made her Bayreuth debut in 1975 and sang each year in the Chéreau *Ring* production, telecast in the U.S. in 1983. She also appeared in a film version of *Tristan und Isolde* as Brangäne, which was directed by Jean-Pierre Ponnelle, and portrayed Fricka and Waltraute in the Bayreuth 1985 *Ring* directed by Peter Hall. Miss Schwarz has been praised in Munich as the Principessa in *Adriana Lecouvreur* (a production which has been recorded); at the Metropolitan Opera as Fricka; at the Vienna Staatsoper as Octavian; and at the Hamburg Opera as Brangäne. Her discography includes numerous recordings of complete operas, lieder and concerts led by such conductors as Claudio Abbado, Pierre Boulez, Colin Davis, Herbert von Karajan, and Wolfgang Sawallisch. Recent engagements include Fricka in the Cologne

WILLIAM JOHNS

Opera's complete (1989/90/91) *Ring of the Nibelung*, Erda in Munich's complete *Ring* cycle, and performances of *Die Frau ohne Schatten* in Bonn. Later this season she is scheduled for a new production of *Orpheus und Eurydike* in Bonn.

Internationally acclaimed tenor **William Johns** sings the role of Tristan in *Tristan und Isolde*. At the San Francisco Opera he has been heard as Walther in *Die Meistersinger* (1981), Don José in *Carmen* (1983), Max in *Der Freischütz* (1985), the Emperor in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* (1989) and, at last summer's *Ring* cycle, in the title role of *Siegfried* as well as Siegfried in *Götterdämmerung*. The Oklahoma-born artist's 1973 operatic debut as Rodolfo in *La Bohème* in Bremen was followed by appearances in other major European houses. He made his U.S. debut in the same role in 1975 with Pittsburgh Opera. He has since appeared as a regular guest artist at the leading opera houses of the world. Highlights of recent seasons include his debut at Milan's La Scala as the Emperor in a new production of *Die Frau ohne Schatten*; his first staged *Tannhäuser* at the Metropolitan Opera; his first Siegfried in *Der Ring des Nibelungen* in Paris; the first Tristan of his career opposite Gwyneth Jones at the Paris Opera; and *Die Meistersinger* at the Bayreuth Festival. Johns was heard in three new productions of *Tristan und Isolde* during the 1987-88 season: at the Hamburg State Opera, the Canadian Opera Company, and at the Los Angeles Opera. That same season he sang Siegfried at the Orange Festival, in addition to Bacchus in Toronto and the title role of *Otello* in Marseilles and Frankfurt. Most recently he appeared in *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung* at the Met and the Cologne Opera; *Tannhäuser* in Vienna, Hamburg and Bonn; *Lohengrin*, *Rienzi* and *Tristan und Isolde* in Hamburg; *Lohengrin* in Cologne; *La Damnation de Faust* at Verona; *Fidelio* with the Philadelphia Orchestra; and performed both Siegfrieds for

HARTMUT WELKER

Seattle Opera's 1991 presentation of the *Ring* cycle. Future assignments include the title role of *Tannhäuser* at the Met and in Linz, *Tristan und Isolde* in Marseilles, and a return to the Cologne Opera for performances of the *Ring*. Johns also frequently appears with orchestras in the U.S. and Europe in repertoire including Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* and Eighth Symphony, Schoenberg's *Gurrelieder*, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, and Berlioz's *La Damnation de Faust*.

In his debut season with San Francisco Opera, bass-baritone **Hartmut Welker** sings the role of Kurwenal in *Tristan und Isolde*. The German artist studied voice at the Music Academy in Essen and made his operatic debut in 1974 in Aachen, where he sang principal roles until 1980. After a two year engagement at the Staatstheater in Karlsruhe, he began his international career, appearing at Milan's La Scala (*Lohengrin*), in Geneva and Paris (*Khovanshchina*), Madrid (*Fidelio*), and in Edinburgh, Hamburg, Munich and Stuttgart. Since his 1984 U.S. debut in concert performances of *Boris Godunov* with the Chicago Symphony, Welker frequently appears at the Vienna Staatsoper (*Fidelio, Salome, Der Fliegende Holländer*), in Berlin (*Fidelio, Holländer*), and Hamburg (*Lohengrin, Salome, Fidelio* and *Holländer*). Highlights of his 1986-87 season include a debut at the Royal Opera Covent Garden in *Fidelio,* and Barnaba in *La Gioconda* at the Lyric Opera of Chicago. Recent assignments include Alberich in a new production of the *Ring* cycle in Cologne, *Lohengrin* in Vienna, Berlin and London, *Khovanshchina* and *Boris Godunov* in Vienna, as well as his Metropolitan Opera debut as Pizarro in *Fidelio*. His numerous symphonic engagements include appearances with the London Symphony, Vienna Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony and Philadelphia Orchestra. His recordings include the complete Schmidt *Notre Dame, Fidelio* (with Christoph von Dohnányi), *Lohengrin* (recorded twice, with Abbado and Mehta), and Schönberg's *Gurrelieder* with Abbado.

ALFRED MUFF

Bass-baritone **Alfred Muff**, who made his U.S. debut as Barak in San Francisco Opera's 1989 production of *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, appears as King Marke in *Tristan und Isolde*. Born in Lucerne, Switzerland, he became a member of the ensemble of the Landestheater in Linz, Austria, in 1980 where he sang Philip II in *Don Carlo*, Orest in *Elektra*, Leporello in *Don Giovanni*, the title roles of *Boris Godunov* and *Falstaff*, as well as a critically praised portrayal of Hans Sachs in *Die Meistersinger*. He was a member of the Nationaltheater of Mannheim from 1984 to 1986, and appeared with that company as Barak, Hans Sachs, and in the title role of *Der Fliegende Holländer*. Subsequent guest appearances in concert and in opera included performances at Milan's La Scala, the state operas of Hamburg and Munich, the Vienna State Opera, The Grand Théâtre de Genève, Rome's St. Cecilia Academy, and the festivals of Lucerne, Zurich, Granada and Madrid. In 1986, he became a member of the Zurich Opera, where he sang his first Wotan and Wanderer in a new production of the *Ring* cycle, in addition to the roles of Barak, Sachs, the Dutchman, and Jokanaan in *Salome*. He made his Paris Opera debut in 1986 as Philip II in the original French version of *Don Carlos*, and returned to that house the following year for *Der Fliegende Holländer*. He made his U.S. orchestral debut in 1988 with the Chicago Symphony under the baton of Georg Solti in performances of the *German Requiem*. Muff has also appeared in *Der Fliegende Holländer* at La Scala and in Barcelona, *Die Walküre, Siegfried, Nabucco, Tosca* and *Mefistofele* in Zurich, *Tannhäuser* in Bonn, *Oedipus Rex* in Geneva, *Die Meistersinger* and *Parsifal* in Mannheim, *Holländer* and *Salome* in Barcelona, *Die Frau ohne Schatten* in Munich, and *Die Zauberflöte* at the Aix-en-Provence Festival. Recent successes include Wotan and the Wanderer in the *Ring* cycle, the title role of *Mefistofele* and Scarpia in a new production of *Tosca* at the Zurich Opera, Kezal in a new staging of *The Bartered Bride* in Bonn, as well as concerts in Rome, Geneva and Lausanne. Muff's recordings include the first complete version of *Die Frau ohne Schatten* and the Aix-en-Provence production of *Die Zauberflöte*.

JOHN DAVID DE HAAN

Tenor **John David De Haan** sings the role of Melot in *Tristan und Isolde*. A native of Kansas, he participated in the 1985 Merola Opera Program and, after portraying Don Ottavio in Western Opera Theater's tour of *Don Giovanni*, became a 1986 Adler Fellow, and was presented in the Schwabacher Debut Recital series. He made his San Francisco Opera debut in the summer of 1986 as Arturo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, returning that fall in the title role of *Faust* for the family performances. In 1987, he stepped in on short notice to replace an ailing colleague as Roméo in *Roméo et Juliette*. He was seen here in 1989 as Fenton in *Falstaff* and Cassio in *Otello*, and appeared with the Company last fall as Andres in *Wozzeck*. After receiving the newly established Eleanor Steber Music Foundation Award, he has made numerous appearances with U.S. opera companies, singing Don Ottavio with the Greater Miami Opera, Eisenstein in *Die Fledermaus* with the Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Anatol in *Vanessa* with Opera Theatre of St. Louis, and Ferrando in *Così fan tutte* at Chautauqua. His credits during the 1988 season include Alfredo in *La Traviata* with the opera companies of Indianapolis, Memphis and Syracuse, and his debut with the Detroit Symphony in Bach's *St. John Passion*. The following year he made his European debut as Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte* at the Mannheim State Theatre, and appeared as Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* for the Seattle Opera, Riccardo in Massenet's *Chérubin* at Santa Fe Opera, and in the title role of *Werther* for the Opera Theatre of St. Louis. Most recently he sang Arbace in *Idomeneo* in Miami and at the Netherlands Opera, Don Ottavio in Indianapolis and Memphis, and Alfredo in New Orleans and Tulsa.

Continued on page 45

1991 Fall Season

Artists

Harolyn Blackwell*
Irina Bogachova*
Jacalyn Bower
Laura Claycomb+
Elizabeth Connell
Catherine Cook*+
Helga Dernesch
Kallen Esperian*
Maria Fortuna+
Cecilia Gasdia
Denyce Graves*
Yanyu Guo+
Cynthia Haymon*
Kristine Jepson
Gwyneth Jones
Catherine Keen
Kathleen Kuhlmann
Olga Markova-Mikhailenko**
Jane Marsh
Reveka Mavrovitis
Mary Mills+
Marilyn Mims
Mariana Nicolesco*
Ann Panagulias
Susan Patterson
Donna Petersen
Ashley Putnam
Patricia Racette
Angela Randell
Gabriele Schnaut**
Hanna Schwarz
Nadine Secunde*
Carol Vaness
Elena Zaremba*
Delores Ziegler*

Valery Alexeiev**
Brian Asawa*
Gennadi Bezubenkov**
Vladimir Chernov*
Stephen Condy*
Paolo Coni*
John David De Haan
Mark Delavan
Craig Estep
Tom Fox
Joseph Frank
Lucio Gallo**
Marcello Giordani*
Micah Graber+
Paul Gudas
Robert Hale
Ross Halper*
Grier Hanedanyan**
Daniel Harper
Kristopher Irmiter
William Johns
Dimitri Kharitonov*
James King
Gaétan Laperrière
Vincenzo La Scola**
Victor Ledbetter
Hong-Shen Li
Frank Lopardo*
Jorge Lopez-Yañez
Yuri Marusin**
Barry McCauley
Dennis McNeil
Robert Milne*
Alfred Muff
Alexandre Naoumenko**
Vladimir Ognovenko**
Antonio Ordoñez*
Luis Oropeza*
Monte Pederson
Dennis Petersen
Paul Plishka
Gino Quilico
Samuel Ramey
Peter Rose**
Timothy Sarris*
Michael Schade*
Brian Schexnayder
Philip Skinner
Nikita Storejev
John Swenson*
Dale Travis
Hector Vasquez*+
LeRoy Villanueva
Hartmut Welker*
Kip Wilborn
James Wood*

Conductors

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

Stage Directors

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

Productions Designed By

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

Costume Designers

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

Choreographers

Adela Clara
Victoria Morgan
Kirk Peterson*
Robert Sund*

***U.S. opera debut *San Francisco Opera debut +1991 Adler Fellow*

Chorus

Deanna Barraza
Julianne Booth
Roberta Bowman
Pamela Dale
Dottye Dean
Paula Goodman
Ann Hughes
Christina Jaqua
Joy Korst
Dallas Lane
Marcie Lawer
Tamaki McCracken
Sharon Mueller
Sharon Navratil
Alexandra Nehra
Rose Parker
Virginia Pluth
Laurel Rice
Shelly Seitz Saarni
Sue Ellen Scheppke
Claudia Siefer
Page Swift
Donna Turchi
Michelle Ziegelman

Daniel Becker-Nealeigh
Richard Brown
Ric Cascio
Frank Daniels
Henryk De Rewenda
Robert Delany
Timothy Foster
Alex Guerrero, Jr.
Cameron Henley
Gerald Johnson
Ken Johnson
Frederick Matthews
Jim Meyer
Raymond Murcell
Daniel Pociernicki
Valery Portnov
Kenneth Rafanan
Tom Reed
Robert Rutt
Sigmund Seigel
Dan Stanley
Jere Torkelsen
Don Tull
Richard Walker

Extra Chorus

Candida Arias-Duazo
Joan Beal
Marcia Gronewold
Lise Lindstom
Wendy Loder
Ellyn Peabody
Christine Reimer
Janine Bartalini Shafer
Bonnie Shapiro-Haroutunian
Diana Smith
Traci Tornquist
Delia Voitoff
Darla Wigginton
Susan Witt

John Beauchamp
William Berges
Mario Dioneda
Tim Enders
Dario Di Maria Fraticelli
Peter Girardot
Gregory Marks
Walter Matthes
Donald Matthews
Tom McEachern
John Musselman
William Pickersgill
Robert V. Presley
Lawrence Rush
Robert Steiner
Erich Stratmann
Grant Thompson
James G. Weaver

Children's Chorus

San Francisco Girls Chorus

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

Golden Gate Boys Chorus

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

San Francisco Boys Chorus

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

Ragazzi, the Peninsula Boys Chorus

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

Additional Boy Chorister

Darryl Temple

Supernumeraries

Susan Alden
Susan Anderson
Pat Angell
Elayne Ashman
Irene Bechtel
Phyllis Blair
Katherine Brazaitis
Madeline Chase
Kay Cheatham
Annette Clark
Renée DeJarnatt
Carol Dunlap
Darcy Fink
Mary Freeman
Diane Graham
Leah Hall
Mary Ann Hery
Peggy Hubacker
Joan Imbeau
Esther Jennings
Ann Masai Jones
Janet Johnston
Candace Kahn
Andrea Kohlruss
Courtney Levin
Jan Moody
Bryn McAfee
Dorothy Papo
Ann Paras
Marianna Petroni
Cassandra Plott
Karen Burtness Prak
Marian Reyes
Ellen Sanchez
Mary Simon
Stella Tatro
Beverly Terry
Kimberly Thompson
Mimi Timberlake
Linda Unemori
Cecilia Valente
Carolyn Waugh
Susan Weiss
Susan Wendt-Bogear
Caper Whitfield
Deidre Whitfield
Laurel Winzler
Suzanna Yeh

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

This production is made possible by a generous gift from the L.J. and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation.

Opera in three acts by RICHARD WAGNER
Text by the composer

Tristan und Isolde

(in German)

Conductor
Peter Schneider

Stage Director
Lotfi Mansouri

Designer
Mauro Pagano

Lighting Designer
Thomas J. Munn

Chorus Director
Ian Robertson

Musical Preparation
Robert Morrison
Kathryn Cathcart
Ernest Fredric Knell
Philip Eisenberg

Prompter
Philip Eisenberg

Assistant Stage Directors
Cynthia Wood
Peter McClintock

Stage Manager
Jerry Sherk

This co-production with Washington Opera was originally designed for Cologne Opera.

Scenery constructed in
San Francisco Opera Scenic Studios

Costumes executed by
San Francisco Opera Costume Shop

First performance:
Munich, June 10, 1865

First San Francisco Opera performance:
September 16, 1927

MONDAY, OCTOBER 21AT **7:00**
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 24 AT **7:00**
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 27 AT **1:00**
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 30 AT **7:00**
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2 AT **7:00**
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5 AT **7:00**
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9 AT **7:00**

CAST

(in order of appearance)

A sailor's voice	Michael Schade*
Isolde	Gabriele Schnaut**
Brangäne	Hanna Schwarz
Kurwenal	Hartmut Welker*
	Victor Braun (Nov. 9)
Tristan	William Johns
Melot	John David De Haan
King Marke	Alfred Muff
A shepherd	Hong-Shen Li
A steersman	Jere Torkelsen

Courtiers, handmaidens, guards, voices of sailors

**United States opera debut
*San Francisco Opera debut

TIME AND PLACE: Medieval Cornwall and Brittany

ACT I A ship en route to Cornwall

INTERMISSION

ACT II The garden outside King Marke's castle in Cornwall

INTERMISSION

ACT III Outside of Tristan's castle in Brittany

Supertitles by Christopher Bergen, San Francisco Opera.

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

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

The performance will last approximately five hours.

Tristan und Isolde / *Synopsis*

The Cornish knight, Tristan, has slain Morold, an Irish warrior; but Tristan was wounded in the combat and cared for by the Irish princess, Isolde, skilled in the magic arts. When she recognized him as the man who killed Morold, her cousin and fiancé, she tried to take revenge on Tristan with his own sword. However, she found herself unable to strike, overcome with love for her victim. Love also burned in Tristan's heart but, once cured, he returned to Cornwall and the court of his uncle, King Marke. When Tristan came again to Ireland it was not to proclaim his love for Isolde but to bring her back to Cornwall to marry King Marke. At this point in the story, as Tristan's ship bearing Isolde nears the Cornish coast, the opera begins.

ACT I

The unhappy Isolde is angered by a sailor's song about an Irish maid. Soon we see the reason for her discontent: Tristan, stubbornly standing at the helm with his servant Kurwenal. Isolde, her hidden love almost turned to hate, sends her servant Brangäne to ask Tristan to come to her. Tristan politely refuses—he must help bring the boat to shore—and Kurwenal, springing to his master's assistance, sings a jeering song about Morold.

Brangäne takes these replies to Isolde who angrily recalls the once feeble knight she cured and spared from rightful vengeance. Brangäne attempts to calm her and reconcile her to her glorious future as King Marke's queen. Isolde can only see an unbearable life, constantly in the presence of a man—the man she loves—who coldly denies her love. When Brangäne points to the love potion Isolde's mother has sent to ensure the happiness of the marriage, Isolde turns instead to a potion that brings death.

Land is sighted but Isolde refuses to leave until Tristan himself comes to ask for forgiveness "for an unnamed wrong." Kurwenal takes the message and Isolde, after a farewell embrace, tells Brangäne to prepare a "cup of peace," using the vial of poison. She and Tristan will drink it together and she will find peace from her tormenting desires.

Tristan arrives, guiltily hiding his love, and claims that honor and duty have kept him from her. Isolde reminds him of the past and how she spared him when honor demanded his death. Tristan offers her his sword to complete the act but she refuses, asking him instead to drink a cup of reconciliation with her.

The trembling Brangäne prepares the drink, and Tristan, sensing what is in it, eagerly swallows "oblivion's kindly cup." Isolde follows suit and the two suddenly discover not death but love they can no longer resist. Brangäne has used the love potion instead and now Tristan's honor and Isolde's shame are but troubled dreams as the lovers embrace. Brangäne frantically tries to separate them as the sailors hail King Marke who has come to meet his intended bride.

ACT II

On a summer night in the torch-lit garden before Isolde's chamber in King Marke's castle, Brangäne and Isolde listen as the horns of the King's hunting party recede in the distance. Isolde is waiting impatiently for Tristan to come to see her while the King is away. Brangäne warns her that she suspects this hunting party is a trick devised by Melot, one of Marke's courtiers, to entrap them. But Isolde insists that the torch be extinguished, the pre-arranged signal to Tristan. When Brangäne again tries to dissuade her, Isolde throws the torch to the ground herself.

Soon Tristan appears in the darkness and the lovers embrace passionately while Brangäne keeps a look-out. Throughout this love night's "love duet" they are so lost in each other that they do not hear her warning them of the approaching dawn. Only her scream of terror and Kurwenal's hurried warning can penetrate their rapture, but it is too late. The King and his court suddenly appear, and Marke bitterly reproaches Tristan, the man he trusted above all others, for this betrayal. Tristan has no reply. He turns to Isolde and asks her to accompany him to the "land of night" where he must go. Melot draws his sword at this insult to his King; Tristan leaps to the challenge only to deliberately let himself be run through. As he sinks to the ground, Isolde throws herself upon him and the act ends.

ACT III

At Tristan's castle in Brittany, the fatally wounded Tristan lies on a bank of earth overlooking the sea. Kurwenal is with him and bids a shepherd keep watch on the sea for ships and to pipe a merry tune should he see any. Tristan finally awakens and Kurwenal explains how he brought him home. Feverishly, Tristan calls for Isolde. Kurwenal explains that he has sent for her to work her magic cures. Tristan soon imagines that he can actually see her ship. Kurwenal doubts this but suddenly, as the shepherd's tune becomes merry, he runs to the watch-tower where he sees and describes the approaching sails before going to the shore to welcome Isolde.

Tristan struggles to his feet, tearing at his bandages—not knowing that "she who can close his wounds forever" is coming. Frantic, he stumbles and falls into Isolde's arms and dies. She collapses beside him while Kurwenal watches in horror.

Suddenly the sound of weapons is heard. The shepherd tells Kurwenal that another ship has appeared. It brings Melot and King Marke. Kurwenal fiercely attacks, killing Melot, but is himself mortally wounded. He sinks to the earth at Tristan's feet as Marke and Brangäne try to tell him that it is all a mistake, that they come in peace. Marke weeps over the body of Tristan while Brangäne revives Isolde and explains that she has told the King about the potion and he has come to forgive her and unite her with her lover. But Isolde can only see Tristan, and, in her heart-rending song of farewell, she sees him transfigured. As her song reaches its climax she too falls dead, the two lovers united at last in death.

Tristan und Isolde

Photos taken in rehearsal
by Marty Sohl

Act I: (Top) William Johns, Hartmut Welker; (Bottom) Hanna Schwarz, Gabriele Schnaut

Alfred Muff

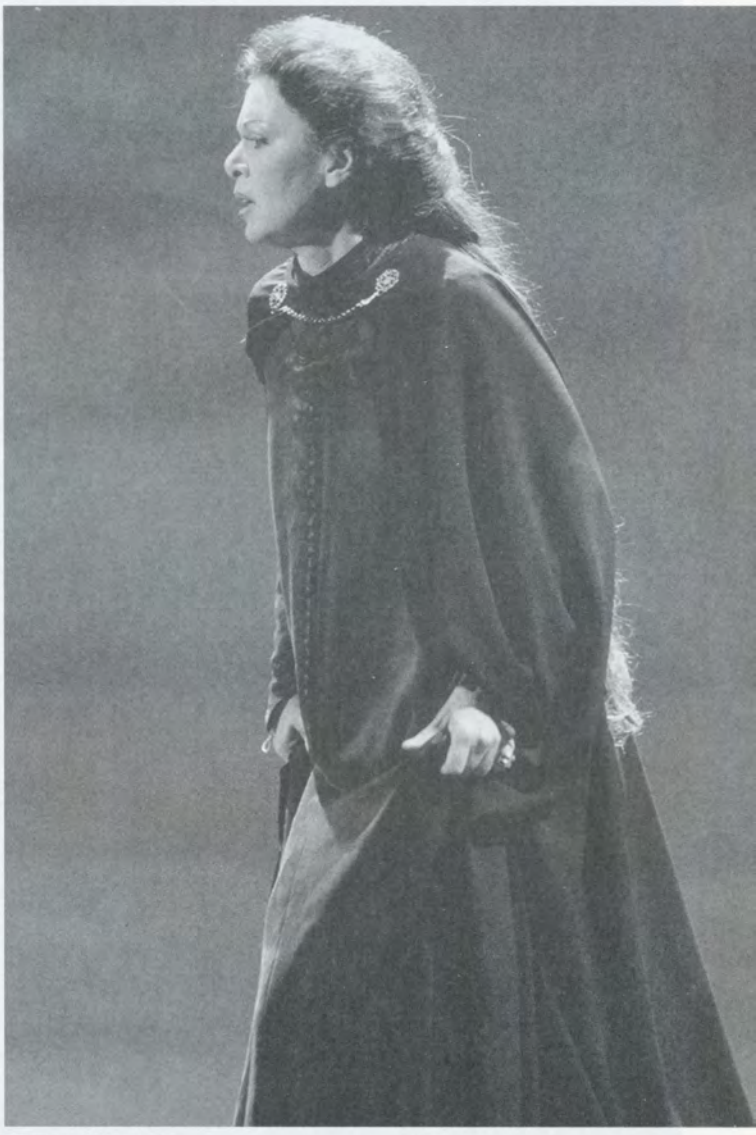
Hartmut Welker

William Johns

Gabriele Schnaut, William Johns

Hong-Shen Li

John David De Haan



Hanna Schwarz

Gabriele Schnaut

Gabriele Schnaut, William Johns

Gabriele Schnaut

William Johns, Gabriele Schnaut

Alfred Muff, Gabriele Schnaut, William Johns

HONG-SHEN LI

Tenor **Hong-Shen Li** portrays Tebaldo in *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* and a Shepherd in *Tristan und Isolde*. An Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center last year, he made his Company debut in 1989 as Goro in *Madama Butterfly*, and also sang in *Idomeneo, Aida* and *Lohengrin*. Last fall he portrayed the Duke of Mantua in *Rigoletto*, and also appeared in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* and *Capriccio*. He was seen on the War Memorial stage this summer as the First Armored Man in *The Magic Flute* and Aufidio in *Lucio Silla*. A native of the People's Republic of China, he received his initial training while studying under a five-year Highest Fellowship Scholarship at the Central Conservatory of Beijing and traveled throughout Asia and Eastern Europe with the Art Ensemble of Beijing. He continued his studies at the Juilliard School, where he appeared as Benedict in Berlioz's *Beatrice and Benedict*. As a member of the 1987 Merola Opera Program, he performed the role of Rinuccio in *Gianni Schicchi*, and returned to the Merola Program in 1988 to sing Lindoro in *The Italian Girl in Algiers*. During Western Opera Theater's 1988-89 tour he portrayed Goro in *Madama Butterfly* and, with the Opera Center Singers, sang Count Almaviva in the 1989 *Barber of Seville*. Recent engagements include the Duke of Mantua in *Rigoletto* for the Washington Opera and the Stockton Symphony, a debut with San Diego Opera in *Die Zauberflöte*, participation in the farewell gala for soprano Régine Crespin in Paris, the role of the Colonel in the Opera Center's Showcase production of Reimann's *The Ghost Sonata*, and Mozart's Requiem with the Sacramento Symphony. Future plans include the Verdi Requiem with the Long Island Philharmonic and Nemorino in *L'Elisir d'Amore* for Dallas Opera. Li is a recipient of a 1990 George London/William Matheus Sullivan grant, and was a winner in the 1991 Metropolitan Opera National Council Competition.

MICHAEL SCHADE

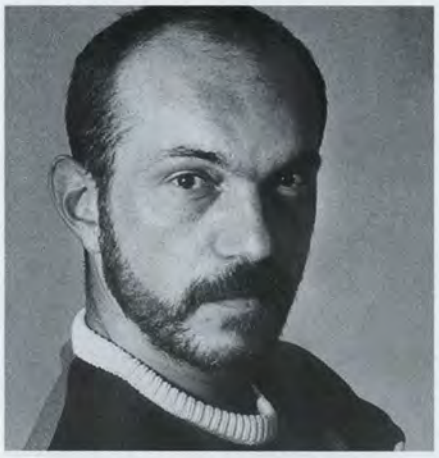
Michael Schade, recipient of the "Most Promising Young Canadian Performing Artist" award for 1991 by the Canada Council, earlier this year made two important international debuts. He sang the role of Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte* at Bologna's Teatro Comunale, and appeared at the Rossini Opera Festival in Pesaro, Italy, as Iago in Rossini's *Otello*. Born in Geneva and raised in Germany and Canada, he received his master's degree in operatic performance from the Curtis Institute of Music. As a participant in the Merola Opera Program last year, he appeared as Fenton in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and was a Schwabacher Debut recitalist in January. Since his operatic debut as Jaquino in *Fidelio* with Pacific Opera of British Columbia, he has appeared in the title role of *Albert Herring* at the Banff Festival, as Ernesto in *Don Pasquale* at the European Center for Opera and Vocal Arts in Belgium, and in the title role of Rameau's *Pygmalion* and as Tamino with Toronto's Opera Atelier. Concert appearances include Mozart's Requiem with the Baltimore Symphony, Handel's *Messiah* with the New York Choral Society, and performances with the symphonies of Toronto, Edmonton, Calgary, Vancouver and Quebec. Future assignments include his debut with the Geneva Opera as Alfred in a new production of *Die Fledermaus* which will be telecast throughout Europe; Almaviva in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* with Edmonton Opera and the Canadian Opera Company; Ernesto for Vancouver Opera; concerts with the San Francisco Symphony, Santa Cecilia Orchestra of Rome, John Eliot Gardiner's Monteverdi Choir, the Duisburg Orchestra and the Bach Accademia; as well as concerts in London and a recording of Haydn's *Maria Theresia Mass* with Trevor Pinnock's "The English Concert." Singing the Voice of a Sailor in *Tristan und Isolde*, Schade is in his debut season with San Francisco Opera.

PETER SCHNEIDER

Peter Schneider, who is on the podium for *Tristan und Isolde*, made his U.S. opera debut with San Francisco Opera last summer leading performances of Wagner's *Ring* cycle. Born in Vienna, he studied piano, violin, conducting and composition in his native city. He was engaged as assistant conductor at Salzburg's Landestheater where he made his professional conducting debut in 1959 with performances of Handel's *Giulio Cesare*. After seven years as assistant conductor in Heidelberg, he became principal conductor at the Deutsche Oper am Rhein in Düsseldorf, where for 10 years he led a wide variety of operas -- from Mozart to Alban Berg. In 1978, he became general music director in Bremen, where he continued to conduct operas and concerts. Maestro Schneider made his Bayreuth Festival debut in 1981 with *Der Fliegende Holländer*, an assignment he repeated at the Festival the following year. For three consecutive years (1984-86) he conducted the entire *Ring* cycle at the Wagner Festival in Bayreuth, and in 1985 was named Director of Opera and Music in Mannheim. The following year he led the Vienna State Opera on a tour of Japan where he conducted *Der Rosenkavalier*. He led *Lohengrin* at Bayreuth in 1987 (and again in 1988 and 1989), resigning his position in Mannheim to guest conduct at the opera houses of Vienna, Berlin, Hamburg, Munich, Cologne, Stuttgart, Bonn, Düsseldorf, London, Bologna, Barcelona and Madrid. Since 1987 he has also led concerts with the symphony orchestras of Bremen, Mannheim, Düsseldorf, Duisburg, Berlin, Munich, Nuremberg, Salzburg, Vienna and San Francisco. He was recently appointed principal conductor at the Bavarian State Opera in Munich, effective 1993.

LOTFI MANSOURI

San Francisco Opera General Director **Lotfi Mansouri** directs *Tristan und Isolde* and is responsible for conceiving this fall's production of *Attila*, a Company premiere. Born in Iran, he attended college at UCLA and received American citizenship before serving as resident stage director at the Zurich Opera from 1960 to 1966. In 1965 he started working simultaneously at the Geneva Opera, where he became head stage director in 1966 and stayed until 1976. During his years in Switzerland, Mansouri began fulfilling engagements as guest director at various houses throughout Italy (including Milan's La Scala and the companies of Naples, Palermo, Genoa, Turin and Perugia) and North America: Chicago, Houston, Santa Fe, Philadelphia, Tulsa, San Diego, Dallas, and both the Metropolitan and New York City Opera companies in New York. From 1971 to 1975, he served as artistic adviser and staged productions for the Tehran Opera in Iran. In 1976 he was named general director of the Canadian Opera Company in Toronto, a position he held until his resignation in 1988 to accept the general directorship of San Francisco Opera. His Toronto credits include 30 new productions, 12 of them Canadian premieres, among them *Wozzeck*, *Lulu*, *Death in Venice*, *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, and Thomas's *Hamlet*, featuring Dame Joan Sutherland. He has had a long working association with Dame Joan, and directed her in no fewer than seven operas in San Francisco: *La Sonnambula* (1963), *La Traviata* (1964), *Die Fledermaus* (1974), *The Merry Widow* (1981), *Norma* (1982), and *Anna Bolena* (1984). His many other Company credits include the 1979 production of *La Gioconda* with Renata Scotto and Luciano Pavarotti, telecast live throughout the U.S. and to Europe via satellite; 1988's opening night production of *L'Africaine*; 1989's highly acclaimed new production of *Lulu*; and last fall's presentations of *Wozzeck* and *Die Fledermaus*. His film credits include opera sequences in *Yes, Giorgio* and the critically praised 1987 film *Moonstruck*.



MAURO PAGANO

The late **Mauro Pagano** created the sets and costumes for *Tristan und Isolde*. The internationally renowned designer's first assignment for San Francisco Opera was creating the 1986 production of Menotti's *The Medium*. Last fall, his sets for *Capriccio* and the sets and costumes for *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria* were seen on the War Memorial stage. Pagano designed the sets for La Scala's 1985 season-opening production of *Aida*, along with the sets for Massenet's *Cendrillon* and Offenbach's *The Tales of Hoffmann* in Brussels; the set design for the world premiere of Hans Werner Henze's version of Monteverdi's *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria* at the Salzburg Festival and, at the Paris Opera, costumes for Gluck's *Iphigénie en Tauride*. He has also created the sets for *The Barber of Seville* at the Edinburgh Festival and at La Scala, and the designs for productions of *Un Ballo in Maschera*, *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* and *La Gazza Ladra* in Cologne. Additional projects include new productions of *La Sonnambula* and *Alceste* at La Scala, *Don Giovanni* in Salzburg, and, in 1988, *Der Fliegende Holländer* at the Bayreuth Festival.

THOMAS J. MUNN

Thomas J. Munn, Lighting Director and Design Consultant for San Francisco Opera since 1976, designed the lighting for the new productions of *War and Peace*, *Tristan und Isolde*, *Elektra* and *Das 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 *Andrea Chénier* and *Mefistofele* for the Houston Grand Opera. In addition to his many theatrical endeavors, Munn is often engaged as consultant for architectural projects, the Muziektheater in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, being one of his most notable achievements.

Wagner's Fluids
Continued from page 33

A fluid-that-changes-everything is essential to the Celtic legend of Tristan and Isolde that has been circulating through the veins of European culture for more than seven centuries. In the fullest account, from the 13th century, Gottfried von Strassburg's novel-length verse epic *Tristan*, it is a love-philtre, concocted by Isolde's mother (also named Isolde, and the healing woman in the original tale) for her daughter and King Marke to drink on their wedding night, which during the voyage an ignorant servant offers to Marke's nephew and the bride-to-be as wine. Wagner's version turns accidental calamity into necessity. "Der Liebestrank" ("the draught of love") that Brangäne, Isolde's servant has deliberately substituted for the poison, does not make Tristan and Isolde feel their own feelings—they already feel them, are being martyred by them. It simply makes it impossible for them to go on not acknowledging their love.

The love-potion is treated in a comic register in another opera, Donizetti's *L'Elisir d'Amore* (1832), which opens with the well-to-do heroine reading to a group of peasants a reduction of the Celtic legend to a tale of conventionally unrequited love with a happy ending. Handsome Tristan procures from a "saggio incantatore" ("a wise sorcerer") a "certo elisir d'amor" ("a certain elixir of love"); no sooner has the beautiful but indifferent Isolde taken a sip than a matching love is created—instantly. "Cambiata in un istante/ quella beltà crudele/ fu di Tristano amante/ visse Tristan fedel." ("Changed in an instant/ that unkind beauty/ became Tristan's true love/ and lived faithful to him.") The drink that makes someone fall in love belongs to the same family of potions, spells, and charms that transforms princes into frogs and mermaids into princesses: it is the instant metamorphosis of fairy tales. Mere fairy tales. Not only does such magic not exist, according to Donizetti's *buffa* realism, it isn't necessary: the fluid sold by an itinerant quack to the opera's hero to woo the woman he thinks (wrongly) doesn't love him is actually Bordeaux. Instead of what is given as wine being really a magic potion, what is fobbed off as a magic potion is mere wine—the inevitable, comic deflation of the fantasy.

Its tragic dissolution is Wagner's, a quarter of a century later: a potion that, rather than making something possible, heightens impossibility, loosening the tie to life. The fluid that Brangäne gives the hapless pair does not just reveal (and therefore unleash) a feeling. It undoes a world. Love subtracts them instantly, totally, from civil society, from normal ties and obligations, to cast them into vertiginous solitariness (rather than a romantic solitude *à deux*) that brings on an inexorable darkening of consciousness. Where are we? asks Isolde at the beginning of the opera. Where am I? She asks Tristan at the end of Act I, after they have drunk the potion, as the boat lands in Cornwall. The king is here, someone says. What king? says Tristan. And Tristan does not know where he is

Jorma Hynninen as Amfortas in the San Francisco Opera 1988 staging of Wagner's **Parsifal.**

SOHL

when he awakens in Act III. What herds? what castle? what peasants? he asks—as his loyal retainer Kurwenal explains that he has been brought home to Brittany, his own kingdom, that he is lying on the rampart of his own castle. Love is an antignosis, a de-knowing. Each act begins with a tormented, paralyzing, anguished waiting by one for the other, followed by the longed-for arrival—and concluding with other, unanticipated arrivals, which are not only disruptive but, to the lovers, barely comprehensible. What duty? What shame?

Passion means an exalted passivity. Act I opens with Isolde on a couch, her face buried in the cushions (Wagner's stage direction), and Act III has Tristan in a coma at the beginning and supine throughout. As in *Parsifal*, there is a great deal of lying down and many fervent appeals for the surcease of oblivion. If the opera ended after its first two acts, one could regard this pull of the horizontal in *Tristan und Isolde*, the paeans to night, the dark, the equating of pleasure with oblivion and of death with pleasure, as a most extravagant way of describing the voluptuous loss of consciousness in orgasm. Whatever is being said, or being done on the stage, the music of the Act II encounter is a thrillingly unequivocal rendering of an ideal copulation. (Thomas Mann was not wrong when he spoke of the opera's "lascivious desire for bed.") But Act III makes it clear that the eroticism is more means than end, a platform for the propaganda against lucidity; that the deepest subject is the surrender of consciousness as such.

Already the emotional logic of the words of the Act II duet is a sequence of annihilating—and nihilistic—mental operations. The lovers do not simply unite, generically, as in the unsurpassably elegant formula of Gottfried von Strassburg:

A man, a woman; a woman, a man;
Tristan, Isolde; Isolde, Tristan.

Imbued with the elaborate understanding of solitude and exploration of extremes of feeling that seems the most original achievement of the Romantic movements in the arts of the last century, Wagner is able to go much further.

TRISTAN: Tristan du, ich Isolde, nicht mehr Tristan!

ISOLDE: Du Isolde, Tristan ich, nicht mehr Isolde!

("Tristan: Tristan you, I Isolde, no more Tristan!/ Isolde: You Isolde, why? Tristan I, no more Isolde!") When the world is thought to be so easily negated by the pressure of extreme feeling (the still regnant mythology of the self we owe to the 19th-century writers and composers), the feeling self expands to fill the empty space: "selbst dann bin ich die Welt" ("I myself am the world"), Tristan and Isolde had already sung in unison. The inevitable next move is the elimination of the self, gender, individuality. "Ohne Nennen, ohne Trennen" ("no names, no parting"), they sing together ... "endlos, ewig, einbewusst" ("ever, unendingly, one consciousness"). For one self to seek to fuse with another is, in the absence of the world, to seek the annihilation of both.

When lovers unite in opera what they do, mainly, is utter the same words; they speak together, as one. Their words unite, rhyme, to the same music. Wagner's libretto for *Tristan und Isolde* carries out this formal principle more literally and insistently then any other opera: the lovers return to echo each other's words throughout. Their fullest exchange, in the garden of Act II, has them voluptuously repeating their words back to each other, competing in their expressions of desire to unite, to die, and their denunciations of light and day. Of course their texts are not identical—and neither, for all their desire to merge, even to exchange identities, are the two lovers. Tristan is given a more complex awareness. And having sung with Isolde of the bliss of their death-bound yearning in Act II, Tristan expresses another relation to death in the last act, in the form of a soliloquy in which he separates himself from Isolde, cursing love. It had been Tristan alone in Act II who dwelt ecstatically on the potion—that flowed

MORTON

through him, that he drank with endless delight. Now in Act III the fluids he invokes are all bitter: "Liebestränen" ("lovers' tears") and the accursed potion, which he now proclaims, in his delirious unraveling of what Wagner makes the story's deepest layer of emotion, that he himself brewed.

The characteristic, plot-generating situation in Wagner's operas is one that has gone on too long, and is infused with the anguished longing to terminate. ("Unending melody—Wagner's phrase for his distinctive musical line—is one formal equivalent of this essential subject of prolongation, of excruciation.) Blood flows unceasingly from Amfortas's wound but he can't die; meanwhile, his father Titurel, the former Grail king, who already lies in his tomb, is being kept alive by the Grail ceremony. And ageless Kundry, painfully revived in each act, wants nothing more than to go back to sleep. Wagner turns the legend of Tristan and Isolde into a first, secular version of the longings expressed in *Parsifal*—with Tristan taking the lead. The Tristan of Act III is a pre-Amfortas: a suffering man who wants to die but can't ... until, finally, he can. Men are given a more developed death wish than women. (Kundry, whose longing for extinction seems even stronger than Amfortas's, is the exception.) Isolde tries to die only in Act I, when, with Tristan, she drinks the potion she believes to be poison, while Tristan actively provokes his death in all three acts, succeeding at the end by tearing the bandages from his wound when he is told that Isolde is approaching. Isolde even has a moment of doubt (or common sense) in Act II, when she evokes "dies süsse Wörtlein: und" ("this sweet little word 'and' ") ... as in Tristan *and* Isolde. But won't dying separate them? she asks. No, he answers.

Viewed from the narrowing and ever more excruciating perspective of the last act, the opera is (or becomes) mostly Tristan's story. Viewed more inclusively, as the story of both, Wagner's version of the old Celtic legend has an arbitrariness in its dénouement that makes it closer in feeling to the traditional Japanese tragedy of the double-suicide—the voluntary death of lovers whose situation is *not* entirely hopeless—than to, say, *Romeo and Juliet*. (And Wagner's depiction of love as tormentingly painful, consciousness-dissolving yearning recalls sentiments in the love poetry of Heian Japan.) His Tristan

HOWARD

(Opposite page) Kirsten Flagstad and Lauritz Melchior were San Francisco Opera's Tristan and Isolde in 1939. Kathryn Meisle was Brangäne.

(Left) Birgit Nilsson and Wolfgang Windgassen as Tristan and Isolde in 1970.

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

William Shakespeare
Twelfth Night

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and Isolde are not, as in Gottfried von Strassburg's poem, star-crossed lovers thwarted by the standard obstacles: that the man has slain a close relative of the woman; that the woman is betrothed to an older male relative of the man, to whom loyalty is owed. Wagner requires something beyond these objective impediments, whose importance signifies that the lovers are members of a society, a world. The world-transcending obstacle is, then, the very nature of love—an emotion always in excess of its object; insatiable. The eroticism that Wagner exalts is one that *has* to self-destruct.

When Marke arrives at the end, it is not to grasp for the first time the claims of this passion but now to wish, when it's too late, as Capulets and Montagues do, that he'd been more understanding. Having learned from Brangäne that the lovers were compelled by a love-philtre to betray him, Marke (who functions as Tristan's father, and in some early versions of the story is his father) has decided to release Isolde from her vow and let the lovers marry. But union is not what Tristan and Isolde want, what they ever wanted. They want the lights turned off. Isolde's last words—the last words of the opera—are a description of losing consciousness: "ertrinken, versinken/ unbewusst höchste Lust!" ("drowning, sinking/ unconscious—supreme bliss!") The music overflows. Consciousness drowns.

Tristan und Isolde is about being overcome, destroyed by feeling ... and not only about extreme experience but intended to be one. That Wagner equates being satisfied or inspired with being overwhelmed is typically a Romantic idea of art, art that is not only about excess (Tristan and Isolde overwhelmed by their passion) but employs, in an almost homeopathic spirit, extravagant and outsized means, such as unusual bulk or duration. The element of ordeal for the audience in all this, even of risk, seemed only appropriate. A good performance of *Tristan und Isolde*, Wagner had predicted to Mathilde Wesendonk while composing the last act, is "bound to drive people mad." One of Wagner's favorite notions about his work was that only the strong could immerse themselves in it with impunity. When the first Tristan, the tenor Ludwig Schnorr, fell ill after the first performances in Munich in 1865, both he and Wagner worried that it would be said that he had been laid low by the role's unprecedented exertions and intensities; and when Schnorr unexpectedly died a few weeks later, Wagner (and not only Wagner) felt that perhaps the opera had killed him.

Wagner was hardly the first composer to associate the lethal, at least metaphorically, with the lyrical. But previous notions of the lethal lyrical had focused on the singer. To the librettist with whom he was working on *I Puritani*, Bellini wrote, "Grave on your mind in adamantine letters: A musical drama must make people weep, shudder, and die through the singing." The great singers were those who could provoke audiences to an ecstasy bordering on delirium, a standard that was set by Farinelli, Pacchierotti, and other celebrated castrati of the 18th and early 19th centuries, the first divas in the modern sense, whose voices made people swoon and weep and feel that they were being driven out of their senses, and whose appearance and extravagantly artificial manner were erotically captivating to both sexes. Napoleon declared, in praise of his favorite singer, that he felt he was going mad when he heard Crescentini sing. It is this longing to have one's normal consciousness ravished by the singer's art that is preserved in an irrepressible phenomenon usually dismissed as a mere oddity or aberration of the opera world: diva worship. The distinctively high-pitched adulation surrounding one or two sopranos (sometimes a tenor) in every generation refers to, and affirms, this much-prized experience as granted by the voice, not merely the charms of celebrity and glamour.

Wagner opens a new chapter in this operatic tradition of creating beauty that is erotically troubling, soul-piercing—the difference being that the intensity has been heightened by becoming, as it were, diffused. Though borne by the singer's voice, lyricism does not climax in the experience of the voice. Rather than being specifically, corporeally, identified with the singer's voice as it floats above the music, it has become a property of the music as a whole, in which the voice is embedded. (This is what is sometimes called the "symphonism" of Wagner's operas.)

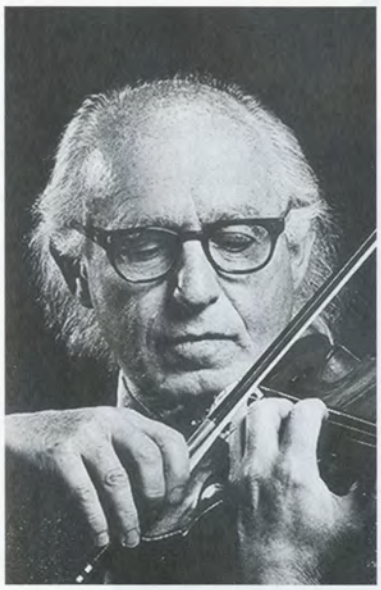
Audiences have relished being excited, disturbed, troubled by the beauty of voices—their sweetness, their velocity. But there was, at least initially, considerable resistance to a *déreglement du sens* produced by music as such. What the voice

did seemed superhuman and as a display of virtuosity was, in itself, admirable. The sound produced by the castrati suggested something disembodied—the words "seraphic" and "heavenly" were often used to describe these voices, though the singers themselves were clearly objects of erotic fantasy as well.

Wagner's maddening lyricism had nothing seraphic about it, whatever the spiritual messages and "higher" feelings being urged on us by the words; if anything, it seemed to come from "below," and, like the potion in the opera, to invite repressed feelings to flow forth. Berlioz described the Prelude to *Tristan und Isolde*, where no voices yet sing, as one long "groaning and moaning." Renouncing all the effects (and relief) of velocity, Wagner had chosen to slow down sequences of deep feeling that then either became thrilling (and addictive) or seemed unbearably oppressive. The Viennese music critic and leader of the anti-Wagnerians, Eduard Hanslick, said that the Prelude to *Tristan und Isolde* "reminds me of the Italian painting of a martyr whose intestines are slowly unwound from his body on a reel." *Parsifal*, he said, made him seasick. "There are no longer any real modulations but rather a perpetually undulating process of modulation so that the listener loses all sense of a definite tonality. We feel as though we were on the high seas, with no firm ground under our feet." Yes. We are.

The new emotional, as distinct from lyrical, intensity that Wagner brought into opera owes most to the way he both amplifies and makes agonizingly intimate (despite the epic settings) the distinctive mix of feelings depicted: lust, tenderness, grief, pity, euphoria, world-weariness. Wagner utterly transforms feelings that are staples in opera's long tradition of representing exalted sentiments, such as the association of love and death. Hearts wounded by love, death that is preferable to separation from the beloved or the loss of love ... this is the common coin of lovers' plaints, of lovers' ecstasies—long before Wagner, long before what we call Romanticism. Wagner, in *Tristan und Isolde* and elsewhere, made these old hyperboles of opera, understood to be expressive exaggerations, shatteringly literal. To speak nakedly and with unprecedented insistence about feeling, to be overwhelmingly intimate with audiences—Wagner's sensualism, his emotionalism was experienced as

Continued on page 58



Felix Khuner, 1906 - 1991

San Francisco Opera mourns the loss earlier this year of one of our leading musicians, the inimitable Felix Khuner, who retired from the San Francisco Opera Orchestra in 1983 after nearly 40 years of artistic service. A member of the San Francisco Symphony for 32 of those years, Khuner was also a respected teacher, an acclaimed chamber musician and a tireless leader of the Bay Area musical community.

We will all miss him and the wealth of insight he brought to us during his many years as part of the San Francisco Opera family.

HIGH GLITTER

By Sandra Macleod White
Photography by Michael Venera

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

This photo story, part of *Theatre Publications*' continuing series of fashion segments, portrays the special Bay Area blend of natural beauty and exquisite jewelry. The team of professional makeup and hair stylists has joined with photographer Michael Venera, formerly of Czechoslovakia, but now living and working in San Francisco, in creating these pages which showcase gems selected from the area's best.

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

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

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

Hairstyles by David Oliver
Makeup styles by Jennifer Mayol

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

Continued from page 52

invasive—was new territory for art in the mid-19th century, and it seems inevitable that such shamelessness (as it was then judged by many) be attached to the license given by opera's rich, unabashed commitment to heightened states of feeling. "But for the opera I could never have written *Leaves of Grass*," Whitman told a disciple late in life (though he meant Italian opera, not Wagner). His treatment of time is certainly one of Wagner's principal innovations—to extend duration being then invariably a means to intensify emotion. But the depth and grandeur of feeling of which Wagner is capable is combined, in his greatest work, with an extraordinary delicacy in the depiction of emotion. It is this delicacy that may finally convince us that we are indeed in the presence of that rarest of achievements in art, the reinvention of sublimity.

Bruno Walter once said to Thomas Mann, as they were walking home after Walter had conducted a performance of *Tristan und Isolde*, "That isn't even music any longer." Meaning, it is more than music. Wagner thought he was offering some kind of transforming experience or idea that transcended mere art. (Of course, he considered that his works were much more than mere operas.) But such claims seem mainly like an idea of art, a peculiarly modern idea of art, in which there is a great deal of expressed impatience with art. When artists aren't trying to subvert the art-status of what they do (saying, for instance, that it is really life), they often claim to be doing something more than art. (Religion? Therapy?) Wagner is an important part of this modern story of the inflation and coarsening of expectations about art, which has produced so many great works of art, among them *Tristan und Isolde*.

It was observed from the beginning that Wagner has the same effect as the continuous consumption of a psychotropic drug: like opium, said Baudelaire; like alcohol, said Nietzsche. And, as with all de-inhibiting drugs, sometimes there were violent side-effects. In the early years of *Tristan und Isolde* occasionally someone had to be evacuated from the theater, fainting or vomiting, in the course of the performance. It is perhaps as hard now to imagine the impact on early audiences of Wagner, particularly of this opera, and the scandal became part of that impact (I mean, of

course, aesthetic scandal ... leaving aside the issue of Wagner's repugnant political views), as it is to imagine the fainting and spasms of tears produced by the voice of Farinelli. But the scandal was immense, as was the passion with which he was defended—and the incalculable influence of his work. No single artist of the 19th century was to be more influential.

Though Wagner was the first composer ever that people boasted of not just admiring passionately but of being addicted to, there have been others since. And the enchantments of addiction, in art, are now rarely viewed as anything but positive. In the era of rock & roll and of Philip Glass and John Adams, it seems normal and desirable for music to aspire to be a narcotic. We live in the time of the triumph of the "theatrocracy" that Nietzsche deplored, in which we can find many descendants of Wagner's favorite dramatic form, the pseudo-spiritual pageant of redemption. And Wagner's characteristic means (the garrulous, soft-focus libretto; the exacerbated length; the organized repetitiveness) and themes (the praise of mindlessness, the featuring of the pathos of heroes and rulers) are those of some of the most enchanting spectacles of our own day.

Wagner's adaptations of the myths of the European and specifically the Germanic past (both Christian and pagan) do not involve belief. But they did involve ideas. Wagner was highly literate, and reflective in a literary way; and he knew his sources. The creators of *Einstein on the Beach* made it clear that they knew nothing about Einstein, and thought they didn't have to. The emblems and bric-a-brac of heroic mythologies of the past that litter the work of the modern Wagnerians only express an even more generic pathos, and a generalized striving for effect. It is firmly thought that neither the creator nor the audience need have any information (knowledge, particularly historical knowledge, is considered to have a baleful effect on creativity and on feeling—the last and most tenacious, of the clichés of Romanticism). The *gesamtkunstwerk* becomes a vehicle for moods—such as paranoia, placidity—that have floated free from specific emotional situations, and for non-knowing as such. And the aptness of these anti-literary, emotionally remote, modern redemption-pageants may have confirmed a less troubled way of reacting to Wagner's very literary, fervent ones. The smarmy, redeeming higher values that Wagner

thought his work expressed have been definitively discredited (that much we owe the historic connection of Wagnerian ideology with fascism). Few puzzle any more, as did generations of Wagner lovers and Wagner fearers, about what Wagner's operas *mean*. Now Wagner is just enjoyed ... as a drug.

"His pathos topples every taste." Nietzsche's rueful remark about Wagner seems, a hundred years after it was made, truer than ever. But is there anyone left even to be ambivalent about Wagner now, in the way that Nietzsche and, to a lesser extent, Thomas Mann were? If not, then indeed much has been lost. I should think that ambivalence (the opposite of being indifferent—you have to be seduced) is still the optimal mood for experiencing how authentically sublime a work *Tristan und Isolde* really is ... and how strange and troubling. o

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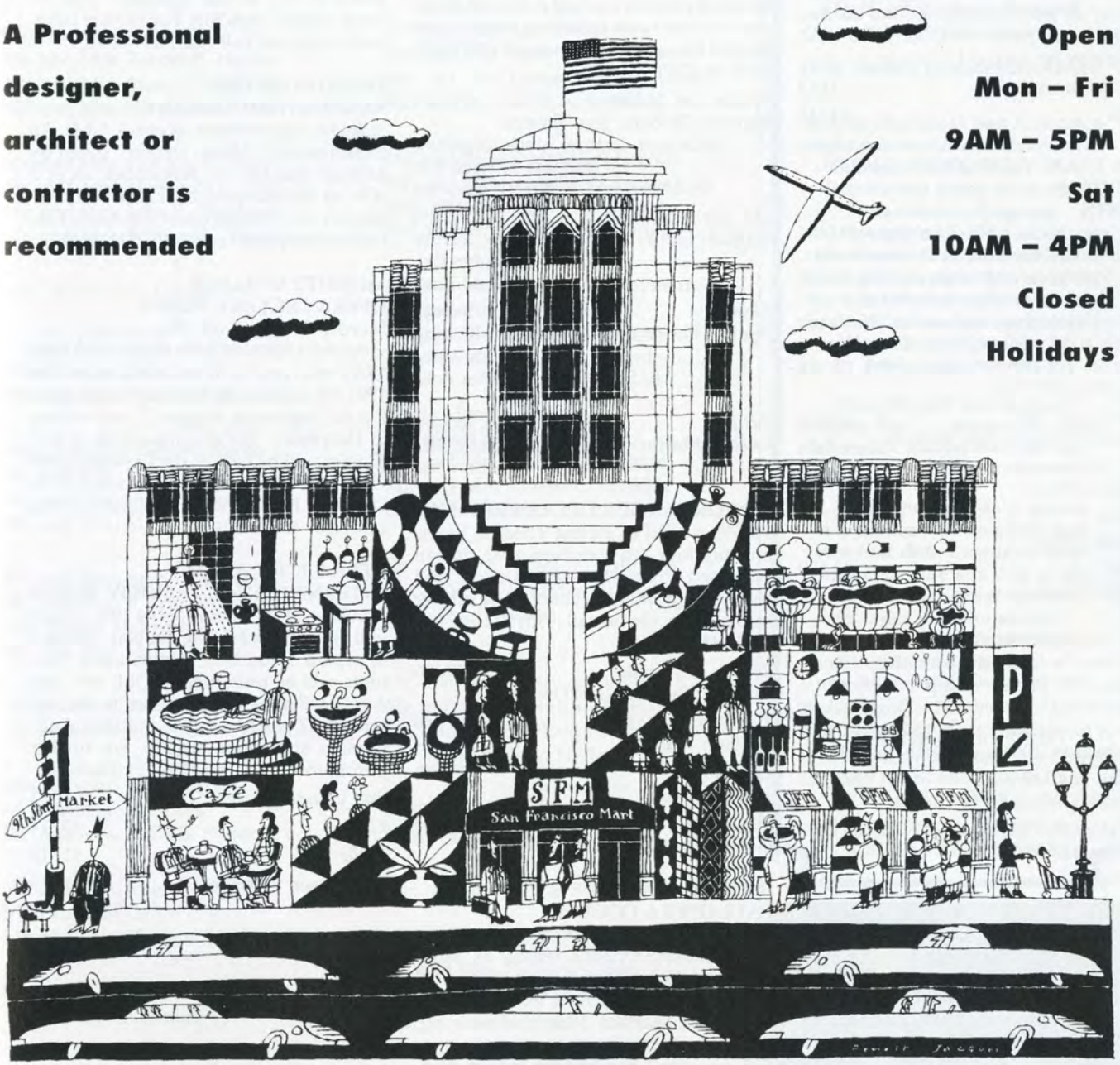

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1991 Opera Previews

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

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD INSIGHTS

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

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

Das Verratene Meer 11/4

Attila 11/18

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD PREVIEWS

MARIN

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

Tristan und Isolde 10/16
Blanche Thebom/Jess Thomas

Das Verratene Meer 11/6
William Huck

Elektra 11/13
Pamela Potter

Attila 11/20
George Martin

SOUTH PENINSULA

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

Tristan und Isolde 10/15
Blanche Thebom/Jess Thomas

Das Verratene Meer 11/5
William Huck

Elektra 11/12
Pamela Potter

Attila 11/19
George Martin

SAN JOSE OPERA GUILD

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

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

Das Verratene Meer 11/5
William Huck

Elektra 11/12*
Pamela Potter

Attila 11/19
George Martin

SONOMA COUNTY CHAPTER

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

Tristan und Isolde 10/17,
Blanche Thebom/Jess Thomas
10:30 a.m. lecture, lunch following
Sonoma Mission Inn
18140 Sonoma Highway, Sonoma

Das Verratene Meer 11/4
William Huck
2:30 p.m. lecture
2988 Sunridge Dr.,
Santa Rosa

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

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

JUNIOR LEAGUE OPERA PREVIEWS

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

Tristan und Isolde 10/16
Blanche Thebom/Jess Thomas

Das Verratene Meer 11/6
William Huck

Elektra 11/13
Pamela Potter

Attila 11/20
George Martin

ROBERT GOODHUE'S FALL OPERA COURSE

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

SAN FRANCISCO CITY COLLEGE OPERA PREVIEWS

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

FRIENDS OF THE KENSINGTON LIBRARY

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

MERRITT COLLEGE OPERA LECTURE SERIES

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

OPERA EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL PREVIEW SERIES

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

Das Verratene Meer 10/7

Elektra 10/14

Attila 11/12

The Season in Review 12/9

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If you would like to learn more about gifts which pay you an income, please contact:

Barbara J. Dukas
Planned Giving Director
San Francisco Opera Association
War Memorial Opera House
San Francisco, CA 94102
(415) 565-6459

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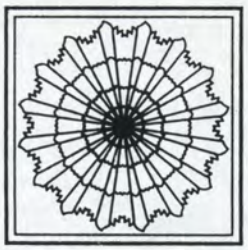

Corporate Council
Benefits & Privileges

The Corporate Council is an exclusive group of corporate supporters who invest in San Francisco Opera—and receive the many wonderful benefits associated with this support. Through their generosity, companies have enjoyed numerous benefits for their employees, distinguished customers and other corporate V.I.P.s.

Leadership Circle ($50,000 and above)
- V.I.P. ticket privileges with highest priority seating for all opera performances and special events
- Recognition in all publicity and advertising of your sponsored production*
- Exclusive invitation to post-performance Cast Party with Opera artists*
- Special recognition and unique season memento at Annual Awards Event
- Invitation from the General Director for an evening of opera in his private box
- Exclusive box seating for twenty of your corporation's most valued customers and employees at the Leadership Circle Working Rehearsal
- *All privileges and benefits which follow:*

Gold Circle ($25,000 to $49,999)
- V.I.P. ticket privileges with priority seating for all opera performances and special events
- Feature article with photographs highlighting your corporation's support in the *San Francisco Opera News*, sent to over 15,000 patrons
- Private luncheon with Opera Association Board officers
- *All privileges and benefits which follow:*

Silver Circle ($10,000 to $24,999)
- Opportunity to participate in Corporate Employee Discount Ticket Program for reduced single ticket prices to selected opera performances
- Four complimentary tickets to an opera in priority seating area
- Opportunity for a private concert featuring acclaimed Opera Center singers for your Board meeting, party, or special event
- *All privileges and benefits which follow:*

Corporate Benefactor ($5,000 to $9,999)
- Invitation to a special donor event with the General Director and Opera artists in an exclusive location
- Recognition in all publicity and advertising prior to your sponsored opera performance or event*
- As a production or performance sponsor, your corporation's name on recognition signage displays in the War Memorial Opera House Lobby*
- Your corporate name on handbills of sponsored performances
- Framed Opera Season Program Magazine cover and program page of your sponsored opera signed by a renowned singer or conductor*
- *All privileges and benefits which follow:*

Corporate Sponsor ($3,000 to $4,999)
- Free reserved parking at the Performing Arts Garage for any opera performance or subscription series
- *All privileges and benefits which follow:*

Corporate Founder ($2,000 to $2,999)
- Use of Corporate Council Ticket Service, which includes a private phone line for special assistance in purchasing tickets to upcoming operas
- Use of Corporate Council Membership Services private phone line
- Opportunity to participate in Corporate Employee Subscription Discount Program
- Personalized backstage tours upon request for your employees and special guests
- Invitation to exclusive special events with Opera artists, Board members and management
- Listing in the Corporate Council section of The Guild Season Book and every Season Program Magazine, reaching more than 150,000 patrons
- Invitation to the Annual Awards Event
- Preferred seating for all open rehearsals
- Invitation to Corporate Council Members' Working Rehearsal and Reception
- Opportunity to purchase reserved parking at the Performing Arts Garage for any opera performance or your subscription series
- Invitation to two V.I.P. tours of the War Memorial Opera House stage, Scenery Shop, Costume Shop, or Wig and Make-Up Department for corporate employees and special guests

* *denotes exclusive benefits for corporate sponsors of productions, performances or events*

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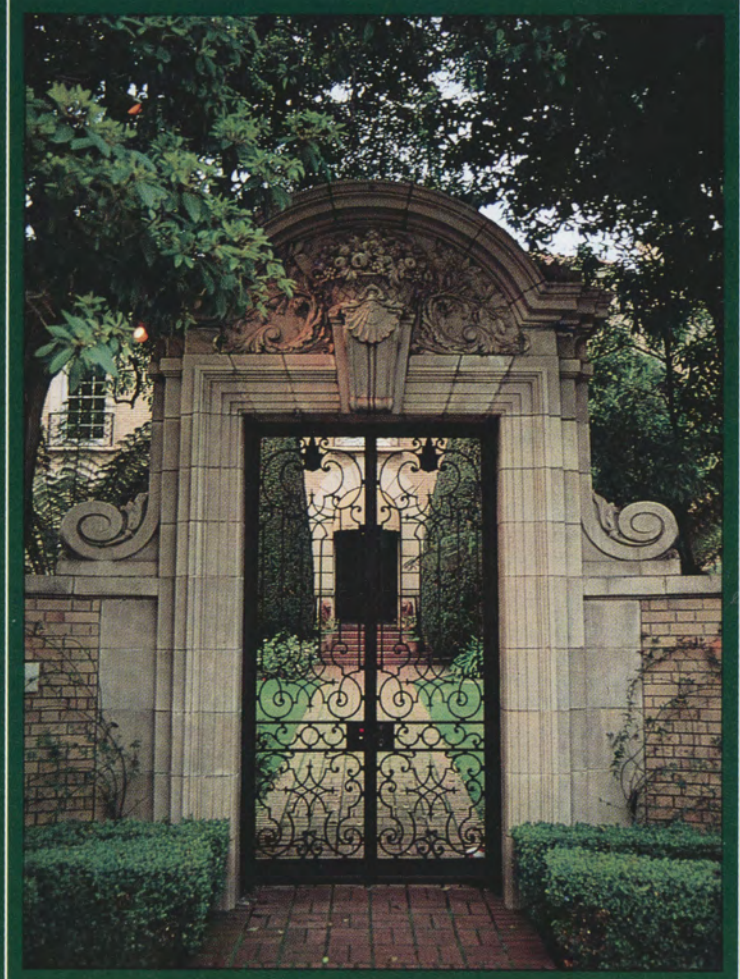

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For a personal consultation, please contact: James Herbert or Katherine August

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San Francisco Opera appreciates the generous support of the following businesses whose leadership contributions made for Performance Years 1990 or 1991 (recorded February 1, 1990 through August 15, 1991) are recognized through their membership in the Corporate Council. Donors of $2,000 and above are eligible for membership in the Corporate Council.

The San Francisco Opera Corporate Council includes Bay Area businesses and corporations that play an active role in the Opera. San Francisco Opera seeks to add new members to the Corporate Council so that it reflects the varied Bay Area business community. Council activities include participation in members-only dress rehearsals, numerous Council evenings at the Opera, and special behind-the-scenes glimpses into the world of opera. These benefits can be enjoyed by your business clients and employees.

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PUBLIC SUPPORT

California Arts Council
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Corporations Supporting San Francisco Opera

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Donor Categories and Benefits

Without the generous support of our Opera family it would be impossible for the San Francisco Opera to continue to produce first-rate opera. In addition to enjoying outstanding entertainment on stage, contributors to San Francisco Opera receive a number of benefits which enable them to observe many stages of opera production, to meet the artists and to have behind-the-scenes opportunities to participate in Opera life.

For information on becoming involved in these interesting and exciting donor benefits and services contact the Development Department (415) 565-6416.

GUILD MEMBER $30-$59
- Invitation to Opera Insights
- San Francisco Opera Newsletter
- San Francisco Opera Guild Season Book
- San Francisco Opera Magazine (preview issue)
- Reservation priority and discount tickets to Opera House backstage group tours
- Advance notice of special events and ticket availability

PATRON $60-$99
All of the above, plus
- Invitation to observe a technical demonstration

SUPPORTING PATRON $100-$199
All of the above, plus
- Invitation to a working rehearsal

SUSTAINING PATRON $200-$299
All of the above, plus
- Invitation to a Sitzprobe (musical rehearsal with principal singers)

VOTING MEMBER $300-$499
All of the above, plus
- Invitation to a second working rehearsal
- Voting membership in San Francisco Opera Association
- Invitation to Annual Meeting and Reception

SUPPORTING MEMBER $500-$999
All of the above, plus
- Invitation to a third working rehearsal
- Listing of your name in performance magazines

SUSTAINING MEMBER $1,000-$1,999
All of the above, plus
- Invitation to a fourth working rehearsal
- Invitation to a lecture and an additional working rehearsal with supper

Medallion Society

The Medallion Society, the premier support group of the San Francisco Opera family, plays a vital role in maintaining the company's stature as one of the world's leading opera companies. The generosity of these members helps to ensure the fiscal stability necessary for the production of first-rate opera, season after season.

FOUNDER $2,000-$2,999
Further privileges:
- Personalized ticket service using the Medallion Society phone number
- Opportunity to purchase reserved parking at the Performing Arts Center Garage for your subscription series
- Invitation to Medallion Society Awards Luncheon
- Invitation to the Medallion Society Members' Working Rehearsal and Reception
- Invitations to two guided tours to places such as Opera Scene Shop, Costume Shop, Wig and Make-up Department, etc.
- Personalized backstage tours upon request
- Listing of your name in special Medallion Society section of all Opera performance magazines
- Preferred seating for all open rehearsals

SPONSOR $3,000-$4,999
Further privileges:
- Free reserved parking at the Performing Arts Center Garage for your subscription series
- Increased ticket priority, subject to availability

BENEFACTOR $5,000-$9,999
Further privileges:
- Invitation to a special donor event with the General Director and Opera artists
- Increased ticket priority, subject to availability

SILVER CIRCLE $10,000-$24,999
Further privileges:
- Facilitation of operatic recital for a business or private function (upon request)
- Increased ticket priority, subject to availability

GOLD CIRCLE $25,000-$49,999
Further privileges:
- Private discussion meeting with the General Director, Board Chairman and President
- Opportunity to follow the stages of the production of an opera
- Increased ticket priority, subject to availability

MEDICI CIRCLE $50,000 and above
Further privileges:
- Individualized benefits as appropriate
- Highest priority in all patron privileges and benefits, subject to availability

All rehearsals are subject to space availability, change of scheduling, and management decisions.

Medallion Society

San Francisco Opera gratefully acknowledges members of the Medallion Society who hae made contributions for Performance Years 1990 or 1991 (recorded February 1, 1990 through August 15, 1991.)

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Sennheiser Listening Devices

In order to increase the enjoyment of opera for hearing-impaired members of the audience, the War Memorial Opera House has installed a Sennheiser Listening System. Wireless headphones and induction devices (adaptable to hearing aids) are available in the coat check room at the south end of the main lobby. There is no charge, but an ID deposit, such as a driver's license or major credit card is required.

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, November 2
Tuesday, November 5
Sunday, November 17
Wednesday, November 20
Sunday, December 1

Tickets for Guild members $2; non-Guild members $5. Advance reservations required. For further information, please call (415) 565-6433.

If You Drive To The Opera . . .

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

SERVICES

Special service for SFO patrons! Many operagoers who live in the northern section of San Francisco are regular patrons of the Municipal Railway special "Opera Bus." This bus is added to Muni's north-bound 47 line following all evening performances of the Opera and all Sunday matinees. Look for the "47 Special," after each performance in the bus zone at Van Ness Avenue and Grove Street--across Van Ness from the Opera House. Its route is: North on Van Ness to Chestnut, left to Divisadero and left to Union. It continues on Union over Russian Hill to Columbus, then left to Powell--then right to the end of the line at North Point.

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.

Taxi Service Patrons needing a cab at the end of the performance should reserve one with the doorman at the taxi entrance before the end of the final intermission.

Performing Arts Center Tours Tours of the San Francisco Performing Arts Center include the Opera House, Davies Symphony Hall and Herbst Theatre and take place as follows: Mondays, 10:00-2:30 on the hour and half hour. Davies Hall only: Wednesday, 1:30/2:30. Saturday 12:30/1:30. All tours leave from Davies Symphony Hall, Grove Street entrance. General $3.00--Seniors/Students $2.00. For information, please call (415) 552-8338.

For **Lost and Found** information, inquire at check room No. 3 or call (415) 621-6600, 8:30 to 11:30 Monday through Friday.

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

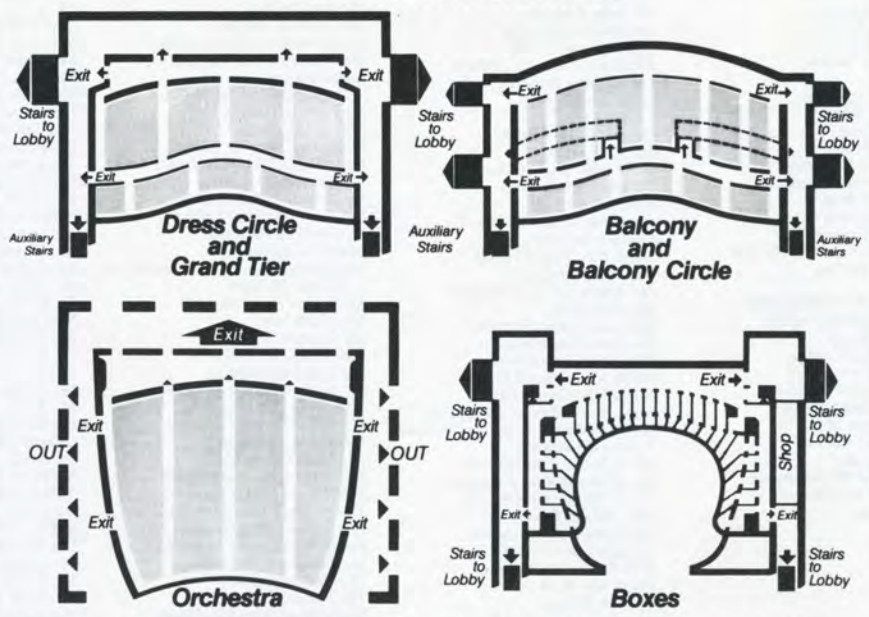
Opera glasses and Sennheiser listening devices are available in the lobby.

No cameras or tape recorders are permitted in the Opera House. Children of any age attending a performance must have a ticket.

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

San Francisco War Memorial and Performing Arts Center

War Memorial Opera House



Patrons, Attention Please! Fire Notice: There are sufficient exits in this building to accommodate the entire audience. The exit indicated by the lighted **"EXIT"** sign nearest your seat is the shortest route to the street. In case of fire please do not run—**walk** through that exit. (Refer to diagrams.)

HOW GOOD IS YOUR AGENT WITH NUMBERS?

When choosing a real estate company, the only number most sellers seem interested in hearing, naturally enough, is the highest one.

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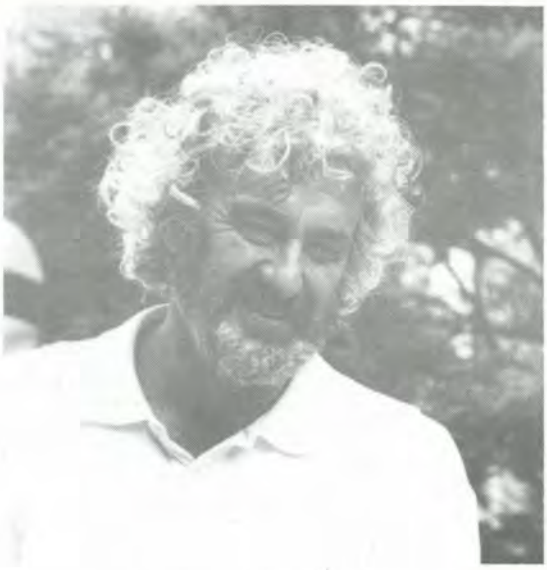

Saturday, November 9, 1991

The role of Kurwenal in tonight's performance of *Tristan und Isolde* will be sung by Victor Braun.

Canadian baritone **Victor Braun** made his San Francisco Opera debut in 1968 as Enrico in *Lucia di Lammermoor* and Conte di Luna in *Il Trovatore*, returning the following year to sing the latter role on the Company's tour to Los Angeles. After his highly acclaimed portrayals of Dr. Schön and Jack the Ripper in 1989's new production of *Lulu*, he was seen here last fall as La Roche in the new staging of *Capriccio*. Braun has earned the reputation of an extremely versatile singing actor, winning acclaim for his wide repertoire, which includes the title role of *Don Giovanni*, Scarpia in *Tosca*, Mandryka in *Arabella*, Golaud in *Pelléas et Mélisande*, and Jokanaan in *Salome*. He made his Metropolitan Opera debut in the title role of *Eugene Onegin* and also sang his first Wozzeck at the Met. He has for many seasons been closely associated with the Santa Fe, Stuttgart, and Munich operas, as well as the Cologne Opera, where he has been heard in a wide variety of roles including the four villains in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* and as Gérard in *Andrea Chénier*. Highlights of the 1988-89 season include Hans Sachs in a new production of *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* at the Paris Opera and at the opening of the new opera house in Essen; his first Orest in *Elektra* and Pizarro in *Fidelio* in Brussels; Golaud at the opening of the Florence May Festival; Don Alfonso in *Così fan tutte* at the Netherlands Opera; and his first performance of the title role of *Der Fliegende Holländer* with the Edmonton Opera. Most recently, he appeared as Balstrode in *Peter Grimes* in Geneva, Dr. Schön and Jack the Ripper in Toronto, and portrayed his first Wanderer in a new *Ring* cycle in Brussels. Future projects include *Parsifal* and *Die Frau ohne Schatten* in Essen, and *Pelléas et Mélisande* in Chicago and Cologne. Throughout his career, Braun has been active on the concert stage, and is currently busy recording a number of compact discs for the Dorian label.