

Saint François d'Assise  
(Saint Francis of Assisi)

2002

Friday, September 27, 2002 6:30 PM  
Tuesday, October 1, 2002 6:30 PM  
Saturday, October 5, 2002 6:30 PM  
Thursday, October 10, 2002 6:30 PM  
Sunday, October 13, 2002 1:00 PM  
Thursday, October 17, 2002 6:30 PM

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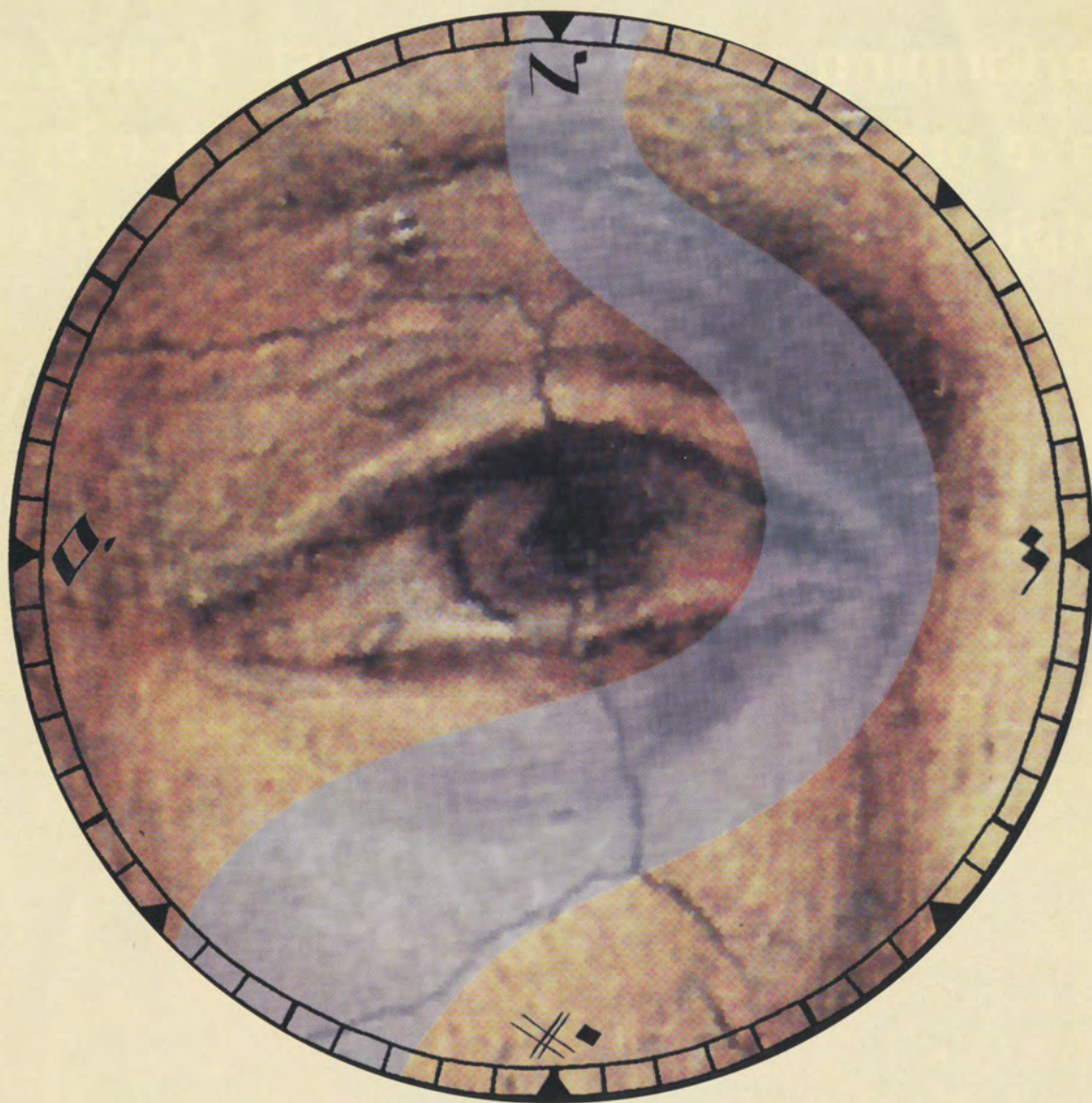
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SAN FRANCISCO OPERA  
2002-03 SEASON

OPERA

Saint François d'Assise  
Olivier Messiaen



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**Saint François d'Assise  
(Saint Francis of Assisi)  
Olivier Messiaen (1908–92)**

**San Francisco Opera Magazine**

Vol. 80, No. 3

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“But every man is called to follow this path...”  
Olivier Messiaen to Claude Samuel.

San Francisco Opera Magazine  
Vol. 80, No. 3  
2002-03 Season

John R. Palmer, *Editor*  
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All editorial material © San Francisco  
Opera Magazine 2002  
301 Van Ness Ave.,  
San Francisco, CA 94102  
(415) 861-4008  
sfopera.com

### COVER

Cimabeu, Giovanni (c.1240-1302?)  
*Maestà* (Detail)

Basilica of St. Francis in Assisi,  
north transept in the lower basilica.

Special thanks to Ivan Berry,  
Video Art Project Manager,  
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## A MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL DIRECTOR



**W**elcome to the third production of our 2002–03 Season, *Saint François d'Assise*, written by Olivier Messiaen, one of the towering and most innovative composers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. I am proud that our Company is presenting the first staged performance of the work in the Americas.

It was Messiaen's conviction that art should bring us into contact with the "Divine," that art should not only help us come to terms with our temporal condition, but that it should also help us transcend our human condition. He pops the big existential question that touches us all: "What is the meaning of Death, and therefore, Life?" The fear of Death, of the Unknown, is in us all. Very often we choose to run away from probing into the question too deeply. There are other times, however, when we want or need help in reflecting on this topic. This is Messiaen's offering on the theme.

This work is neither a biographical nor historical work about St. Francis. Messiaen says he chose him because he was so human. Because of the physical suffering he withstood and his poverty, humility and vulnerability, he could be a mirror for the rest of us. He is like a lightning rod or medium, successively absorbing the lessons of life and passing them on to us. As he travels on his journey in this opera, he achieves different states of being, in which he ultimately conquers his fears.

Messiaen wanted his music to convey mysteries that lay beyond time. This is quite startling because music as an art exists in the here-and-now, in measured time. With his unique sense of orchestral coloring, with his modal harmonies, with his ametrical rhythms, Messiaen did not develop his opera as a narrative. Instead, the elements accumulate into something bewitching and magical, rather like looking through a prism and seeing the elements of light reflect off one another from different angles. His musical language is one of reflection and contemplation—it transports us into another state of being. One goes from the utterly deep quietness that overcomes one when looking at a Mark Rothko painting to the ecstatic bedazzlement of being almost blinded by the sensuous riot of color when sunlight streams through a stained glass window. We don't often have the opportunity in our frenetic world to let ourselves "be carried outside of ourselves." I hope you will enjoy taking this journey.

Pamela Rosenberg  
General Director

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



**S**an Francisco Opera's 80<sup>th</sup> Season is the first planned by Pamela Rosenberg and initiates her five-year artistic initiative, *Animating Opera*. The aim of this plan, with its clear vision, is not only to enhance the opera-going experience but also to give our Company renewed vigor and stature among the great opera organizations in the world.

With the opera world focused on the American stage premiere of Messiaen's *Saint François d'Assise* this season, San Francisco Opera has collaborated with organizations throughout the Bay Area to celebrate this event with a host of ancillary programs. We are also delighted to present some extraordinary new artists this season and, at the same time, welcome back San Francisco favorites such as Karita Mattila in our new production of *Kát'a Kabanová*, Deborah Voigt in *Ariadne auf Naxos* and Jane Eaglen in the season-opening production of *Turandot*.

We are pleased to welcome Wells Fargo as our new Corporate Season Sponsor for 2002–03; Kawai, provided by Colton Piano, is the Official Piano of San Francisco Opera; and public funding is provided by Grants for the Arts/San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund, California Arts Council and National Endowment for the Arts.

This season we celebrate the Inaugural Company Sponsorship of Jeannik Littlefield, whose generosity inspires us all. Other Production Sponsors include the Carol Franc Buck Foundation, Mr. and Mrs. Reid W. Dennis, Jane Bernstein and Bob Ellis, Mrs. Gorham B. Knowles, The Bernard Osher Endowment Fund, The Thomas Tilton Production Fund, and Mr. and Mrs. David T. Traitel. With over half the Company's budget dependent on contributions from individuals, foundations and corporations, we are increasingly grateful for those who have been able to sustain and increase their support—particularly in light of the slow economic times and the events of September 2001, which have given the Opera a new set of challenges.

The Board of Directors salutes two outstanding individuals for their devotion to the Opera. We will miss the late Phyllis Wattis, an extraordinarily generous philanthropist, whose support made possible many new productions, and to whom this season is dedicated. Also, at the close of last season, our friend William Godward retired as President of the Association after seven years of leadership. Bill has had a lifelong relationship with the Company and, in his new position as Vice Chairman of the Board, will continue to contribute to the rich cultural life of this city.

On behalf of the San Francisco Opera Association, thank you for joining us for San Francisco Opera's 2002–03 Season.

Franklin P. Johnson, Jr.  
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Additional support provided by the National Endowment for the Arts.

Opera in three acts by OLIVIER MESSIAEN

Text by the composer

(By arrangement with Theodore Presser Co., agent for Alphonse Leduc et Cie, publisher and copyright owner.)

# Saint François d'Assise

(in French)

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Donald Runnicles

*Production*

Nicolas Brieger\*

*Set Designer*

Hans Dieter Schaal\*

*Costume Designer*

Andrea Schmidt-Futterer

*Lighting Designer*

Alexander Koppelman\*

*Sound Designer*

Roger Gans

*Dramaturge*

Wolfgang Willaschek\*

*Chorus Director*

Ian Robertson

*Musical Preparation*

Ian Robertson

Mary Chun

Bryndon Hassman

Adelle Eslinger

William Hobbs

Ernest Fredric Knell

*Prompters*

Sara Jobin

Judith Yan

*Ondes Martenot*

Jean Laurendeau

Geneviève Grenier

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Scenery, props, costumes and wigs  
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Opera workshops.

First performance:

Paris, November 28, 1983

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 27 AT 6:30

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 1 AT 6:30

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5 AT 6:30

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 10 AT 6:30

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13 AT 1:00

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 17 AT 6:30

## CAST

<i>L'Ange (The Angel)</i>	Laura Aikin*
<i>Saint François (Saint Francis)</i>	Willard White
<i>Le Lépreux (The Leper)</i>	Chris Merritt
<i>Frère Léon (Brother Leo)</i>	Johannes Martin Kränzle*
<i>Frère Massée (Brother Maseo)</i>	Gran Wilson*
<i>Frère Bernard (Brother Bernard)</i>	Gabor Andrasy Alfred Reiter (10/13)
<i>Frère Élie (Brother Elias)</i>	Jay Hunter Morris
<i>Frère Sylvestre (Brother Sylvester)</i>	Hugh Russell†
<i>Frère Rufin (Brother Rufus)</i>	Kwang Shik Pang†

*Monks, lepers*

\*San Francisco Opera debut †2002 Adler Fellow

ACT I	Scene 1	The Cross
	Scene 2	Lauds
	Scene 3	The Kissing of the Leper

## INTERMISSION

ACT II	Scene 4	The Journeying Angel
	Scene 5	The Angel-Musician
	Scene 6	The Sermon to the Birds

## INTERMISSION

ACT III	Scene 7	The Stigmata
	Scene 8	Death and New Life

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Latecomers will not be seated during the performance after the lights have dimmed.  
The use of cameras, cellular phones and any kind of recording equipment is strictly forbidden.  
The performance will last approximately four hours and fifty minutes.

# SAINT FRANÇOIS D'ASSISE

## SYNOPSIS

### SCENE ONE: THE CROSS

In the midst of an average day, Francis is confronted with the song of his companion, Brother Leo: "I am afraid on the road." Francis does not respond to him directly, but rather speaks of "perfect joy," always describing what it is not. It is not found in the curing of the blind, deaf and mute. Even if one could divine the future of the world and the secrets of all hearts, even if one could understand the language of the angels and of nature, even if one could convert all people, all this does not bring "perfect joy." If all this is not perfect joy, asks Brother Leo, then where is it found? Francis explains that if one can accept being chased from one's home, and lie freezing in the street without hatred or resistance, one can know "perfect joy." Francis has an experience that radically changes his life. He comprehends that everything can be avoided except the recognition that in the face of inevitable mortality, everyone must experience his own personal suffering.

### SCENE TWO: LAUDS

Francis isolates himself from the brothers' ritual songs. He retreats into solitude, and sings his own song of praise, seeking dialogue with the God who created air, sky, fire and earth. His search for a radical change in his life culminates in the recognition that he must overcome the most disgusting thing he can imagine; his greatest fear. He asks God that he might meet a leper, and that he will love him.

### SCENE THREE: THE KISSING OF THE LEPER

Francis does not avoid the leper, who treats others aggressively and with disgust. Mere sympathy for the leper does not suffice for Francis, who seeks direct physical contact with him. An angel's voice is able to eliminate the seemingly insurmountable distance between them. As though in a trance, between death and rebirth, the leper is cured. For Francis, this crucial encounter with his own mortality becomes the turning point on his way to becoming Saint Francis.

### SCENE FOUR: THE JOURNEYING ANGEL

On his journey, the angel uses the time prior to meeting Saint Francis to ferret out the brothers who do not recognize him. In response to his question about divine providence, the angel receives two answers that could not be more conflicting: Brother Elias feels that the angel's casual and forward manner is patroniz-

ing and pretentious, and he drives him away. At the unyielding angel's behest, Brother Masseo calls Brother Bernard, who answers the question of divine providence simply and urgently, given the imminence of his death. Following the departure of the remarkable guest, the brothers can only explain the events by considering that the guest might have been an angel.

### SCENE FIVE: THE ANGEL-MUSICIAN

Completely isolated from the outside world, Saint Francis experiences a dream encounter with the angel, who plays for him the "music of the invisible." The other brothers discover Saint Francis unconscious.

### SCENE SIX: THE SERMON TO THE BIRDS

Sensing a kind of disturbance in Saint Francis, brother Masseo attempts to distract him with talk of birds, trying with difficulty to describe them in words. As Saint Francis begins to hear birds that are not native to Umbria, Masseo reacts to his companion with increasing confusion. Saint Francis explains that he heard them in a dream, and this dream has enabled Saint Francis to hear his environment like never before. At first, Saint Francis perceives only single voices, then they become more and more numerous. Finally, he is able to hear each individual detail in a seemingly impenetrable babble. Saint Francis starts speaking with the birds, and this becomes a pivotal experience for him as he releases himself more and more from the laws of space and time.

### SCENE SEVEN: THE STIGMATA

Abandoned and alone, feeling unworthy and contemptible, haunted by prophetic voices, Saint Francis receives the stigmata. Following a period of utter motionlessness and unspeakable pain, he hears his name. He follows the example of Jesus Christ unconditionally while remaining true to himself in the process, and takes yet another step on his journey.

### SCENE EIGHT: DEATH AND NEW LIFE

People who accompanied Saint Francis on his journey pass through his consciousness. On the border between life and death, he encounters the angel once again. Brother Leo announces the death of Saint Francis. The chorus assures us that he has reached a state of "perfect joy."

### SPECIAL RECOGNITION

The October 17 performance of *Saint François d'Assise* is sponsored by Meyer Sound Laboratories, Inc.

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BY WOLFGANG WILLASCHEK

*J'ai peur, sur la route.*  
I am afraid on the road.

This sentence is uttered by Brother Leo. It is the first sentence of the opera, referred to by Olivier Messiaen as the “Franciscan scene.” Brother Leo was one of Saint Francis’s most trusted companions. He was his confessor, was able to write well and worked as his secretary. In Francis’s last years, Brother Leo was always with him. He changed the bandages on the stigmata on Saint Francis’s hands and feet. After Francis’s death, Brother Leo was allowed to keep Saint Francis’s prayer book. He survived Saint Francis by forty-five years and published writings about him. His statements seem to have been so provocative that Church officials decided to have most of them destroyed. What was important was an official image of Saint Francis, not an authentic one.

One reason for that could have been that Brother Leo understood how to express difficult questions and feelings clearly—and he received uncompromising answers from Saint Francis. “I am afraid on the road”: Brother Leo’s anxiety touches everyone, even today. The dialogue between Saint Francis and Brother Leo in the first scene is conceived as a question-and-answer game that repeats itself three times over. Brother Leo is afraid of the strange images and perceptions that haunt him: windows that grow darker and larger and the aroma of the Tiaré-flower. Saint Francis does not address Brother Leo’s remarks right away. First, he speaks of “heaven,” “earth” and “cross” and expresses his perceptions without making any logical connection to Brother Leo’s anxiety. Then he calls questioningly to Brother Leo, who turns to Saint Francis in all three sections of the conversation and poses his trusted companion a question: “My father?”

In response, Saint Francis speaks each time of “Perfect Joy,” primarily about what it is not. It does not lie in making the blind see, the deaf hear or the dumb speak. Also, the experience of “Perfect Joy” has nothing to do with guessing the future or the

heart’s secrets. And “Perfect Joy” is also not the ability, he says, to comprehend nature and the inexplicable. “Whatever is it, then?” asks Brother Leo. This is the first question directly posed to his partner. The conversation of the two men has been leading to this central moment. Saint Francis answers spontaneously and with enthusiasm. “Perfect Joy” is the acceptance of suffering as a follower of Christ.



ENGRAVING OF ST. FRANCIS RECEIVING STIGMATA, WITH STAFF LINES AND LIGATURES. ENTITLED “AMOR RECIPROCUS DEI ET D. FRANCISCI” [MUTUAL LOVE OF GOD AND ST. FRANCIS]. BY J. CH. SMISECK.

The conversation of Saint Francis and Brother Leo about the connection between mortal agony and the glorification of sorrow literally runs into a void. It is notable, however that their movements and gestures are described with precision: “They walk one behind the other.” “He stops and turns around.” “Brother Leo and Saint Francis go on their way again.” “Brother Leo and Saint Francis take a few steps.”

At first glance, the dialogue seems to elapse outside of space and time. But one must imagine it somewhat differently perhaps. Right in the middle of everyday life, surrounded by people and things that revolve around entirely different subjects,

two people venture to ask questions and give answers that deviate blatantly from the feelings that most people concern themselves with. Doesn’t one have to make that which many suppress and to which others would never admit the decisive perception in one’s life? “I am afraid on the road.”

“Windows are eyes, which enlarge and fade away at the moment of death.” With these words, the librettist and composer Messiaen clarifies Brother Leo’s vital anxiety. Brother Leo is encountered in the “Franciscan scenes,” in the daily life of the cloister, and later in the final scene of the opera at Saint Francis’s side while he dies. Inexorably, Brother Leo repeats that perception that has turned into the essence of his life and a characteristic feature of his being: “I am afraid on the road.”

The “Franciscan scenes” could not begin more simply and clearly than with this statement by Brother Leo. Even in operas in which the composer intentionally restricts himself to a limited number of associations in order to clarify the internal processes essential to the music—such as Richard Wagner in *Tristan and Isolde*, for example—there still are always clear external actions. They may be prehistories, power struggles and intrigues. Or props appear that decisively influence the action, be they a love-potion or a letter.

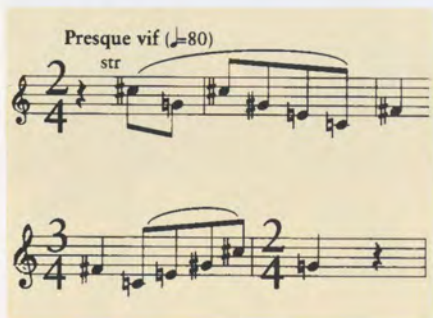
Nothing of that ilk is found in Messiaen’s opera. The first sentence already describes the entire action thoroughly. One of the longest and most demanding operas of the total repertoire is about mortal agony—and of the possibilities for factoring it out of our lives: “Windows are eyes, which enlarge and fade away at the moment of death.” At first, it is not Saint Francis who is controlled by this fear, but rather Brother Leo, an Everyman in a certain sense. Each of us is unavoidably confronted, possibly somewhere on the street, with the reality of our own death at some time in our lives.

Saint Francis sees himself forced to take the path proposed by Brother Leo in order to arrive at “Perfect Joy.” This way leads him to overcome the greatest disgust—Saint Francis kisses a leper—to completely new experiences of sorrow and to a new relationship with nature. Brother Leo’s perception is a signpost at all eight stations in this opera for Saint Francis as well: “I am afraid on the road.”

Tr: Heather Fleming.  
Wolfgang Willaschek is Dramaturge at San Francisco Opera.

*The Melody of Saint Francis—Saint Francis’s Decision—The Subject of Joy*

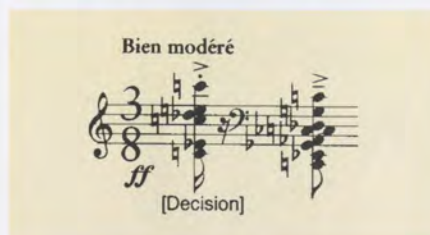
In the first scene of the opera, Saint Francis says to Brother Leo that the essence of “Perfect Joy” lies not in returning vision to the blind. The moment that the topic of eyesight is raised, the beginning of a melody that will repeat itself in the opera innumerable times is sounded in the orchestra, always played by the violins alone. Shortly thereafter, this part of the melody is sounded a second time and cut off by a new episode some moments later. This melody consists very clearly of two parts, a downward movement in the first part and an upward movement in the second.



Messiaen himself assigned this melody to Saint Francis and spoke of it being a “veritable leitmotif.” Upon hearing the melody, the concept of a cycle emerges, a self-contained image. Because this melody describes an extraordinary person, not only the sense of how manifold this person is becomes stronger and stronger, but also how very much he strives to be “an entirety,” a personality with many features, all of them aiming toward a single life goal: to imitate Christ.

In the first scene of the opera, Saint Francis calls to the earth and the heavens with tones from his melody. Shortly afterward, he equates the elements of nature with the call to the cross. For a moment he hesitates to admit to himself what the cross has to do with his existence between earth and sky: “Could this be possible?” At this very moment, a succinct theme is introduced for the first time by

two short beats in the orchestra. The aggressive gesture may startle the listener the first time or two it is made. This theme appears in contrast to the melody, the “leitmotif,” in that it does not describe any characteristics of Saint Francis. Instead, it expresses a sudden impulse, a physical effect. Messiaen also gives this theme an unambiguous name: “Theme of Decision.”



Directly upon the “theme of decision”—still at that place at which Saint Francis wonders about the meaning of the cross in connection with heaven and earth—one more theme is introduced. Following the melody and the theme of decision, this third theme returns again and again throughout the entire opera at dramatically significant moments. It seems to be closely associated with the “theme of decision,” even though its structure is totally different. This theme is created from four short tones played sequentially. As he does with the melody of Saint Francis, Messiaen provides this theme with a special timbre and accordingly enables the listener to recognize it easily. Messiaen names it the “theme of joy,” that “return[s] each time the saint performs a good deed.” Trumpet, xylophone and woodwinds always perform it.



Upon closer examination of the “theme of joy” one realizes that the high voice progresses down—the line of movement of the theme corresponds with the direction

of Saint Francis’s melody. One could characterize the “theme of joy” as a formula of the Saint Francis melody that hits the mark. A person makes an irrevocable decision that will let him experience what he seeks most intensely in a life determined by fear and expectation: “Perfect Joy.”

Again and again, Messiaen specifically emphasized that the eight stations of Saint Francis that he worked on for eight years, so reminiscent of the stations of Christ’s suffering, are not a psychological study. For him, Saint Francis is a real character living today (“a man not a god”), whose feelings and actions are exclusively focused on one point: “He still resembled Christ because he was chaste, because he was humble, because he was poor, and because he suffered.”

There are, as the composer says, powerfully dramatic moments in this opera, such as the curing of the leper in the third scene. The stigmatization in the seventh scene, with its deliberately realistic music, is cruel and aggressive, which actually runs counter to his nature, for as Messiaen says: “I am a composer of Joy.” In spite of the length of the piece, *Saint Francis* is never lost on the listener. That is assured by three essential features the composer gives his character at all eight stations of his journey: the unmistakable melody, his power of decision and his indestructible capacity for joy.

In the last scene of the opera, “Death and New Life,” Saint Francis experiences his path in eight stations once more in time-lapse format right up until his encounter with the angel. The moment in which Saint Francis dies is deliberately not specifically composed. The sounds in the orchestra subside with Saint Francis’s call for truth. He seems to dissipate to where he had come from. He seems to be returning to a place, dissolving into a space that had appeared to him in the middle of his journey through this piece as the perfect realization of the divine mystery: the music.

Tr: Heather Fleming.

BY WOLFGANG WILLASCHEK



UNKNOWN MASTER, SECOND THIRD OF THE 13<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY, SAINT FRANCIS AND FOUR POSTHUMOUS MIRACLES. VATICAN CITY, PINACOTECA VATICANA.

**T**he artistic director of the Paris Opera, Rolf Liebermann, announced in the presence of the French President, Georges Pompidou: “Messiaen, you will write an opera for the Opéra de Paris!” Messiaen admitted that he felt honored more than compelled. Regardless of the genres central to his

Tr. Heather Fleming.

work—symphony, chamber music, organ music—for a long time, Messiaen did not want to write an opera. His respect for masterpieces such as Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*, Debussy’s *Pelléas et Mélisande* and Berg’s *Wozzeck* was too great. Eventually, Messiaen began to contemplate an opera about a “primary Christian mystery,” about the suffering and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Since he did not want to compose a naïve passion play,

he replaced the figure of Jesus Christ with a representative. This character should not be any sort of a god, but rather an average person—humble, weak and completely fulfilled by the idea of pursuing Christ’s passion. Saint Francis is the first saint in recorded history to carry Christ’s stigmata. For Messiaen, this character becomes the central figure in a drama in several, independently developed stations. In spite of its length, the

# Genesis

work is a portrayal of an occasionally grotesque path of life and suffering that seems to careen along in fast-forward. This path reaches from Saint Francis's awakening to a new consciousness to his death and his effect on others.

Messiaen assembled the text itself from various sources: the writings and confessions of Saint Francis, documentation by Giovanni de Ceprano, Thomas de Celano, Bonaventura and Thomas Aquinas, Franciscan legends such as the "Fioretti," excerpts from the New Testament and the Christian liturgy, as well as the thoughts of the important 19<sup>th</sup>-century French theologian Ernest Hello. Consisting of eight scenes in three acts, the opera occupied Messiaen for eight years: first the composition took shape from 1975 to 1979, and the orchestration from 1979 to 1983. The premiere took place on 28 November 1983, in the Salle Garnier of the Opéra Paris under the direction of Seiji Ozawa.

After Messiaen was forced to realize that his original intention of using an enormous choir of 150 singers could not be implemented at the premiere, he made do with 110, divided into ten voice groups. His instrumentation includes 22 woodwinds, 68 strings, a percussion section consisting of five players, and three *ondes martenot*, extraordinary keyboard instruments with a tremendous tonal range and variety. The number "three" and an overall structure reminiscent of a pyramid shape the cast: Saint Francis is a baritone, the angel a soprano, the leper a tenor. Brother Leo, who frames the work with his question about mortal agony, is also a baritone. Accompanying Saint Francis are the brothers Masseo, Elias and Bernardo, the first being a naively faithful monk, the second quite arrogant and the last one the very reflection of him. Each figure has notable themes and birdcalls assigned to him, as though each of them had a character and an unmistakable voice from nature.

Olivier Messiaen deliberately leaves out several external dramatic events from Francis of Assisi's life, such as the breach with his father, his relationship to Saint

*continued on next page*

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Clare (a love story that is actually indispensable for the opera genre) or the touching episode about the taming of the wolf of Gubbio. Messiaen's unmistakable style is marked by special means of expression (borrowed from the Balinese theater or the Japanese No-theater),

motifs that are easy for the listener to follow and empathize with, and certain rhythmic patterns and timbres. The dramatic action is determined by frequent but subtly varied repetitions that have a ritualistic character. The listener participates in each change of the main charac-

ter: "At the beginning, he's Francis. Then, little by little, he becomes Saint Francis, and even super-Saint Francis. The series of eight scenes explains it," noted Messiaen.

The first act symbolizes both a return and a departure to a new existence in three phases: Saint Francis's confrontation with mortal agony, the Canticle of the Sun as a return to Earth, and overcoming disgust, as represented by the kiss that Saint Francis gives to the leper. This three-part development recurs in the second act but this time, the alteration of Saint Francis's consciousness happens in a transcendental manner, symbolized by three extraordinary encounters: with an angel, with the mystery of music and in the dialogue with the birds. The third and final act is a grand synthesis of two scenes: exaltation and death. Following the stigmatization in scene seven, "the central point of controversy" for Messiaen, the eighth and final scene functions simultaneously as summary and reorientation. What does Saint Francis's path mean today if the form of this "representative" disappears and each of us is placed before the realization: "I am afraid on the road"?

Initially, Messiaen composed the fourth scene with the title "The Journeying Angel," an exact portrayal of daily life in a monastery that is deliberately aligned with, as he admits, Modest Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov*—a real opera scene! The second scene, called "Lauds," came next, in large part because Messiaen also needed the music for the last scene, "Death and New Life." This is indicative of how very much the structure of this opera is influenced by cycles above and beyond the text. Then Messiaen wrote one of the scenes he considered crucial, scene three, which was already forged very dramatically in the text: "The Kissing of the Leper." This scene is marked by a melody that is striking in the best sense of the word. This melody is an expression of the joy that overcomes both the leper and Saint Francis because of the miraculous cure. Next, Messiaen composed the fifth scene, titled "The Angel Musician," a creed of his art. It was one of the most difficult scenes for Messiaen

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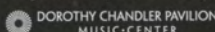
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## OPERA TALKS

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

*Turandot*, September 28; October 2;  
November 27; December 2, 5, 8 . . . . . Ron Gallman  
*Ariadne auf Naxos*, September 29 . . . . . John R. Palmer  
*St. François d'Assise*, October 1, 5, 10, 13, 17 . . . . . Charles Barber  
*Otello*, October 16, 19, 22, 26, 29;  
November 1 . . . . . Laura Stanfield Prichard  
*Die Entführung  
aus dem Serail*, October 18, 20, 27; November 2 . . . . . Kip Cranna

*Káťa Kabanová*, November 6, 9, 12, 15, 20 . . . . . Anna Nisnevich  
*Hansel and Gretel*, November 21, 23; December 3;  
January 11, 14, 16, 18 . . . . . John R. Palmer  
*Alcina*, November 22, 26, 29; December 1, 4, 7 . . . . . Camille Crittenden  
*Madama Butterfly*, January 10, 12, 15, 17, 19 . . . . . Marvin Tartak  
*La Cenerentola*, June 13, 19, 22, 25, 28; July 6 . . . . . Arthur Kaplan  
*La damnation de Faust*, June 14, 17, 20, 26, 29; July 3 . . . . . Mary Ann Smart  
*Il trovatore*, June 18, 21, 24, 27, 30; July 2, 5 . . . . . Melina Esse

Opera Guild Preview Lectures are scheduled in communities throughout the greater Bay Area by local Guild chapters (East Bay, Marin, San Francisco, Sonoma County, South Peninsula and the San Jose Opera Guild). Each Preview features a renowned musicologist who may use recordings, slides, handouts, or all three to familiarize the audience with repertoire from the current season.

### Opera

*Ariadne auf Naxos*  
*Saint François d'Assise*  
*Otello*  
*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*  
*Káťa Kabanová*  
*Alcina*  
*La Cenerentola, La damnation de Faust,*  
*Il trovatore*

### Speaker

Conrad Susa  
Robert Fallon  
Richard Taruskin  
Robert Glick  
Michael Beckerman  
Bruce Lamott

D. Kern Holoman

### East Bay Chapter

October 2 *Otello*  
October 9 *Die Entführung  
aus dem Serail*  
October 30 *Káťa Kabanová*  
November 13 *Alcina*  
June 11, 2003 *La Cenerentola,  
La damnation de Faust,  
Il trovatore*

Lectures are held at 8 PM and preceded by complimentary refreshments at 7:30 PM. St. Mark's United Methodist Church, 451 Moraga Way, Orinda; (925) 254-5965. Admission: \$7; June lecture, \$10. Series: \$35 for fall lectures. Summer lecture sold separately. Reservations required. To guarantee space and facilitate check-in, we request that everyone prepay. Please send checks, made payable to SFOG, EBC, to Glen Purdie, 2336 Pelham Place, Oakland, CA 94611. For further information, call Glen Purdie at (510) 531-5677, Annelle Clute at (510) 527-1846 or Silvia Lin at (925) 838-9255.

### San Francisco Chapter

October 2 *Otello*  
October 9 *Die Entführung  
aus dem Serail*  
October 30 *Káťa Kabanová*  
November 13 *Alcina*  
June 11, 2003 *La Cenerentola,  
La damnation de Faust,  
Il trovatore*

Lectures are held at 12 PM. Koret Auditorium, Lower Level, New Main Library, 100 Larkin Street, San Francisco. Admission: Free. For further information, call (415) 565-3204.

### San Jose Opera Guild

October 3 *Otello*  
October 10 *Die Entführung  
aus dem Serail*  
October 31 *Káťa Kabanová*  
November 14 *Alcina*  
June 12, 2003 *La Cenerentola,  
La damnation de Faust,  
Il trovatore*

Lectures held at 10 AM. Luncheon following the lecture. Los Gatos History Club, 123 Los Gatos Blvd. Admission: \$10; free to San Jose Opera Guild members. For further information, call Mrs. Joy H. Hulme at (408) 741-1331 or email HotFlash96@aol.com.

### Sonoma Chapter

October 3 *Otello*  
October 11 *Die Entführung  
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October 31 *Káťa Kabanová*  
November 15 *Alcina*  
June 8, 2003 *La Cenerentola,  
La damnation de Faust,  
Il trovatore*

Admission: \$8; June lecture, \$10. Series: \$40 for Sonoma Chapter members, \$48 for non-members. For further information, please contact Kathleen Ellithorpe at (707) 546-4379 or Neva Turer at (707) 539-1220.

### South Peninsula Chapter

October 1 *Otello*  
October 8 *Die Entführung  
aus dem Serail*  
October 29 *Káťa Kabanová*  
November 12 *Alcina*  
June 10, 2003 *Il trovatore,  
La Cenerentola,  
La damnation de Faust*

Lectures held at 8 PM. Palo Alto Senior Center, 450 Bryant Street, Admission: \$8. For further information, call Ramona Rockway at (650) 941-3890.

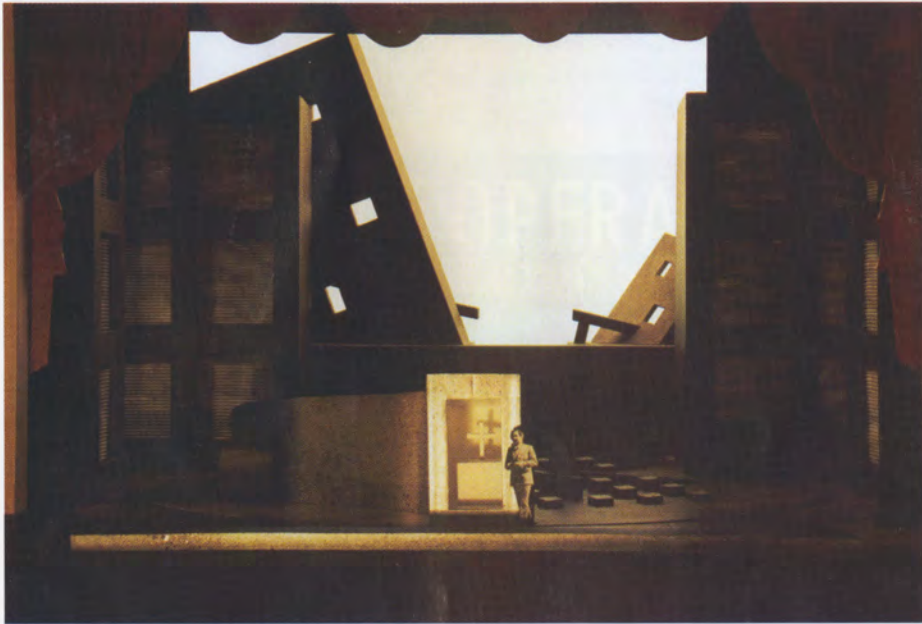
### Marin Chapter

September 30 *Otello*  
October 7 *Die Entführung  
aus dem Serail*  
October 28 *Káťa Kabanová*  
November 11 *Alcina*  
June 9, 2003 *La Cenerentola,  
La damnation de Faust,  
Il trovatore*

Lectures are held at 8 PM and preceded by complimentary refreshments at 7:30 PM. Mt. Tamalpais United Methodist Church, 410 Sycamore Avenue, Mill Valley. Admission: \$8 for adults, \$7 for students and seniors; June lecture, \$10. Series: \$30 for Marin Chapter members. For further information, call Verna Parino at (415) 388-6789.

# Viewpoint Viewpoint Viewpoint Viewpoint

BY TOM SUTCLIFFE



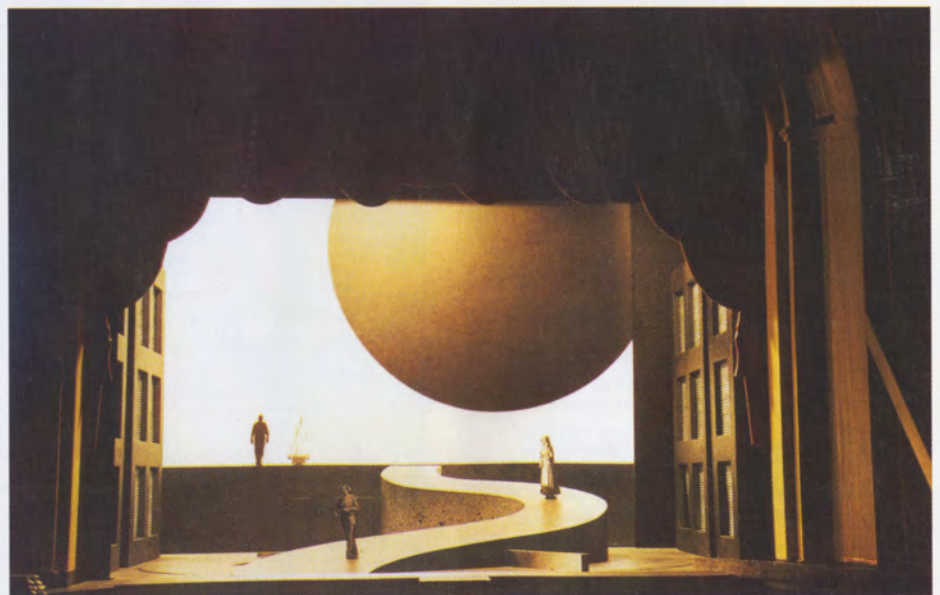
SAINT FRANÇOIS D'ASSISE SET MODEL BY HANS DIETER SCHAAL.

**R**ound the corner from the main body of Ognissanti (All Saints church) in Florence, pinned up above a side altar like a picture behind glass, is the habit and cowl that Francis of Assisi wore: rough, frayed brown material showing the signs of its age, more or less sackcloth really. There's quite a contrast between this insignificant relic of sanctity and poverty and the extraordinary status its wearer had already acquired by the time of his death, thanks to the stigmata, the signs of the crucifixion, that he had come to bear on his hands and feet—the consequence of his miraculous mirroring of the life and work of Christ. Francis is a revolutionary figure who practiced what he preached and vice versa. One of the most bizarre moments of the Margaret Thatcher era in Britain was when she stood on the steps of No. 10 Downing Street and quoted words by this icon of poverty. But in a sense that only goes to prove his continuing importance.

*Tom Sutcliffe has published widely on the subject of opera.*

An opera about St. Francis by Olivier Messiaen has a sort of inevitability about it. Messiaen's music is full of birds, and St. Francis listened to nature and loved it as much as he loved everything in the created world. In my bedroom as a child there was

a Jesus picture by Margaret Tarrant that made Jesus seem more like St. Francis than himself, surrounded by birds and docile furry animals. Messiaen's opera is unashamedly religious. The great French organist and composer chose to dramatize his Franciscan Themes because he was as fervently evangelical as a devout catholic could be. For Messiaen everything in nature manifested God. For him to be able to describe many aspects of the world given in creation by God in highly suggestive and absorbable musical terms was a fabulous gift and privilege. The "word made flesh" he thought would be more readily understood, digested and absorbed in music than in abstract theological speculation. Yet Messiaen is very unlike J. S. Bach. He is not interested in mechanics or a sense of ordered, structural architecture. He is a painter with sounds who puts aural colors and Miro-like phrases on his audio-canvas—some of his memorable little details as kitsch and naive as anything by Walt Disney. When I listen to Messiaen's elemental evocations of earth-shattering forces and the non-verbal aspects of divine creation, I get a sense of somebody describing the footprints of the creator in a universe that's still in the crucible of formation.



SAINT FRANÇOIS D'ASSISE SET MODEL BY HANS DIETER SCHAAL.

A book I wrote, about the changes in how opera is staged during the last 25 years, is called *Believing in Opera*, a title that reflects the fact that people need help to enable them to believe in the theater, and that the process of “believing” is central. I wrote about how designers and directors may assist audiences to get the message, to see below the surface and accept what’s going on and what matters about it. All performance requires an “act of faith” by the audience. One must have an appetite for music and ideas and expressive theatricality. One must want to believe. One should relish the materials being deployed—human voices, 110 instruments (in Messiaen’s opera), painted and constructed scenery. It’s no good coming along and stubbornly refusing to engage with what’s happening because it’s unreal, or improbable, or silly. Operas are often all of those things, but they’re a lot else too. Theorists coined the phrase “suspension of disbelief” about the kind of mindset people should bring to the theater. Theater (and opera is part of theater) is all about creating positive belief.

Does “belief” sound too religious? Well, it’s undeniable that in its ancient Greek origin opera started out as a religious festival, in which the myths and deities and heroes who dominated the imagination and the religious rituals of people at that time were incarnated in theatrical terms. The present Pope’s favorite theologian, Hans Urs von Balthasar, wrote a monumental and fascinating tome called *Theo-Drama*, which draws on many strands of modern culture including opera. There’s no difference between opera and oratorio as Peter Sellars’s memorable Glyndebourne staging of Handel’s *Theodora* showed (Sellars of course has also brought his rich imagination to *Saint Francois* too, in Salzburg and Paris).

What makes an opera into a religious opera? “We have a story to proclaim,” sing the Evangelical Christians. For me *Fidelio* is a religious opera, and not just

*continued on next page*

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# Viewpoint Viewpoint Viewpoint Viewpoint



SAINT FRANÇOIS D'ASSISE SET MODEL BY HANS DIETER SCHAAL.

because the opening word of the second act, sung by Florestan, is “God.” Beethoven’s transforming and emotional masterpiece is a more truly religious and redemptive work than Wagner’s *Parsifal*, which is about psychiatry more than religion. *Parsifal*’s theme of humanistic healing and our subjective feelings about sex and mystery and mastery have little to do with the fabric of Christianity. J. S. Bach’s great passions, on the other hand, are only part drama, and part meditation, though Jonathan Miller and Deborah Warner have staged them powerfully. Opera in all its passion is a sort of liturgy of living. Messiaen, whose love for the power of opera dated back to his adolescence and his first encounter with Debussy’s *Pelléas et Mélisande* and various forgotten religious operas by Pierne, d’Indy and Honneger, wants audiences to

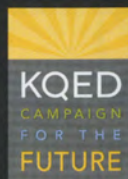
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# Listening to Saint François d'Assise

BY JOHN R. PALMER

“The music of our time  
is quite a natural continuation  
of the music of the past;  
doubtless there are changes,  
but no rupture.”

—Olivier Messiaen to Claude Samuel.

When news spread that French composer Olivier Messiaen was writing an opera, many in the music world were genuinely astonished, and for good reason. It seems Messiaen never attended performances of operas; his familiarity with the art form grew from reading scores at the piano, and he was very suspicious of the possibility of conveying dramatic ideas on stage. Not surprisingly, when Rolf Liebermann, then director of the Paris Opéra, first approached Messiaen in 1975 about composing a piece for the company, he found the composer ambivalent. Messiaen considered himself ill equipped to write for the theater, remarking that very few composers had done so successfully.

Timing, however, is everything, and Liebermann persisted. At a dinner with the President of the Republic, Georges Pompidou, Liebermann announced that Messiaen would write a work for the Opéra. Under the circumstances, Messiaen found it impossible to refuse. From 1975 to 1979 Messiaen was occupied exclusively with the composition of *Saint François d'Assise*, which he orchestrated between 1979 and 1983. The work received its premiere at the Paris Opéra on 28 November 1983.

Both the libretto and music of *Saint François d'Assise* are the product of Messiaen's mind, and neither aspect of the opera could have been created by any other composer. To make even the slightest attempt to understand the piece, we must consider Messiaen's relationship with Roman Catholicism and the musical language he developed and used for a great many of his works. *Saint François d'Assise* is the culmination of Messiaen's thoughts on his faith and his techniques of musical composition.

Messiaen's only opera reflects his unwavering devotion, a faith so devout that it could be described as naïve. He claimed never to have had any doubts, and this unquestioning belief extended beyond scripture to relics such as the Shroud of Turin, which Messiaen believed was physical evidence of the Resurrection:

Unlike some people, I don't see the Resurrection as an effort made by Christ: It's something He underwent, like an atom bomb exploding. The Turin Shroud is evidence of this. I believe in it. It strikes me not as a miracle, but as a natural phenomenon: in Hiroshima the bodies of the victims were found “photographed” on the walls. In the same way, the Resurrection was an atomic explosion, with Christ suddenly rising from the dead, his likeness imprinted on the shroud.

To construct the libretto of *Saint François d'Assise*, Messiaen studied and borrowed from Francis's own writings, including the *Cantico delle creature*, a stanza of which appears in each of the opera's eight scenes. The composer also consulted memoirs written shortly after Francis's death and Louis Antoine's more recent *Lire François d'Assise*, but he was not interested in research that questioned what he believed were the facts of Francis's life.

Choosing subject matter for the opera was an ordeal for Messiaen. Initially, he wished to depict Christ's Passion or Resurrection, but feared that staging such events would create the appearance of a village passion play. In the end, he chose a human character, Saint Francis of Assisi, whom Messiaen felt resembled Christ “because he was humble, because he was poor, and because he suffered.” Still, Messiaen set very little of the saint's daily life and gravitated toward the spiritual and miraculous. Messiaen omitted Francis's youth, family, interaction with his Umbrian acquaintances, the wolf of Gubbio and even St. Clare. The scenes with the Leper and the Angel are the only segments that verge on dramatic presentation, while the rest of the opera focuses on “the progress of grace in Saint Francis's soul,” as Messiaen described it. “At the beginning, he's Francis. Then, little by little, he becomes Saint Francis, and even super-Saint Francis,” in a series of eight scenes.

On first hearing, the score of *Saint François d'Assise* may strike some as a random assemblage of notes bearing no relationship to any music encountered before. To those who have never heard pieces by Messiaen, many of the sounds will be new, but Messiaen's music is firmly grounded in the music of the past. His works are as systematic and learned as are those of any other composer, and all of his sounds are directly traceable to deliberately applied musical techniques, many of which he discusses in his *Technique de mon langage musical* (1944). Often, the first thing we notice about something new to us is what it is *not*, and this is a good point with which to begin a discussion of the music of *Saint François d'Assise*.

Messiaen's music doesn't “go” anywhere. Narrative direction is typically absent, and the music luxuriates in logic and ritual, seemingly mutually exclusive concepts. Ideas give way to new ideas, restatements or altered restatements. Messiaen creates a musical environment in which time is “colored” (as he put it) by rhythm. The composer achieves this through both his manipulation of rhythm (or the seeming lack thereof) and his use of a modal pitch system. Rather than being part of a continuous musical discourse, a chord can be an event in itself. Thus, the “goal-directed,” tension-and-release language of the Viennese classical style and much of Romantic-era music is completely absent from *Saint François*. Instead, we find music that establishes atmosphere, that ignores the passage of time.

A timbre that will probably turn most people's ears is that of the *ondes martenot*, an electronic instrument of which there are three in the score of *Saint François*. Developed in 1928 by Maurice Martenot (1898–1980), the *ondes martenot* generates its sound with a beat-frequency oscillator. The performer uses the right hand to play a standard keyboard and operate a wire ribbon controller to create portamento effects. The left hand manipulates variable potentiometers, housed in a drawer, that alter articulation, dynamics and timbre.

John R. Palmer is Publications Manager at San Francisco Opera.

# LISTENING...

continued from page 19

Messiaen's compositional vocabulary looks back to that of Debussy, especially in his use of unresolved diatonic dissonance. Also we find added 6<sup>th</sup> chords Messiaen borrowed from jazz between the World Wars. Most important are Messiaen's seven "modes of limited transposition," described at length in his *Technique*. From these modes, the composer can create any of the sounds we associate with traditional harmony, including major and minor chords, but the non-traditional sounds derived from the modes are what make Messiaen's music unique.

Structurally, *Saint François d'Assise* is Wagnerian in that each act is continuous and the singing is *arioso* from beginning to end, not broken down into "numbers." From the beginning of the opera, Messiaen marks his characters, situations and ideas with motives, and a brief look at some of these motives will give us a glimpse into the musical language of *Saint François*.

In Example 1, we see part of Francis's lecture to Brother Leo on the meaning of "perfect joy," followed by the angular string theme (marked "Presque vif" in Example 1) that becomes Francis's musical sobriquet. It is pointless to discuss this passage in terms of traditional harmony; the music is simply not written that way. It does, however, fit neatly into Messiaen's seventh mode (Example 2). The motive's closing gesture, a falling tritone, is one of Messiaen's favorite ways of creating a melodic cadence.

EXAMPLE 1: FRANCIS'S THEME, SCENE 1.

EXAMPLE 2: THE SEVENTH OF MESSIAEN'S SEVEN "MODES OF LIMITED TRANSPOSITION."

Messiaen stressed the importance of the third scene, "The Kissing of the Leper": "In one instant a double miracle occurs: the Leper is cured and Francis becomes Saint Francis. It is the decisive moment, and in my opera, it is the key scene." The composer marks the Leper with a lively, rising theme, the rhythms of which provide the basis for the Leper's ecstatic dance after Francis cures him (Example 3). Here we find Messiaen tending toward diatonic harmony, A major, a key he often associates with joy.

EXAMPLE 3: THE LEPER'S DANCE, SCENE 3.

Francis appears in every one of the opera's eight scenes except the fourth, in which the Friars first encounter the Angel. As we might expect, the Angel has musical calling cards, the first of which is an

aggressive, upward glissando in the strings and *ondes martenot*, followed immediately by an astringent motive in the oboe and clarinet (Example 4). More important is the song of the gerygone, a species of bird native to New Caledonia, which sounds in the orchestra here and in later scenes, alerting us to the presence of the Angel (Example 5).

EXAMPLE 4: THEMES ASSOCIATED WITH THE ANGEL, SCENE 4.

EXAMPLE 5: SONG OF THE GERYGONE, ASSOCIATED WITH THE ANGEL, SCENE 4.

Another prominent passage in which Messiaen uses blatant triadic harmony occurs in the fifth scene, "The Angel-Musician." As the Angel plays the "music of the invisible" on his violin, we hear a melody pass from one *ondes martenot* to another, each placed in a different part of the performing space (Example 6). The melody is modal, but is supported by the strings and humming chorus sustaining C major, a key that returns after Francis's death at the end of the opera, as the chorus sings a "resurrection" chorale.

EXAMPLE 6: THE ANGEL'S "VIOLIN" MELODY, SCENE 5.

One might ask why an opera about a person who shunned opulence and deliberately chose the life of a pauper would demand the presence of an immense orchestra and an even more immense chorus performing a daunting score packed with notes. Messiaen explained:

It is true that St. Francis was poor, utterly poor, but since he retained a child's wondering admiration for all the beauty surrounding him ... a music rich in color, timbre, sustained notes and complex sonorities seems to me perfectly in accordance with his true inner nature.

Although *Saint François d'Assise* is not Messiaen's final work, it remains the summation of both his musical career and his expression of faith.

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**TURANDOT** Giacomo Puccini  
Sept. 7, 10, 13, 22, 25, 28; Oct. 2;  
Nov. 27, 30; Dec. 2, 5, 8

Cast  
Eaglen/ Stottler, Racette/ Amsellem,  
Villars\*/Nagore\*, Reiter\*/Jun\*,  
Iturralde\*, Boyd/Petersen, Rojas\*

Production  
Runnicles/Polianichko/Robertson,  
Alexander\*, Hockney, Falconer, Munn

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**ARIADNE AUF NAXOS** Richard Strauss  
Sept. 9, 12, 14, 21, 26, 29

Cast  
Voigt, Mahnke\*, Claycomb, Gilbert\*,  
Moser, Green, Belcher\*, Conners\*,  
Fedderly\*, Hoffmann

Production  
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American Stage Premiere  
New Production

**SAINT FRANÇOIS D'ASSISE** Olivier Messiaen  
Sept. 27; Oct. 1, 5, 10, 13, 17

Cast  
Aikin\*, White, Merritt, Kränzle\*,  
Wilson\*, Morris, Andrasy/Reiter\*

Production  
Runnicles, Brieger\*, Schaal\*, Schmidt-  
Futterer, Koppelman\*, Willaschek\*

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**OTELLO** Giuseppe Verdi  
Oct. 9, 12, 16, 19, 22, 26, 29; Nov. 1

Cast  
Racette, Cook, West/Mussard\*,  
Leiferkus, Very, Owens\*

Production  
Runnicles, Sagi, Brown, Munn

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**DIE ENTFÜHRUNG AUS DEM SERAIL** Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart  
Oct. 15, 18, 20, 23, 27, 31; Nov. 2

Cast  
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Bronder\*, Eder/Röhlig\*, Hoffmann

Production  
Schneider, Wadsworth, Lynch, Long,  
Oliver\*, Arhelger

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New Production  
**KÁT'A KABANOVÁ** Leoš Janáček  
Nov. 3, 6, 9, 12, 15, 20

Cast  
Mattila, Schwarz, Döring\*, Cook,  
Decker\*, Bonnema\*, Very,  
Chernomortsev\*

Production  
Runnicles, Schaaf\*, Wonder\*, Herold\*,  
Voss\*, Willaschek

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**HANSEL AND GRETEL** Engelbert Humperdinck  
Nov. 17, 21, 23, 30;  
Dec. 3; Jan. 11, 14, 16, 18

Cast  
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Feeney, Clark, Okerlund

Production  
McGegan/Runnicles, Jones\*, Dobell\*,  
Macfarlane\*, Tipton

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**ALCINA** George Frideric Handel  
Nov. 19, 22, 26, 29; Dec. 1, 4, 7

Cast  
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Schneiderman\*, Castle\*, Spence\*,  
Pittsinger

Production  
Goodman\*, Wieler\*, Viebrock\*, Finn\*,  
Morabito\*

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**MADAMA BUTTERFLY** Giacomo Puccini  
Jan. 10, 12, 15, 17, 19

Cast  
Villarroel/ Bravo\*, Cook, Larin,  
Hancock\*, Petersen

Production  
Luisi\*, Daniels, Yeargan, Strawbridge

**LA CENERENTOLA** Gioachino Rossini  
June 7, 13, 19, 22, 25, 28; July 6

Cast  
Ganassi, Flórez\*, Belcher, Del Carlo,  
Schulte\*

Production  
Summers, Ponnelle, Asagaroff,  
Ponnelle, Munn

**LA DAMNATION DE FAUST** Hector Berlioz  
June 10, 14, 17, 20, 26, 29; July 3

Cast  
Denoke\*, Kuebler, Sigmundsson\*,  
Stapp

Production  
Runnicles, Langhoff\*, Rose\*, Bauer\*,  
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**IL TROVATORE** Giuseppe Verdi  
June 15, 18, 21, 24, 27, 30; July 2, 5

Cast  
Mescheriakova, Zajick, Margison,  
Alvarez\*/Fu\*, Doss

Production  
Armiliato, Dalton, Conklin, Wierzel\*

*This production is owned by the Seattle Opera.*

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**ANTONIN ARTAUD,  
THE POEM OF SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI**

*I am the saint, I am he who was  
A man, very small among other men;  
And I have only a few thoughts that crown me  
And flow through me with a confused sound.*

*I am that eternal absent from himself  
Who always walks beside his own path.  
And one day my soul left me, tomorrow  
I shall awake in an ancient town.*

*I tell you, I am the wanderer who has come  
To offer you the image of a humble example.  
For this I left myself on an old Sunday  
Following the evangelical flight of the Angelus bells.*

*And behold, I arrived at the circle of souls,  
They rushed down a circus ring of little hills;  
And the grasses were droning muted psalms  
At the feet of donkeys bearing souls who smiled at me.*

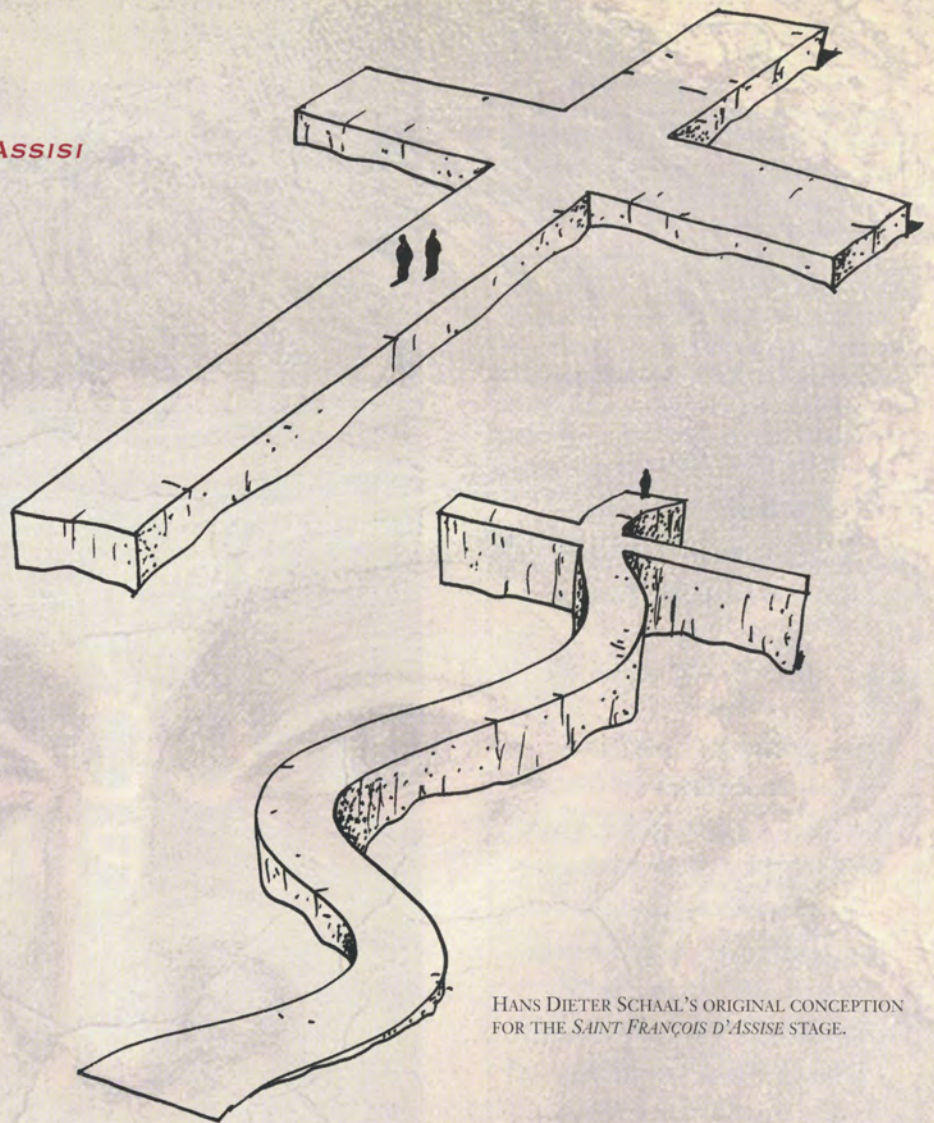
*I am no longer ashamed of my robe or of my hands  
Which belong to me and you, my brothers;  
And on that day I unbound myself from earth  
And waves passed through my transparent body.*

*Around me lies a city of rigging  
Whose ramparts are like the water of boundless seas,  
And behold, I recovered that which begins  
And the word that ends, and the land beyond.*

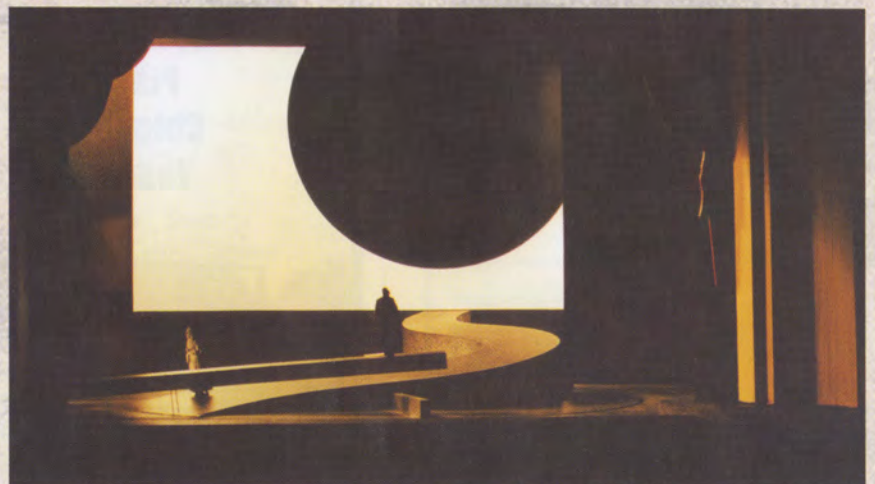
*I have only a cave of wax and I am an orphan  
And yet wherever I go Angels come  
To show me the path of that strange Father  
Whose heart is softer than a human father's heart.*

*Seek me out, I come from the kingdom of peace,  
That peace that penetrates the very stones,  
And I have pity on this incessant dust  
Of human bones returning to the burned ground.*

*I am he who dissolves the terror  
Of being a man and going among the dead,  
For is not my body the miraculous ash  
Whose earth is the voice of the speaking dead?*



HANS DIETER SCHAAL'S ORIGINAL CONCEPTION FOR THE SAINT FRANÇOIS D'ASSISE STAGE.



SAINT FRANÇOIS D'ASSISE SET MODEL BY HANS DIETER SCHAAL.

Remarks by Olivier Messiaen

From *Olivier Messiaen, Music and Color: Conversations with Claude Samuel*, tr. E. Thomas Glasow (Amadeus Press, 1994)

One may delimit several categories of opera fans. There are those concerned only with singers, who wait for the tenor's high B-flat, they go away happy or furious depending on the quality of the high B-flat. Some come only for the spectacle—the scenery, staging, and lighting are enough to make them happy. There are even those who listen to the music solely from the conducting standpoint. Very few people go to the opera to hear the music.

Furthermore, I love singers and have no desire to make them whistle or hiccup. Even *Sprechgesang* doesn't interest me. Singers need open vowels in the low and, above all, the high registers. A high B-flat can only be sung on the sounds "ah," "oh," or "ay," and this phonetic imperative also guides the choice of my words.



At the beginning, he's Francis. Then, little by little, he becomes Saint Francis, and even super-Saint Francis. The series of eight scenes explains it.



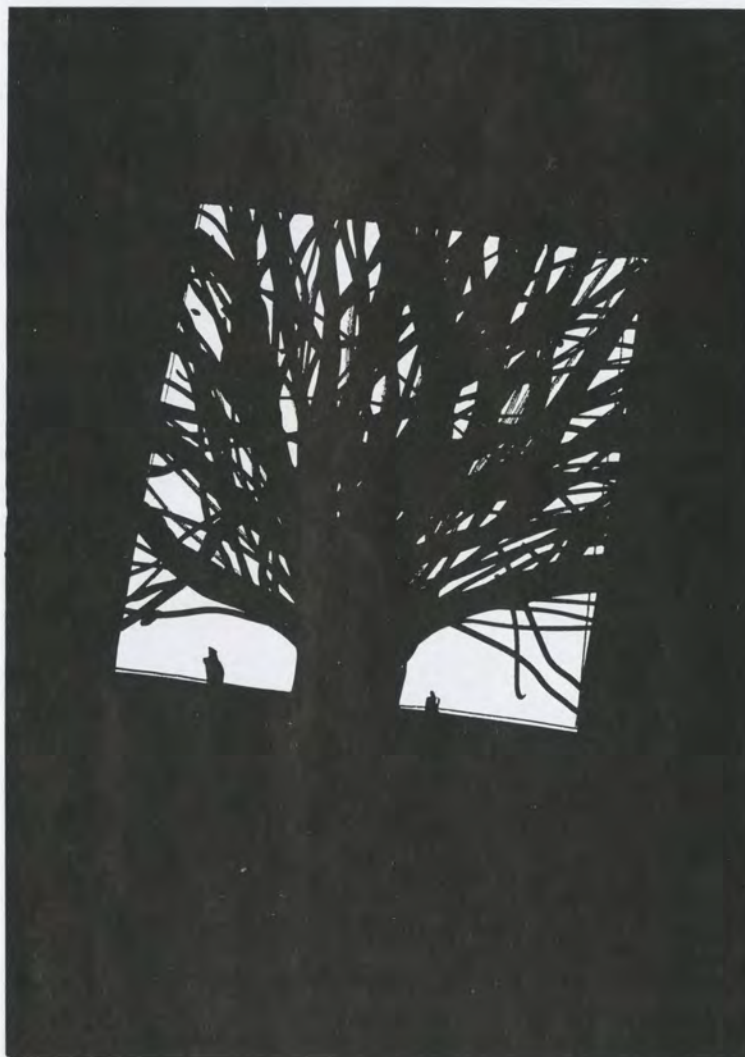
It's obviously not a traditional opera. There's no overture, no interludes between the various scenes, no symphonic numbers that can be played separately, like a hunting tune or a funeral march. Finally, there are neither arias nor vocal ensembles. It's very far from Mozartean or Wagnerian opera. Let's say again, it's a musical spectacle. But I have a chorus, as in *Boris*, as in Japanese No theater, as in ancient Greek drama. A chorus that plays the role of commentator and that, like a sort of divine voice, constantly intervenes.



It's a religious subject in which earth is married to heaven, but earth is here and now; Saint Francis's wounds are real. He is surrounded by real friars and real birds, whom he really addresses. A stylized staging would have been a contradiction to the spirit of Saint Francis, who never ceased to glorify all things on earth, who called the sun and the moon his brother and sister. These are tangible realities, even if they are at the same time symbols of invisible realities.



It's true, my opera is very long. So are Wagner's, and no one dreams of criticizing him for that. I don't see why one wouldn't write a long work if the subject warrants it. Truthfully, it's not a traditional opera, but it isn't an oratorio either. As I've said, it's a musical spectacle in which the movements of the characters and their costumes are essential. And the orchestra is also a character in the opera, even the principal one. It's not typical, but any original work inevitably breaks with certain traditions.



DRAWING BY HANS DIETER SCHAAL.

## EIGHT SCENES

### SCENE ONE: THE CROSS

OLIVIER MESSIAEN TO  
CLAUDE SAMUEL

Almost all the scenes begin not with an overture but with a keyboard passage combining xylophone, xylorimba, and marimba. It's a way of paying homage to Bali, where spectacles are always introduced by the playing of metallophones.

So the keyboards announce the first scene, which should have been called "Perfect Joy." I rejected this title because it might have been misinterpreted. According to Saint Francis, to feel perfect joy is to suffer like Christ, in penance for all the sins of mankind. This is a strange joy, and I thought it simpler to entitle the scene "The Cross."



The drama is the music. The music is the drama. Instead of using an overture to approach St. Francis, Messiaen uses birdcalls and voices from nature. This is

the remembrance of a lost story of creation. A fissure rips through the story. The earth quakes. After that, everything seems to continue as before. Hordes of people surge through their day like lemmings. But in the middle of the everyday bustle, in the middle of the cities, the issue of death surrounds every person, whether he knows it or not. "J'ai peur, sur la route" ("I am afraid on the road") is the first, central sentence of this piece. It seems like the writing on an invisible wall. It is the preface for everything that follows. The melodic leitmotiv that permeates the entire work is sounded by St. Francis for the first time with the word "invisible." "I am afraid on the road." Francis does not sing this sentence; it is sung by his brother Leo, the companion, the opposite, the other. Brother Leo sketches images of his mortal agony. St. Francis establishes what the essence of "perfect joy" is not. Francis and Leo's questions and answers seem to be at cross-purposes with each other. The music accompanies these two outsiders and their path against the current like a movie camera. Messiaen needs to clarify a desperate moment. How can a person such as Francis, who eventually states that "perfect joy" only exists in being chased away, sweat-soaked, beaten and taking Jesus Christ's suffering on the cross literally; that is, physically reincarnating this model, how can this person interpret the mortal agony of another if he does not change himself, if he does not find another path for himself. The marking of this path symbolically appears at the end of the first scene: the cross that points out new directions. The cross is the decisive coordinate on the path. It will no longer be exploited as a symbol of salvation. Instead, it is literally lying in the way. It can't be avoided. Initially, Olivier Messiaen wanted to call the first scene "Perfect Joy," but eventually he decided on a different title: "The Cross." Messiaen puts Francis at a fork in the road, before a decision that was not to be postponed.

W. W.

Tr. Heather Fleming.



ANGELICO, FRA (c.1400-55), *THE MOCKING OF CHRIST*. SAN MARCO, FLORENCE.



DRAWING BY HANS DIETER SCHAAL.

## SCENE TWO: LAUDS

At the beginning of the scene, Saint Francis sings four stanzas from the *Canticle of the Sun*: the stanzas on Brother Wind, Sister Water, Brother Fire and Mother Earth. Then the friars stand up and sing the Sanctus with great contrasts between the *pianissimos* and *fortissimos*, contrasts that might bring to mind the chorus of ghosts and shades in Berlioz's *Lelio*. The bell theme is heard again. Saint Francis remains alone and asks God to cause him to meet a leper whom he'd be capable of loving.

This second scene, then, depicts life in the monastery. It shows us the friars reciting the prayers of the Office and Saint Francis adding his own personal poems to it, as he always did and would continue to do even as he was dying. After the departure of the friars, he makes his request to God: he already knows that he will never truly be Saint Francis until the day he will have met and kissed a leper.



Francis digs in the earth. He is investigating God's space with his own hands. It is like going into a ruin, into the cave of human history, back to the origins. Nearly blind, Francis of Assisi wrote

*Canticle of the Sun* in 1225. This is a progressive appeal to nature, to Brother Wind, Mother Earth, Sister Sun, Brother Moon, and above all, to Brother Death, both the death of the body and the death that abolishes damnation. In Messiaen's opera, Lauds sounds three times, marking St. Francis's path from the anxious question about death (Scene 1), to a personal hymn to the earth (Scene 2), to the mystery of music (Scene 5) and to resolution in death (Scene 8). Brothers Sylvester, Rufus and Bernard's song—the monks' morning prayer—sounds very distant in Messiaen's music, as though sung under a glass dome. The monks look into the distance, to the heavens, to the sun. Francis, in becoming St. Francis, comes up with a new melody for the lauds instead. This melody is deliberately aimed within, down, back to the earth, back to the origins. The dramatic aspect results from the counter-movement portrayed on stage. One voice stands in contrast to all the others. Olivier

Messiaen states that he wanted to structure this scene in the style of the chorus of spirits and shades in Hector Berlioz's *Lelio*. From the depths of the earth, St. Francis retrieves a secret thought to be lost, one that enables people to come into harmony with nature. A new hymn quickens within him, human voices surround him: "Holy! Holy! Holy!" St. Francis comes up with an enormous provocation, one through which intimate thoughts will be turned outward at once: "Lord, let me meet a leper! Make me capable of loving him." Messiaen forces Francis to make a decision. Francis can never become St. Francis without kissing a leper. This is the crossroads at which he stands.

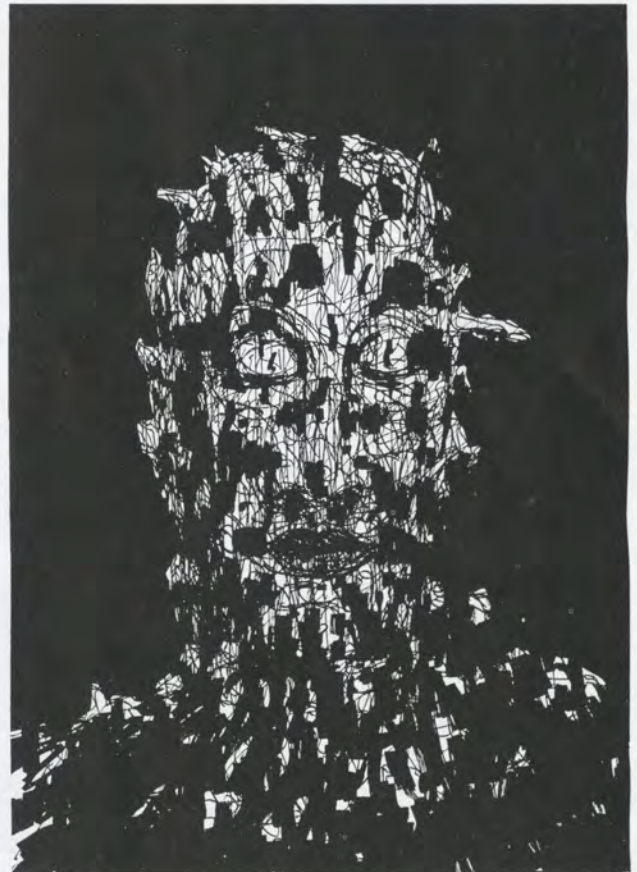
*Tr. Heather Fleming.*

## SCENE THREE: THE KISSING OF THE LEPER

"The Kissing of the Leper." The contrabass clarinet and *ondes martenot* in the extreme low register establish the horror of leprosy. In the same vein, the Ural Mountain owl is heard in the horns and tubas. Then come symmetrical permutations, producing strange chords and rhythms. The curtain rises on a low room. It's a sort of dormitory, very starkly represented, with a bench on which the Leper is seated, a straw mattress for his bed, and in a corner, a window looking onto a dark alley through which the Angel will appear.



Everything that the music portrays in this scene is as real as in a movie—terribly banal, grotesque and surreal. The city has been overcome by leprosy. It is like stepping into a history of the great plagues of humanity, a broadside out of



DRAWING BY HANS DIETER SCHAAL.



ANDREA SCHMIDT-FUTTERER'S COSTUME SKETCH FOR THE LEPERS.

the Bible and ancient dramas about pestilence, from leprosy to AIDS and the threat of global destruction. And there, in the midst of the wheels of history, is Francis, the one who refuses to be satisfied with giving empathy, who wants to be literally “commiserate”—“to suffer with.” In a description of this scene, which he conceptualizes rather naturalistically as the “horror of leprosy,” Messiaen places a lot of value on what apparently is minute detail, as Francis carefully and fearfully approaches the leper. He is close to despair, to turning back. In the music, this encounter between the two turns into a nightmare. The leper, full of hatred toward the brothers’ care because he finds it hypocritical, suddenly sings with many voices. Individual fate becomes a signal. The encounter between the leper and St. Francis is a test in a no-man’s land, outside of the city. An angel appears. It is a megaphone between the unequal partners, someone who uses music to build bridges between incompatible poles—an “angel of history,” floating freely in the room or with burning wings. The miracle occurs. The leper is healed; is beside himself; dances. It is like a scene from a musical, interrupted by the leper’s memories of the evil that lets itself be eradicated but not forgotten. Messiaen states that his lively music shows the joy of both the healed man and he who provoked the healing. The composer uses their contrasts to point out the commonalities. For the leper, the cure is the

triumph of the healed body itself. Saint Francis’s joy is reflected in his face, according to Messiaen: “It is his face that translates his internal drama, and the music expresses as much his joy as that of the leper.” Again the music is a few important steps ahead of the plot. Overcoming external disgust opens the gate to a new consciousness, a new vision. The voice of the angel announces this new route. Saint Francis leaves the stage.

*Tr. Heather Fleming.*



DRAWING BY HANS DIETER SCHAAL.

**SCENE FOUR:  
THE JOURNEYING ANGEL**

I thought for a long time about the set for the fourth scene and decided it must be presented in this way: at stage left, a monastic cell whose interior is visible when the door is open; in the center, a road through the forest; at right, a cave where Saint Francis, unseen, is engaged in prayer. At the beginning of the scene—this is historically accurate—Brother Leo carries a spade and a wooden plank, for he’s going to try to set up a makeshift bridge between two dangerous rocks.



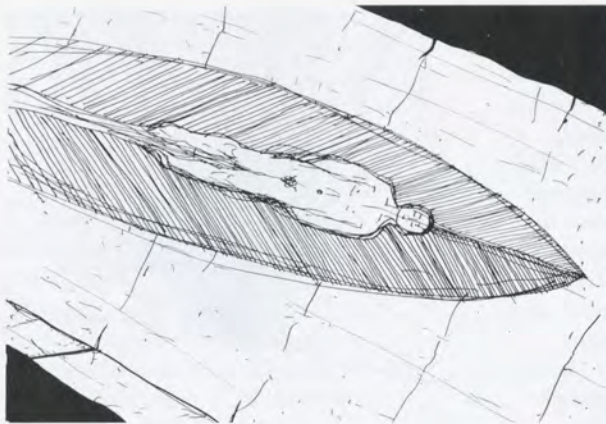
This is the first scene of the opera Olivier Messiaen composed. It is the only one of the eight scenes in which Saint Francis is not directly onstage. It is the

very moment in which a wonderful transformation from reality to fantastic scenery of angels, birds and supernatural events takes place. In this scene, Messiaen wants Saint Francis invisible in the vicinity, “engaged in prayer.” The scene is a grotesque intermezzo full of humor and irony. The spectator becomes witness to the Franciscan workday. Monks are busy writing. The prior of the monastery, Brother Elias, struts around like a vain peacock. Brother Masseo naively rebukes the angel knocking loudly at the gate. Only Brother Bernard feels, thinks and speaks in the way that Saint Francis does and intuitively answers the angel’s question in the sense of divine providence. Olivier Messiaen plans the location and events of this scene to the smallest naturalistic detail. As he says, he relied on Modest Mussorgsky’s exact milieu studies in *Boris Godunov*. The scene describes a mundane world, one that is suddenly turned upside-down by unpredictable events. Just as before, Brother Leo is obsessed with thoughts of death. He is carrying a spade in order to build a bridge between two rocks nearby. These events return to the central point of departure. Francis does not lead an exemplary holy life. He is a vessel, a frame, and a symbol for the possible change in human consciousness. At the end of the scene, the angel persists in a pose that is reminiscent of Albrecht Dürer’s painting “Melancholia.” The invisible is actually available. Messiaen summons Saint Francis to perceive it.

*Tr. Heather Fleming.*



ANDREA SCHMIDT-FUTTERER'S COSTUME SKETCH FOR THE MONKS.



DRAWING BY HANS DIETER SCHAAL.

**SCENE FIVE:  
THE ANGEL-MUSICIAN**

The whole thing has to take one by surprise. The listener must be transported to another world, and this is where something extraordinary occurs: the [Angel] viol solo is played by the three *ondes martenot*, separated spatially. The three *ondes* play very slowly, each with an individual timbre, and at first are simply accompanied by a C-major fourth and sixth in the solo violins, violas, and cellos. This is the moment of the miracle: the strings stop playing while the *ondes* continue, still supported by the C-major fourth and sixth now entrusted to the invisible chorus, relayed through the ceiling of the theater by a series of loudspeakers. The effect is striking.



The path to the divine secret leads right to the mystery of music. Messiaen could not go any other way. A child's voice would have been ideal, instead of a soprano, he confessed. After all, the voice that he had mind is that of Pamina in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*. Messiaen considered having the angel float on a flying carpet and remembered a trick from *The Beauty and the Beast*. But all that is external remains incomplete. The violin-playing angel perceives the world as a gigantic harp and leads Saint Francis, who has gone into a trance through a verse of the Lauds, into the process of a new consciousness. Messiaen wants "the bow of the angel's violin to be bent," as

though in reflection of the earth's curvature. One hears spherical music ranging to atonality. All conceivable sounds suddenly seem to exist simultaneously. Music becomes the reservoir for all that remains unseen. Then the sounds seem, according to Messiaen's plans, "to come from all possible directions." "The forest responds." The voices of people and nature become one. The playing angel is not just a wondrous image. It is also, like

Francis himself, a provocateur, a mediator, a trigger. The pulsing music of heartbeats plays. These aural pictures that resemble x-rays aren't just accompaniment to a hallucination, they sharpen St. Francis's consciousness for the impending dialogue with nature. At the end of the scene, the brothers find Saint Francis in his cell, unconscious in his listening room. A person has removed himself from reality. He had bound his eyes in order to see no longer, only to hear. In the last scene, at the moment of his death, Saint Francis will articulate what he experienced in the trance: "Music and poetry have led me to Thee."

*Tr. Heather Fleming.*



COSTUME SKETCH FOR THE ANGEL  
BY ANDREA SCHMIDT-FUTTERER.



DRAWING BY HANS DIETER SCHAAL.

**SCENE SIX: THE SERMON TO  
THE BIRDS**

Musically, this scene is the terror of conductors. When Seiji Ozawa saw the score for the first time, he told me, "This is unperformable!" He got used to it and ultimately conducted it wonderfully, as he did the rest of the score, with the authority, precision, expressive force, and genius characteristic of him. But it really is very difficult. The conductor has to beat some very complex bars based on unequal time signatures with the 32<sup>nd</sup> note as the unit of measure—for example, 3-3-2/32 or 2-3-2/32 or 2-2-3/32, and so forth. This is quite risky, and, as it is out of the question to learn it by heart, the conductor must use his left hand to turn the pages of the score. So, he is already responsible for executing two simultaneous actions, but there's a third: he must give the instrumentalists who are playing *hors tempo* their entrances and cut offs. This is a formidable task, which I don't regret calling for; even if it is madness, the result is marvelous! I was looking for and achieved a great organized chaos of which I know no equivalent in contemporary music.





GOZZOLI, BENOZZO (?), (1420/22-97), *THE HOLY FACE*. ASSISI, MUSEO DEL TESORO DELLA BASILICA DI SAN FRANCESCO.

Even if he were threatened by death, Messiaen confesses, he would be healed immediately by hearing a bird's voice. He would no longer suffer from cold, heat or hunger: "I listen to the birds!" The sixth scene is the longest of the opera and the last one that Messiaen composed for this work. It is an opera within an opera, the summation of a lifelong obsession and a euphoric self-analysis: "I," the composer, dissolves as a concrete person in the hunt for the voices of nature. Proudly he emphasizes that the conductor is deliberately led to the boundaries of his capacity to control in this scene. Sheer impossibilities are demanded of him. He can start and stop the birdcalls in the instruments. However, their progress is exclusively left up to the respective players at a certain place. This guarantees the utmost

autonomy. Instruments become dramatic actors. Nature is emancipated from man. The initial helplessness before this scene seems completely intentional. Saint Francis and Brother Masseo peripatetically pursue the domestic birdcalls they know so well. This sober study emerges as a prerequisite to Saint Francis's grand vision, in that it enables him to overcome space and time and to suddenly perceive an "island in the sea beyond all seas" without actually changing his location. That which is thought changes the reality. The

scene plays in the empty room, appearing to be the transference of the kiss of the leper to a metaphorical level, the realization of the unimaginable, outside in nature, outside of the cities. The bird sermon, as well as the small and large bird concerts that follow the vision and finally culminate in a symbol of the cross, produced totally from the powers of nature, are structured by the composer down to the smallest detail. The perfect organization of the bird concert makes it possible for all things to come together for the first and only time: nature, belief, music. It is salvation as a dream.

*Tr. Heather Fleming.*



DRAWING BY HANS DIETER SCHAAL.

### SCENE SEVEN: THE STIGMATA

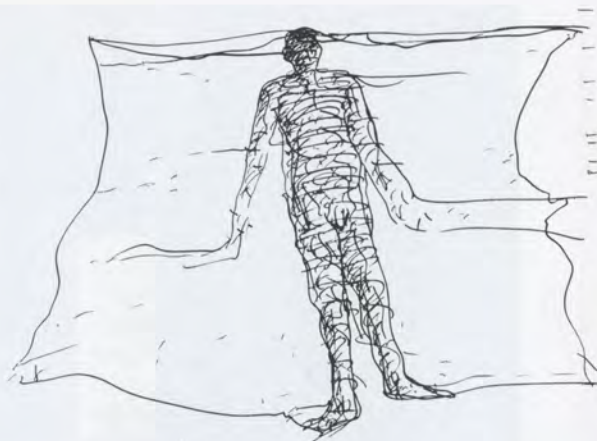
The music starts with a descending motion in the woodwinds, followed, in the distance, by a humming chorus that makes an enormous cluster. Over this cluster appears a tawny owl, which is a very common bird in Europe, but whose cry always frightened me. The peasants also fear the tawny owl, a fear that has given rise to numerous superstitions. Naturally, these superstitions are ridiculous and unjustified, but the cry is strange: it's a descending minor third followed by a staccato note and repeated tones leading to the reprise of the descending minor third.



The sixth scene, the bird sermon, is the only one beyond the fourth scene in which the choir does not sing. The voice of Saint Francis prevails. The seventh scene, on the other hand, is dominated almost exclusively by the voices of the choir. Saint Francis seems just to deliver cues. Surrounded by night and loneliness, he is at risk of losing his voice. The only birdcall heard in this scene is that of the brown owl, about which Messiaen said: "His cry always frightened me." Time, which was previously disintegrating in the

image of nature, seems to be racing around in infinite space, controlled by the wild flap of a wing, either an angel's or a bird's: winter, a time of sorrow, a time of mortal agony. This is salvation as a nightmare. The music propels the beginning and end of the consciousness with massive blows and hysterical screams (the choir sings: "I am the Alpha and Omega") into the human body like an act of torture. Saint Francis now experiences directly on his body the powerful knocking of the angel from the fourth scene. The process of stigmatization, Messiaen confesses, separates the believers from the truly faithful. One can either reject or accept stigmatization, but it has to be absolute. The secret of personal, unconditional identification with the Savior's suffering seems to lead Messiaen to a fascinating reverse of the music. In the process of stigmatization, Saint Francis, who could transfer himself to an impossibly distant location in the bird sermon, achieves the highest measure of conceivable freedom. This happens through the complete opposite of movement, that is, in the conscious acceptance of total motionlessness. The person is forced to stay in place. In a particular manner, the cross symbolizes a triumph over space and time. The person has reached his goal. He and the path have become one. He floats in space without being able to move. The purely rhetorical identification of mortal agony with perfect joy postulated at the beginning of the opera has now become a dramatic process, an inextinguishable experience. The powerful choir scene is divided into two parts, a grand Allegro of force followed by a grand Andante of glorification, structures almost like a dramatic scene in one of Verdi's great operas. Messiaen did not compose the immediate moment in which Saint Francis experiences the miracle of the stigmatization. A general intermission is noted. Until then, power and fear rule. All that the music expresses after that is salvation and transfiguration.

*Tr. Heather Fleming.*



DRAWING BY HANS DIETER SCHAAL.

#### SCENE EIGHT: DEATH AND NEW LIFE

Saint Francis dies and the bells ring loudly. This is historically accurate: when Saint Francis died, all the bells in the town tolled. In the opera, it's an enormous, excruciating, heartrending carillon, because of the complex chords of the orchestra and the bells, because of the choral cluster, because of the crescendo and ascending motion. Then everything stops, and Brother Leo sings a short lament, the text of which I wrote myself: "He is gone like a friendly silence that one touches with very gentle hands. He is gone like a tear of clear water that drops slowly from the petal of a flower. He is gone like a butterfly, a golden butterfly that flies from the cross to beyond the stars." Everything vanishes; everything goes dark. Where Saint Francis's body was, only a spot of light remains.



Saint Francis's melodic leitmotif, which had accompanied him throughout the entire piece, disintegrates at the beginning of the last scene. As if his life were passing before his eyes like time-lapse frames in a movie, all his companions gather around him, along with the voices and birdcalls that had been with him. The falcon who had once called him to the angel of music has become the herald of death. The brothers bid him farewell. The angel

appears at the leper's side. Birdcalls become signposts. Immediately after his death, Brother Leo moves to Francis's side. Once a trigger for Francis's unusual departure from the path in order to become Saint Francis, the theme of mortal agony remains. In the view of those standing by, he now seems to have become "Super-Saint Francis," as Messiaen put it. But not Francis, only those standing around decide what the dying man "is" to them. The music returns to that filmic perspective from which it had departed in the first scene. It offers no appraisal, but rather simply documents and records.

Possibly, Super Saint Francis is still just Francis, a homeless guy on the streets who lost his life in an accident, who takes his last breath right in our midst. Messiaen views this transfiguration exclusively in the music, above and beyond space and time, as it were. At the Paris premiere in November 1983, there was no light—bright, radiating and powerful enough for the composer and the director of this journey in eight stations—to emphasize dramatically and underscore the immense C-major chord that concludes the Franciscan scenes. At this very point, the music speaks entirely for and from itself one last time. Saint Francis does not die in a real sense. There is no characteristic motif in Messiaen's music for the moment of death. The life-melody characterizing Christ's representative is extinguished. The legacy of Saint Francis exists in the realization that there are manifold voices and signs that enable us to juxtapose the undeniable existence of death with the experience of a path that leads over the boundaries of space and time and can bring us and nature together.

*"I crucified my hate and held the word within my hand."*

Jon Anderson  
Steve Howe

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**GENESIS...**

*continued from page 14*



SAINT FRANÇOIS D'ASSISE SET MODEL BY HANS DIETER SCHAAL.

because, as the composer confessed, it deals with the portrayal of the very moment at which the “heavens open up.”

Scene seven, “The Stigmata,” follows, and is composed using serial methods. For Messiaen, it is furthest removed from his being and artistic intent because it portrays “terror and horror in the night.” Possibly to give the entire work a meaningful framework, Messiaen composed the eighth and first scenes one right after the other. Only then did Messiaen begin work on the longest and most extensive scene, the Bird Sermon (scene six), about which Messiaen, by his own admission, was the most anxious. As an ornithologist, he demanded from himself his “finest bird music,” an “opera within the opera.”

Textually lyrical, stylistically epic and musically ritualistic, this work is much more than a story of a saint. The music interferes directly with the listener’s perception. It is structured such that it calls forth certain memories, experiences and visions in each listener, forcing one to identify more and more powerfully with this representative, Saint Francis. On stage, it is crucial neither to raise these levels of identification to a sacred height nor simply to illustrate them. Messiaen’s music requires dramatic objectification, even a conscious breach with the text at hand. It is truly the music that turns the paramount symbol of the cross into a signpost, the meaning of which reaches far beyond certain religious concepts and images. Messiaen conceives of his opera as a challenge for everyone: “But every one is called to follow this path.”



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## VIEWPOINT

continued from page 19

be able to share in the crucial moments in Francis's life in the context of their profound religious significance. His Franciscan Scenes present Francis as perhaps the truest mirror of Christ there has ever been. For Messiaen it's an opportunity like no other to emphasize a wonderful Franciscan simplicity right beside the Saint's sensitivity to, and readiness to discover, everything in the world. His love of Nature and his Christ-like vocation to poverty led Francis to an appreciation of life in all its forms, not just the nice bits. The suppurating leper, as much as birdsong or the sun itself, become part of a single "yes" to creation.

But Messiaen's opera, though inescapably religious, tells its story quite conventionally. Characters such as the Angel or the Brothers or the Leper discuss with the Saint and with each other their experiences and beliefs. They listen and learn, becoming more enlightened,

more able to follow Jesus's example of poverty and the Cross. This is an opera with incidents, but also a meditative opera about states of being. Its pace may vary, its pulse sometimes quicken, but its aim is to inspire us with spiritual joy and a profound feeling for the forces of nature—beloved, troubled, entirely existential. The challenge to our imagination in so much descriptive music on such a vast scale is mind-blowing. Messiaen's unexpected ambition to write a great opera gave the world of French opera an unexpected Indian summer. On stage our theatrical vision will always find it hard work to match the epic elemental panorama with appropriate power and persuasiveness. Our aural imagination is free to dream up anything, and that's how Messiaen's opera primarily works. Making drama and a visual statement is an entirely different issue. **—PETER**



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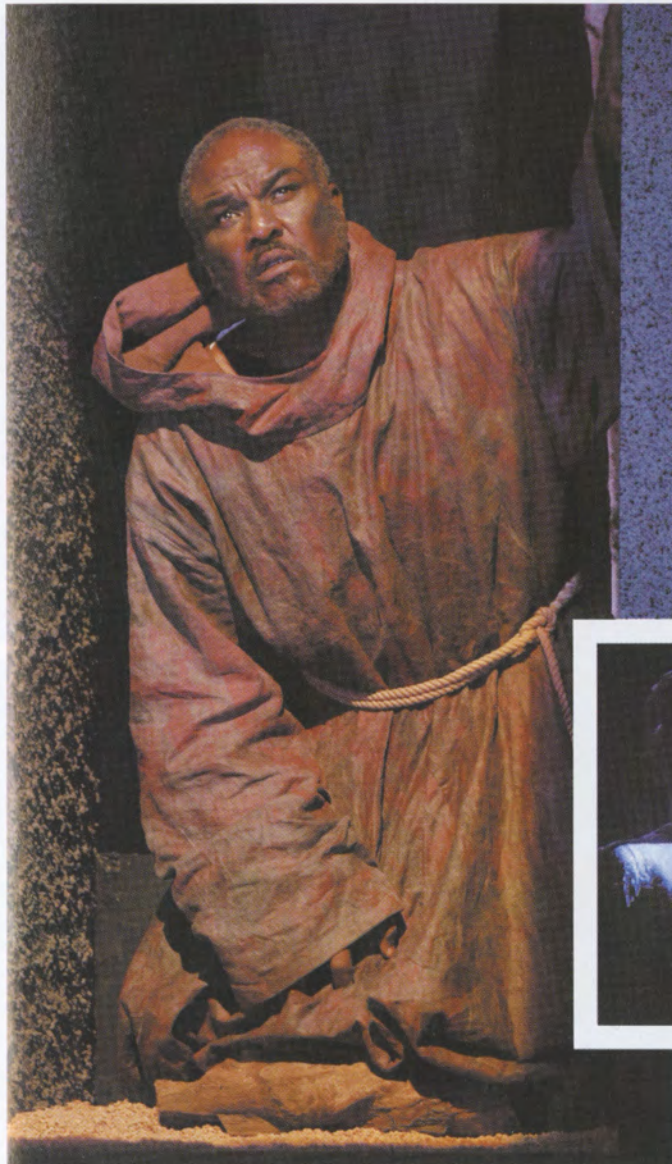
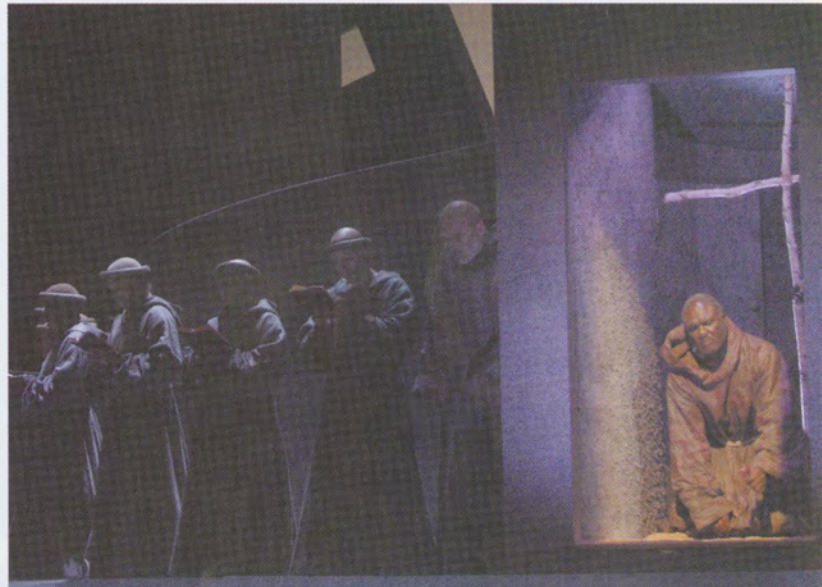
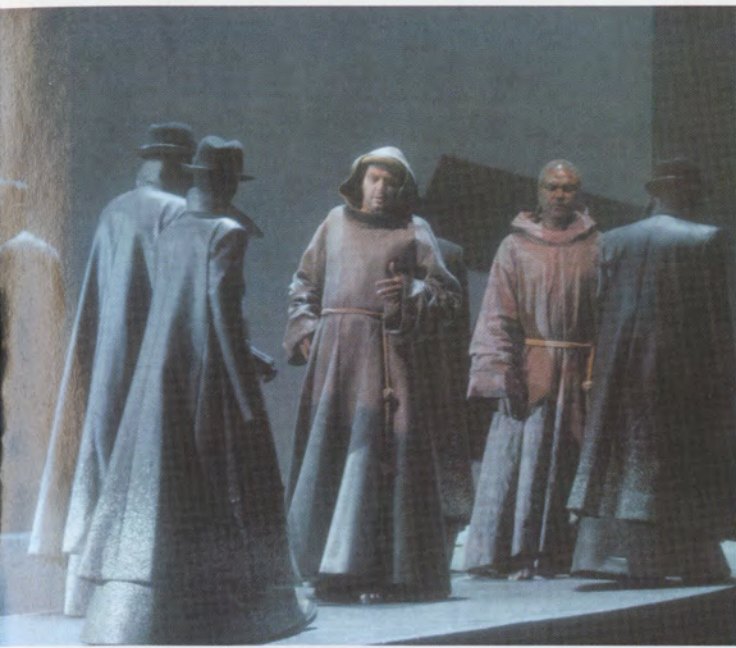
\* Principal for one or more operas of the season

† Regular substitute

# Saint François d'Assise

Rehearsals of 15 and 17 September 2002

Photography by Marty Sohl



Above: Willard White.

Top left: Johannes Martin Kränzle, Willard White and San Francisco Opera supernumeraries

Top right: (R to L) Willard White, Gabor Andras, Johannes Martin Kränzle and members of the San Francisco Opera Chorus

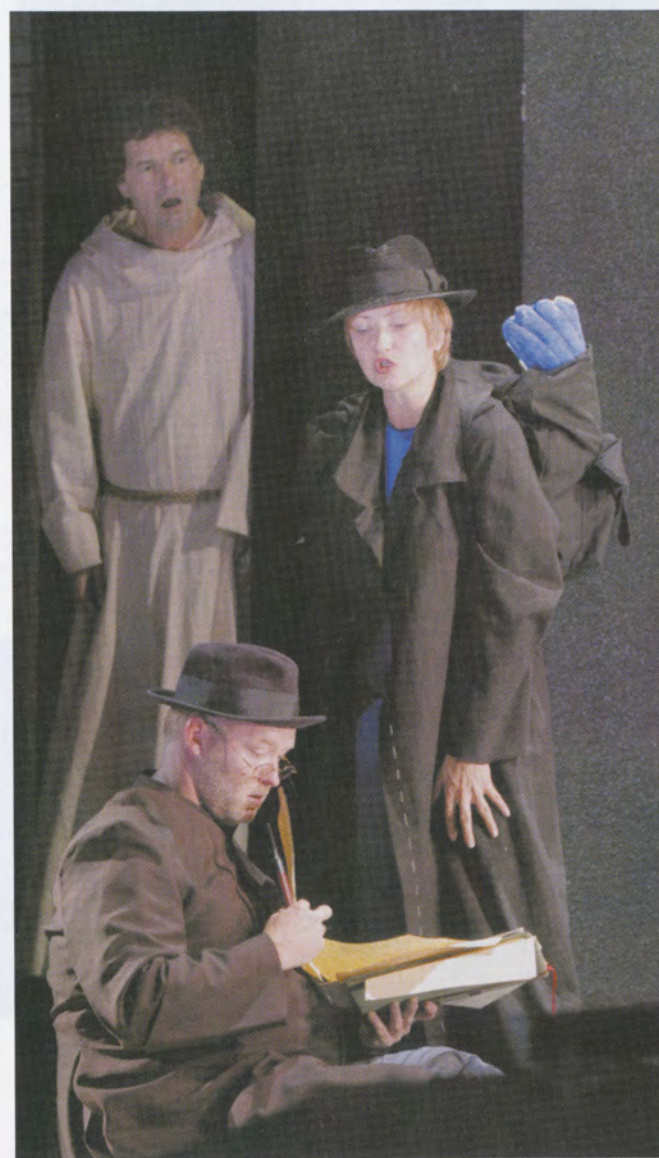
Above right: (L to R) Chris Merritt and Willard White

Left: Laura Aikin

Dress rehearsal of 17 September 2002

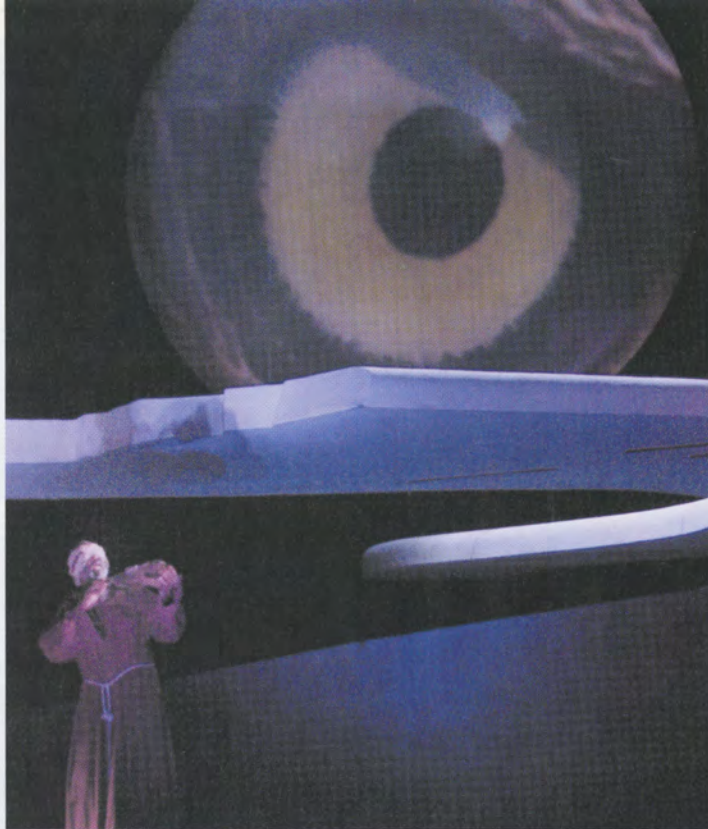
Right: Gabor Andras, Laura Aikin and Gran Wilson

Below: Johannes Martin Kränzle



Above left: Gabor Andras and Laura Aikin

Above right: (L to R): Gran Wilson, Jay Hunter Morris and Laura Aikin



Above right: *Laura Aikin*

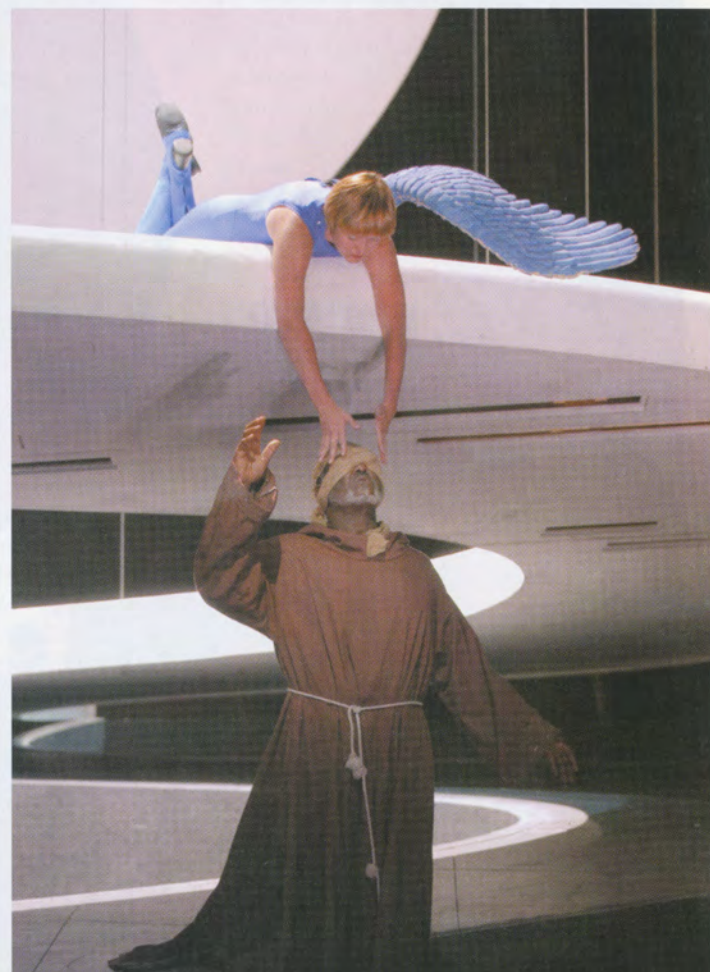
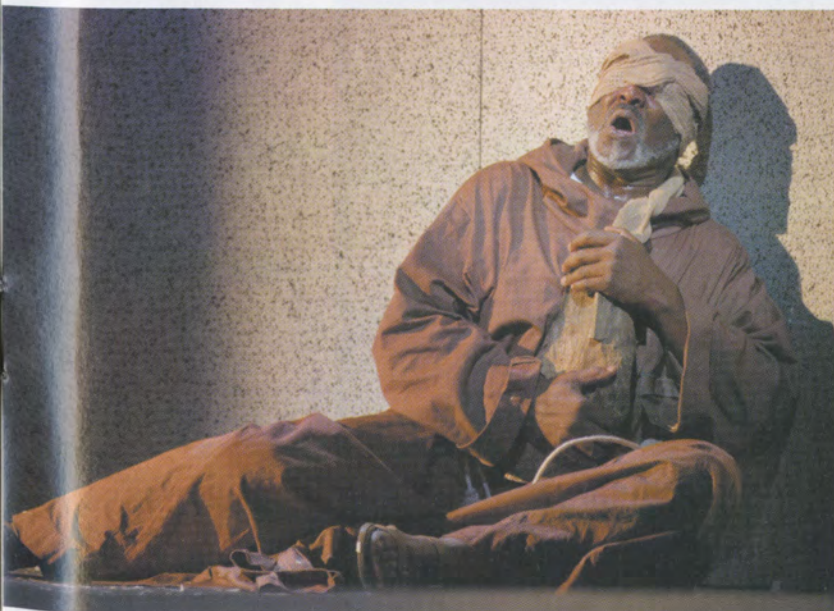
Above left: *Willard White*



Left: *Willard White*

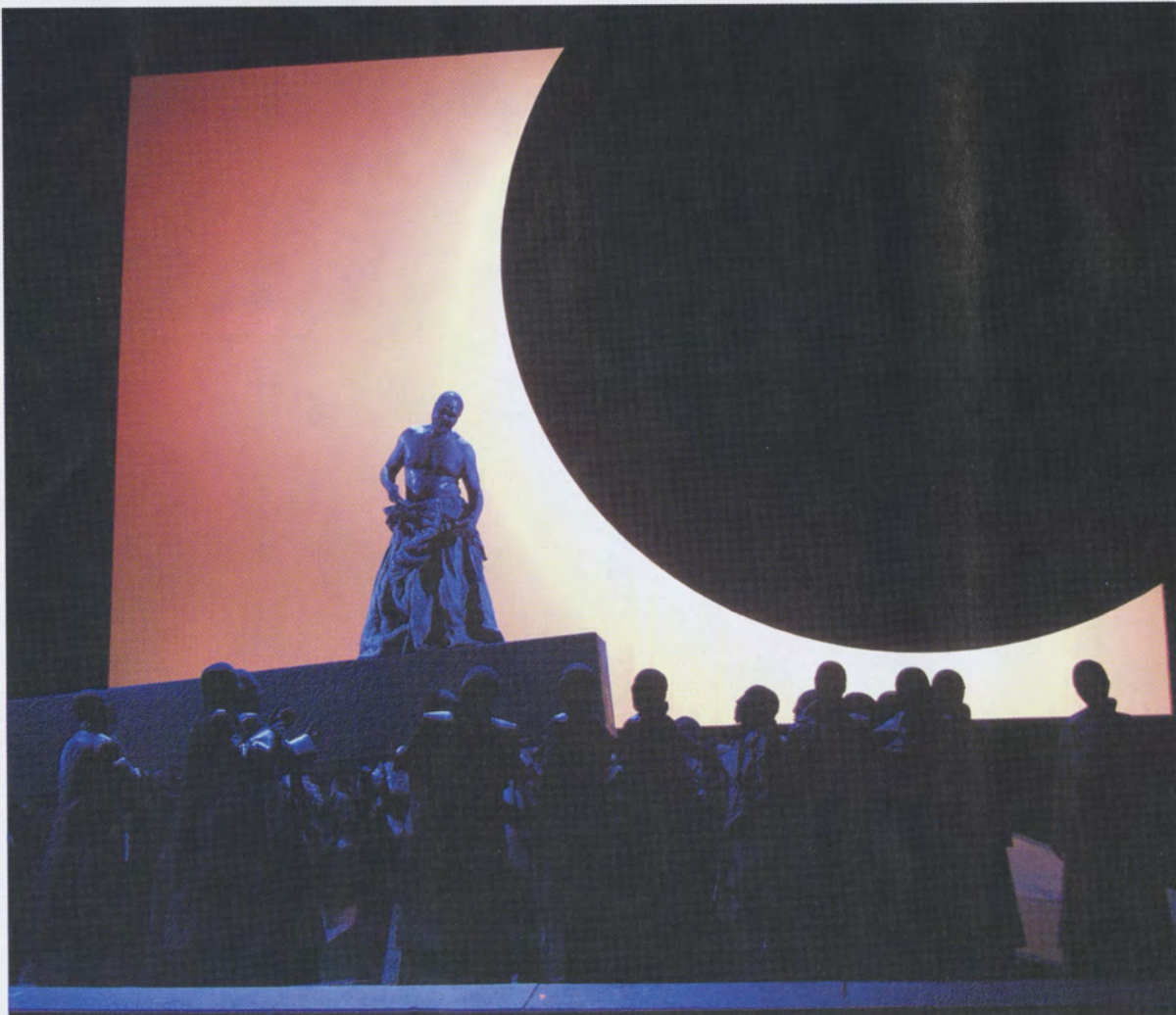
Below left: *Willard White*

Below right: *Laura Aikin and Willard White*





*Above: Members of the San Francisco Opera Chorus*



*Left: Willard White and members of the San Francisco Opera Chorus*

# ARTIST PROFILES



A native of Buffalo and currently residing in Milan, **LAURA AIKIN** (*L'Ange*) is increasingly in demand in Europe and North America both on the operatic stage and as a concert

and recital artist. The soprano was a member of the Deutsche Staatsoper Berlin from 1992-98 where she sang, among others, Sophie (*Der Rosenkavalier*), Queen of the Night (*Die Zauberflöte*), Zerbinetta (*Ariadne auf Naxos*), Amenaide (*Tancredi*), Adele (*Die Fledermaus*), as well as the title roles of *Lulu* and *Zaide*. She has also performed Aminta (*Die schweigsame Frau*), Zerbinetta, Adele, Olympia and Queen of the Night at the Vienna State Opera; Marzelline (*Fidelio*) and Zerbinetta at Milan's La Scala; Sophie at the Semperoper Dresden; Zerbinetta in Munich, Florence, Chicago, Lyon and Paris; Amenaide and Lulu with the Zurich Opera; Aspasia (*Mitridate*) at Santa Fe Opera; Queen of the Night at the Salzburg Festival; Lulu in Amsterdam; in addition to Fiakermilli (*Arabella*) and Queen of the Night for the Metropolitan Opera. The artist has also given numerous recital and chamber music performances in Germany and has appeared with many orchestras including the Berlin Staatskappelle and Berlin Philharmonic Orchestras, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Israel Philharmonic Orchestra and the Ensemble Intercontemporain.



**WILLARD WHITE** (*Saint François*) began his musical training in his native Jamaica and later studied at the Juilliard School in New York. Since making his debut with

New York City Opera, he has appeared at most of the major houses and festivals of the world. He made his San Francisco Opera debut in 1980 as the Foreman in *Jenůfa* and the Speaker in *The Magic Flute*, returning in 1995 as Wotan in *Die Walküre* and in 1998 as Golaud in *Pelléas et Mélisande*. His repertoire comprises the bass-baritone roles in operas by Monteverdi, Handel, Mozart, Rossini, Verdi, Puccini, Wagner, Debussy, Shostakovich, Prokofiev and Gershwin. He has also performed in concert with many prestigious symphony

orchestras worldwide and is much in demand as a recitalist. (He recently appeared at festivals throughout Great Britain in a tribute recital to the legendary Paul Robeson.) In addition to his discography (operas, oratorios, recitals), White appeared as Porgy in the television film of *Porgy and Bess* and in the title role of *Othello* with the Royal Shakespeare Company. Recent highlights include his Metropolitan Opera debut as Golaud, *Rigoletto* at the Bastille, the world premiere of John Adams's *El Niño* in Paris, *War and Peace* (Kutuzov), *Parsifal* (Kingsor) and *Bluebeard's Castle* (Bluebeard) at London's Royal Opera, as well as *Falstaff* (title role) at the Paris Champs Élysées.



World-renowned tenor **CHRIS MERRITT** made his debut with San Francisco Opera in 1988 as Erisso in the U.S. premiere of *Maometto II*, and has since returned to

portray Arnold Melcthal in *Guillaume Tell* (1992), Arrigo in the 1993 season-opening *I vespri Siciliani*, the title role of Rossini's *Otello* in 1994, and Melcthal once again in 1997. A native of Oklahoma City, he is one of the most versatile and in-demand artists in the world of opera, performing with the Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Los Angeles Opera, Milan's La Scala, Vienna State Opera, Paris Opera, Royal Opera at Covent Garden, the Liceu in Barcelona, Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires, and many others. He is also a prolific recitalist, in addition to appearing in concert with the world's great orchestras. The tenor has produced a variety of recordings and videos for over 10 labels. Of particular note are releases of Messiaen's *Saint François d'Assise* under Kent Nagano, Rossini's *Guglielmo Tell* and Verdi's *I vespri Siciliani* under the baton of Riccardo Muti, as well as Schoenberg's *Moses und Aron* led by Pierre Boulez. Recent operatic highlights include *Ariadne auf Naxos* (Bacchus) in Dresden, *Boris Godunov* (Shuisky) and *Salome* (Herod) in Amsterdam, as well as *Kát'a Kabanová* (Tichon) in Hamburg and at the Glyndebourne Festival.



Augsburg native **JOHANNES MARTIN KRÄNZLE** (*Frère Léon*) began his vocal training after studying violin, composition and musical theater. After

vocal studies with Martin Gründler in Frankfurt, he began his opera career with the companies of Dortmund and Hannover and has been a member of the Frankfurt Opera since 1998. He has also had several guest engagements at the houses of Munich, Hamburg and Stuttgart, with further appearances at, among others, the Komische Oper Berlin, Vienna Volksoper, Oper Leipzig, New Israeli Opera and Italy's Spoleto Festival. The baritone's recent engagements include Danilo in *The Merry Widow* in Berlin and Frankfurt; Figaro in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* in Wiesbaden, Orpheus in *Orpheus in the Underworld* in Bern (where he played the violin solo himself), as well as Papageno (*Die Zauberflöte*), Ned Keene (*Peter Grimes*), Lescaut (Henze's *Boulevard Solitude*), and Lenz (Rihm's *Jakob Lenz*) in Frankfurt. Among his forthcoming assignments are *The Merry Widow* at the Komische, Ford in *Falstaff* in Tbilisi, as well as Roland (Schubert's *Fierrabras*), Silvio (*Pagliacci*) and Don Alfonso (*Così fan tutte*) with the Frankfurt Opera. Also a popular recitalist and concert performer, Kränzle holds visiting professorships at various Brazilian universities.



Tenor **GRAN WILSON** (*Frère Massée*) enjoys a busy career with leading opera companies and orchestras around the world. The American artist's performances in recent seasons have

included Marzio in *Mitridate* and Arbace in *Idomeneo* for Opéra de Nice; Almaviva in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* for Opera Australia and Florida Grand Opera; and Orfeo in *Orfeo ed Euridice* with the Netherlands Opera. He has also sung Tonio in *La fille du régiment* with Lisbon's Teatro São Carlos, Seattle Opera and Opera Columbus; Fenton in *Falstaff* with Florida Grand Opera; and Count Libenskof in *Il viaggio à Reims* with the Opera Theatre of St. Louis. His most recent engagements include Elvino in *La sonnambula* for the

Athens Opera, Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor* and Jacquino in *Fidelio* with the Baltimore Opera, Essex in Britten's *Gloriana* at Central City Opera, as well as Tom Rakewell in *The Rake's Progress*, the title role of *Faust*, and Edgardo for Indianapolis Opera. Upcoming are Alfred in *Die Fledermaus* in Baltimore and the title role of *Werther* in Indianapolis. A native of Alabama, Wilson studied at Stamford University in Birmingham and at the Indiana University School of Music.



One of the most acclaimed young tenors on the operatic and concert scene, **JAY HUNTER MORRIS** (*Frère Élie*) made his San Francisco Opera debut during the

1998–9 season as Mitch in the world premiere of *A Streetcar Named Desire*. He returned to the Company in 1999 for *Louise* (the Noctambulist), in 2000 for *The Tsar's Bride* (Lykov) and the world premiere of *Dead Man Walking* (Father Grenville), and last season for *Die Meistersinger* (Walther von Stolzing) and *Jenůfka* (Steva). Additional recent highlights include Anatol in *Vanessa* for his Seattle Opera debut with a return to Seattle earlier this year as Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly*, Pinkerton for Utah Opera and the New Jersey Festival, Jeník in *The Bartered Bride* for his bow at the Opéra du Rhin in Strasbourg, *Pagliacci* (Canio) with Houston Grand Opera, *Streetcar* for his New Orleans Opera debut, Sam Polk in *Susannah* at Kentucky Opera, and the Drum Major in *Wozzeck* with Santa Fe Opera. Among the Texas native's future engagements are *The Rape of Lucretia* (Male Chorus) for the Opéra de Montréal, as well as *Kát'a Kabanová* (Tichon) for the companies of Santa Fe and San Diego. Morris also created the role of Tony in Terrence McNally's play, *Master Class*, at the Philadelphia Theatre Company. His characterization of the part on Broadway earned him an "Outstanding Debut of an Actor" nomination from the Outer Critics Circle.



Bass **GABOR ANDRASY** (*Frère Bernard*) made his first San Francisco Opera appearance as Svetoazar in the 1995 Company premiere of *Ruslan and Lyudmila*. The native of

Romania was first seen in the U.S. as both

Hunding and Hagen in Seattle Opera's 1987 presentation of the *Ring* cycle. He was soon re-engaged in Seattle for their 1991 cycle (for which he added the role of Fafner), and last year sang both Fafner and Hagen in Seattle's new *Ring* production. In addition to his long association with Seattle Opera (other roles there include Dansker in *Billy Budd*, Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte*, Daland in *Der fliegende Holländer*, Pogner in *Die Meistersinger*, Rocco in *Fidelio*, the Hermit in *Der Freischütz*, and both the Grand Inquisitor and Philip II in *Don Carlo*), Andrasy has recently performed with Los Angeles Opera and the Opéra National de Paris (*Billy Budd*), Houston Grand Opera (*Holländer*), Washington Opera (Count Walter/*Luisa Miller*), Opera Colorado (Banquo/*Macbeth*), the Dallas Opera (Michaud/premiere of Picker's *Thérèse Raquin*, Sparafucile/*Rigoletto*, Dikoy/*Kát'a Kabanová*) and the Montreal Opera (*Thérèse Raquin*).



German bass **ALFRED REITER** (*Frère Bernard*) studied voice in Munich and began his career in Wiesbaden and Nürnberg, where he sang Sarastro (*Die Zauberflöte*),

Sparafucile (*Rigoletto*), Fafner (*Das Rheingold*) Seneca (*L'incoronazione di Poppea*), Rocco (*Fidelio*) and Pogner (*Die Meistersinger*). He subsequently appeared for three consecutive seasons at Bayreuth (Titirel in *Parsifal*) and made his debut at London's Royal Opera in the same role. Additional highlights include Seneca in Stuttgart, the *Rheingold* Fafner at the Vienna State Opera, Fafner (*Siegfried*) in Geneva and Cleveland, Colonna (*Rienzi*) in Paris, as well as Sarastro in Paris, Lisbon, Berlin, Vienna and at the festivals of Salzburg and Ludwigsburg. His concert repertoire includes Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and *Missa Solemnis*, the Requiems by Mozart and Verdi, as well as Haydn's *Creation*. Reiter has performed with Christoph Eschenbach, Myung-Whun Chung, Wolfgang Sawallisch, Jeffrey Tate, Frans Brüggen, Christophe Rousset and Franz Welser-Möst, among others.



**HUGH RUSSELL** (*Frère Sylvestre*), a 2002 Adler Fellow, recently made his recital debut with the Opera Center's Schwabacher Debut Recital Series and appeared as Il Podestà

in the Center's Showcase production of *La finta giardiniera*. The baritone's additional credits include Masetto (*Don Giovanni*), Sciarrone (*Tosca*) and the Mandarin (*Turandot*) with Pittsburgh Opera, as well as Spinelloccio (*Gianni Schicchi*) with the Merola Opera Program. As a member of the Pittsburgh Opera Center, he appeared in several roles including Pelléas in *Pelléas et Mélisande*, Taddeo in *L'italiana in Algeri*, Nick Shadow in *The Rake's Progress* and Eisenstein in *Die Fledermaus*. Among his concert credits are Beethoven's Mass in C Major and Britten's *War Requiem*. A winner of numerous vocal prizes, the native of Manitoba is a graduate of the Eastman School of Music, Oberlin Conservatory and Brandon University.



Second-year Adler Fellow **KWANG SHIK PANG** (*Frère Rufin*) made his first San Francisco Opera appearances last season in *Samson et Dalila* and *Tosca*. The baritone was also seen

as Nardo in the Opera Center's recent Showcase staging of *La finta giardiniera*, Giove in the 2001 Showcase presentation of Cavalli's *La Calisto*, and performed the title role in the 2000 Merola Opera Program staging of *Rigoletto*. Additional parts in his repertoire include Renato (*Un ballo in maschera*), Count Alvaviva (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Escamillo (*Carmen*), Scarpia (*Tosca*), Amonasro (*Aida*) and the title role of *Don Giovanni*. Pang received his undergraduate degree in music from Yonsei University in his native Seoul, and continued his studies at the Bruno Maderna Conservatory in Cesena, Italy. He received a full scholarship to Glasgow's Royal Scottish Academy of Music where he earned his Master of Music degree. He was an artist in residence at the Academy of Vocal Arts in Philadelphia and has won several awards including first prize in the 1999 James Parkinson Italian Opera Competition and first prize in the the AVAs 1998 Bel Canto Competition.



One of his generation's most distinguished conductors of operatic and symphonic repertoire, **DONALD RUNNICLES** has served as Music

Director of San Francisco Opera since 1992 and has conducted over 35 productions for the Company. Last season, the maestro led the Company's stagings of *Die Meistersinger*, *Falstaff* and *Madama Butterfly* and in our current season conducts *Turandot*, *Saint François d'Assise*, *Otello*, *Kát'a Kabanová*, *Hänsel and Gretel* and *La Damnation de Faust*. He has led the San Francisco Opera Orchestra and Chorus for two recordings: *Harvey Milk* and the Grammy-nominated *Orphée et Eurydice*. Additional recordings include *Hänsel und Gretel*, a CD of *Ring* excerpts with the Dresden Staatskapelle, a Grammy-nominated disc of German Romantic opera arias with Ben Heppner, Bellini's *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*, a recording of works by Strauss, Wagner and Berg with Jane Eaglen, and *Carmina Burana* with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra. He has conducted opera productions at most of the major opera houses and festivals of the world (most recently *Le nozze di Figaro* for the Metropolitan Opera, the *Ring* cycle and *Billy Budd* with the Vienna State Opera). Maestro Runnicles has led many of the most prominent European symphonic orchestras as well as numerous important orchestras of North America. In addition to his position with San Francisco Opera, Runnicles is also principal guest conductor of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and principal conductor of the Orchestra of St. Luke's.



A native of Berlin, **NICOLAS BRIEGER** first established himself as an actor, appearing in theater, film and television, and working with such directors as Karin

Brandauer, Axel Corti, Beate Klöckner, Edgar Reitz and Urs Egger. Director of Drama at Mannheim's Nationaltheater from 1988 to 1992, his career has taken him to theaters throughout Germany, and well as to the Burgtheater Wien and the Vienna Festival. In addition to directing numerous plays (from Euripides to Chekhov), his notable opera productions

include *Der Rosenkavalier*; Busoni's *Die Brautwahl* and the premiere of Elliot Carter's *What Next?* at the Berlin State Opera; *Turandot*, *The Love for Three Oranges* and *Il trovatore* in Stuttgart; *Elektra* and *Jenifa* in Essen; *Simon Boccanegra* at the Paris Opéra-Bastille; *Il barbiere di Siviglia* in Brussels; *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* in Geneva; *La clemenza di Tito* and *The Consul* in Vienna; *Kát'a Kabanová* and *The Bartered Bride* in Leipzig; as well as Henze's *Boulevard Solitude* and *Das verratene Meer*, Hindemith's *Cardillac* and Rihm's *Die Eroberung von Mexico* in Frankfurt.



**HANS DIETER SCHAAL** was trained as an architect in Hannover and Stuttgart but is now regarded by many as a cultural institution in his native Germany.

The renowned artist currently works as an architect, scenic designer, sculptor, exhibition designer/architect, landscape architect and writer. From 1982–92, he created the designs for ten productions directed by Ruth Berghaus, including *Les Troyens* in Frankfurt, *Elektra* in Dresden and Zurich, *Pierrabras* in Vienna, *Tristan und Isolde* in Hamburg, *Lulu* in Brussels, *Moses und Aron* in Berlin and *Wozzeck* in Paris. Among his most recent operatic designs are the *Ring* cycle in Mannheim, Nicolas Brieger's stagings of *Boulevard Solitude* and *Das verratene Meer* in Frankfurt, *La bohème* in Bremen, Fauré's *Pénélope* in Chemnitz and *Tannhäuser* in Wiesbaden. He is the author of eight books, including *Learning from Hollywood: Architecture and Film*, *Stage Designs*, *New Landscape Architecture*, *Paths and Passages* and *Interior Spaces*.



**ANDREA SCHMIDT-FUTTERER** made her U.S. debut with the costume designs for San Francisco Opera's 2000 staging of *Parsifal*. A native of Mannheim, she began

her career as costume assistant at the Schaubühne Berlin resulting in a long association with the Schauspielhaus Bochum. Since 1995, she has worked in Vienna, Berlin, Cologne, Zurich and Hamburg in collaboration with several leading directors. She has also been professor of costume design at the Hochschule für Bildende Künste,

Hamburg. Her most recent creations were seen in Zurich (*Carmen*), Amsterdam (*Turandot*), Munich (*Fidelio*), Berlin (*Macbeth*, *Der ferne Klang*), Salzburg (*Lulu*), Paris (*Arabella* at the Châtelet), Chicago (*Der fliegende Holländer* at the Lyric), and at the Metropolitan Opera (the company's first staging of *Doktor Faust*).




**ALEXANDER KOPPELMANN** was resident lighting designer for 10 years at one of Europe's leading theaters, the Berlin Schaubühne. Since 1999, he has mainly been working

at the Burgtheater in Vienna, where he continues to collaborate with directors such as Andrea Breth and Luc Bondy on productions also presented in Paris, Moscow and at the Edinburgh Festival. His lighting creations for opera include *Salome* at the 1992 Salzburg Festival (Dohnányi/Bondy/Wonder), a staging which he also lit for the Monnaie in Brussels, London's Covent Garden, the Châtelet in Paris, the Teatro Comunale in Florence, and for the Lyric Opera of Chicago. More recently, he designed, among others, Gluck's *Orfeo et Euridice* (Bolton/Breth/Raschig) at Oper Leipzig; the premiere of Philippe Boesmans's *Wintermärchen* (Pappano/Bondy/Wonder) for the Monnaie in Brussels and the Châtelet in Paris; as well as *Arabella* (Dohnányi/Mussbach/Wonder) at the Châtelet (in collaboration with London's Covent Garden). Current and future engagements include Schnitzler's *Das Weite Land* at the Salzburg Festival, Lessing's *Emilia Galotti* and Schiller's *Don Carlos* at the Vienna Burgtheater, *The Turn of the Screw* in Geneva, Nicolas Brieger's staging of *Idomeneo* in Vienna, and the world premiere of Pascal Dusapin's *Perelà, l'homme de fumée* (Mussbach/Wonder) at the Paris Opéra Bastille.



**WOLFGANG WILLASCHEK** was Head Dramaturge at the Hamburg Opera under general director Rolf Liebermann. He was also Head Dramaturge of the

Salzburg Festival from 1987–91, as well as Dramaturge and Associate Artistic Director of the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival from 1995–97. In addition, he has served as dramaturge at, among others, the opera houses of Munich, Stuttgart,

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Frankfurt, Zurich, St. Petersburg and London. (He was dramaturge for the English National Opera's original production of *Parsifal* which was seen at San Francisco Opera in 2000.) In addition to his work as dramaturge, Willaschek was active as a teacher (Hamburg University for Performing Arts, Technical University of Hamburg, Hanns Eisler University in Berlin, European Academy for Opera in Neumarkt, Austria), librettist (for Udo Zimmermann's often produced *Weisse Rose* and for other operas performed in Munich, Prague, Nuremberg, Schwetzingen and Zurich), and author (*The History of the Salzburg Festival, 1987-1990, The Magic Flute—Mozart's Great Opera, Mozart-Theater*; and *Fifty Themes: A New Opera Guide*). Upcoming projects include the librettos for several children's operas and for a work composed by Manfred Trojahn that will have its world premiere at the Cologne Opera.



**IAN ROBERTSON**

has been chorus director and conductor at the San Francisco Opera since 1987 and artistic director of the San Francisco Boys Chorus since 1996.

He made his Company conducting debut with the 1988 production of *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* and has since led performances of *Falstaff, Lobengrin, Rigoletto, La traviata, Don Carlo, Turandot, Il trovatore* and *La bohème*. In addition to his highly praised work with the Opera Chorus, he has led the Opera Orchestra and Chorus in many concerts. Additional conducting assignments include productions for the Opera Center, concerts with the Merola Opera Program, as well as engagements at Sarasota Opera, Edmonton Opera and at Philadelphia's Curtis Opera Theatre. Before joining the Company, Robertson was head of music and chorus director of Scottish Opera, where he led numerous stagings. A native of Scotland, the maestro trained as a concert pianist and accompanist at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music, subsequently graduating with honors from the University of Glasgow.

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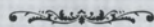
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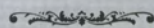
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For more information contact Lilly Schlachta, Associate Director of Corporate and Foundation Relations, at (415) 551-6344 or lslachta@sfoopera.com.

# SAN FRANCISCO OPERA CENTER

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

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Mr. James H. Schwabacher  
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Ms. Betty Toy  
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Ms. Suzanne Turley  
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We are grateful to all donors who have made memorial and honorary contributions to Merola between October 1, 2001 and June 15, 2002.

**IN MEMORY OF**

Ms. Maida Friedman  
Mr. George Hale  
Mr. Robert Hawes  
Ms. Joan Jacobs  
Ms. Regina Kamenetskaya  
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Ms. Colleen McCarthy  
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Mr. Forresto Simoninici  
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Mr. Campbell Dickson Titus III

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Mr. Don Weightman  
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**IN HONOR OF**  
Mr. & Mrs. Richard Bastoni  
Ms. Renata Jones

Mr. Milton Mosk and Thomas Foutch  
Ms. Jane Roos & Jean-Louis LeRoux  
Mr. James Schwabacher  
Mr. Don Taylor  
Mrs. Anita Weissberg  
Dr. A. Jess Shenson

The Merola Opera Program trains the stars of the future. We congratulate the following former Merola participants, who appeared in San Francisco Opera's 2001-2002 international season:

Mr. John Ames  
Mr. Brian Anderson  
Ms. Elena Bocharova  
Mr. John Churburwell  
Mr. Steven Condy  
Ms. Catherine Cook  
Mr. John Del Carlo

Ms. Katia Escalera  
Ms. Adelle Eslinger  
Ms. Greta Feeney  
Ms. Nicole Poland  
Mr. Todd Geer  
Ms. Nancy Gustafson  
Mr. Kyu Won Han

Mr. Daniel Harper  
Mr. Bryndon Hassman  
Mr. Philip Horst  
Ms. Catherine Keen  
Mr. Bojan Knezevic  
Mr. Matthew Lord  
Ms. Anna Netrebko

Mr. David Okerland  
Mr. Kwang Sbik Pang  
Ms. Suzanne Ramo  
Mr. Christopher Robertson  
Ms. Tsylya Robinson  
Mr. Michael Schade  
Ms. Ruth Ann Swenson

# SERVICES

**FOOD SERVICE.** The Opera House lower lounge is open one and one-half hours prior to curtain time for hot buffet service. Patrons arriving before the front doors open will be admitted at the carriage entrance. Refreshments are served in the box, grand tier, dress circle and balcony circle levels.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**ACCESS FOR DISABLED PATRONS** Wheelchair seating positions are located in the orchestra, mezzanine and dress circle levels. Aisle seats with swing-up armrests are located in the orchestra, dress circle, balcony circle and balcony levels. Contact the S.F. Opera Box Office (415) 864-3330 for more information.

On permanent display in the Opera House lower bar:

**A CELEBRATION OF SINGERS**

Great artists at San Francisco Opera, 1962-1997

Stage photography by Robert Cahen

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

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

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

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

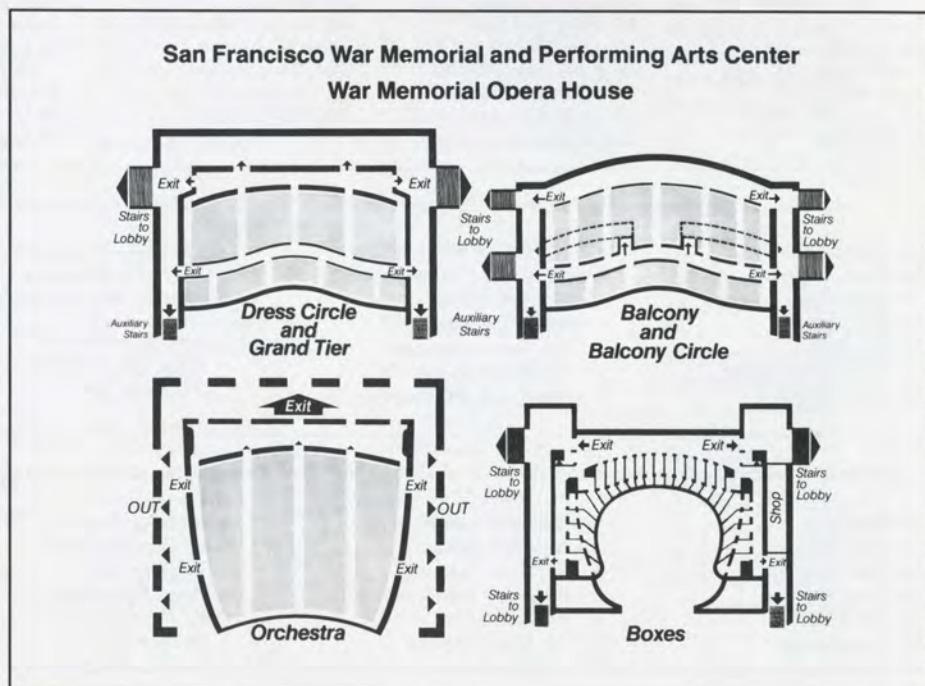
**WAR MEMORIAL OPERA HOUSE TOURS, 2002-2003 Season**  
Sponsored by the San Francisco Opera Guild, house and backstage tours of the War Memorial Opera House will be conducted every half hour from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. on weekdays and Saturdays; and every half hour from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. on Sundays.

Saturday, September 28  
Saturday, October 5  
Wednesday, October 9  
Saturday, November 16  
Wednesday, November 20  
Friday, November 29  
Wednesday, December 4  
Saturday, December 7  
Saturday, January 4, 2003  
Wednesday, January 15  
Saturday, June 14  
Tuesday, June 24

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

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

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





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**San Francisco Opera**

27 September 2002

The Olivier Messiaen Foundation and I

are pleased to award the

**Olivier Messiaen Foundation Prize**

to

Ian Robertson  
Chorus Director

for his artistic contribution to the preparation of the opera

*Saint François d'Assise*

*Yvonne Toriod. Messiaen*

*Paris, le 27 septembre 2002*

