

Das Rheingold
(The Ring Cycle: Rhine Gold)

1989-1990

Wednesday, June 6, 1990 7:00 PM
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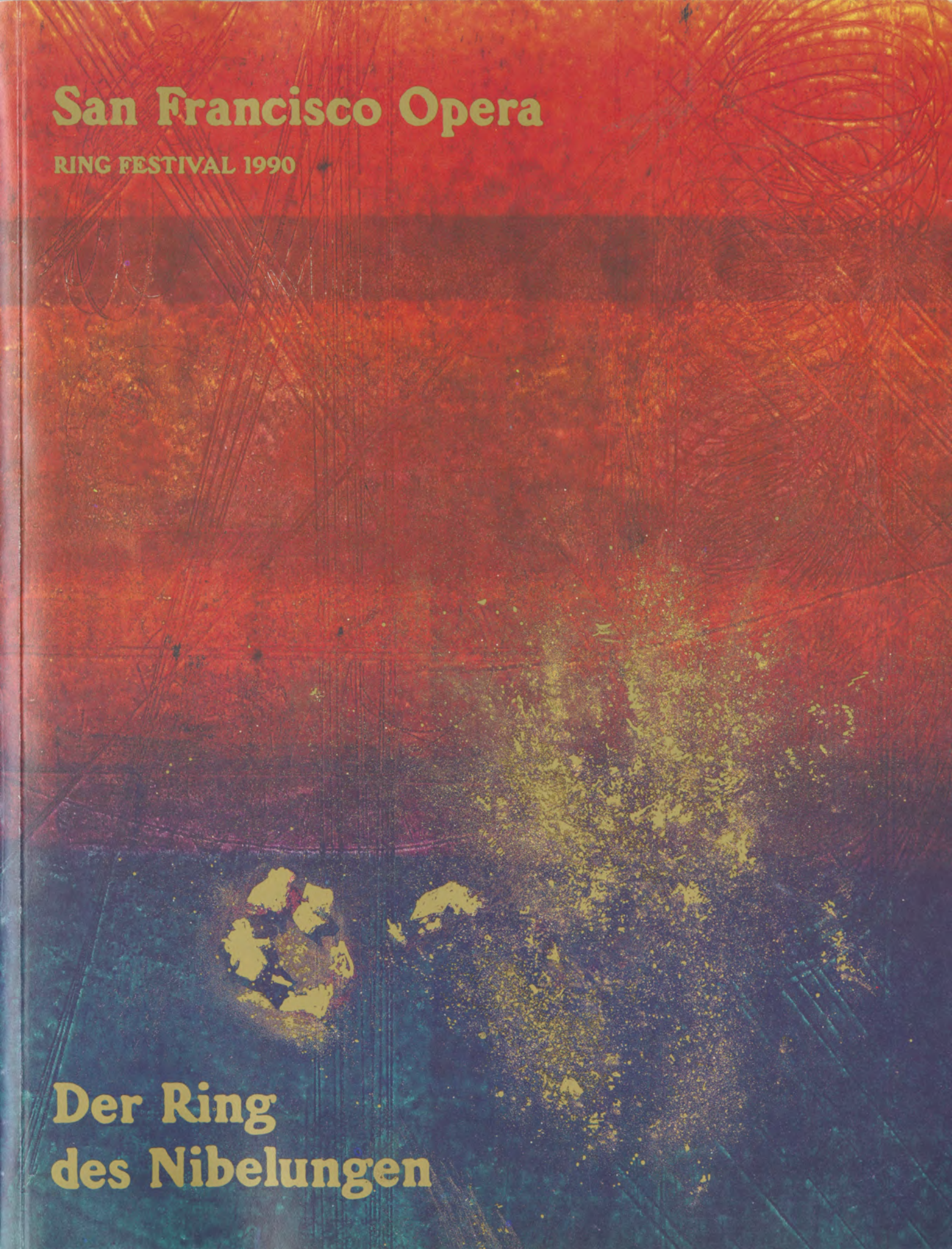
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des Nibelungen

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San Francisco Opera

Lotfi Mansouri, General Director

RING FESTIVAL 1990

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From the Chairman of the Board and the President

We are pleased to welcome you to the 67th annual season of the San Francisco Opera, a season distinguished by no fewer than four new productions as well as ventures into new repertoire. Our own General Director Lotfi Mansouri will lead us on the first of these journeys of discovery, when he directs the Company's first presentation of the complete three-act version of Berg's *Lulu*. Boito's *Mefistofele* has not been seen in the Opera House for 26 years; this year, it returns in a new production that is our first cooperative effort with the renowned Grand Théâtre de Genève. Mozart's *Idomeneo* returns to the Company in a new production created by the team of John Copley, director; Michael Stennett, costume designer (*Julius Caesar*, *Orlando*) and John Conklin, set designer (Wagner's *Ring* cycle). With *Orlando Furioso*, San Francisco Opera adds not only a new opera but also a new composer to its list, as we present our first work ever by Antonio Vivaldi. Pier Luigi Pizzi, responsible for the gripping 1986 *Macbeth*, returns to stage this baroque opera. Our gratitude goes to the Paul L. and Phyllis C. Wattis Foundation for underwriting our new *Lulu*; the L.J. and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation for *Idomeneo*; and Geoffrey Chambers Hughes who underwrote *Orlando Furioso* in memory of his grandfather, John William Hughes.

The return of productions seen in previous seasons is always a source of pleasure. Two of these, *Falstaff* and *Otello*, represent the heritage of Jean-Pierre Ponnelle, whose productions in the past contributed greatly to our Company's international stature. We are grateful to the L.J. and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation, the original underwriters of our *Falstaff*, and the San Francisco Opera Guild who made possible this season's revival. Two of our 1989 operas, *Aida* and *Lohengrin*, owe their existence to an anonymous friend of the San Francisco Opera, while *Die Frau ohne Schatten* was originally underwritten by Cynthia Wood, who is also making this year's staging possible. Last, but far from least, *Madama Butterfly* re-joins our repertoire in a production made possible some years ago by the San Francisco Opera Guild.

It is a privilege to be able to acknowledge our governmental funding sources, including the National Endowment for the Arts and the California Arts Council. We also extend our appreciation to the Grants for the Arts of the San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund, Mayor Art Agnos and Chief Administrative Officer Rudolf Nothenberg, whose support has always been gratifying.

As in previous years, we extend our appreciation to the San Francisco Opera

Guild and the War Memorial Board of Trustees for their ongoing support.

In the past, we have pointed out that ticket sales cover only slightly more than half of our expenses; this is no less true now than it has ever been. With the ongoing support of the individuals, foundations, corporations and government agencies already mentioned, and your own interest and financial support, we anticipate continued success and growth for our Company.

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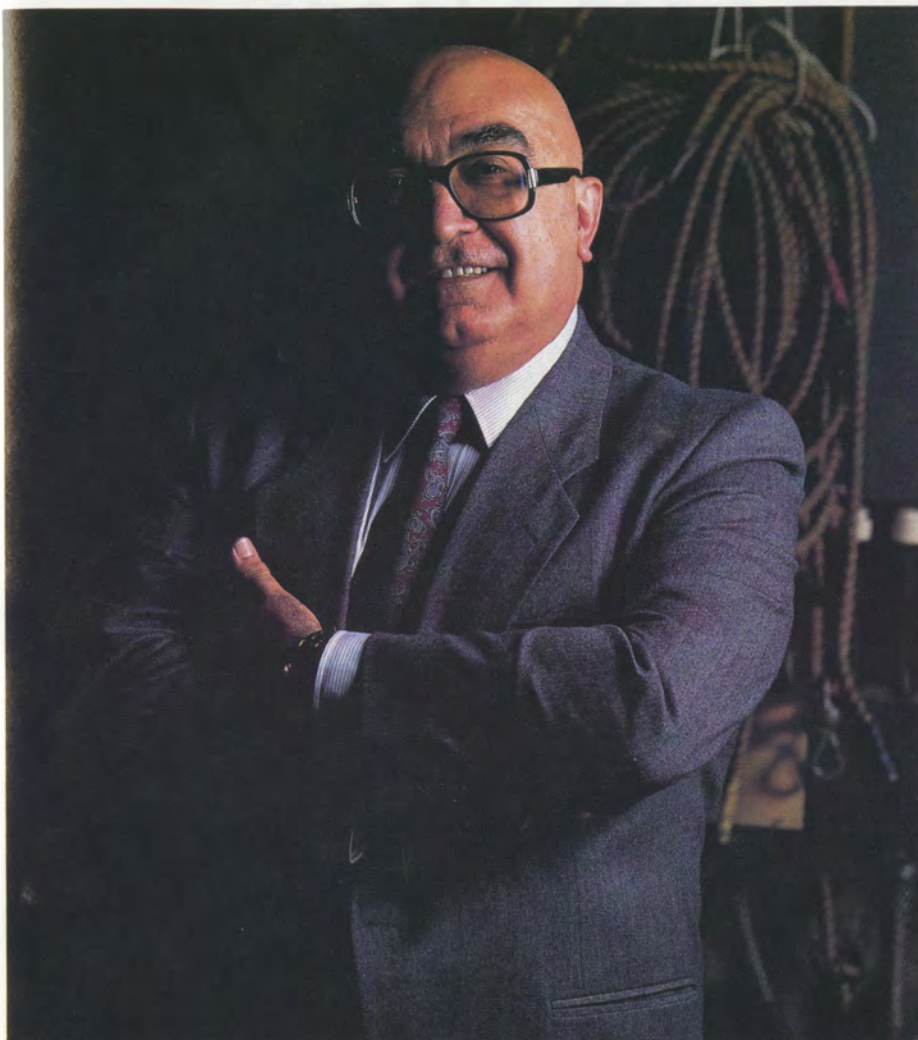


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General Director's Message

Ever since our production of Wagner's *The Ring of the Nibelung* won international attention and acclaim in 1985, Wagnerites from around the world have been awaiting its revival. Other *Ring* productions have been produced in other cities in America and abroad during the past five years, but San Francisco's remains one of the most highly praised of our time. It is a pleasure to bring back this stunning artistic achievement.

It is also an incredible challenge. Although this production of the four individual operas that make up the *Ring* have been presented here before, reassembling a project of this magnitude is an enormously complex, difficult and expensive task. This space is not adequate to offer sufficient thanks to the artists, musicians, technicians and administrative personnel who have so enthusiastically devoted their time and seemingly

limitless energy toward the realization of Wagner's vision. They have given new meaning to the word "teamwork."

Once again, our *Ring* production is complemented and surrounded by an array of ancillary events designed to help you derive the maximum enjoyment and understanding of Wagner's unique creation. A number of Bay Area organizations, including Humanities West, The Wagner Society of Northern California, the San Francisco Opera Guild, the University of California at San Francisco, the Goethe Institute of San Francisco and Pocket Opera, have prepared over four dozen *Ring*-related events—lectures, films, performances, art exhibits and panel discussions covering a range of topics even Wagner never dreamed of. Clearly, if you are a confirmed Wagnerite, San Francisco is the place to be this summer.

San Francisco is also the place to be if you are a newcomer to the magic of *The Ring of the Nibelung*. For many of you, this Festival will be your first exposure to the complete *Ring*, and it gives me great delight that you have selected San Francisco Opera as the door through which you will enter this infinitely fascinating realm of gods and mortals and everything in between. Being able to share the excitement with you as you embark upon this unique journey is one of the most satisfying aspects of my work.

To those who have been here before, and to those who are joining us for the first time, let me extend my warmest welcome to our 1990 *Ring* Festival!

San Francisco Opera

Lotfi Mansouri, *General Director*

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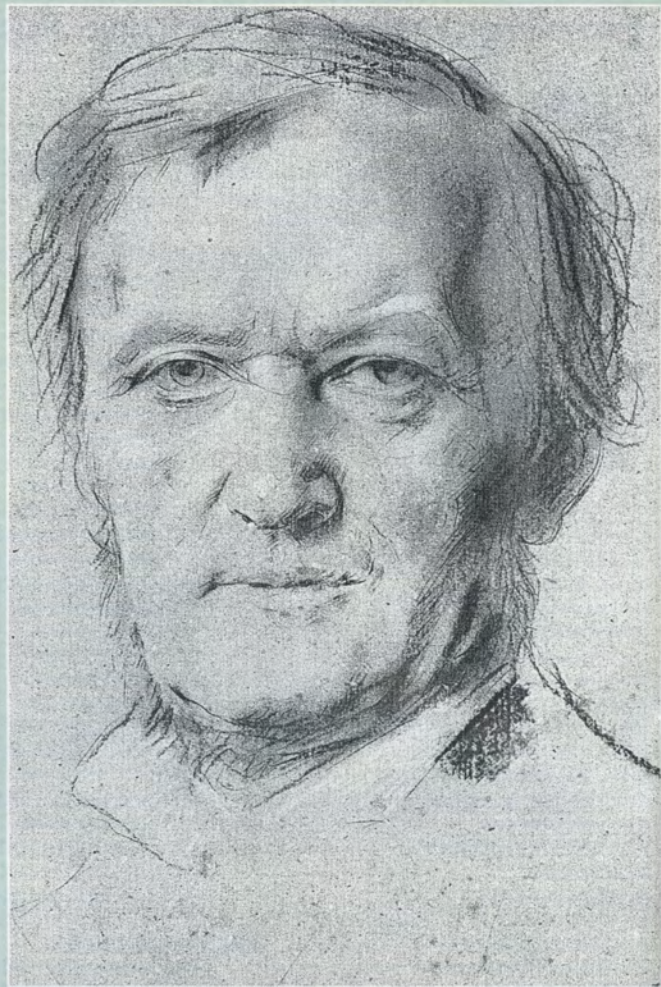
By ANDREW PORTER

"Every now and then in history there do come these terrible geniuses, like Wagner, who stir up all the wells of thought at once."

—Margaret Schlegel in E.M. Forster's *Howard's End*

Early in this century there were people who declared confidently that the spell Wagner had cast upon the world—upon not just its musicians and opera audiences but also its painters, poets, playwrights, novelists, philosophers, politicians—would soon lose its power

Andrew Porter, the music critic of the New Yorker, has published five volumes of collected New Yorker reviews. In 1980-81 he was Bloch Professor at UC Berkeley. His English translation of the Ring is published in a bilingual edition as a Norton paperback.



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SCHÖN

and pass away; that Wagner would prove to be as ephemeral a phenomenon as the once all-conquering Rossini and the ambitious Meyerbeer had been. In 1933, for example, the British critic W.J. Turner wrote, "We in the twentieth century are witnessing the gorgeous fabric of Wagner's music gradually crumbling into dust." Rash prediction! In Bayreuth's early days, there were worries about attracting an audience to the festival. Today, Bayreuth tickets—and tickets for the *Ring* in San Francisco, in New York, in London—have become the hottest tickets in town. Wagner's spell seems to grow ever stronger. In Bayreuth today, amid the throng around the Festspielhaus before performances, one sees prime ministers, poets, philosophers, tsars of industry, world leaders, and eager, vociferous young people. Some of them have come, maybe, just to be entertained, to bathe in the rich flow of the music and to enjoy a tale of high adventure: of gods and giants, dragons and dwarfs, magic and marvels, murders and mysteries, amid spectacular scenery. Yet upon their thinking the *Ring* is likely to work at least some of the influential spell that it has always cast. Not neces-

sarily by way of acceptance—questioning, rejection, even repugnance may play a part: but mingled with fascination. No artist has been more influential than Wagner.

About half a century ago, someone with a taste for statistics reckoned that the three men—strictly speaking, the God-become-man and the two mortals—who had had most books written about them were Christ, Napoleon, and Richard Wagner. I do not know what today's tally is. My impression, while scarcely a month goes by without the publication of some new books and many articles about Wagner, is that the German composer now leads the field. That makes it hard to write about the *Ring*. Everything has already been said. I myself, who spent years hammering out, for the English National Opera, a translation of the *Ring* singable in English, must have reviewed some fifty or sixty performances of the cycle, many books about it, many recordings. What more can I say about it?

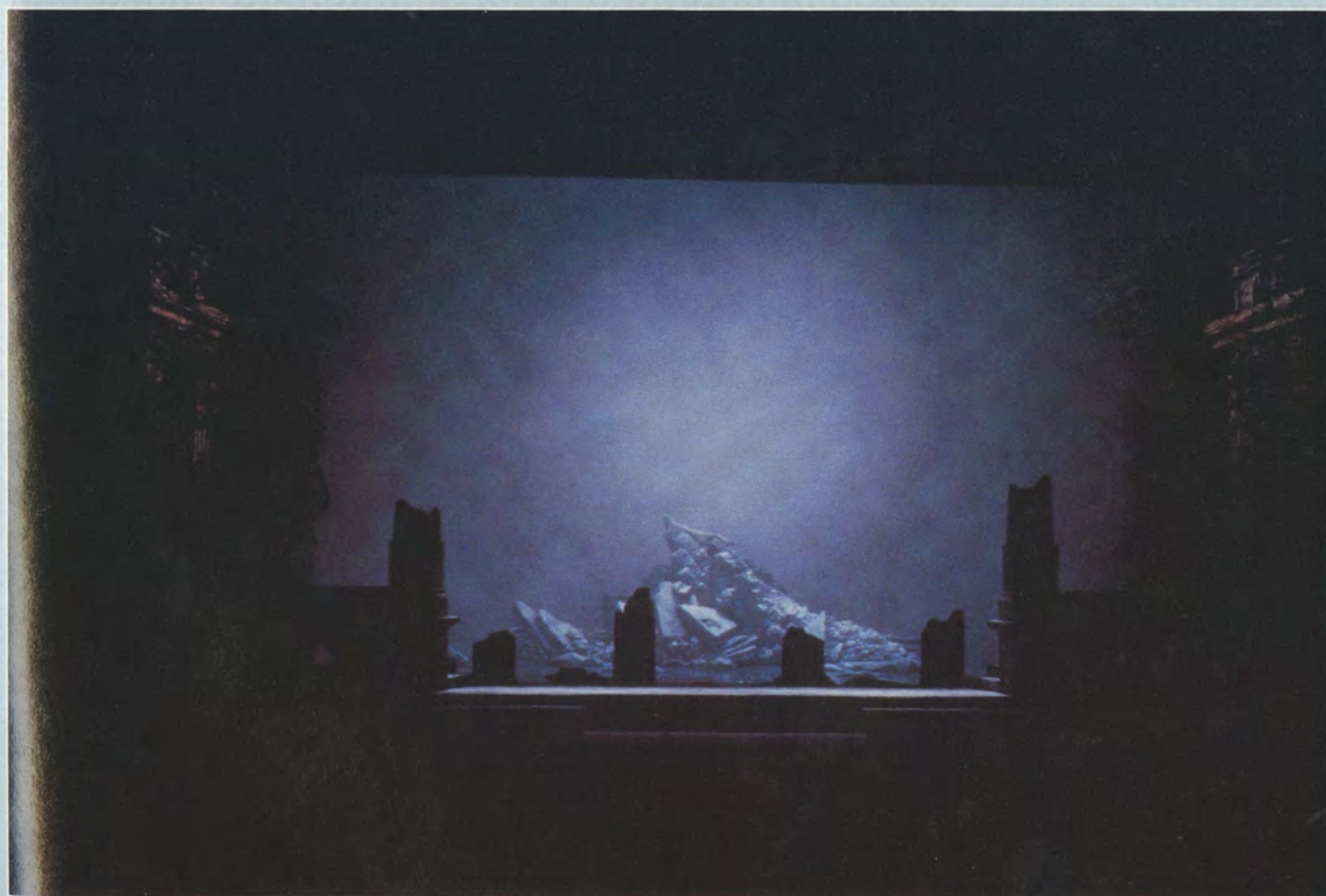
Well, the *Ring* has rightly been called inexhaustible. Every production of it yields something new. And whatever one writes may be new to at least someone. It

is tempting to be sidetracked into trivia: Are Siegmund and Sieglinde blond or dark? Which of his eyes did Wotan stake in his wooing and winning of Fricka? How many children did Erda have? I will not resist that temptation but will try to keep a sense of proportion. Little points may have their bearing on the large issues; possible solutions to some of the *Ring* "puzzles" play a part in any appreciation of the whole. For example: What is the hour-by-hour, day-by-day time schedule of *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung*? And, most important, what exactly is the power possessed by the eponymous, apparently omnipotent Ring, which nevertheless proves so powerless when Brünnhilde brandishes it against Siegfried-as-Gunther in the first-act finale of *Götterdämmerung*?

Inconsistencies there are—but what might be thought of as fruitful, rewarding inconsistencies, involving simultaneous acceptance on an artistic level of two things that on a literal, everyday level may be incompatible. A few hours and several months may pass simultaneously. We need not go so far as to follow the White Queen's advice and practice believing six impossible things before

(Top left) Richard Wagner in the famed pastel portrait by Franz von Lenbach, 1880.

The first and the last image from the current San Francisco Opera production of Wagner's *Ring*: (Bottom left) The opening scene of *Das Rheingold*; (Below) The end of *Götterdämmerung*.



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breakfast, but, as Bernard Shaw remarked in *The Perfect Wagnerite*, "an allegory is never quite consistent except when it is written by someone without dramatic faculty." Dramatic faculty was something that Wagner did not lack.

* * *

The *Ring* has been studied in many different ways: as a "world history"; as a political allegory; as a dramatized presentation of the psychological strands and their strife within any individual psyche; as (less plausibly but also revealingly) a purely "artistic" structure, to be apprehended on its own, self-sufficient terms. And productions have been staged that concentrate on each of these aspects. The fullest and most satisfying presentations, I have found, have been the most comprehensive: not those set in some deep, dark, subterranean tunnel, far from the natural splendors of the world; not those laid amid the rusting rubble of an industrial age; not the "space-age" or the strictly Victorian versions; but the productions that take as starting point a mythology set in the natural world and show man's place in it, and his endeavors (many of them harmful) to master nature for his own use; the productions that continue from there to use Wagner's imagery—the huge skies, the fierce storms, the enchanted stillness of a dappled forest glade, the promise of a rainbow—in their presentation of the other conflicts and final resolution that combine to form the matter of the drama.

Since the San Francisco *Ring* has such a starting point, let us begin by considering the primeval appeal of the cycle, its appeal on the simplest—but not least important—level. Lord Berners—a composer now largely forgotten, except as the "Lord Merlin" of Nancy Mitford's novels—in his autobiography *A Distant Prospect* provided a vivid account of first, fresh schoolboy responses to the *Ring* which must parallel those of many. I did not know Berners, but I knew his house, near Oxford, which his heir maintained in style by the occasional sale of a bedroom Corot, where rainbow-dyed doves still strutted the courtyard, where a gilded angel atop a folly still sounded a daily trumpet at the hour of Berners' birth. Berners did more, Osbert Sitwell wrote, "to civilize the wealthy than anyone else in England." As an Eton schoolboy, in the late nineteenth century, Berners picked up a copy of *A*

Ring Chronology

- | | | |
|---------|---|--|
| 1848 | — | "The Nibelungen Myth as Sketch for a Drama." Then, text draft of <i>Siegfrieds Tod</i> (which became <i>Götterdämmerung</i>); at Eduard Devrient's suggestion, the Prelude (Norns scene and the Siegfried-Brünnhilde duet) is added to it |
| 1850 | — | musical sketches for the Norns scene and the Siegfried-Brünnhilde duet |
| 1851-52 | — | texts of <i>Der junge Siegfried</i> (which became <i>Siegfried</i>), <i>Die Walküre</i> , and <i>Das Rheingold</i> (in that order), and revisions of the last two dramas in the light of the earlier two once they are written |
| 1853 | — | the <i>Ring</i> libretto (fifty copies) privately printed |
| 1853-57 | — | composition of <i>Das Rheingold</i> , <i>Die Walküre</i> , and almost two acts of <i>Siegfried</i> ; then the <i>Ring</i> is set aside |
| 1857-59 | — | composition of <i>Tristan</i> (performed in Munich in 1865) |
| 1861 | — | piano-vocal score of <i>Das Rheingold</i> published |
| 1862-67 | — | composition of <i>Die Meistersinger</i> (performed in Munich in 1868) |
| 1863 | — | the <i>Ring</i> libretto published |
| 1865 | — | piano-vocal score of <i>Die Walküre</i> published |
| 1869 | — | <i>Das Rheingold</i> produced in Munich |
| 1870 | — | <i>Die Walküre</i> produced in Munich |
| 1869-74 | — | resumption and completion of the <i>Ring</i> |
| 1871 | — | piano-vocal score of <i>Siegfried</i> published |
| 1872 | — | "definitive" <i>Ring</i> libretto published |
| 1875 | — | piano-vocal score of <i>Götterdämmerung</i> published |
| 1873-76 | — | <i>Ring</i> full scores published (<i>Rheingold</i> 1873, <i>Walküre</i> 1874, <i>Siegfried</i> 1875, <i>Götterdämmerung</i> 1876) |
| 1876 | — | first performances of the cycle, at Bayreuth: a "private" one (in effect a dress rehearsal) for King Ludwig, then three public cycles |

Synopsis of Wagner's Nibelungen-Ring, and "as I read on, a wonderful new world unfolded itself. I passed enraptured through the green waters of the Rhine, into the resounding caverns of the Nibelung, up the pine-clad mountain slopes, across the rainbow bridge, to the glittering turrets of Valhalla." In a music shop, he looked at a vocal score, and "there they were, the Rhinemaidens swimming about in shimmering semiquavers, Alberich clambering up from the depths of the Rhine to an accompaniment of syncopated quavers and rising arpeggios, the theft of the Gold, followed by a scurry of descending scales out of which there emerged the majestic strains of the Valhalla motif." The score cost twelve shillings, more than he could afford, but for a shilling he acquired a libretto,

walked on into Windsor Park to read it, and "entered spell-bound into the Wagnerian world." The Corder English translation ("Spoilt were your sport if 'stonished I stand here still? . . . The languishing calf, let us accost him") could not damp his enthusiasm: "Windsor Park, the massive castle, Eton, the whole world of reality became engulfed in the mysterious depths of the Rhine."

That initial sense of enchantment is something Wagnerians can feel again every time the first low E-flat steals out into the dark theater (even if it does not always survive what is later revealed). Listeners may bring to the cycle their own feelings about nature. Many years ago, I made the pilgrimage to Bayreuth by way of a Rhine Journey: the memory of those majestic landscapes has ever

since colored my responses to the Rhine music that flows through the *Ring*, filling the first, the last, and several other scenes; and I acquired a new admiration for Siegfried's strength as "with a powerful stroke yet with leisurely ease" he drove his boat against that strong current. And one night, after a Bayreuth *Walküre*, we drove on up the Green Hill, beyond the Festspielhaus, into a pine forest, and there a thunderstorm broke out with an awesome, terrifying grand-

MORTON



(Above) Marjorie Lawrence as Brünnhilde and Julius Huehn as Wotan in San Francisco Opera's 1939 staging of *Die Walküre*. In that particular performance, Kirsten Flagstad was singing the role of Sieglinde, but on a subsequent date, the two sopranos switched roles.

(Opposite page) San Francisco Opera's first presentation of the *Ring* featured Friedrich Schorr as Wotan and Kirsten Flagstad as Brünnhilde: *Die Walküre*, 1935.

eur that gave a new meaning to the thunderstorm that breaks over Siegmund's defenseless head before Act I of *Die Walküre*, and the baleful thundercloud in which Wotan arrives at the close of Act II, and the approaching thunderstorm of Act III, bearing Wotan in its midst, which fills the Valkyries with fear.

To picturesqueness and romance, much is then added. Wagner described

his encounters with Nordic myth as "the recapture of a long-lost yet eagerly resought consciousness," the *recognition* of figures who seemed "real" and "well-known from earliest days," the revelation, "as if by a miracle, of a world through which I had previously moved blindly, like a child in its mother's womb." Prime *Ring* sources, we know, were the Icelandic *Volsung Saga* (of which a new English translation, by Jesse Byock, has just been published by the University of California Press) and the Prose and the Poetic Eddas; the German *Nibelungenlied*; and the *Thidrek Saga*, written in Norse but dealing with Germanic matter. Lines from those old poems now ring out, after the *Ring*, with strange familiarity:

Hail, day! . . . Hail, gods!
Hail, earth, with its fruitful fields.
Long I slept, long did I slumber!

Or, from the Poetic Edda:

Charms he uttered, enchantments
strong,
till spell-bound she rose . . .
"Who is the man, to me unknown,
who disturbs my sleep, and
disturbs my peace?"

But, to an extent sometimes under-emphasized, Wagner refashioned these sources and invented his own mythology. At the start of the cycle alone (as Deryck Cooke makes clear in his *I Saw the World End*), the Rhine, the Rhinemaidens, Alberich, the dwarf's wooing, the Rhinegold, its powers, the condition attached to its forging, and Alberich's theft of it are all of Wagner's own invention, not found in the sources. So is the powerful *Ring* itself; so are the fashioning and the significance of the Spear, with the treaties graven on its shaft. And so is much else that lies at the heart of the action: the Annunciation of Death, Siegmund's refusal to obey Wotan's summons, Brünnhilde's rebellion against her father's command. Because *Ring* mythology permeates modern life—even for someone whose encounters with it may have been only by way of Flash Gordon, or E.M. Forster, or Tolkien—we are apt to forget how much of it Wagner himself fashioned or refashioned.

He wrote of the exciting correspondences he discovered in the mythologies of different cultures, and by his inventions he forged new links between them. Greek theater was another source of the *Ring* drama: the *Oresteia* trilogy; the



Prometheus trilogy once ascribed to Aeschylus, as translated and "reconstructed" in German; Sophocles' Theban plays; and the whole idea of a "festival drama" carefully rehearsed, performed and witnessed with due seriousness—something very different from routine entertainment. Brünnhilde has often been likened to Antigone, who was moved by love to defy authority. In Wagner's words (in *Opera as Drama*), "Antigone knew nothing of politics: she loved . . . She loved Polynices because he was unfortunate, and only the greatest power of love could save him from the curse. What was this love, which was neither sexual love nor family love? It was the highest bloom of all . . . pure

San Francisco Opera's 1956 *Walküre* included Birgit Nilsson's U.S. debut performance as Brünnhilde, and Hans Hotter as Wotan.



LACKENBACH

human love . . . Holy Antigone, I call on you! Let your banner wave aloft, that beneath it we may destroy and redeem." The structure of the *Ring*'s constituent parts is classical: *Das Rheingold*, after a prelude, spans the events of a day; *Die Walküre* spans a day, *Siegfried* spans two, and *Götterdämmerung* . . . but let us leave that for a while. Moreover, the cycle begins with gods and their doings and ends in the world of men and women: the forces that influence and shape men's actions, located at first in the gods, are found at least to lie within men themselves. Raymond Prier, in a centennial essay about Wagner and Aeschylus, considered the way that "both dramatists perceived a movement from myth to history." One can also trace a progress in the *Ring* from "Aeschylean" drama, in which the powerful gods are prime movers, to "Sophoclean" drama in which men bear responsibility for their actions.

* * *

What else? More than a program-book essay, more than many a long book, can hope to encompass: the revolutionary fervor that led to Wagner's exile from Dresden in 1849. The philosophy of Feuerbach, and then of Schopenhauer. All that Wagner had read and heard and pondered. His practical theater experience. The conception of *Parsifal* and the composition of *Tristan* and *Die Meistersinger* during the years when the *Ring* was set aside: from 1857 until, nearly 12 years later, Cosima joined him in his Swiss exile. The birth of his son, Siegfried, the strains of whose Idyll run through the final act of the resumed *Siegfried*. All that happened during the long genesis of the *Ring*, from its first drafting in 1848 to the first production of the cycle, 32 years later. And, through it all, the workings of that extraordinary musical mind turning everything into sounds, harmonies, structures, and musico-dramatic adventures unknown before. Wagner knew that the *Ring* did not turn out to be what he had at first consciously planned: during the long years "I was faithful to my intuition and not to my conceptual ideas, and something different came to light from what I had actually thought."

If one must codify possible approaches to the *Ring*, Deryck Cooke's distinctions seem to be as sound as any: between the social or political level, "built into the work ineradicably by Wagner



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himself" (and exemplified by Shaw's commentary and in many a modern production); the "existential" level, or the characters' immediate and particular motivations by their greed, aggression, sex, love, or whatever (one might call this the sit-com level, bearing in mind that commercial sit-coms have been subjected to serious intellectual scrutiny); the "psychological" level (exemplified by Donington and by the directors who invite listeners to find some part of themselves in each of the characters and their actions); and, most important, what Cooke calls the "metaphysical" level, where "words are completely at a loss"—the level on which Wagner the musician says, and his performers sing, things that mere words cannot say. If one writes that at the end of the cycle Wagner proclaims "the highest bloom of all . . . pure human love" as the only thing that may make life in this vile world worth living, it seems sadly imprecise. But when at the close of a cycle a great Brünnhilde sings it and the orchestra plays it, to crown the *Ring*, then the whole absurd, expensive business of grand opera—all the mechanical apparatus, the laborious funding, the years of costly training that the singers and the players have spent, the years that Wagner and his predecessors (the Greek dramatists, Shakespeare, Goethe, Beethoven, and all their interpreters through the ages, on the stage and on the page) devoted to mastering dramatic art—can seem to be justified. Monteverdi matters, Mozart matters, and *Fidelio* matters; so do *Otello* and *Falstaff*, and *Tristan* and *Die Meistersinger* and *Parsifal*. And Roger Sessions' *Montezuma*, opera by Gluck, by Janáček, by Schoenberg, by Britten and by Tippett, and much, much else. But an opera company's most challenging undertaking remains its production of the all-comprehending *Ring*, the "world history," the exploration in sounds and sights and actions of what and why we are, and what we might become.

In what follows, I move from one level of *Ring* appreciation to another, mingling trivia with deeper concerns. In a *Ring* performance, nothing is unimportant: everything should come together, fruitfully, even though some details of Wagner's working, and some details of its execution, may jostle. ■

"What follows" follows like this: *Das Rheingold* on page 60, *Die Walküre* on page 78, *Siegfried* on page 96, and *Götterdämmerung* on page 114.

—Ed.

SCHERL



Two magic moments from San Francisco Opera's 1985 *Ring* Festival: René Kollo as Siegfried during the "Forest Murmurs" scene, and (below) Eva Marton during "Brünnhilde's Awakening" part of Siegfried.



SCHERL

Whither Breastplates?

Stagings of Wagner's *Ring* Since 1876

By DAVID LITTLEJOHN

Faced with the astonishing array of visual and dramatic interpretations of Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* offered during the last 20 years, it's sometimes hard to realize that for 75 years—from the very first performances at Bayreuth in 1876, to the first post-World War II performances there in 1951—most opera-goers saw the *Ring* done by performers going through much the same motions, in much the same costumes, against sets that were altered only very gradually, all over the western world.

One reason for the durability of the original, Victorian-Teutonic conception, was that Richard Wagner created it himself. He commissioned and oversaw the creation of the first sets and cos-

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tumes, and meticulously directed the premiere cycles himself.

After her death in 1883, his widow Cosima—who personally ran the Bayreuth Festival with an iron fist until 1906 (and who then lived on until 1930, to be sure that her docile son Siegfried kept the rituals intact)—insisted that all subsequent performances be copies of what she declared she remembered of her husband's originals.

Wagner had written stage directions of minute and often unrealizable detail, which Cosima insisted (and many orthodox Wagnerites still insist) must be followed to the letter. ["A flash of lightning breaks through the cloud; in its light, a Valkyrie on horseback becomes visible; on her saddle hangs a slain warrior." "Fafner drags himself further up the knoll and spits from his nostrils at Siegfried. Siegfried avoids the venom, leaps nearer, and stands to one side.

Fafner tries to reach him with his tail. When Fafner has nearly caught Siegfried, the latter leaps with one bound over the dragon, and wounds him in the tail." Et cetera.]

The composer commissioned a friend and disciple to sit in on the 1876 rehearsals and "to note down everything I say, even the smallest details, about the interpretation and performance of our work, so that a tradition goes down in writing." In founding his own festival theater at Bayreuth to produce the *Ring*, he also created a world headquarters, and began a family directorate, which were to exert a quasi-dictatorial, profoundly conservative power over *Ring* productions there and elsewhere for decades to come. "Wahnfried [the Wagner household at Bayreuth] sought conformity to a Bayreuth 'ideal,' and when this was not forthcoming it tried to scuttle the offending production by withholding rights or



SCHERL

personnel . . . Cosima continued to view the production of her husband's work outside Bayreuth as a kind of sacrilege, as a 'betrayal' of Richard's memory." (David C. Large, "Wagner's Bayreuth Disciples")

There are few visual images of the original productions beyond the detailed, highly romantic paintings of the artist Josef Hoffmann, from which the Brückner brothers at Coburg created the actual painted sets. Hoffmann's sketches for the Rhinemaidens' undersea rocks, Hunding's lofty wooden hut with the mighty ash-tree in its center, Alberich's and Mime's high rocky caves, the Gibichungs' elaborately carved hall, and the "Wild, Wooded, and Rocky Valley on the Rhine" where Siegfried meets the Rhinemaidens are all vivid, busy, melodramatic renderings of an exaggerated nature and a mythical past, conceived by a conventional German landscape artist of the time. We do have photographs of the original Brünnhilde (with her horse) and the original Wotan, with the winged helmets, bumpy metal armor, white gowns and blue cloaks, cross-gartered sandals, armlets, spears, long wigs and beard that defined these characters visually (on stage and in caricatures) for many decades to come. One prize shot shows the original Rhinemaidens (including Lilli Lehmann) "swimming" atop their precarious machines while swathed head to toe—as Shaw once complained—in "muslin fichus and tea-gowns," their hair arranged in fashionable 1876 coiffures—quite unlike the topless, Rubensian nixies shown cavorting in Hoffmann's original designs.

We also have photographs of Angelo Neumann's Leipzig production of 1878, which he toured all over Europe during the next 11 years, and of the second Bayreuth production of 1896, both of which were based very closely on the original. We have photographic (and of course verbal) records of other 19th-century versions as well, most of which took their cue from the original.

It is impossible to recover to a present-day imagination the impact of these early productions. Wagner's whole grandiose idea, his voluptuous new music would still have to seem "modern" to us; the conventions of painted romantic backcloths, two-dimensional rock-and-foliage wings, and clumsy pseudo-historicist costuming we would simply take for granted.

Most professional critics and amateur observers of the time who made any mention at all of the staging devoted most of their attention to the technical novelties. They wrote of steam-

machines that covered the stage with colored mists and clouds in order to mask the transformations, not always on cue; of how well the mechanical dragon or the Magic Fire scene worked (less than flawlessly, in 1876); of how well-deceived they were of the undersea illusion. "Never before," wrote the Vienna critic Eduard Hanslick—who had decidedly mixed feelings about the music—"has such an accumulation of scenic wonders been offered at an opera." But he regarded these devices, like most of Wagner's music, as mere nervous stimulants, so much sensual opium for the rational mind.

At Munich, one Brünnhilde actually did leap on her horse and charge into the final "fire"—as Wagner's stage directions required; but Cosima dismissed this as a mere "circus trick." Many critics derided the "children's pantomime" effects of the serpent and dragon, while admitting they might impress unmusical tourists. The original "rainbow bridge" to Valhalla was derided as an obvious, flower-garden prop. Hanslick complained about the tired, tethered horses and the ludicrous live rams. J.W. Davidson, of the *London Times*, thought the scenography at Bayreuth nowhere near as good as that visible on stages at London, Paris, and Vienna.

From 1896 on (when Bayreuth finally mounted its second *Ring*), critics took issue with the ossified, semaphoric style of acting Cosima imposed there, which many thought more forced and unnatural than what her husband's

Three views of the Wotan/Fricka confrontation in three different stagings of *Die Walküre* at the San Francisco Opera: (Opposite page) Thomas Stewart and Helga Dernesch in 1983; (Below) Julius Huehn and Kathryn Meisle in 1939; (Bottom) Hubert Hofmann and Margarita Lilova in 1968.



MORTON



JONES

actors had done 20 years earlier. In 1889 Shaw wrote, "Bayreuth has chosen the law of death. Its boast is that it alone knows what was done last time, therefore it alone has the pure and complete tradition, or, as I prefer to put it, that it alone is in a position to strangle Wagner's lyric dramas note by note, bar by bar, nuance by nuance." In 1896, he judged the Bayreuth style of acting to be an amateurish display of *tableau-vivant* attitudes, the striking of stupid poses by



MORTON

Lauritz Melchior as Siegfried in *Götterdämmerung*, given in 1935 as part of San Francisco Opera's first presentation of the Ring cycle. The Rhinemaidens were Lina Kroph, Jean Merrill and Doris Doe.

singers who were often little more than "animated beer casks." (From earliest days, *Ring* tourists mocked the girth of "youthful" Siegfrieds and "enchanted" Brünnhildes. Romain Rolland, at Bayreuth in 1896, described "the vast padded bulk" of a Sieglinde: "from bust to backside she is as wide as a city wall.")

What is remarkable, in view of these

criticisms, and the epochal changes that took place both in the western world and on western stages during the half century that followed, is how durable these images and methods were to prove. Photographs and accounts of *Ring* productions and performers in Berlin, Paris, London, New York and Vienna well into the 1930s and 1940s depict staging very little changed from the preceding century. Hans Kautsky designed new *Ring* productions for the Royal Opera at Berlin (1912-13), the Metropolitan Opera in New York (1913-14), and the Vienna State Opera (1930) that satisfied another generation with the same breastplates and helmets, the same stock crags and caves and Nordic carvings and dark fussy trees. (He did risk "cinematographic" projections in Berlin for the Entry of the Gods into Valhalla, but the jerky silent-film movements went out of synch with the music, and destroyed the illusion.)

World War I, a flurry of anti-Germanism, and the beginnings of modernism in the arts came and went; still large singers in horned helmets and bearskins and long blonde plaits stood still or made traditional gestures against fussy, romantic-naturalistic mountain crags and picturesque trees. The "golden years" of Wagnerian singers like Flagstad, Melchior, Lorenz, Leider, and Schorr were, for the most part, leaden, unchanging years for theatrical design, as far as *Ring* productions went. The reactionary cultural nationalism of the Nazi leaders (who effectively turned the Wagner festival into an annual party celebration between 1933 and 1942) accounted for some of this paralysis in Germany; it is harder to explain on the stages of London, Paris, and New York.

The standard argument still made in favor of mounting a "traditional" *Ring* production (the Metropolitan Opera's version of 1988 was supposedly patterned after Bayreuth's of 1896) is that "this is what Wagner wanted." To this anti-traditionalists counter with two objections:

First, "what the author wanted," even when it can be surely known, is in many cases irrelevant. The text (or score) exists, the author doesn't: it's ours now, not his, to make of what we will. ("It is in vain," wrote Shaw, "for Bayreuth to contend that by faithfully doing what was done last time it arrives at an exact copy of what was done the first time when Wagner was alive, present and approving. The difference consists just in this, that Wagner is dead, absent and indifferent.")

"Respect for the work," a sense of

responsibility to the notes on the staves, does seem to me a worthwhile trait in a producer—respect, at least, for what the stage director finds worthy of respect. But this need not imply a total and slavish respect for the author, with all his quirks and crotchets; and Wagner had more than his share. In any case, the world has turned a few times since 1876, and what Wagner wanted 124 years ago isn't likely to be what he'd want today. It certainly isn't what his two grandsons (who have run the Bayreuth Festival since 1951) have wanted for the past 39 years.

Secondly, despite the strange cultural phenomenon of "Wagnerism"—a near-deification of Wagner (Wagner the thinker, as well as Wagner the musician) that spread through Europe and the United States between 1870 and 1900—despite his claim to have created total and indivisible art works—no aspect of the composer's work has stood the test of time *except* his music. Not his philosophy, not his historical and aesthetic theories, not his mythologies, not his plots and librettos, certainly not his racial theories; and not his ideas and ideals on operatic staging. Although he was (like Verdi) a very astute man of the theater, responsible for a number of important theatrical innovations, his vision of the stage possibilities of even his own works was radically limited by European tastes and tradition of the second half of the 19th century.

There were innovative, anti-traditional productions of Wagner's *Ring* before 1951, which went against the Gospel According to Bayreuth. The holy city itself risked a few concessions to abstraction and stylization. Beginning in 1933 (with the Nazis breathing down his neck), the skillful designer Emil Preteorius gave Bayreuth—as he also gave Berlin, Milan, Rome, and (as late as 1958) Vienna—versions of Wagner's *Ring* cycle that, while following the Master's stage directions, reduced a great deal of the Victorian fussiness into symbolically simple and powerful forms. As early as 1905, Alfred Roller designed a *Ring* for Mahler at the Vienna Court Opera that dispensed with horses, rams, and Teutonic motifs altogether, reduced the Ride of the Valkyries to a projection of clouds, and created looming, elemental mountain shapes that dismayed the Viennese old guard. In the 1920s, adventurous stage designs in many German cities—Munich, Freiburg, Baden Baden, Hanover, Frankfurt (all by Ludwig Sievert), Dortmund, Düsseldorf, Duisburg, Berlin and Dresden began incorporating the experiments and discoveries of modern art—German Expressionism, in particu-

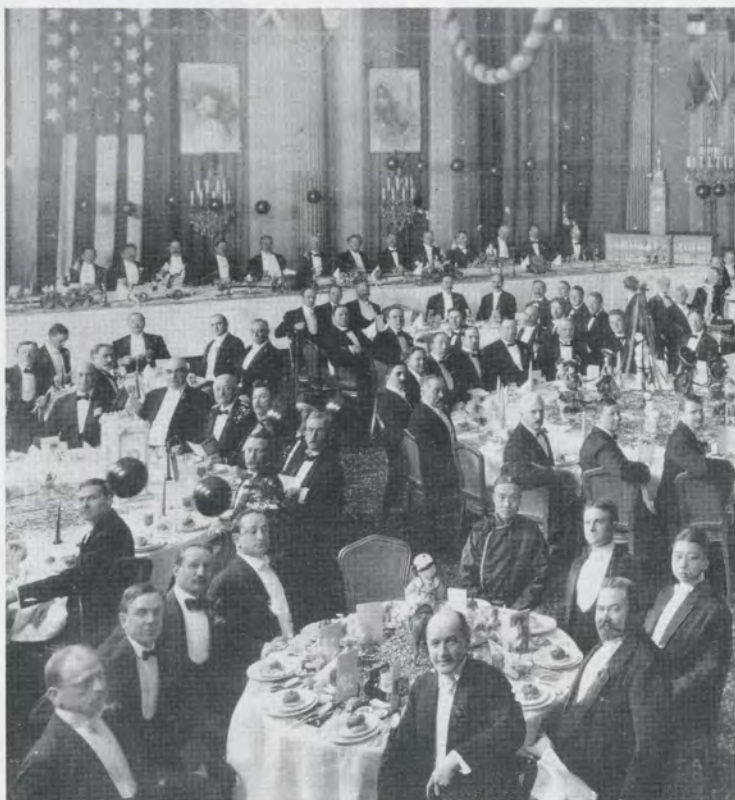
lar—into productions of Wagner's *Ring*.

These drew on the unrealized stage ideas of Adolphe Appia and others (geometric abstractions, projections on cycloramas, the use of traps and revolves, stark use of lighting and symbolic colors), as well as on the strange "inner vision" of modern painters. Sievert's were perhaps the first consistently stylized productions: bare stepped acting platforms in front, an imagined "Rhine Valley" beyond, crystalline mountain shapes, minimal projections in the distance. (Lee Simonson's new *Ring* for the Met in 1948, with its stylized, unromantic cliffs and sharp-angled acting platforms, was very similar to Sievert's.) The gods in his *Rheingold* stand on a stark, bare segment of curved earth—an impressive image later used by Wieland Wagner. In Sievert's productions, and Emil Pirchan's even more minimalist version at Berlin, Erda is simply a giant mask emerging from the earth.

The single most important scenographer ever to turn his attention to the *Ring*—the Swiss designer Adolphe Appia (1862-1928)—was turned away by Cosima as a presumptuous upstart. Appia had been working since 1892 on a series of timeless, stunningly simple, geometric designs for Wagner's music dramas, the drawings for which are now regarded as one of the landmark creations in the art of the stage. But when he showed them to the Widow of Bayreuth in 1896, she dismissed him and wrote to a friend, "Appia seems not to know that the *Ring* was performed here in '76 and that as a result there is nothing more to be discovered in terms of sets and productions." In the end, he had to settle for a sadly cheapened version of his magnificent designs (and then, for only half a *Ring*) at Basel in 1924-25. The Wagner brothers' productions of 1951-75—and the many stripped-down, light-created, atmospheric/abstract versions that followed—owe more to Appia than to anyone else, the first modern man of the theater to dispense with all inessentials in order to carve stage-places out of changing washes of color and light.

Partly because of its identification with the Nazi cause, partly because of Germany's postwar poverty, the Bayreuth Festival was not resumed until 1951. When Wieland Wagner, the composer's grandson, offered the first postwar cycle at Bayreuth that summer, the effect was shocking, profound, and internationally felt. During the next 25 years, he and his brother Wolfgang (Wieland died in 1966) presented four complete new productions of the *Ring* (1951-58; 1960-64; 1965-69; 1970-75), all in the

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radical "New Bayreuth" style.

The New Bayreuth style (which, abandoned in 1976, is of course new no longer; producers since 1970 have been trying to find ways to rebel against it) has been explained in three ways. One, since Germany was strapped for cash in 1951, this was the least expensive way to mount a new *Ring* cycle that could still be impressive. Two, the legacy of 1933-45 had left the traditional Teutonic style of production—which Hitler saw as a tangible demonstration of his vision of a heroic "master race"—in hopeless political disfavor. The only way to start the Festival anew was to dump the old style altogether, strip the stage bare of its nationalistic associations, and begin with a "less is more" modernist style. Three, despite the howls of traditionalist Wagnerites, such a style was in fact quite defensible in and congenial to the 1950s and '60s, of a piece with related movements in architecture, painting, sculpture, and film.

Interpreted most economically, the *Ring* tetralogy calls for a minimum of 11 different scenes. It would be tiresome to try to describe the 44 different ways the Wagner grandsons chose to evoke these scenes between 1951 and 1976. If you are familiar with the San Francisco *Ring* productions of 1967-72 (Paul Hager/Wolfram Skalicki), or any of the seven different *Rings* designed by Günther Schneider-Siemssen between 1964 and 1989, you have some idea of the New Bayreuth style—although these designers never settled for stages quite as abstract and unfurnished as those of the brothers Wagner.

In general, the New Bayreuth style focused on a central, circular acting area—although the stage disk (or "ring") was sometimes tilted, rendered concave

or convex, even cracked and broken into pieces. This area was subtly and diffusely lighted; a world of darkness lay beyond its edges. Leads, usually in simple robes or tunics, posed about the disk; they had spears when called for, but no helmets or armor. Groups (of Nibelungs, Valkyries, or Gibichung soldiers—120 of the latter, in three fixed choral rows, for Wieland's first *Götterdämmerung*) cluster or move in carefully fixed patterns. There are no walls, no ceilings, no mountains, no trees. On the flat disk are placed the fewest possible objects—rocky lumps to serve as seats or a forge.

Variations over the 25 years occurred mainly in the lighting of the stage and the gigantic cyclorama behind it. A complex console that controlled hundreds of lights and projectors could create violent, moving thunderclouds, washes of subtly shifting color, the mottled shadows of a forest: light and color changes could be precisely timed to the movement of the score. Abstract background sculptures were created to indicate a wall of gold, a wooden palisade, totemic deities, a tangled, organic forest. Stark, dramatic projections on the cyclorama produced a golden vertical pile of a Valhalla, horizontal waves for the Rhine.

Wieland was generally regarded as the more ingenious and creative of the pair: the original conceptions, refined over the years, were his. Few stage images of Wagner's *Ring* have ever matched the potency of his Siegfried and Brünnhilde standing alone on a bare curve of earth, surrounded by an infinity of blue; or the sudden emergence out of sheer blackness of the neck and flame-breathing head of a giant dragon, dead center behind Siegfried, alone on his flat circular disk. For his second series, in 1965 (which he had originally hoped to

persuade the sculptor Henry Moore to design), Wieland Wagner devised great archetypal images and primeval idols. When the Nibelung's gold was piled up in front of Freia, it assumed the shape of a female fertility goddess.

For several years, Wieland Wagner had to defend his stagings each summer against the outrage and boos of traditionalists, frustrated by all that was missing, by his defiance of his grandfather's explicit instructions. But gradually variations of his style spread to other of the world's opera houses. By the 1960s these "eternal," light-created, un-Germanic settings began to seem more appropriate for Wagner's philosophy-drenched legends than detailed, pseudo-archeological reconstructions of Old German places and times. For one thing, they enabled viewers to read into the action almost any meaning they wanted. For another, they seemed, in their global, evocative, ever-changing play of light and space and color at one with, as if created by the music. The un-spotlit, minimalist staging, as Ernest Newman pointed out, at once reduced the negative effect of mediocre acting, and enhanced the fundamental narrative role of the orchestra.

Like Shaw—who long before had suggested that the best way to attend the *Ring* might be to sit in the back of a box with your feet up and your eyes closed—Wieland Wagner had come to feel, long before 1951, that the romantic settings and exaggerated acting styles of his father's and grandfather's generations ("those papier-maché castles, those pseudo-naturalistic forests, those fat ladies in helmets, with all their lusty shouts") worked *against*, undercut, the music they were supposed to incarnate and complete.

(Left) Joseph Hoffmann's sketch for the original, 1876, Bayreuth Festival production of *Das Rheingold*. (Right) Hans Hotter (Wotan) and fellow gods in the final scene of *Das Rheingold* in Wieland Wagner's 1955 Bayreuth production.





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Giuseppe Verdi • In Italian

Swenson/Hong*(12/1,7), Powell*/Keen(12/1,7), Fondary/Pons(12/1,7), Leech*/Li(12/1,7), Langan, Skinner
Fiore—Asagoroff—Ponnelle—Munn
Sept. 15, 20, 25, 30(2:00pm), Oct. 5, 10(7:30pm), 12(7:30pm), Dec. 1(1:00pm), 7(7:30pm)

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Richard Strauss • In German

Te Kanawa, Schwarz, Grist; Olson, Shimell, Hagegård, Braun, Sénéchal
Barlow**—Cox—Pagano—Versace**—Munn
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UN BALLO IN MASCHERA

Giuseppe Verdi • In Italian

Dunn*, Dahl, Curry*; Mauro, Fondary, Storoyev*, Skinner
Arena—Ewers—Conklin—Morgan—Munn
Oct. 28(2:00pm), 31(7:30pm), Nov. 3, 6, 9, 14(7:30pm), 18(2:00pm)

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New Production

Johann Strauss, Jr. • In English

Holleque*(11/4, 8, 10, 16)/Gustafson(11/24, 25, 27, 30), Kilduff;
Lopez-Yañez*, Hagegård(11/4, 8, 25, 27)/Baerg(11/10, 16, 24, 30), Nolen, Adams*
Rudel(11/4, 8, 10, 16)/Summers*(11/24, 25, 27, 30)—Mansouri—Skalicki—Bosquet*—Munn
Nov. 4(2:00pm), 8(7:30pm), 10(1:00pm/8:00pm), 16, 24(1:00pm), 25, 27, 30(7:30pm)

KHOVANSCHINA

Modest Petrovich Mussorgsky • In Russian

Zajick, Fortuna; Ghiaurov, Howell, Noble, Myers, Treleaven*, Cole, Ledbetter, Travis
Simonov*—Frisell—Benois—Carvajal—Munn
Nov. 17, 20, 24, 29, Dec. 2(2:00pm), 5(7:30PM), 8

IL RITORNO

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San Francisco Premiere

Claudio Monteverdi • In Italian

Von Stade, Graham*; Hampson*, Cole, Rayam*, Cox, Patterson
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The cracked disk, the lowering dark skies, the more menacing, overalled and helmeted Gibichung army of Wolfgang Wagner's 1970-75 series heralded the end of this powerful, long-dominant mode. It pointed, at the same time, to the more bitter and specifically political interpretations to come. It was stark, abstract, hieratic, timeless (like all the brothers' stagings)—and, by 1970, perhaps growing just a bit dull. After Paris 1968 (and similar intergenerational protest movements elsewhere), western culture was felt to have made another sharp turn; it was time for *Ring* productions to catch up.

Outside of Bayreuth, between 1950 and 1975, production styles ranged from the antique-traditional (Paris 1955), through handsome but not abstract stylizations (Milan 1950, Hamburg 1956, Vienna 1957-58); to productions like those designed by Paul Hager (San Francisco 1967-72), Jörg Zimmermann (Milan 1968) and Günther Schneider-Siemssen (London 1964, Vienna/Salzburg/New York 1967-75), which seemed closely related to what the Wagner brothers were doing. They all made use of "timeless" costuming, huge curving symbolic sets, a minimum of stage furniture, dazzling atmospheric projections, and fabulous (if often dim) lighting effects. In these cities, too, however, some critics and audience members began to wonder if there were not other, more "relevant," more immediately exciting alternatives to the Alt Bayreuth style.

* * *

When it came, it came with a vengeance: first at Kassel, in West Germany, in 1970-74; then at Leipzig, in East Germany (as it then was), in 1973-76; finally, and most notoriously, at the Centennial *Ring* at Bayreuth in 1976.

The 1974 Kassel production was defiantly eclectic and disunified. In it, Siegfried was a bearded hippie, Wotan a Texas millionaire, Nibelheim a concrete bunker, and the Gibichungs Nazis. The gods decayed into hate-filled, senile creeps in wheelchairs; the Norns' broken future-telling rope became a computer that suddenly went down. Wotan and Alberich embraced at the end, apparently the sole survivors of a nuclear war.

At Leipzig, director Joachim Herz (one of the several protégés of the late, great Walter Felsenstein of East Berlin who exerted considerable influence in European opera production) told a consistently ugly, anti-capitalist tale, the roots for which can be traced back to interpretations of the *Ring* written by

left-polemicists like Shaw and Theodor Adorno. Wotan is again a power-hungry capitalist; the dragon becomes an armored tank, with Fafner's head emerging from the turret. The dwelling place of the gods (like that of San Francisco's 1985 *Ring*) is a neo-classical temple in decay. A gang of factory workers—the ones who really built Valhalla—gather at the end of *Das Rheingold* to watch as the gods move on to their own destruction. Siegfried and Brünnhilde make love on a battlefield; Wotan marches in Siegfried's funeral procession surrounded by drooping imperial eagles. *Götterdämmerung*, in fact, begins long after *Siegfried*, in a sleek chrome and glass world; the wedding takes place in a turbine-factory floor, surrounded by fascist eagles on columns,

abstract mountaintop out of time, but Western Europe, 1876.

The production (conducted by Pierre Boulez) was, for all that, vivid and compelling, with acting of an intensity never before seen at Bayreuth (and rarely elsewhere in Wagner), and a few potent, unforgettable symbols—the pendulum, the mirror, the Valkyries' ruined wall. Nibelheim was a factory full of slave laborers; Hunding arrives surrounded by a sinister mob of goons; Gunther and Gutrune wore fashionable evening dress, the dragon turns back into a giant—all of which have since become near clichés. (Alberich was no dwarf, but the giants were truly gigantic.) Mime's forge is operated by steam in a power plant. "Alienation effects" were provided



Opening scene of *Das Rheingold* in the Bayreuth Festival presentation of the 1988 Kupfer/Schavernoch *Ring*.

banners, saluting leagues of uniformed thugs.

The Patrice Chéreau/Richard Peduzzi Bayreuth production of 1976 is perhaps well enough known by now not to need description, thanks to international television broadcasts, videodiscs and cassettes, and the forests of newsprint and rivers of ink that have been devoted to it. In this super-controversial staging, the producers pushed the Shavian interpretation of Wagner's *Ring* as an allegory of the evils of the industrial revolution even farther than their brothers at Leipzig or Kassel; the Rhinemaidens became whores at a hydroelectric plant, in an opening scene that led to screams of fury from the first-day audience at the Master's Temple on Green Hill. Costumes and sets depicted not the medieval Rhineland, or some

by Loge drawing the curtain himself at the end of *Das Rheingold*, smirking knowingly at the audience; and by having the mob/chorus turn, as the closing flames subside (there is no flood) and stare at the audience, as if defying us to come up with a better world.

Since 1976, the castle has indeed collapsed, the river overflowed, the house of the gods gone up in flames. Productions of every imaginable sort, from the most safe and picturesque to the most grotesque and nonsensical, have poured out at a rate never known before: at least 30 important new *Ring* cycles have been completed in the last 25 years, in Seattle and Dallas, Bologna, Florence, and Turin, Aarhus and Brussels, Buenos Aires and Cardiff, Zurich and Geneva, Nice, Strasbourg, and Mar-

continued on p. 44

Wagner, Politics and the Ring

By WILLIAM HUCK

The revolutions which swept Europe in 1848 and '49 changed all the political and social thought in the mid-nineteenth century. At first, the insurrections raised ecstatic hopes of the birth of national republics freed from foreign domination and built on universal suffrage. But failure came as quickly as hope. When the entrenched governments joined together to smash the individual uprisings and imprisoned their leaders, the idealism that had blazed so brightly burned itself out.

Richard Wagner, who was himself an active participant in the Dresden rebellion, was greatly influenced by both sides of this tumultuous political upheaval. He conceived his plan for *Der Ring des Nibelungen* in the months of hope. He imagined it as his artistic response to the challenge of the future, both musically and mythically. Though the great tetralogy would take more than 25 years to complete, it never lost the imprint of that original impulse.

However, like all the revolutionaries, Wagner suffered for his involvement in the attempt to bring about a new society. It was in the years of his exile that the composer wrote the librettos for the *Ring* and began work on the music. That long banishment naturally changed the composer's outlook. Philosophically, he turned inward, away from a political solution to a personal one of almost



SCHERL

Buddhist resignation.

In 1856, Wagner explained this shift to his one-time musical assistant and revolutionary cohort, August Röckel: "I shaped it [the text of the *Ring*] at a time when I had built up in my conceptual thought a hellenistic-optimistic world, the realization of which I held to be entirely possible, if only men wanted it—though I rather ingeniously pushed away the problem of why they actually didn't want it. I remember that I worked out the personality of Siegfried in this premeditated way, with the desire to represent an existence free from pain; and I thought to express myself even more clearly in the presentation of the complete Nibelung myth, by showing the original injustice from which a whole world of injustice arose and therefore must fall to ruins, so as to—well—teach us a lesson how to recognize injustice, tear it out by the

roots, and establish a just world in its place.

"But I hardly noticed that, in carrying out my plan—indeed, even in laying it down—I was unconsciously following a quite different, much deeper intuition, and instead of conceiving a phase in the development of the world, I had conceived the essence of the world itself and recognized its nothingness..."

There is a world of pain and anguish in this letter, first as the would-be revolutionary acknowledges the lack of driving support that doomed the uprisings of 1848 and '49 and then in the world-weary discovery that the greed and injustice Wotan initiates with the theft of the ring and that Siegfried faces in the halls of the Gibichungs are not phases in the regeneration of the world but unending characteristics of the world as we know it. The only conclusion Wagner could draw

William Huck is a San Francisco-based music critic and opera librettist. His writing appears in the *San Francisco Sentinel*, *Opera Quarterly* and the *Los Angeles Times*. He is editor and program annotator for *San Francisco Ballet magazine*.



from this new shift is to emphasize the "nothingness" of the world, "the land of illusion," as Brünnhilde calls it in one draft of her final soliloquy. The most complete artistic expression of this new philosophy, however, is not to be found in the *Ring*, but in *Tristan und Isolde*, for it is the drama that was completely imagined under the spell of exile. Since the music (and drama) of the *Ring* contains such a great range of emotions—from the glittering appeal of the Rhine-maidens' song in *Das Rheingold* to the sensuous celebration of nature in *Siegfried* Act II to the fearful revenge trio of *Götterdämmerung*—it shows that the tetralogy continued to embody for Wagner his attachment to life and to the hope under which it was conceived.

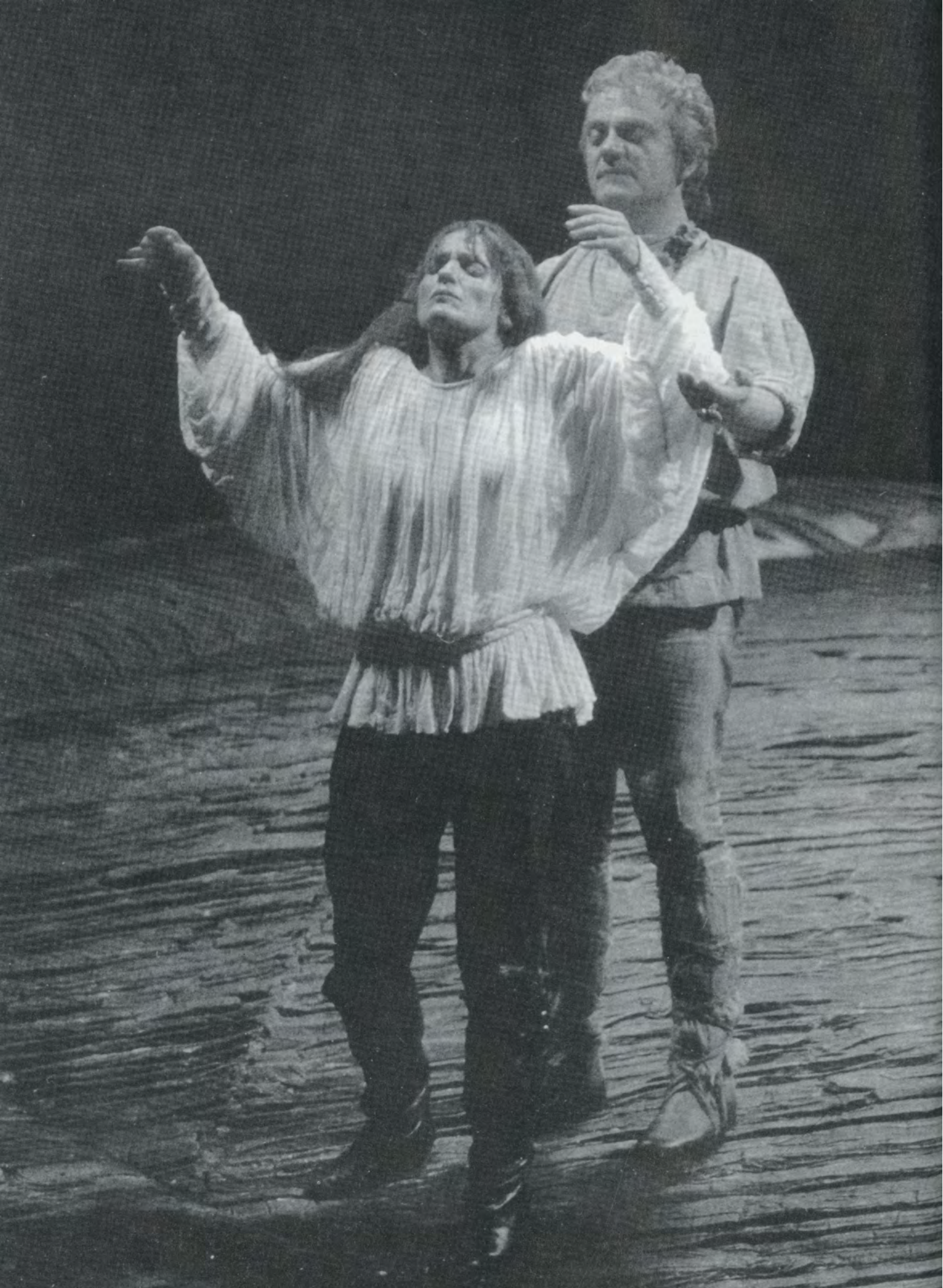
The most common sins indulged in by the commentators on Richard Wagner's politics are first that they

submerge the vitality of the young man's revolutionary thought in the ravings of the old man's anti-Semitism, and second that they view this later philosophy in the light of our century's hideous use of it rather than as part of the struggles of the preceding century.

The most important context of Wagner's developing political philosophy as it influenced the *Ring* is the revolutionary tumult of 1848 and '49. The political analysis of injustice that casts its deepening shadow over the four dramas of the *Ring* was born, as Wagner's letter to Röckel states, in the enthusiastic hope of the late 1840s. The inward-turning of Wagner's Schopenhauerian philosophy that later tempered this sense of hope was in many ways the direct result of the failure of that revolution to change the world. To understand this context and to get a better idea of how this clash of

(Opposite page) James Morris as Wotan in San Francisco Opera's 1985 presentation of *Die Walküre*.

The Dresden uprising of May 1849 in a contemporary lithograph, showing the old opera house and the Zwingerstrasse in flames.



philosophies were actually precipitated for Wagner, let us turn to what happened in those crucial and fascinating years.

In the spring of 1848, Wagner was 35 years old. He had returned to Dresden in 1842 to supervise a production of *Rienzi*. His great success in this endeavor led to the Dresden premiere of *The Flying Dutchman*, whose equal acclaim resulted in Wagner's appointment as the court opera conductor. Triumph followed triumph for the new Kappellmeister: hard on the heels of *Tannhäuser's* premiere in 1845 came the first of the legendary Palm Sunday performances of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony in 1846. Wagner's recreation of Gluck's *Iphigenia in Aulis* in 1847 confirmed his status as a conductor, while *Lohengrin* proved his renown as a composer. Then came what Wagner called in his autobiography "the fateful year, 1848."

At last the lifelong fears of Europe's entrenched aristocracies came true. The world, it seemed, had returned to 1789. Once again, the revolution began in Paris, but this time it quickly spread to Vienna and then throughout the Austro-Hungarian empire. Italy raised arms against its northern occupiers in Venice and Lombardy. Street-fighting broke out in Berlin and soon, it appeared, even great Prussia itself had yielded to the revolutionaries. Amid this nearly universal tumult, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels fed the gathering fires with their *Communist Manifesto*.

This political crisis coincided with Wagner's completion of *Lohengrin* and with a deadlock the composer had reached in his negotiations with his Dresden employers. As always, Wagner's successes had been matched only by his extravagance, which resulted in ever-mounting debt. In order to dig out from under, Wagner applied for a higher salary in February of 1848. The Kappellmeister was paid 1,500 thalers per annum and he asked for 2,000—hardly enough to finance his lifestyle, let alone reduce his debt. Yet the King responded with sarcasm, threats and a mere 300 thalers. In May, Wagner further complicated matters by submitting the detailed, and indeed revolutionary "Plan for the Reorganization of the German National Theaters in the Kingdom of Saxony,"

Hildegard Behrens as Brünnhilde and Manfred Jung as Siegfried in the last scene of Siegfried, part of the Bayreuth Festival 1984 staging of the Hall/Dudley Ring.

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which, like his report on the orchestra two years earlier, was politely but firmly ignored.

Wagner readily blamed his precarious predicament on the aristocratic court and its pompous courtiers. Indeed, Wagner saw his appalling debt as the result of an abusive social order. In those troubled times, he found an alternative to the stuffy atmosphere of the Court in the proto-revolutionary association of the Vaterlands-Verein, which was founded in March of 1848 to campaign for the establishment of a democracy in Germany. The intellectual fervor of the new association naturally attracted the visionary in Wagner, and the composer immediately took up its banner. He joined the military arm of the association, the Communal Guards, and published the article, "What relationship do republican endeavors bear to the monarchy," which was signed simply by "A Member of the Vaterlands-Verein." But on June 14, 1848, Wagner acknowledged his authorship of this inflammatory piece by reading it to a meeting of the association.

It was in the summer and fall of that year that the composer-turned-revolutionary first sketched the plot of the *Ring*. But then in February of 1849, Wagner turned his pen back to revolutionary propaganda with the poem *Die Noth*, in which we hear not only the battle cry of an ardent revolutionary, who sees visions of the old order going up in flames, but the first use of the term that he would later give to Siegmund's sword in the first act of *Die Walküre*, "Nothung, Nothung, Sword that I need."

Wagner's last concert in Dresden was his third Palm Sunday presentation of Beethoven's Ninth on April 1, 1849. As Wagner recollects this concert in his autobiography *Mein Leben*, "Everyone did his utmost to make this one of our finest performances and the public took up the matter with real enthusiasm. [The Russian emigré-revolutionary] Michael Bakunin, unknown to the police, had been present at the public rehearsal. At its close, he walked unhesitatingly up to me in the orchestra, and said in a loud voice, that if all the music that had ever been written were lost in the expected world-wide conflagration, we must pledge ourselves to rescue this symphony, even at the peril of our lives." For the next several weeks, the two men became almost inseparable companions.

At this point Bakunin's dream was

not far off for Dresden. On April 30th, the monarchy dissolved Dresden's Chamber of Deputies. As a result of this, Wagner's friend, August Röckel, who had founded a radical newspaper called *Volksblätter*, lost his diplomatic immunity and was forced to flee to Bohemia. Wagner immediately felt that "this event imposed upon me the friendly task of caring for Röckel and his family . . . As I could do little enough to help him, I promised at least to provide for the continued publication of his popular *Volksblätter*, mainly because the proceeds from this would support his family."

This statement about continuing the publication of the radical newspaper because it was the main support of



Warrant for Richard Wagner's arrest, published in Dresden on May 16, 1849.

Röckel's is typical of Wagner's attempt in *Mein Leben* to diminish the importance of his involvement in the ensuing resurrection. One must always remember that *Mein Leben* was meant, among other things, for King Ludwig's royal eyes. Yet even the chronicles of his autobiography suggest that the composer took a fiercely partisan role in the upheaval.

With the Court's dissolution of the Chamber of Deputies, battle lines were firmly drawn. On Thursday, May 3rd, the King further rejected the demands of the democrats in the Vaterlands-Verein and ordered the Communal Guards to disband. That afternoon, the Vaterlands-Verein responded by voting for armed resistance. In *Mein Leben* Wagner admits

that he was at the decisive Vaterlands-Verein meeting, but maintains that he was there innocently, "merely as a representative of Röckel's *Volksblätter*, for whose continuance, both from economic as well as human motives, I felt pledged."

On his "way home from the meeting" Wagner recalled he heard the bell of St. Anne's Church sound the call to revolt. "The clang of this bell, so close at hand, made a profound impression on me . . . The whole square looked as though it were illuminated by a dark yellow, almost brown light, such as I had once before seen in Magdeburg during an eclipse of the sun. My most pronounced sensation was one of great, almost extravagant satisfaction. I felt a sudden strange longing to play with something hitherto regarded as dangerous and important."

Wagner's response to the clanging call of rebellion was to go directly to the house of Joseph Tichatschek, who had been his first Tannhäuser, and demand from the tenor's wife all the guns he knew were there. Clutching these weapons, Wagner continued on his way, but soon found the soprano Wilhelmine Schröder-Devrient addressing a crowd from her hotel window. The great singer, whose performance of Beethoven's Leonore supposedly changed Wagner's very concept of operatic drama, remained throughout the composer's life one of his few heroes. Her participation in the insurrection confirmed his own.

By now, Prussian troops were marching towards the Saxon capital. At the first sight of them, Wagner climbed the tower of Kreuzkirche and acted as a scout for the rebel government. He noted the placement and movement of the fighting and threw down messages tied to stones which were then conveyed to the revolutionary leaders Hübner and Bakunin at Town Hall. But the appearance of the foreign troops spelled the beginning of the end for Wagner and his colleagues. By the morning of May 9th, the Dresden rebellion was crushed and its leaders put to flight. In desperation, the composer joined Otto Hübner and Bakunin in their carriage headed to Chemnitz. The three spent the night together at an inn in Freiburg, but luckily for Wagner he was separated from the two doomed leaders during the next day's travels. That following night Hübner and Bakunin were discovered in Chemnitz and removed to prison.

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did Wagner escape the fate of his comrades. While Schröder-Devrient was able to defend herself successfully against the charge of traitor, Hübner, Bakunin and Röckel did not fare so well. During the years that Wagner lived in his relatively plush, Swiss exile and composed *Das Rheingold*, *Die Walküre*, most of *Siegfried* and all of *Tristan*, Bakunin was at forced labor in Siberia, while Hübner and Röckel languished in German prisons.

In exile, Wagner's politics took a more than symbolic turn from action to thought, for the possibility of a revolutionary solution to the injustice of the world was dead for him. Faced with the problem that the people of Europe did not act in 1848-'49 in what Wagner thought was their own best interest, the composer reached for what remains his most fantastic political idea. Embodied in the story of Wotan is this thesis: in order to clear the way for a new beginning the ruling classes should accept the inevitability of their own destruction. The proposition, though it does not solve Wagner's problem, is as unlikely as it is fanciful.

As a political program, the new thesis unfortunately spelled the end of all of Wagner's liberal principles, for it located the only real hope for regeneration in the magnanimity of the established orders. In time, this idea would lead to the image of Parsifal, the good leader who would purify a rotten society from above. In this sense, the turn in Wagner's politics was a profoundly conservative reaction to the failure of revolutionary change from below, but we must remember that its aim was just as profoundly anti-conservative. Through it, Wagner sought an instrument that could effect a fundamental change in society.

In his letter to Röckel, the composer explained his new idea. "Alberich and the Ring could not destroy the gods if they were not already ripe for destruction. So where is the root of the catastrophe? Look at the first scene between Wotan and Fricka that leads to the second major scene in *Die Walküre*. The rigid bond that unites them, arising from love's inevitable desire to perpetuate itself beyond the inescapable laws of change . . . lands them both in the mutual horror of lovelessness. The development of the whole drama shows the necessity of recognizing and yielding to change, the diverse, multiple and eternally renewing reality

of life. Wotan rises to the tragic height of willing his own destruction. This is the major lesson that we must learn from the history of mankind: to will what necessity imposes, and to bring it about ourselves. The creative product of this supreme, self-destroying will is a fearless man who never ceases to love: Siegfried."

In the realm of practical politics this is, of course, sheer wish-fulfillment. Wagner's basic premise points not to a solution, but rather a definition of the problem facing European intellectuals after the debacle of 1848-'49. These men and women could clearly see the ever-mounting corruption of aristocratic government, but they felt powerless to change it. It is this fundamental flip-flop between the hope of revolution and the resignation of defeat that stands behind the most enigmatic character of the *Ring*: Siegfried. In the beginning, Siegfried embodied a brave new world, beyond the greed of Wotans and Alberichs and Mimes. As Wagner wrote in the crucial letter to Röckel, Wotan "resembles us to a hair. He is the sum of the [political] intelligence of the present, whereas Siegfried is the man of the future whom we wish for and will to arrive, and yet cannot create—who must create himself by means of our annihilation."

But, as he faces life, not even Siegfried can remain the pure and true "man of the future," for he too becomes enmeshed in the poisonous power of Alberich's ring. Although Siegfried can gain the love of Brünnhilde, he is powerless to protect himself from his own corruption. It is at this point that the political allegory in Wagner's great tetralogy falls down. In time, Wagner the man would turn to an entrenched conservatism and a very sophisticated game of flattering royal power in order to get what he wanted from his art, but at least so far as the *Ring* is concerned, Wagner the artist was checkmated in his search for a political solution to problems he had so forcefully delineated. As a result of this standstill, the composer turned inwards to find in the love of human beings for each other the all-embracing meaning of life.

This magical state of love appears in many guises in the four operas, and each time it comes forward, it inspires Wagner to lyrical heights that he could reach under the influence of no other theme. The passion of Siegmund and Sieglinde, for example, is expressed in music of

torrential intensity. Sieglinde's mother-love for the unborn Siegfried soars in ecstasy. The majesty of Wotan's father-love for Brünnhilde as he puts his rebellious daughter to sleep on her rock is very different, though even more compelling. It has a sonorous compassion in its rolling periods that humanizes the god and transforms his story from archetypal to personal tragedy. The shining love that crowns the last two operas is that between Siegfried and Brünnhilde. Their two mountain-top duets are triumphant paeans, whose glorious sun-like brilliance seems at first capable of obliterating the myriad shadows haunting the poisoned world below.

Yet even here Wagner was true to the complexity of his own analysis of the world, for Siegfried and Brünnhilde's love—though it can bring them both fulfillment—cannot insulate them from the tragedy of the world of everyday activity. They are as much pawns in the game of power and greed as the Gibichungs themselves.

Nor can Siegfried and Brünnhilde's final realization of the glory of their love save the world from destruction. In the *Ring's* concluding image of fire and flood, Wagner is returning to the vision of his revolutionary poem *Die Noth*, with its terrifying portrait of devastation and its succeeding promise of life springing anew after universal ruin.

The chance for human life to begin afresh, to build a new society based on the truth of love, is the apocalyptic conclusion that Wagner finally accepts in the *Ring*. It was a hope born in the fires of the uprisings that swept Europe in 1848-'49. The miscarriage of that near-universal revolution condemned the *Ring* to tragedy and is one of the reasons that Wagner kept expanding his work backwards into the tale of injustice and oppression and not forward into a new world built upon love and freedom. But the dynamic of that surge of revolutionary hope wove itself so firmly into the fabric of the *Ring* that not even defeat, exile and the eventual peace the composer made with the most conservative elements in German society could deny it its central place in Wagner's greatest creation. ■

Richard Wagner in 1853, while in exile in Switzerland and at work on the Ring of the Nibelung. Tempera by Clementine Stockar-Escher.



Whither Breastplates?
continued from p. 35

seilles, Warsaw and Barcelona—as well as the traditional world opera capitals, and of course all over Germany and Austria. Bayreuth has come up with two more new *Rings*, in 1983 and 1988, each more unusual and disturbing than the last.

The bizarre and sometimes very specific updatings among these—the productions that have attracted the most publicity—wrench the music dramas out of their legendary or mythical settings and shove them into other, real-looking

Two scenes from the 1983 Hall/Dudley production of Die Walküre, part of the Bayreuth Festival Ring cycle: Ride of the Valkyries, with warrior maidens descending on a metal platform over the dimly lit naked bodies of slain heroes; and the same scenery later, as Brünnhilde is put to sleep.

(or futuristic) worlds. Their producers have cast off the New Bayreuth “essentialist” style as something fraudulent and safe, and used Wagner’s *Ring* instead to make specific comments about the contemporary (or 19th-century, or western bourgeois) world. In Germany, in particular, they have made explicit references to the Third Reich/Wagner connection (the Gibichungs often become Nazis pure and simple), treated the gods as decadent and criminal, Nibelheim as an oppressive capitalist slave-factory, and the whole epic as a tale of modern bourgeois greed and abuse of power—whether they choose to set it in 1876, 1945, or in some utterly bleak era after a nuclear war.

A serious critical analysis and response to the new interpretations and productions of Wagner’s *Ring* of the past

20 years would take another essay at least as long as this one. More “liberties” have been taken, more extravagant conceits have been displayed, more novel readings of lines, scenes, and characters have been offered in these last two decades than in the near-century of productions before.

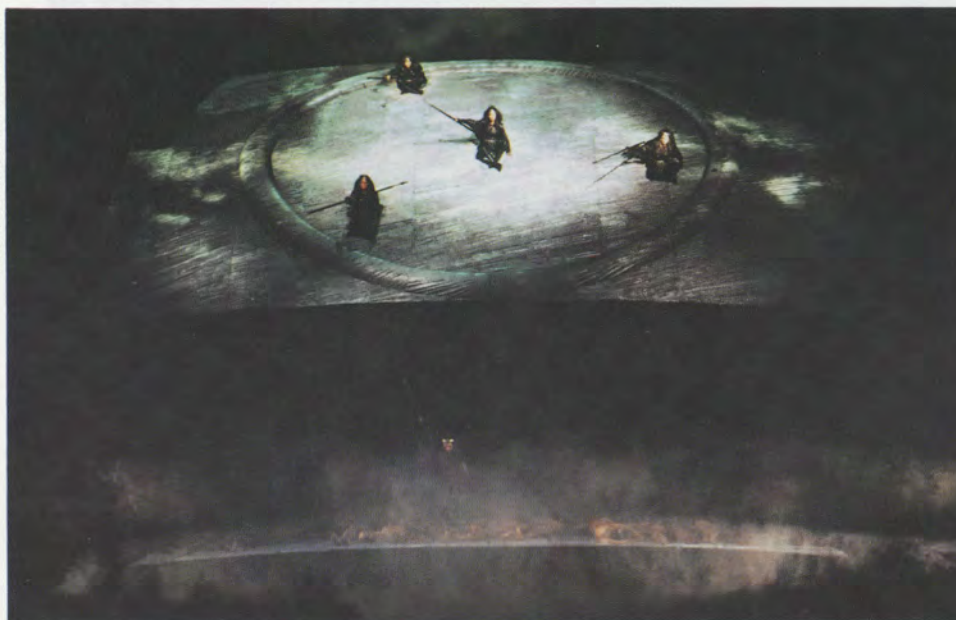
I cannot comfortably justify a return to 1876; but neither can I champion interpretations of Wagner’s *Ring* that profoundly diminish the stature and significance of characters like Wotan, Siegfried, and Brünnhilde (as many of these do) to levels far below the import of their music.

If “What Wagner Wanted” is no sure guide to production, most critics still insist that “What the Music Tells Us” is. You can ignore (they may concede) the stage directions, even skim over some sung German words that contradict your stage action or scenes, on the argument that what matters most is the music, and the drama implicit in it.

But who is to say precisely what drama is implicit in a score? Leitmotifs “mean,” for the most part, only because Wagner or his commentators say they do. Except for a few almost obvious ones, like the Magic Fire music, would we “know” that certain chords and sequences “meant,” say, Revenge, or Fate, or Renunciation, or God’s Stress, if we didn’t have a guidebook to tell us? Aestheticians have argued for centuries over what and how music “means”: until they all agree, and we agree with them, we cannot hold producers to a fixed and single interpretation of a line, scene, or character, because “the music says so.”

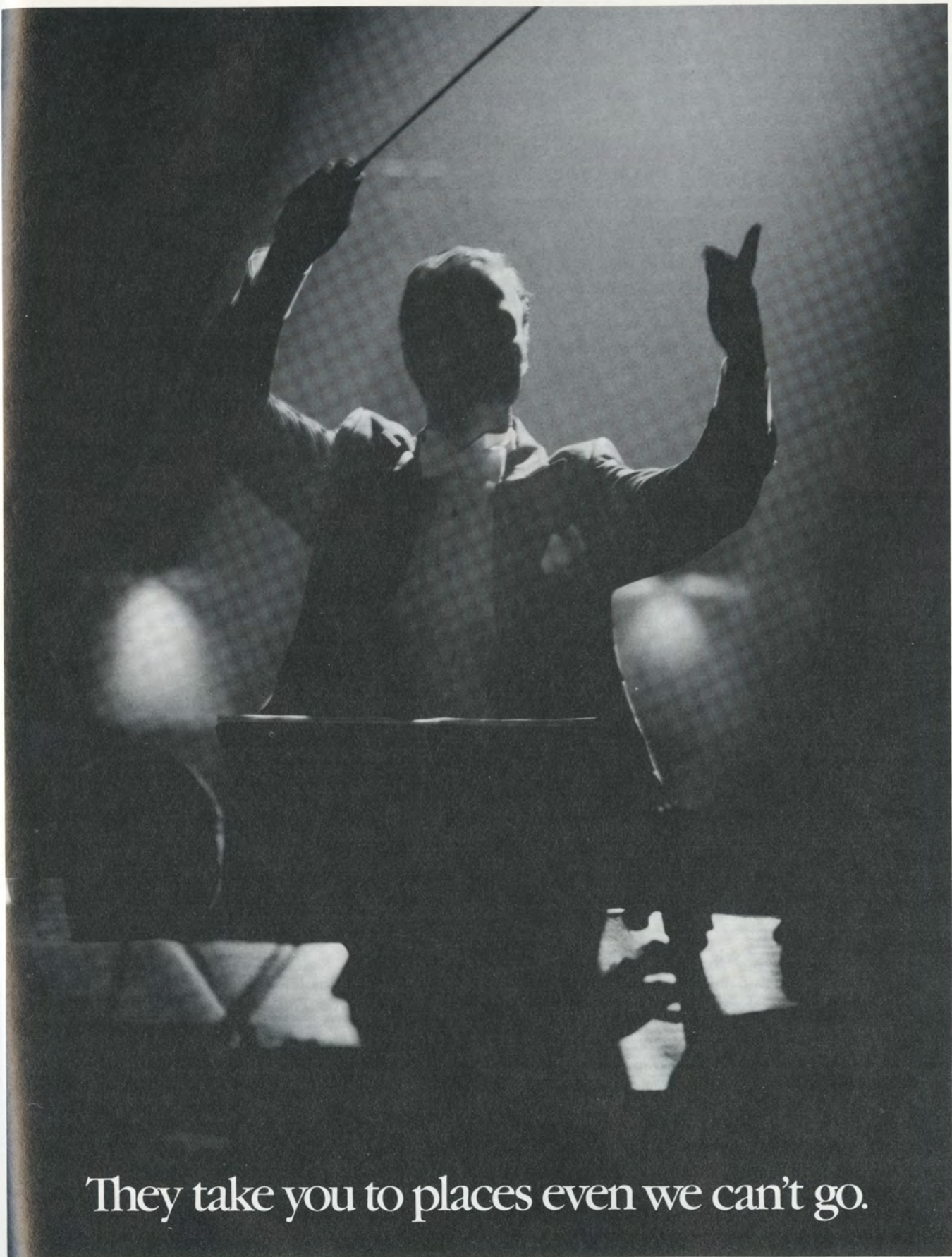
Chaos, as Wagner himself sometimes suggested, is likely to be the rule rather than the exception in our world (and in productions of *Der Ring des Nibelungen* that try to reflect or comment on that world) until another cruel divine order emerges to force things back into unity. *Rings* devoted to the evils and collapse of Eastern European communism are surely on the drafting boards already, now that *Rings* devoted to the evils and collapse of capitalism and fascism are becoming routine. Be grateful that you are seeing one of the few contemporary *Rings* that is as handsome to look at as it is to listen to, thoughtfully (not narrowly or spitefully) of our time, on the whole more generous to Wagner than mean-minded and reductive; one that (for the most part) makes provocative sense, and still seems to grow out of the music—which is (fortunately) larger than all of these Concepts put together. ■

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The *Ring* Calendar

June 6 Wednesday	Cycle I — DAS RHEINGOLD Helga Dernesch, Patricia Racette, Birgitta Svendén*, Ann Panagulias, Mary Mills, Sandra Walker/James Morris, Tom Fox*, Jacque Trussel, Helmut Pampuch, Eric Halfvarson, James Patterson, Monte Pederson, Mark Baker* Peter Schneider**/Nikolaus Lehnhoff/Laurie Feldman/John Conklin/Thomas J. Munn	Opera House 7 p.m.
June 8 Friday	Cycle I — DIE WALKÜRE Gwyneth Jones, Rebecca Blankenship**, Helga Dernesch, Patricia Racette, Meredith Mizell, Sheila Smith*, Katherine Ciesinski, Pamela King*, Carla Cook, Robynne Redmon, Catherine Keen/Gary Lakes, James Morris, John Macurdy Peter Schneider/Nikolaus Lehnhoff/Peter McClintock/John Conklin/Thomas J. Munn	Opera House 7 p.m.
June 10 Sunday	Cycle I — SIEGFRIED Gwyneth Jones, Birgitta Svendén, Janet Williams/William Johns, James Morris, Helmut Pampuch, Tom Fox, James Patterson Peter Schneider/Nikolaus Lehnhoff/Peter McClintock/John Conklin/Thomas J. Munn	Opera House 1 p.m.
June 12 Tuesday	Cycle II — DAS RHEINGOLD (Same cast as June 6, except Franz Mazura replaces Tom Fox)	Opera House 7 p.m.
June 13 Wednesday	Cycle I — GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG Gwyneth Jones, Kathryn Day, Katherine Ciesinski, Birgitta Svendén, Ann Panagulias, Mary Mills, Sandra Walker/William Johns, Michael Devlin, Eric Halfvarson, Tom Fox Peter Schneider/Nikolaus Lehnhoff/Laurie Feldman/John Conklin/Thomas J. Munn	Opera House 6:30 p.m.
June 14 Thursday	Cycle II — DIE WALKÜRE (Same cast as June 8, except Janis Martin replaces Gwyneth Jones)	Opera House 7 p.m.
June 16 Saturday	Cycle II — SIEGFRIED (Same cast as June 10, except Janis Martin replaces Gwyneth Jones; René Kollo replaces William Johns; Franz Mazura replaces Tom Fox)	Opera House 7 p.m.
June 17 Sunday	The Wagner Society of Northern California sponsors a panel discussion — "The Performers View the <i>Ring</i> " — with participants including singers Blanche Thebom and Jess Thomas, Philip Eisenberg of the SFO musical staff, musicologist David Breckbill, members of the Opera Orchestra, and others. For further information, please call (415) 421-4412.	S.F. Ballet Bldg. 8 p.m.
June 18 Monday	The San Francisco Opera Guild presents a <i>Ring</i> Insight with conductors Peter Schneider and Donald Runnicles, and SFO Musical Administrator Clifford Cranna. For further information, please call (415) 565-6432.	Herbst Theatre 6 p.m.
June 19 Tuesday	Cycle II — GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG (Same cast as June 13 except Janis Martin replaces Gwyneth Jones; René Kollo replaces William Johns; Franz Mazura replaces Tom Fox)	Opera House 6:30 p.m.

June 20 Wednesday	Cycle III — DAS RHEINGOLD (Same cast as June 6, except Robert Hale* replaces James Morris; Donald Runnicles* replaces Peter Schneider)	Opera House 7 p.m.
June 21 Thursday	Cycle III — DIE WALKÜRE (Same cast as June 8, except Robert Hale replaces James Morris; Donald Runnicles replaces Peter Schneider)	Opera House 7 p.m.
June 22 Friday	The Wagner Society celebrates <i>The Ring</i> with a Musicale featuring the Adler Fellows from the San Francisco Opera Center performing music by composers who influenced Wagner, those influenced by him, and some early songs by Wagner himself.	S.F. Ballet Bldg. 8 p.m.
June 23 Saturday	Cycle III — SIEGFRIED (Same cast as June 10 except Robert Hale replaces James Morris; René Kollo replaces William Johns; Donald Runnicles replaces Peter Schneider)	Opera House 7 p.m.
June 24 Sunday	Cycle IV — DAS RHEINGOLD (Same cast as June 20, except James Morris replaces Robert Hale; Franz Mazura replaces Tom Fox) The Wagner Society's reception for <i>Ring</i> performers and a buffet. Reservations required.	Opera House 2 p.m. S.F. Ballet Bldg. Following <i>Das Rheingold</i>
June 26 Tuesday	Cycle III — GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG (Same cast as June 13, except René Kollo replaces William Johns; Donald Runnicles replaces Peter Schneider)	Opera House 6:30 p.m.
June 27 Wednesday	Cycle IV — DIE WALKÜRE (Same cast as June 21, except Hildegard Behrens* replaces Gwyneth Jones; James Morris replaces Robert Hale)	Opera House 7 p.m.
June 29 Friday	Cycle IV — SIEGFRIED (Same cast as June 23, except Hildegard Behrens replaces Gwyneth Jones; James Morris replaces Robert Hale; Franz Mazura replaces Tom Fox)	Opera House 7 p.m.
July 1 Sunday	Cycle IV — GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG (Same cast as June 26, except Hildegard Behrens replaces Gwyneth Jones; Franz Mazura replaces Tom Fox)	Opera House 1 p.m.

**U.S. opera debut

*San Francisco Opera debut

English Supertitles for every performance.

Casts and dates subject to change.

Box office and telephone sales: (415) 864-3330.

A VISUAL "RING"

Audience members are invited to view an exhibit of photographs of San Francisco Opera's production of *The Ring of the Nibelung* in the War Memorial Opera House Museum (box level, south side). The display includes color reproductions of scenes from the 1985 *Ring*, as well as a special look behind the scenes at the creation of this elaborate production, the most complicated project ever undertaken by San Francisco Opera. The exhibit is open to the public during Opera House performance hours throughout the run of the *Ring*.

Note: Many additional *Ring*-related events have been scheduled by the Goethe Institute, Humanities West, University of California at San Francisco, and the Wagner Society of Northern California; many of these will have taken place before San Francisco Opera's *Ring* cycles begin. We have therefore limited this calendar to S.F. Opera events only.

PROFILES



PETER SCHNEIDER

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

Currently general music director of the Freiburg Opera, Scottish conductor **Donald Runnicles** makes his San Francisco Opera debut leading performances of the *Ring* cycle. After studying music at Edinburgh University, St. John's College, Cambridge, and the London Opera Centre, he joined



DONALD RUNNICLES

the Mannheim Nationaltheater as répétiteur and made his professional conducting debut there in 1980 with *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*. After promotion to Kapellmeister, he spent seven years in Mannheim where he conducted over 40 operas, including *Fidelio*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Un Ballo in Maschera*, *Die Walküre* and *Parsifal*, and was a guest conductor at numerous German houses, including those in Frankfurt, Düsseldorf and Hamburg. In 1987 he was appointed principal conductor at the Hannover Opera, where he led, among others, performances of *Werther*, *Jenůfa*, *Tosca*, *Don Giovanni* and *Salome*. That same year he began a long association with the Hamburg Staatsoper, where he has conducted *Otello*, *Turandot*, *Don Carlo*, *The Bartered Bride*, *Carmen*, *Die Zauberflöte*, *Der Fliegende Holländer*, *Manon Lescaut*, *Il Traviatore* and *L'Elisir d'Amore*. Maestro Runnicles also spent several seasons at the Bayreuth Festival, where he assisted James Levine on the centenary production of *Parsifal*, as well as Peter Schneider and Georg Solti on *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, and Horst Stein on *Die Meistersinger*. As Levine's assistant at the Metropolitan Opera, he made his debut there in 1988 conducting on short notice the 3-act version of Berg's *Lulu* to great acclaim, and has since returned to the Met for *Der Fliegende Holländer*. Recent engagements include new productions of *Peter Grimes* in Zurich, *Die Zauberflöte* in Amsterdam, *Idomeneo* and *Der Freischütz* in Hannover, *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* in Freiburg, and *Parsifal* in Copenhagen. Future plans include *Don Giovanni* at Glyndebourne, *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* at the Hamburg Staatsoper and Vienna Volksoper, *Die Zauberflöte* at the Met, and several engagements at the Vienna Staatsoper. Maestro Runnicles also maintains a busy symphonic career with engagements in Edinburgh, Darmstadt, Hannover, Copenhagen and Hamburg.

Nikolaus Lehnhoff conceived the original production of Wagner's complete *Ring of the Nibelung*, which was mounted at San Francisco Opera in the summer of 1985. His



NIKOLAUS LEHNHOFF

most recent Company assignment was in 1987, when he recreated his production of *Salome*, first seen here during the 1982 season. Following a stint as an assistant director at the Deutsche Oper in Berlin, Lehnhoff became assistant to Wieland Wagner at Bayreuth and worked with him on the last *Ring* produced by the composer's grandson in 1965-66. He also worked with Herbert von Karajan on his Salzburg *Ring* production, which was later taken to the Metropolitan Opera, where Lehnhoff served as assistant director from 1966 to 1971. He made his debut at the Paris Opera with the 1972 production of *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, conducted by Karl Böhm, with Leonie Rysaneck and Christa Ludwig. Lehnhoff first came to San Francisco Opera to direct *Salome* in 1974 and returned here two years later to stage *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, also conducted by Böhm. His staging of the Strauss allegorical drama won him critical praise in Stockholm (where he directed Birgit Nilsson in her first appearance as the Dyer's Wife), Düsseldorf and in San Francisco, where he recreated the work in 1980. He has directed *Tristan und Isolde* at the Orange Festival in France and in Frankfurt, *Elektra* for Chicago, and *Fidelio* in Bremen. In Düsseldorf, he staged his first Mozart opera, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, which he also directed in Bonn. His credits include *Pelléas et Mélisande* in Nuremberg, Ravel's *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges* and Debussy's *La Chute de la Maison Usher* at the Berlin Festival, Marschner's *Hans Heiling* in Zurich, *Salome* in Rio de Janeiro, and a highly praised *Così fan tutte* in Bonn. For the Beethoven Festival in Bonn, he staged an acclaimed *Fidelio* in 1984, with Hildegard Behrens and René Kollo. For the 1984 re-opening of the Zurich Opera House he directed the world premiere of Rudolf Kelterborn's *Cherry Orchard* (after Chekhov). Recent credits include *Dido and Aeneas* for the Graz Festival, *Eugene Onegin* in Mannheim, *Katya Kabanova* and *Jenůfa* for the Glyndebourne Festival, *Der Fliegende Holländer* in Santa Fe, a new production of *Salome* at the Metropolitan Opera, *Die Meistersinger* at La Scala, and a complete new production of Wagner's *Ring* in Munich.

RING CONDUCTORS AND PRODUCTION TEAM



LAURIE FELDMAN

Associated with San Francisco Opera since 1981, **Laurie Feldman** makes her directorial debut with the Company as stage director of *Das Rheingold* and *Götterdämmerung*. The native of San Francisco has worked here as Assistant Stage Manager on over 25 different productions, and served as Assistant Director for over 20 operas, aiding directors Lotfi Mansouri (*Lulu*, *La Gioconda*), Michael Hampe (*Fidelio*), John Copley (*Eugene Onegin*), Wolfgang Weber (*Jenůfa*), and Nikolaus Lehnhoff (*Salome*). In addition to her local credits, she has been engaged as assistant director at Santa Fe Opera, the Canadian Opera Company, and the Dallas Opera. Miss Feldman has directed her own productions of *Fidelio* at the Carmel Bach Festival, *Carmen* for Marin Opera, and Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Gondoliers* for The Lamplighters. She also staged San Francisco Opera productions of *Fidelio* for the Washington Opera and *The Tales of Hoffmann* for the COC. She has twice been a recipient of the San Francisco Opera Guild Scholarship which enabled her to further her studies at the Bayerische Staatsoper in Munich.

Peter McClintock makes his San Francisco Opera directorial debut staging *Die Walküre* and *Siegfried*. He began his association with the Company in 1985, serving as Assistant Stage Manager for over 15 productions. He has been an Assistant Director here since 1987, working with John Cox on *The Rake's Progress*, Nicolas Joël on *Parsifal*, Robert Carsen on *Mefistofele*, and Wolfgang Weber on *Lohengrin*, among other assignments. McClintock also shares his time with the Metropolitan Opera, where he was recently assistant director to Harold Prince on *Faust* and to Nikolaus Lehnhoff on *Salome*. Additional production credits include engagements with Long Beach Opera, San Diego Opera, Portland Opera, the Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Vancouver Opera, and at Artpark, where he was the assistant director of *Die Walküre* and *Siegfried*. He received his bachelor's degree in theater arts from UCLA and was awarded a scholarship from San Francisco Opera to further his studies in Italy.



JOHN CONKLIN

During the summer of 1985 **John Conklin** created designs for the four operas of Wagner's *Ring of the Nibelung*, which had been unveiled in 1983 (*Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*), 1984 (*Siegfried*) and 1985 (*Götterdämmerung*). For this summer's presentation of the *Ring* he also serves as production consultant. Local audiences first saw his work in Spring Opera Theater productions of *Orfeo* (1972), *Death in Venice* (1975 and '79) and *Julius Caesar* (1978). He made his San Francisco Opera debut in 1977 with the sets for *Un Ballo in Maschera* (repeated in 1982 and '85), and returned for *Don Pasquale* (fall 1980, summer 1984), *La Traviata* (1987), and for the new production of *Idomeneo* last fall. Conklin's designs have been seen in numerous opera, ballet and legitimate theater productions. He has created designs for such companies as the New York Shakespeare Festival, the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis, the Goodman Theatre in Chicago, the Long Wharf Theater in New Haven and the Hartford Stage Company. His long association with Santa Fe Opera has resulted in American premieres of Henze's *We Come to the River*, the three-act version of *Lulu*, Aulis Sallinen's *The King Goes Forth to France*, and Penderecki's *The Black Mask*. For New York City Opera his production credits include *Il Turco in Italia*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*,



THOMAS J. MUNN

and the world premieres of Argento's *Miss Havisham's Fire* and Anthony Davis's *X*. Other American opera projects have been for the Lyric Opera of Chicago (*Tancredi* and *The Barber of Seville*); Dallas Opera (the world premiere of Argento's *Aspern Papers*); Seattle Opera (*Il Trovatore* and a forthcoming production of *War and Peace*); and Opera Theatre of St. Louis, among others. For the Metropolitan Opera, he has designed the costumes for *Khovanshchina*, and is currently working on the set designs for a new production of *Semiramide*. On the other side of the Atlantic, he has been responsible for production designs for the Holland Festival, Scottish Opera, and the Bayerische Staatsoper in Munich. He teaches at the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University.

Lighting Director and Design Consultant for San Francisco Opera, **Thomas J. Munn** created the lighting and special effects for the *Ring* cycle, first seen here in 1985. In his 15th season with the Company, he has lighted over 130 productions for San Francisco Opera and last fall was lighting designer for *Falstaff*, *Mefistofele*, *Idomeneo*, *Aida*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Lohengrin*, *Orlando Furioso* and *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. He also serves as scenic adviser for the Company, and has designed scenery for *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, *Roberto Devereux*, *Pelléas et Mélisande*, *Billy Budd* and *Nabucco*. In addition to his numerous design credits for the War Memorial stage, Munn has designed scenery and lighting for Broadway, Off-Broadway, regional theater, ballet, industrials and film. His television credits include San Francisco Opera productions of *La Gioconda* (for which he received a 1979 Emmy Award), *Samson et Dalila*, *Aida*, *L'Africaine* and *La Bohème*. Recent credits include lighting and projection designs for *Madama Butterfly* for the Netherlands Opera; scenery and lighting for Hartford Ballet's production of *Coppélia* and *The Nutcracker*; and lighting designs for the Hartford Opera and Pittsburgh Opera productions of *Hansel and Gretel*. His most notable achievement as a lighting consultant is the new Muziektheater in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.



PETER MCCLINTOCK



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The 1990 presentation of the *Ring* is sponsored by Cynthia Wood, Mr. & Mrs. Reid W. Dennis and an anonymous friend of the San Francisco Opera. Additional support is provided by  , Mr. & Mrs. John M. Bryan, Barbro and Bernard Osher, Mr. & Mrs. Evert B. Person, Mr. & Mrs. William D. Rollnick, and Mr. & Mrs. Alfred S. Wilsey.

The original 1985 production was made possible by the BankAmerica Foundation, the Carol Franc Buck Foundation, the L.J. and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation and an anonymous friend of the Company.

Music drama in one act by RICHARD WAGNER
Text by the composer

Das Rheingold

(in German)

Der Ring des Nibelungen—Prologue

Conductor

Peter Schneider** (June 6, 12)
Donald Runnicles* (June 20, 24)

Original production by
Nikolaus Lehnhoff

Stage Director
Laurie Feldman

*Designer and
Production Consultant*
John Conklin

*Lighting Designer and
Special Effects*
Thomas J. Munn

Projections
Ron Scherl

Sound Designer
Roger Gans

Musical Preparation

Eric Weimer*
Mark Haffner
Kathryn Cathcart
John Beeson*
Patrick Summers
Jonathan Khuner
James Johnson
Philip Eisenberg

Prompter
Philip Eisenberg
Assistant Stage Directors
Paula Williams
Barbara Donner

Choreographic Assistance, Rhine Scene
Victoria Morgan

Stage Manager
Jerry Sherk

Scenery constructed in
San Francisco Opera Scenic Studios

Costumes executed by
San Francisco Opera Costume Shop

First performance:
Munich, September 22, 1869

First San Francisco Opera performance:
November 1, 1935

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 6 AT 7:00
TUESDAY, JUNE 12 AT 7:00
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 20 AT 7:00
SUNDAY, JUNE 24 AT 2:00

CAST

(in order of appearance)

<i>Woglinde</i>	Ann Panagulias
<i>Wellgunde</i>	Mary Mills
<i>Flosshilde</i>	Sandra Walker
<i>Alberich</i>	Tom Fox* (June 6, 20) Franz Mazura (June 12, 24)
<i>Fricka</i>	Helga Dernes
<i>Wotan</i>	James Morris (June 6, 12, 24) Robert Hale* (June 20)
<i>Freia</i>	Patricia Racette
<i>Fasolt</i>	Eric Halfvarson
<i>Fafner</i>	James Patterson
<i>Froh</i>	Mark Baker*
<i>Donner</i>	Monte Pederson
<i>Loge</i>	Jacque Trussel
<i>Mime</i>	Helmut Pampuch
<i>Erda</i>	Birgitta Svendén*
<i>Nibelungs, giants</i>	

**U.S. opera debut

*San Francisco Opera debut

<i>Scene 1:</i>	The river Rhine
<i>Scene 2:</i>	Terrace of the gods
<i>Scene 3:</i>	Nibelheim
<i>Scene 4:</i>	Terrace of the gods

PERFORMED WITHOUT INTERMISSION

Supertitles by Jerry Sherk and Francesca Zambello,
San Francisco Opera.

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

Das Rheingold/*Synopsis*

Scene 1—The Nibelung Alberich steals the gold of the primeval Rhine from its guardians, the Rhinemaidens. They have rashly revealed to him that the gold, when forged into a Ring, will bring its wearer power over the whole world—though such a Ring can only be forged by one who has renounced forever the possibility of loving or being loved. Frustrated beyond hope by the heartless teasing of the Rhinemaidens, Alberich makes that vital renunciation.

Scene 2—Meanwhile, in the realm of the gods far above, a new palace has been built for Wotan and his fellow deities by the giants Fafner and Fasolt, who have agreed to do the work in return for Freia, goddess of love, beauty, and youth. The terms of the giants' contract with Wotan are irrevocably engraved in sacred runes on Wotan's spear. Wotan's authority as chief of the gods rests upon the enforcement of laws and contracts, so he cannot himself break the pledge. Instead, he has relied upon Loge, the cunning spirit of fire, who has promised to find a way around the contract's fulfillment. But when the giants come to claim their payment, there is no sign of Loge, and Wotan, failing to dissuade Fafner and Fasolt, can barely restrain the other gods from using force. Finally Loge does appear but at first offers no solution. In all his travels, he says, he has found no alternative to Freia. He has, however, heard an unusual story, of the Nibelung Alberich, who by renouncing love and beauty has been able to acquire the wealth of the Rhine-gold and, with the Ring he has forged from it, untold power. The giants, fascinated, suggest that they might accept the Nibelung's hoard in place of Freia. Taking Freia with them as hostage, they promise to return for a final answer that evening. Without Freia the gods rapidly begin to grow old. Faced

with the consequences of his agreement, Wotan is persuaded to accompany Loge to Nibelheim, Alberich's empire, to secure the gold.

Scene 3—In his underground empire, Alberich has not only forged from the Rhine-gold the Ring that has brought him absolute power over the Nibelungs; he has also forced the skilled jeweler Mime to make from it a magic helmet, the Tarnhelm, whose powers of invisibility and transformation he spitefully demonstrates to the cringing Mime. When Wotan and Loge arrive, they have little difficulty learning the Tarnhelm's secret from Mime while Alberich is away forcing the Nibelungs, whom he has completely enslaved, to build up his treasure-hoard. Playing on the returned dwarf's vanity, Loge tempts Alberich to reveal the Tarnhelm's power, which he at once does by transforming himself into a frightful dragon. With mock admiration Loge professes himself duly astonished, though he doubts if Alberich's magic could work in the reverse direction, a transformation into something really small. Proudly the dwarf immediately turns himself into a toad. Wotan captures the toad, and as Alberich returns squirming to his own form, Wotan snatches the Tarnhelm from his head. Binding the Nibelung, Wotan and Loge drag him back to the terrace of the gods.

Scene 4—Emerging from the dark of Nibelheim into the mountain light, Wotan forces Alberich to have his slaves bring his treasure to the surface. Wotan pulls the Ring from the Nibelung's finger. Entranced at the prospect of its power, he puts it on. With terrible anger, Alberich lays his curse upon the Ring and all who shall wear it. By now it is evening, and the giants return to negotiate Freia's ransom. Still torn between love and

power, they demand as much gold as will completely conceal Freia's standing figure. All the treasure will barely do it; the Tarnhelm, too, must go; yet Freia's eyes still are visible through a chink in the pile. The Ring itself must join the heap. But Wotan wants it for himself. Only the magical appearance from the depths of the earth of Erda the Earth Mother, warning him of the strength of Alberich's curse, finally persuades the king of the gods to add the Ring to the ransom-pile, and complete his contract. As Freia is released to the rejuvenated gods, the Nibelung's curse begins its fatal course: Fafner, determined that the Ring shall be his alone, kills his brother giant. Gathering up his treasure, he stumbles off with it into the forest, leaving Wotan filled with foreboding. The gods are now free to enter their new palace. Its glory is revealed by Donner, who summons the thunderclouds to clear the sky. And the gods' access is made possible by Froh, god of light, who throws a rainbow-bridge from the mountain terrace across the Rhine in the gorge below, to the steps of Valhalla—for so Wotan now names it. In pondering the doom-ridden consequences of his contact with the Nibelung's Ring, he thinks first of force, symbolized by the powerful first appearance in the orchestra of the sword-motif. The idea occurs to him of creating a race of warrior-maidens, Valkyries, who will choose the greatest heroes from the battlegrounds of man, bringing them after death on the field to defend Valhalla, "Hall of the Chosen." As Wotan leads the gods to the rainbow-bridge, his anxiety is rekindled by the complaints of the Rhinemaidens far below demanding the return of their gold. Putting their cries aside, and unaware of the cynical doom-saying of Loge, Wotan leads Fricka and the other gods towards Valhalla—and their doom.



Das Rheingold

Photos taken in rehearsal by Marty Sohl



Sandra Walker, Ann Panagulias, Mary Mills



Helmut Pampuch

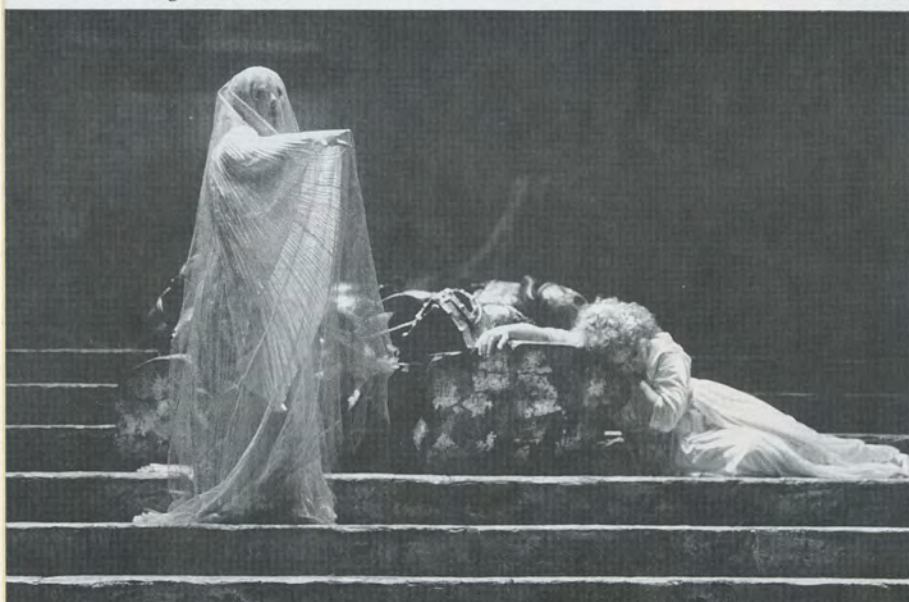
(below) Birgitta Svendén



Helga Dernesch



Jacque Trussel



Preceding page: Das Rheingold at the San Francisco Opera in 1985—Entrance of the gods into Valhalla. SCHERL

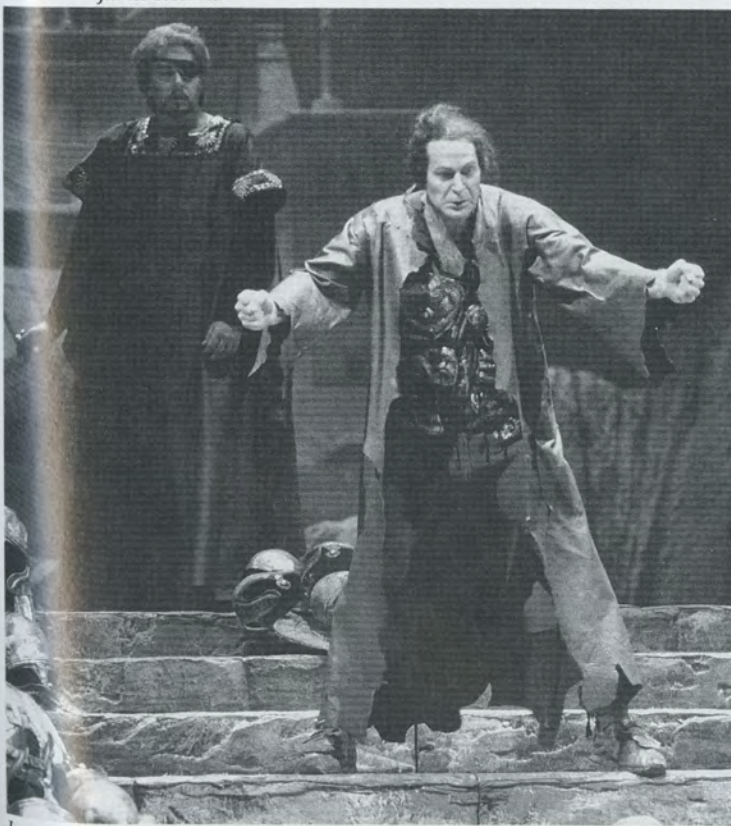


James Morris

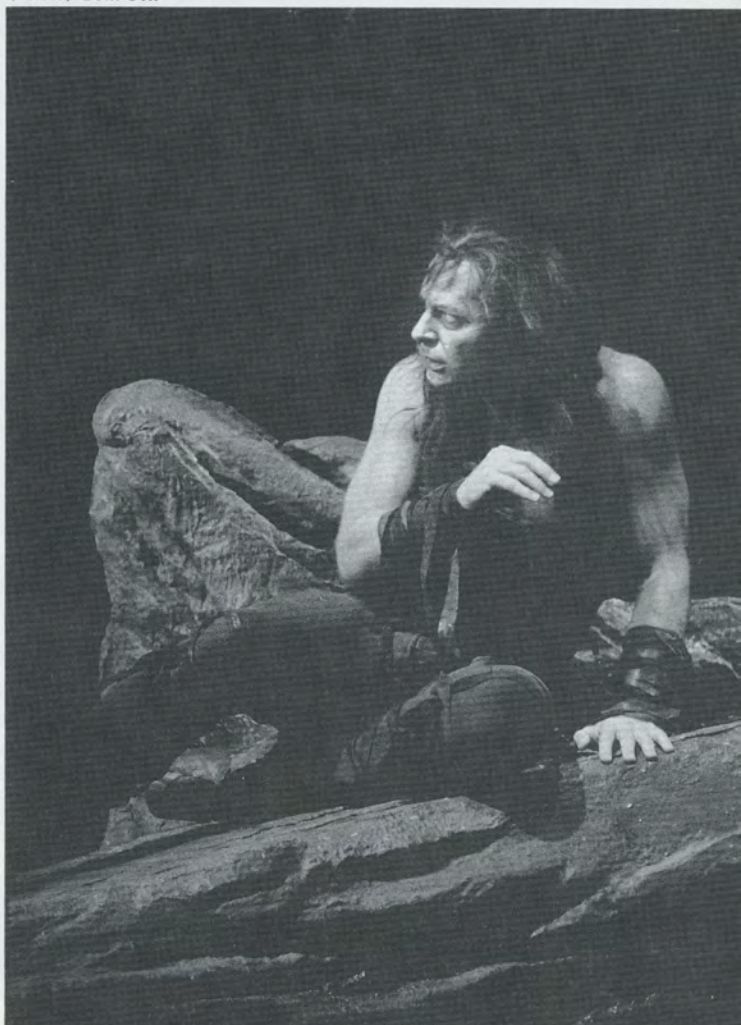


James Patterson, Patricia Racette, Eric Halfvarson

(below) Tom Fox



James Morris, Tom Fox





James Morris, Monte Pederson



Patricia Racette, Helga Dernesch, Mark Baker



Tom Fox, San Francisco Opera Supernumeraries

ARTIST PROFILES



HELGA DERNESCH

The renowned Viennese mezzo-soprano **Helga Dernes** portrays Fricka in *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*. Since her Company debut in the summer of 1981 as Goneril in *Lear* (repeated during the 1985 Fall Season), she has been a favorite of San Francisco audiences and has returned frequently. Roles she has performed on the stage of the War Memorial are Herodias in *Salome* (1982, 1987); Fricka in *Die Walküre* (summer 1983); Erda in *Siegfried* and Prince Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus* (summer 1984); Marfa in *Khovanshchina* (fall 1984); and Fricka in *Die Walküre* as well as the Second Norn and Waltraute in *Götterdämmerung* (1985 Ring Festival). Miss Dernes made her debut at the Bayreuth Festival in 1965 as a soprano, singing such roles as Eva in *Die Meistersinger*, Freia in *Das Rheingold*, and Gutrune in *Götterdämmerung* for five seasons. Turning to heavier dramatic Wagner roles, she first sang at the Salzburg Easter Festival in 1969 as Brünnhilde in *Siegfried*, conducted by Herbert von Karajan, with whom she subsequently performed and recorded the *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung* Brünnhildes, Leonore in *Fidelio*, and Isolde in *Tristan und Isolde*. Under the baton of Georg Solti she appeared at Covent Garden as Chrysothemis in *Elektra* and the Dyer's Wife in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, and recorded the role of Elisabeth in *Tannhäuser*. Since 1979, Miss Dernes has been singing mezzo-soprano roles with great success in the major opera centers of the world, beginning with the Nurse in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. By now, she is also in great demand as Klytemnestra in *Elektra*, Brangäne in *Tristan und Isolde*, as well as Herodias, Fricka and Waltraute. At the 1982 Salzburg Festival she performed and later recorded Othmar Schoeck's *Penthesilea*, and has also recorded Aribert Reimann's *Lear* and Requiem, as well as his new opera, *The Trojan Women (Troades)*. Since her 1985 Metropolitan Opera debut in *Khovanshchina*, she has returned to that company as Fricka in *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*, Waltraute in *Götterdämmerung*,



PATRICIA RACETTE

Herodias in *Salome*, the Nurse in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, and Prince Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus*. Other recent appearances include Fricka in *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*, as well as Klytemnestra in *Elektra* and Herodias in *Salome*, all for the Royal Opera, Covent Garden; the Nurse in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* at the Munich Opera Festival; Dame Quickly in Los Angeles Opera's *Falstaff*, and Herodias in Amsterdam. The most recent additions to her extensive discography are complete recordings of Strauss' *Arabella* and Weill's *The Threepenny Opera*.

Soprano **Patricia Racette** sings Freia in *Das Rheingold* and Helmwige in *Die Walküre*. She made her San Francisco Opera debut last fall as Mistress Ford in the Family Performance of *Falstaff*, and also performed in *Aida*, *Idomeneo* and *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. She also appeared as Anastasio in the 1989 Opera Center Showcase production of Handel's *Giustino*. A member of the Merola Opera Program in 1988 and currently an Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, she sang the title role of *Madame Butterfly* on Western Opera Theater's 1988-89 national tour, and traveled to Japan with the Center's Pacific Rim Exchange program. A native of New Hampshire, she received a Bachelor of Music degree in Voice from North Texas State University, where she sang the title role of *Suor Angelica*, Diana in *Orpheus in the Underworld* and Laura in *Luisa Miller*. She also appeared in the title role of Carlisle Floyd's *Susannah* at the Metro Opera Works in Fort Worth. Miss Racette was a National Finalist in the 1988 Metropolitan Opera National Auditions, first place winner in the New York region of the 1988 San Francisco Opera Auditions, and received the Mr. & Mrs. Bernhardt N. Poetz Memorial Award at the 1988 Grand Finals. She recently appeared as Micaëla in *Carmen* with Marin Opera,

DAS RHEINGOLD



BIRGITTA SVENDÉN

and will be seen with the Company this fall as Sister Osmia in *Suor Angelica* and as Rosalinda in the Family Performance of *Die Fledermaus*. Additional future engagements include Mimì in *La Bohème* with Marin Opera, and Nedda in *Pagliacci* with Miami Opera.

Mezzo-soprano **Birgitta Svendén** makes her San Francisco Opera debut as Erda in Wagner's *Ring* cycle. Born in Sweden, she studied at the Stockholm Opera School before joining the Royal Opera in Stockholm, where she has performed the roles of Erda, Dorabella in *Così fan tutte*, and Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, among others. In 1983, Georg Solti invited her to appear in a new production of the *Ring* cycle at the Bayreuth Festival. She made her debut at the Opéra de Nice in 1985, and has subsequently appeared there in the title role of *Carmen*, as Meg Page in *Falstaff*, and as Anna in *Les Troyens*. Miss Svendén made her Metropolitan Opera debut during the 1988-89 season as Erda in *Das Rheingold* and *Siegfried* and, that same season, sang Magdalene in *Die Meistersinger* in Seattle, Ulrica in *Un Ballo in Maschera* at the Zurich Opera, Maddalena in *Rigoletto* at the Met, and a performance of Mahler's Second Symphony at Chicago's Ravinia Festival under James Levine. Future performances include her debut at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden as Erda; her debut at Milan's La Scala as Magdalene; and a European tour with the Israel Philharmonic under Zubin Mehta in performances of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.



ANN PANAGULIAS

Soprano **Ann Panagulias**, who was recently featured by San Francisco Opera in a concert with Plácido Domingo at Civic Auditorium, sings Woglinde in *Das Rheingold* and *Götterdämmerung*. A 1988 Adler Fellow with the Opera Center, she scored a storybook success in the title role of Berg's *Lulu* here last fall, singing the demanding role for the first time in her career. She made her Company debut in 1988 in Wagner's *Parsifal* and was also featured in the Schwabacher Debut Recital series. Last year, in addition to *Lulu*, she appeared as Fortuna in the Opera Center's presentation of Handel's *Giustino* and Mrs. Naidoo in the Philip Glass *Satyagraha*, staged at the Opera House. A 1986 Merola Opera Program participant, she performed the role of Mimi in *La Bohème*, repeating the part for Western Opera Theater's tour of the opera, which culminated with performances in China and a special concert with the Shanghai Opera Orchestra. For WOT's 1987-88 tour she sang Norina in *Don Pasquale*, and was also heard in the title role of Titus's *Rosina* in the work's West Coast premiere. As a member of Wolf Trap Opera in 1987, she performed Erisbe in Cavalli's *L'Ormino* and Helena in Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Her most recent opera appearances were as Pamina in Pittsburgh Opera's *The Magic Flute* and as Violetta/Camille in Skylight Opera of Milwaukee's presentation of the Dumas heroine as seen in the original play and the Verdi *Traviata*. Future engagements include her European debut at La Fenice in Venice in the title role of a new production of *Lulu*, and Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte* in Bordeaux, *Carmina Burana* with the Honolulu Symphony, and Susanna in *Le Nozze di Figaro* with Hawaii Opera. Miss Panagulias, a native of Pittsburgh, received her Bachelor of Music degree from the Oberlin College Conservatory and a Master of Music degree from the New England Conservatory.



MARY MILLS

Currently an Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, soprano **Mary Mills** sings Wellgunde in *Das Rheingold* and *Götterdämmerung*. A member of the 1989 Merola Opera Program, she made her Company debut last fall in *Lulu*. The Dallas native received her undergraduate degree from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music and her Master of Music degree from the Yale School of Music. She continued her operatic training at the Banff School of Fine Arts Program in Alberta, Canada, the Mozarteum Summer Academy in Salzburg, the American Institute of Musical Studies in Graz, the Central City Opera Studio Program, and the Houston Grand Opera Studio. She made her professional debut as Barbarina in *The Marriage of Figaro* with Houston Grand Opera, and also appeared in their productions of *Show Boat* and *Dialogues of the Carmelites*. A 1989 National Winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, Miss Mills will be seen with the Company this fall in *Rigoletto*, *Don Quichotte* and *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria*.



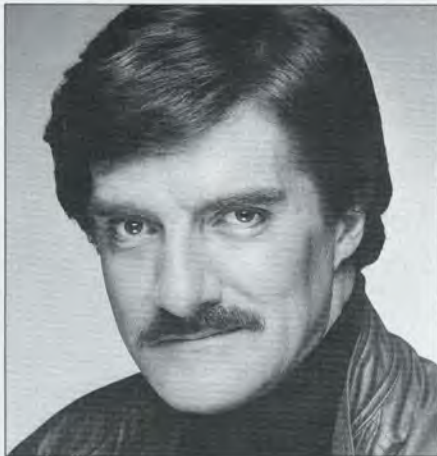
SANDRA WALKER

Mezzo-soprano **Sandra Walker** portrays Flosshilde in *Das Rheingold* and *Götterdämmerung*. The North Carolina native made her San Francisco Opera debut in the 1972 production of the *Ring* cycle, and returned in 1974 as Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly*. She appeared with the Company in 1986 as Magdalene in *Die Meistersinger* and Olga in *Eugene Onegin*, and was seen here last fall as Bradamante in *Orlando Furioso*. She made her 1986 Metropolitan Opera debut as Micah in Handel's *Samson*, a role she had previously performed at the Lyric Opera of Chicago and at the Teatro Comunale in Florence. She returned to the Met last year for Olga in *Eugene Onegin* and Maddalena in *Rigoletto*. The 1976 Spoleto Festival was the occasion for Miss Walker's European debut in a highly acclaimed production of *The Rape of Lucretia* in which she sang the title role. Based in Germany since 1980, she has often appeared at the Frankfurt Opera as well as other German opera houses. Her roles there included Fricka in *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*, Brangäne in *Tristan und Isolde*, Octavian in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Isabella in *L'Italiana in Algeri*, Orfeo in Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice*, Ottavia in *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, Judith in *Bluebeard's Castle*, Dorabella in *Così fan tutte*, and Ramiro in *La Finta Giardiniera*. Highlights of recent seasons include her Rome debut in Prokofiev's *Alexander Nevsky*, Berlioz's *Romeo and Juliet* in Paris, and the world premiere of Hans Zender's *Stephen Climax*, in which she created the role of Bella Cohen, in Frankfurt and The Hague. She also sang the Nurse in Dukas's *Ariane et Barbe-Bleue* with the Netherlands Opera. Miss Walker has appeared as soloist with the Chicago Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, St. Louis Symphony and the American Symphony. She has recorded the song cycle *King Midas* by Ned Rorem, and appears in the videos of *Eugene Onegin* with Mirella Freni, *Manon* with Beverly Sills, as well as a forthcoming video of San Francisco Opera's recent production of *Orlando Furioso*.



JAMES MORRIS

Bass **James Morris** returns to the Company to recreate the role of Wotan in both *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*, and to portray the Wanderer in *Siegfried*. The Baltimore native made his 1981 San Francisco Opera debut as Assur in *Semiramide* and during the 1985 Ring Festival won international acclaim as Wotan, appearing in the *Rheingold* part for the first time in his career. He returned here that fall as Scarpia in *Tosca* and as Claggart in *Billy Budd*. In May of 1987 he performed a recital at the War Memorial Opera House and appeared later that year as the four villains in *The Tales of Hoffmann*. Morris became the youngest male singer on the Metropolitan Opera roster at the age of 23 and four years later was on the Met stage as Don Giovanni, a role he has sung in numerous seasons there, as well as those of the four villains in *The Tales of Hoffmann*, Claggart in *Billy Budd*, Wotan/the Wanderer in the complete Ring cycle, the title roles of *Der Fliegende Holländer* and *Faust*, and leading roles in *Macbeth*, *La Forza del Destino*, *Don Carlo*, *Otello*, *Carmen*, *Peter Grimes*, and *The Barber of Seville*, among others. In addition to his regular appearances at the Met and throughout the U.S. and Canada, he has appeared several times at the Salzburg Festival (*The Marriage of Figaro*, *Tosca*), Milan's La Scala (*Der Fliegende Holländer*), the Vienna Staatsoper (*Die Walküre*, *Don Giovanni*), at the Glyndebourne and Edinburgh Festivals, as well as in Strasbourg, Florence, Madrid, Barcelona, Santiago, Sydney and Melbourne. Last season, he made his Royal Opera Covent Garden debut in *Das Rheingold*, and recently sang in performances of *Die Walküre* with that company, with whom he will perform the complete Ring cycle over a period of several years. He has also taken part in two complete new German Ring cycles—Munich and Berlin. In great demand as a concert singer, he has performed with a number of



ROBERT HALE

prominent orchestras including the New York Philharmonic, Berlin Philharmonic, the National Symphony Orchestra, and the symphonies of Atlanta, St. Louis, San Francisco and Chicago. He also joined the Soviet Émigré Orchestra in Carnegie Hall for the first performance outside the Soviet Union of Shostakovich's "Six Romances." His discography includes two complete Ring cycles, *Maria Stuarda*, *Le Roi de Lahore*, *I Vespri Siciliani*, *Così fan tutte*, Haydn's *The Creation*, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, the Requiems by Mozart and Fauré, as well as a recent release of arias by Wagner and Verdi.

American bass-baritone **Robert Hale** makes his San Francisco Opera debut as Wotan in *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*, and the Wanderer in *Siegfried*. Born in Texas, he completed his master's degree at the University of Oklahoma and continued his studies at Boston University and the New England Conservatory of Music. He made his operatic debut in Frankfurt, Germany, while stationed there as a member of the armed forces. After a U.S. opera debut with the New York City Opera, and several appearances with the opera companies of San Diego, Philadelphia, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh and Winnipeg, he has sung most recently with great success in Europe. He has performed at the Vienna Staatsoper, the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, the Bayerische Staatsoper in Munich, the Deutsche Oper Berlin, and in Zurich, Hamburg, Frankfurt, Stuttgart, Cologne and Düsseldorf. He appeared as Wotan and the Wanderer when the Deutsche Oper Berlin presented the Ring cycle in Tokyo and in Washington, D.C., and will perform these roles in the Vienna Staatsoper's new production of the Ring later this season. Equally successful in the concert hall, he has performed with the symphonies of San Francisco, Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, Cincinnati, Washington, D.C., Toronto and



TOM FOX

Montreal. Hale has also appeared at the festivals of Ravinia, Tanglewood, and Wolftrap in the U.S., and those of Bergen, Lausanne, Bordeaux, Orange and Bregenz in Europe. Highlights from the 1988-89 season include Jokanaan in *Salome* at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden; Méphistophélès in *Faust* at the Deutsche Oper Berlin; Wotan in *Die Walküre* at Bologna's Teatro Comunale; and the title role of *Der Fliegende Holländer* in a new David Pountney production in Bregenz.

Baritone **Tom Fox**, in his San Francisco Opera debut, portrays Alberich in *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. After early musical training at the Cincinnati Opera's College Conservatory of Music, he became a resident member of the Cincinnati Opera, singing such roles as Doctor Dulcamara in *The Elixir of Love*, Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly*, and Escamillo in *Carmen*. In 1981, he was engaged as principal guest artist at the Frankfurt Opera, where his roles included Orest in *Elektra*, Amonasro in *Aida*, Pizarro in *Fidelio*, Klingsor in *Parsifal*, Nick Shadow in *The Rake's Progress*, Alberich and Escamillo. His first appearance with the Canadian Opera Company was in 1983 as Orest, and he has since returned to Toronto as Jokanaan in *Salome*, the four villains in *The Tales of Hoffmann*, Scarpia in *Tosca*, and Escamillo. The role of Escamillo also served as his debut with the Vancouver Opera and the Welsh National Opera. During the 1986-87 season, Fox made his debut with Pittsburgh Opera as Claudius in the Ambroise Thomas *Hamlet*, and sang his first Iago in *Otello* at the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires. He returned to Frankfurt for the 1987-88 season as Amonasro and as Ford in *Falstaff*, and made his debut with L'Opéra de Nice at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris as Alberich in their joint production of the Ring cycle. He

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Das Rheingold: Fire and Water

By ANDREW PORTER

Early chemistry divided the constituents of our world into four elements: fire, air, earth and water. And early psychology divided human personality into four "humors" or temperaments: choleric, sanguine, phlegmatic, and melancholy. By various "elementary" combinations, all substances in the world could be categorized, and by various combinations of the four humors all human personalities could be defined. (In *Götterdämmerung*, the melancholy Hagen,

after Siegfried and Gunther have sworn blood-brotherhood while he stays apart from the oath, declares that "my blood runs stubborn and cold, slow to stir ... So I remain far from fiery bondings.") The simple quadriform formulations were soon elaborated, but in art they lingered on, and rightly so, for they retain their elemental potency: "fiery," "earthy," "airy," "watery" are words that draw a ready response. It was not mere chance that led Aristotle to his dry-wet-

Das Rheingold, Scene 2, at the San Francisco Opera in 1985. SCHERL

hot-cold combinations.

Das Rheingold is an elemental exposition, almost schematically so. It opens in Water, the feminine, mother element, our prenatal surrounding before we are expelled, or dragged, into the consciousness, brightness, and harshness of Fire, Earth, and Air. (It provides the "harbour shelt'ring peace" to which, in later operas, Wozzeck, Peter Grimes, and Billy Budd return, toward which Tadzio beckons Aschenbach.) In this element the Rhinemaidens swim and sport. It is a peaceful, happy place until it is invaded by the male earthling Alberich. Then later we see it pierced, as each day it is, by a brilliant, penetrating ray from the Sun. And at once Jungian problems arise: in German the sun is feminine—*Frau Sonne*, "Mrs. Sun"—while the moon is masculine, *Herr Mond*, "Mr. Moon." In other European languages *le soleil*, *il sole*, that great big glaring thing in the sky is masculine, while the gentler moon—*la lune*, *la luna*—is feminine. English and American poets, in our largely genderless language, generally follow suit in their use of pronouns to characterize the two luminaries. But the Germans have things

Das Rheingold, Scene 1, as it looked at Bayreuth in 1876. Design by Joseph Hoffmann.

the other way round, and perhaps, if gender-sensitive, they make it all something quite different from what the rest of the world does. At any rate, a penetrating ray from the (feminine) Sun fertilizes the (neuter) Gold into radiance, and the (indubitably male) Alberich seizes and steals it.

The second and the fourth scenes of the opera are set on the Airy heights, and the third scene is set in the depths of the Earth, where the Nibelungs dwell. Through all three of these scenes there flickers the element of Fire, Loge, who would have been quenched in the Water but who can flourish both in Air and on Earth.

* * *

Quiz question: "Which character appears in all four operas of the *Ring*? An acceptable answer would be Wotan, given a production that showed him, at the close of *Götterdämmerung*, as the stage directions prescribe, awaiting his fate in doomed Valhalla and consumed by Fire. Otherwise it must be Loge, active and vocally present in *Das Rheingold*, active but present only visually in the other three: as at Wotan's command he flares up to fill the stage with flame, protectively ringing Brünnhilde, at the close of *Die Walküre*; as in the last act of *Siegfried*

and again in the first act of *Götterdämmerung* he becomes the "sea of fire" through which only a hero can pass; as in the final scene of the cycle he is dominant, to the eye if not to the ear, while his flames, destructive but purifying, consume the old orders—the godly castle, the princely palace—and when the flames are at their height, the curtain falls.

Loge, personified, did not figure in Wagner's first scheme for the *Ring*. (Well, neither, for that matter, did Wotan or any of the gods figure in *Siegfried's Tod*, the original one-opera version.) But as the dramatist worked backwards, bringing musical and stage actuality to the events that lead up to the final opera, he made Loge the most vivid character of *Das Rheingold*. Looking at him, we can begin to discern some of Wagner's intentions. But it is hard to look at him, and hear him, steadily. Like Fire, he is elusive, flickering, protean. Sometimes his motif sparkles on a steady harmonic base; sometimes it darts and glimmers in a wildfire chromatic dazzle. He comes on in a rushing upward swirl. Elegant, witty, and detached, he hops from key to key as he mocks Donner's and Froh's domestic aspirations, praises the giants' solid workmanship, and disclaims any responsibility for Wotan's terrible predicament. Then, suddenly, this unpredictable figure becomes a poet as he breaks into the D-major aria hymning "woman's beauty and worth"—an aria that is at once glowingly lyrical and beautiful, and cynical and ironic in tone.

In the power struggles of *Das Rheingold*, Loge is the tempter. He does no violence himself (except at the close of the third scene, when—according to a stage direction that I rather wish Wagner had not written—he lends a hand in the binding of Alberich) but merely suggests the possibility of it to others. He behaves rather like the witches in *Macbeth*, who put ideas into Macbeth's head but leave the decisions to him. Although the other gods call Loge a liar, he tells nothing but truths—and disastrous truths they prove to be. He is fluent, clever, and tricky. He points out the escape clauses that provide the temporary answers. He was in the White House while Nixon was President. He is not just an observer but also a dangerous, amused meddler, who refuses to take the blame if things go wrong. Others may make the evil choice: he merely points out the possibility of





(Left) Friedrich Schorr as Wotan and Hans Clemens as Loge in S.F. Opera's 1935 *Rheingold*; (Above) Jess Thomas as Loge and David Ward as Wotan in the 1967 staging.

doing so. In the personality patterns of *Das Rheingold*, he is the scapegoat. In Genesis, Eve says to God, "The serpent beguiled me." In *Das Rheingold*, Loge says, "To conceal their blunders, the fools blame me!"

Under another aspect, Loge is one of the great elemental natural forces that gods and men strive to master, to call to their aid. Indifferent himself, Loge, Fire, can be used for good or for evil: to warm underground caves and to melt pleasing metals into agreeable shapes (as we learn in the third scene); to provide the fire that forges the Ring; to reforge Nothing; to erect fearsome barriers of flame that only a hero can breach; and finally, destructively yet creatively, to purge and

purify. Loge obeys commands: Wotan's, and at the close, Brünnhilde's. He is an elemental force who has been at least partially controlled. There is a stage direction at the end of *Das Rheingold* which is often ignored but which, I think, should not be: after morally disassociating himself from the gods—"Ashamed I'd be to share in their dealings"—Loge decides that he will, for a while at least, stay with them. "Nonchalantly he goes to join them." In the first scene of *Götterdämmerung*—a scene that, in the days when a single opera, the last, was all that Wagner had in mind, was intended to provide the necessary "summary" of what had happened before—the Second Norn sings some puzzling lines about Loge: "By the

Spear's magic Wotan tamed him . . . but in an endeavor to free himself, his teeth nibbled at the runes on the shaft." But he nibbled vainly, she suggests, since, when Brünnhilde's rock needed surrounding, Wotan's Spear could summon him again. Though tamed, he is recalcitrant, rebellious, and dangerous.

Fire and Water dominate the final scene of the *Ring*. Here, Loge has been summoned by Brünnhilde, but the rising of the Rhine is a natural phenomenon. T.S. Eliot called the river "a strong brown god, sullen, untamed and intractable . . . almost forgotten By the dwellers in cities—ever, however, implacable, Keeping his [sorry about the pronoun] winter seasons and rages, destroyer, reminder

Of what men choose to forget," whose "rhythm was present in the nursery bedroom ... within us." Eliot was influenced by the *Ring*—as every poet, every writer, has been, directly or indirectly, since Wagner's work first appeared. Some years ago, the Arno, usually a slow, shallow stream flowing deep in its bed through Florence, rose in wild fury and almost devastated the city. Productions of the *Ring* that slight the Rhine—and we have had many of those—scamp one of the cycle's most important symbols: the reminder that man lives in a world older than he is, which will continue after he has ceased to be a part of it.

* * *

Wagner once declared that all the music of his cycle grew from its opening pages: a rather big statement with perhaps no more than a general truth about it. Yet at the start of *Das Rheingold* we hear something of the kind: a single, deep note; its overtones sounded and then shaped into a rising melody; the gaps in that chordal melody filled in; after a long while, steps downward as well as upward; and then, with the entry of the Rhinemaidens' voices, looping and leaping melodies. The development goes on, sometimes by slow transformations, sometimes with the introduction of arresting new motifs that may only later reveal their kinship with what has gone before. Certainly, the opening pages do seem to convey the sense of a world stirring into life, of the start of the "world history." But—a first instance of what we may call the multiple, different though simultaneous time schemes of the *Ring* (more about that later)—important things have also happened before *Das Rheingold* begins. Only later—much later, at the start of *Götterdämmerung*—do we learn about Wotan's acquisition of the Spear, fashioned from a branch that he tore from the World Ash Tree. With loftier aim but with equally grave consequences (the tree withered and died), Wotan committed an act of violence against nature similar in some ways to that we are about to witness Alberich committing. Alberich, it is true, seeks power only for himself; Wotan seeks benevolent power, exercised within the rule of law. To win the Spear, Wotan sacrifices an eye; to gain the ability to forge the Gold, Alberich renounces love. In some sense, Alberich is Wotan's dark shadow. In *Siegfried*—whose words were

written before those of *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*—the *Schwarz-Alberich* and *Licht-Alberich* (i.e. Wotan) conjunction and opposition is spelled out.

In the second scene of *Das Rheingold* we meet the gods. Let us consider them for a moment as aspects of Wotan's personality. (I summarize here what Cooke examined through a long, sensitive chapter.) Fricka represents Wotan's conscience—and specifically "her husband's conservative conscience, his rigid super-ego ideals, from which he is trying to break free—first, criminally, to increase his power, and later, idealistically, to discover a higher morality." Freia is the capacity for love; Froh, unthinking optimism; Donner, aggressiveness. Loge, I suppose, represents the free play of the intellect. He is the only god not linked to the others by family ties: the most independent, and yet the closest to Wotan. Their relationship is fascinating and unstable. Wotan relies on Loge, turns to him for answers, treats him with a mixture of respect and harshness; Loge, an imperfectly mastered force, serves the god half-willingly, half rebelliously, and strives to keep his independence.

That said, let us not make too much of it. The pattern of linked personality strands is present, surely, but what Wagner presents on stage is a play of separate characters.

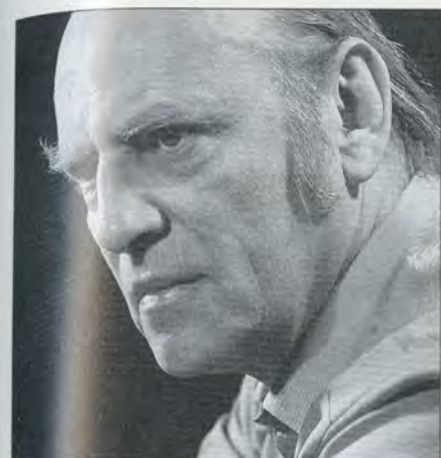
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In the second scene of *Das Rheingold*, when Fricka accuses her husband of underrating woman's worth, Wotan replies: "To win you as wife, I staked my single eye [*mein eines Auge*]" (an idea of Wagner's own invention, not found in any of the source mythologies). The lines have occasioned much commentary, as being apparently inconsistent with the First Norn's account of Wotan's sacrificing his eye in order to drink from the Spring of Knowledge bubbling up beneath the World Ash Tree. But the plain sense of the lines suggests another interpretation, and no inconsistency: it was his *remaining* eye that Wotan wagered in order to win Fricka. (And the Wotans who gesture as they sing the lines should indicate not the dark socket but the eye that remains.) A bold stake indeed! It is hard—since mythology gives us no help, and within the *Ring* there is no other reference to the event—to imagine exactly what sort of contest-for-Fricka Wagner had envisaged. Perhaps

one day some researcher will come up with a source. Until then, we can find it an extraordinary, flamboyant assertion of the young god's passionate audacity.

* * *

The close of *Das Rheingold* sounds like a triumph, as in a blaze of sunse splendor the gods stride across the rainbow bridge to the glorious fortress from which Wotan plans to rule the world justly, wisely, and well. But "Valhalla is Wall Street," Wieland Wagner once said, and many a modern producer has sought to "undermine" the musical confidence of the moment by adding to it some touches of scenic ridicule: a mincing minuet, a prissy pavan. Hans Mayer's program-book essay, used both at Bayreuth and at Covent Garden, asks, "How can the entry into Valhalla be portrayed as a brilliant occasion?" "How can it not be" is my reply "given the music that Wagner wrote for it?" Trickery, treachery, theft and murder have been committed, it is true. Fasolt's corpse—he has been the first victim of the curse on the *Ring*—lies on the stage. Loge, at Wotan's command, has answered the Rhinemaidens' plea for the return of the Gold with flip cynicism: "Though the Gold may no longer shine on you maidens, bask henceforth in the gods' new splendor." The last words of the opera are the Rhinemaidens' "Tenderness and truth dwell but in the waters; false and base, those who rejoice on the heights." And their words provide all the irony that is needed. Wotan's reign is doomed, as are all reigns founded upon dishonesty. But Wagner is too honest to deny that Wotan's dominion had its potential splendor. We are meant to have mixed feelings: each *Ring* opera ends with the promise of a better future—a promise unfilled, but one not without a gleam of hope. To take a modest analogy: a man of good will can today have mixed feelings about noble monuments to the past, cherishing them, loving them, striving to save them from destruction, even though they were erected from the profits of, and can be deemed memorials of, a social system that he abhors. In that vein we can ask—not flippantly but symbolically—whether it was necessary for Valhalla to be destroyed, or whether it could not have been put to better use as a People's Palace. Wagner was asked pretty well that question—"Why must Valhalla burn?"—and, as we shall see, he found it one not easy to answer. ■



FRANZ MAZURA

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most recently sang Pizarro and Gessler in *William Tell* in Nice, Pizarro in San Diego, Orest and Scarpia in Pittsburgh, and Escamillo in Toronto. Later this year he is scheduled to sing the title roles of *The Flying Dutchman* and *Eugene Onegin* with Pittsburgh Opera.

Bass **Franz Mazura** returns to San Francisco Opera as Alberich in Wagner's *Ring* cycle. He made his American debut with the Company in 1968 as Jokanaan in *Salome*, appearing that same season as the Commendatore in *Don Giovanni*. The following year he appeared as Pizarro in *Fidelio*, Gunther in *Götterdämmerung*, and the Speaker in *The Magic Flute*. He was most recently seen here in 1979 as Orest in *Elektra*. He has been heard at the Bayreuth Festival since 1970 in such roles as Gurnemann and Klingsor in *Parsifal*, King Marke in *Tristan und Isolde*, Biterolf in *Tannhäuser*, and Alberich and Gunther in the *Ring* cycle, and has won acclaim at the Salzburg Festival in *Fidelio* and Mozart's *La Finta Semplice*. In Hamburg, in addition to those roles, he has performed Kaspar in *Der Freischütz*, Daland in *Der Fliegende Holländer*, Pizarro, Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte*, La Roche in *Capriccio*, Orest, Jokanaan, and Moses in *Moses und Aron*. He has also had a huge success with his portrayal of Dr. Schön in the complete three-act version of Berg's *Lulu* at the Paris Opera, the Metropolitan Opera, and at Milan's La Scala. In addition to his numerous appearances at the major opera houses of the world, Mazura has performed every consecutive year at the Met since 1980. Roles there include Gurnemann, Klingsor, Alberich, Pizarro, and Frank in *Die Fledermaus*. A permanent member of the Mannheim Nationaltheater, his recordings include *Lulu* (1980 Grammy Award), *Parsifal*, *Moses und Aron* (1985 Grammy Award) and *Palestrina*. He was honored with the title of Kammersänger by the Mannheim National Theater in 1980.



JACQUE TRUSSEL

American tenor **Jacque Trussel** portrays Loge in *Das Rheingold*. A native of San Francisco, he was last heard here as Sergei in the 1988 production of *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*. He made his Company debut in 1981 as Edmund in *Lear*, reprising the role for the 1985 revival. For Spring Opera Theater's 1973 *Carmen*, he first performed the role of Don José, which he went on to sing at several North American and European houses. In addition to appearing with many prominent opera companies at home and abroad, he returned to the New York City Opera, where he has been featured in new productions of *Der Freischütz*, *L'Amore dei Tre Re*, and *Tosca*. He opened the inaugural season of Spoleto USA as Gherman in *The Queen of Spades*, a role in which he had won acclaim in Spoleto, Italy, and subsequently sang in Houston and Ottawa. Trussel made his San Diego Opera debut in the American premiere of Saint-Saëns's *Henry VIII* during the 1982-83 season, and has also appeared in the world premieres of Floyd's *Bilby's Doll*, Hoiby's *The Tempest*, and Pasatieri's *The Seagull*, as well as the American premiere of Vaughan Williams's *Hugh the Drover*. During the 1987-88 season he won critical acclaim singing the title role of *Peter Grimes* at the Maggio Musicale in Florence, and shortly thereafter made his debut at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden as Grimes in a different production. Recent highlights include Don José opposite Maria Ewing's *Carmen* at Earl's Court in London (telecast throughout Europe); the title role of *Oedipus Rex* in Barcelona; and Nerone in *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* in Geneva. Future assignments include the title role of *The Gambler* and Caesar in Barber's *Antony and Cleopatra* in Chicago, the title role of *Peter Grimes* in Madrid, Gherman in Florence, and Jimmy in *Mahagonny* in Geneva. He will be making debuts at the Metropolitan Opera, the Paris Opera and at Milan's La Scala during the 1990-91 season. His busy concert schedule includes guest appearances with the Chicago Symphony, the Philadelphia Orchestra, Boston Symphony, Concertgebouw Orchestra, and the symphonies of San Francisco and St. Louis.



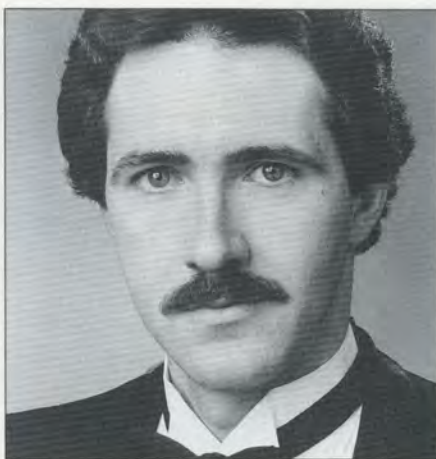
HELMUT PAMPUCH

German tenor **Helmut Pampuch** recreates the role of Mime in *Das Rheingold* and *Siegfried*, having made his U.S. debut with San Francisco Opera in 1984 as Mime in *Siegfried*, returning for the 1985 *Ring* Festival to repeat that role and to sing his first *Rheingold* Mime in this country. Born in Oberschlesien (now part of Poland), he graduated from the Conservatory of Nürnberg and studied with Willy Domgraf-Fassbänder before his professional debut in Regensburg. Engagements in other German houses followed and since 1973 he has been a member of the Deutsche Oper am Rhein in Düsseldorf. He has also appeared in Berlin in *Der Fliegende Holländer* and *The Bartered Bride*; in Geneva as Mime in *Das Rheingold* and *Siegfried* and David in *Die Meistersinger*; and at the Bavarian State Opera in Munich as Monostatos in *Die Zauberflöte*, and Pedrillo in *The Abduction from the Seraglio*. Pampuch took part in the world premiere of the three-act version of *Lulu* in Paris, where he also appeared as Monostatos and as Mime in *Das Rheingold*. He traveled with the Paris Opera to Milan for a repeat of *Lulu* and has since fulfilled numerous guest engagements in the opera houses of Amsterdam, Bordeaux, Rouen, Genoa, Stuttgart, Hamburg and Lisbon. At Bayreuth he has performed in *Tristan und Isolde*, *Parsifal*, *Die Meistersinger* and *Das Rheingold*, in which he sang Mime for several years and in the film televised in 1983. In 1984 he scored a major success as Mime in a new production of *Siegfried* at the Teatro Verdi in Trieste, and in 1985 appeared at Milan's La Scala as Monostatos in a new production of *Die Zauberflöte*. Highlights from recent seasons include *Lulu*, *Die Zauberflöte* and *Das Rheingold* at the Paris Opera, *Das Rheingold* and *Lohengrin* at Bayreuth, *Die Meistersinger* and *Ariadne auf Naxos* at the Grand Théâtre de Genève, a concert version of *Das Rheingold* with the Minneapolis Orchestra, and the *Ring* cycle in Munich. He is scheduled to perform Mime in the Deutsche Oper am Rhein's entire *Ring* cycle in the next few seasons.



ERIC HALFVARSON

Bass **Eric Halfvarson** portrays Fasolt in *Das Rheingold* and Hagen in *Götterdämmerung*. He made his San Francisco Opera debut during the 1981 Summer Festival in *Die Meistersinger* and *Rigoletto*, and that fall appeared in *Semiramide*, *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* and *Le Cid*. After appearing here during the 1982 Fall Season as the Marquis in *Dialogues of the Carmelites*, Surin in *The Queen of Spades* and Angelotti in *Tosca*, he returned to the Company in the fall of 1983 as Lodovico in *Otello*. The Illinois-born artist made his professional debut in *The Barber of Seville* at the 1973 Lake George Opera Festival. Since then he has made numerous appearances with opera companies across the U.S., Canada and South America. Highlights of Halfvarson's recent seasons include *I Capuleti ed i Montecchi* in London as well as at the Kennedy Center; *Don Carlo* in Columbus and Cincinnati; the world premiere of Argento's *Aspern Papers* (which was telecast nationally over PBS) for Dallas Opera; *Die Zauberflöte* in Dallas and *Die Walküre* in Miami; *Faust* with Opera Hamilton; *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* with Tulsa Opera; and *Die Walküre* and *Götterdämmerung* at Artpark. After performing Baron Ochs in Santa Fe Opera's production of *Der Rosenkavalier* last year, he appeared in *Lucia di Lammermoor* and *Aida* in Washington, *Der Fliegende Holländer* in Edmonton, and *Die Zauberflöte* with the Florentine Opera. A popular concert artist, he recently appeared as soloist in the premiere of Shostakovich's *Rayok* with the National Symphony (a work which was recorded), Mahler's Eighth Symphony and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with the Columbus Symphony, and Shostakovich's *The Execution of Stepan Razin* with the composer's son leading the New Orleans Symphony. Future engagements include *Prince Igor* and *Die Walküre* in Dallas, *Aida* and *Lohengrin* in Houston, *Antony and Cleopatra* in Chicago, and *Der Rosenkavalier* in Columbus, Montreal and at Santa Fe.



JAMES PATTERSON

Bass **James Patterson** recreates the role of Fafner in *Das Rheingold* and *Siegfried* which he sang for San Francisco Opera during the 1985 Ring Festival. A graduate of the 1982 Merola Opera Program and a 1983-84 Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, he has sung over 20 roles here and was last heard in 1988 as Trulove in *The Rake's Progress*, Titurel in *Parsifal*, and the Old Convict in *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*. During the 1987-88 season, Patterson appeared as Sarastro in *The Magic Flute* for Portland Opera, Des Moines Metro Opera and Seattle Opera, where he also sang Fafner for their Ring cycle. Additional engagements that season included his Lyric Opera of Chicago debut in *Tosca*, Colline in *La Bohème* with Opera Hamilton, Hunding in Act I of *Die Walküre* with the Montreal Symphony, and Basilio in Orlando Opera's *Barber of Seville*. The next season saw him as the Commendatore in the Peter Sellars production of *Don Giovanni* in Vienna and Purchase, N.Y., Padre Guardiano in *La Forza del Destino* with the Greater Miami Opera, the Commendatore in Orlando, and the King in a concert performance of *Aida* with the Minnesota Orchestra. He most recently repeated the role of the Commendatore in Sellars's *Don Giovanni* production in Paris, and appeared as Sarastro with the Kentucky Opera, and as Basilio in *The Barber of Seville* and Lodovico in *Otello* for the Canadian Opera Company. A native of Toronto, Patterson received both his bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Michigan.



MONTE PEDERSON

Bass-baritone **Monte Pederson** portrays Donner in *Das Rheingold*. The young artist has been seen in over 16 roles with San Francisco Opera since his 1985 debut, most recently in 1988 when he stepped in for an ailing colleague in the title role of *Der Fliegende Holländer*, and last fall when he appeared as the Spirit Messenger in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. Wagner's Dutchman was the vehicle of his 1988 European debut at Montpellier, in Limoges, and for his debut at the Deutsche Oper Berlin. He participated in the 1983 and '84 Merola Opera Programs and went on to become 1985-86 Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center. Pederson has many California credits, including *The Flying Dutchman* for West Bay Opera; leading roles in Pocket Opera performances of *La Cenerentola*, *Imeneo* and *Maria Stuarda*; and *Lucrezia Borgia* and *La Vestale* with the Concert Opera Association of San Francisco. Highlights of his 1988-89 season include his debut with Miami Opera as the four villains in *The Tales of Hoffmann*; the title role of *King Roger* in Bremen; Jokanaan in *Salome* in Winnipeg, Cologne, Montpellier and Basel; *Der Fliegende Holländer* at the Bregenz Festival; a concert performance of Schreker's *Irrelohe* in Vienna; and Kurwenal in a concert performance of Act III of *Tristan und Isolde* in Paris. Upcoming engagements include his Chicago Lyric Opera debut as Claudius in Thomas's *Hamlet* and a debut with the Seattle Opera in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*. He makes his Covent Garden debut this year as Pizarro in *Fidelio* and will bow at the Zurich Opera in the title role of *Eugene Onegin*. Next year, Pederson will join the ensemble of the Vienna State Opera as principal bass-baritone, and will sing such roles as Pizarro, Orest in *Elektra*, Jokanaan, and Rangoni in *Boris Godunov*. Among his awards is a special study grant from the S.F. Opera which enabled him to travel to Munich to study with Hans Hotter.



MARK BAKER

Tenor **Mark Baker** makes his San Francisco Opera debut as Froh in *Das Rheingold*. The native of Florida first came to national attention as a winner of the 1986 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and made his Met debut during the 1986-87 season in *Roméo et Juliette*. Subsequent Met assignments during the past two seasons include *Das Rheingold*, *Khovanshchina*, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, *Macbeth*, *Boris Godunov* and *Parsifal*. Additional credits from 1986 to 1988 include Lensky in *Eugene Onegin* with the Glimmerglass Opera, Narraboth in

Salome at the Spoleto Festival U.S.A., Froh in a concert version of *Das Rheingold* with the Minnesota Orchestra, Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* with the Indianapolis Orchestra, Don José in *Carmen* with the Chattanooga Opera, Erik in *Der Fliegende Holländer* with the Santa Fe Opera, and a recital in New York City. His engagements during the 1988-89 season included a return to the Met for *Das Rheingold* and *Salome*, and debuts with the Opéra de Lyon in *Der Fliegende Holländer*, with the Minnesota Opera in *Salome*, and at the Glynde-

bourne Festival in *Jenůfa*. Baker can be heard on a complete recording of *Das Rheingold* under the baton of James Levine. He is a graduate of Indiana University where he received his bachelor's degree in Vocal Performance, as well as a master's degree in Counseling and Counseling Education.

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The original 1985 production was made possible by the BankAmerica Foundation, the Carol Franc Buck Foundation, the L.J. and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation and an anonymous friend of the Company.

Music drama in three acts by RICHARD WAGNER
Text by the composer

Die Walküre

(in German)

Der Ring des Nibelungen—Part I

Conductor
Peter Schneider (June 8, 14)
Donald Runnicles (June 21, 27)
Original production by
Nikolaus Lehnhoff
Stage Director
Peter McClintock
Designer and
Production Consultant
John Conklin
Lighting Designer and
Special Effects
Thomas J. Munn
Projections
Ron Scherl
Sound Designer
Roger Gans
Musical Preparation
James Johnson
Robert Morrison
Eric Weimer
Patrick Summers
Susan Miller Hult
Prompter
Jonathan Khuner
Assistant Stage Directors
Gina Lapinski
Barbara Donner
Stage Manager
Jamie Call

Scenery constructed in
San Francisco Opera Scenic Studios

Costumes executed by
San Francisco Opera Costume Shop

First performance:
Munich, June 26, 1870

First San Francisco Opera performance:
November 4, 1935

FRIDAY, JUNE 8 AT 7:00
THURSDAY, JUNE 14 AT 7:00
THURSDAY, JUNE 21 AT 7:00
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 27 AT 7:00

CAST

(in order of appearance)

<i>Sieglinde</i>	Rebecca Blankenship**
<i>Siegmund</i>	Gary Lakes
<i>Hunding</i>	John Macurdy
<i>Wotan</i>	James Morris (June 8, 14, 27) Robert Hale (June 21)
<i>Brünnhilde</i>	Gwyneth Jones (June 8, 21) Janis Martin (June 14) Hildegard Behrens* (June 27)
<i>Fricka</i>	Helga Dernesch
<i>Ortlinde</i>	Sheila Smith*
<i>Schwertleite</i>	Catherine Keen
<i>Waltraute</i>	Katherine Ciesinski
<i>Gerhilde</i>	Meredith Mizell
<i>Helmwige</i>	Patricia Racette
<i>Siegrune</i>	Pamela King*
<i>Grimgerde</i>	Robynne Redmon
<i>Rossweisse</i>	Carla Cook
<i>Hunding's men</i>	

**U.S. opera debut

*San Francisco Opera debut

ACT I: Hunding's house

INTERMISSION

ACT II: Scene 1: Wotan's fortress

Scene 2: A clearing in the forest

INTERMISSION

ACT III: A remote mountaintop

Supertitles by Jerry Sherk and Francesca Zambello,
San Francisco Opera.

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

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

The performance will last approximately four hours and thirty-five minutes.

Die Walküre/Synopsis

Wotan, wandering the earth disguised as a human Wälse, has fathered twin children by a mortal woman: the Wälsungs Siegmund and Sieglinde. To prepare Siegmund for his task, Wotan separated the twins in their youth, leaving Sieglinde to enter a loveless marriage with Hunding, while putting Siegmund through endless trials of misery.

Siegmund, who calls himself Wehwalp ("Woeful"), went to the aid of a woman who was being forced into marriage by her brothers. In his struggle to save her, Siegmund lost his weapons but managed to kill several of the woman's brothers. As he fled, Wotan created a mighty storm to separate Siegmund from the brothers' pursuing kinsmen.

ACT I—Exhausted from his flight, Siegmund seeks shelter from the raging storm in a house built around a great ash-tree. Collapsing unconscious on the floor, he is discovered by Sieglinde, who offers him water and mead. She reveals only that the house is Hunding's and she is Hunding's wife. As they talk, an overpowering attraction for each other takes hold of them.

When Hunding returns and hears Wehwalp recount his history, Hunding reveals that he is himself one of the pursuing kinsmen. The laws of hospitality demand that he offer strangers shelter for one night; but in the morning Wehwalp must be prepared to fight him. Sending his wife to prepare him a drink, Hunding leaves Siegmund alone. Siegmund then recalls that Wälse had vowed to provide his son with a sword in his hour of need.

Sieglinde, after drugging her husband's drink, returns to Siegmund and tells him of a one-eyed stranger who appeared at her wedding-feast and thrust a sword deep into the ash-tree, saying that only a great hero would retrieve it. Many had tried and all had failed to pull the sword from the tree. Still ignorant of their identities, Wälse's children give way

to their passionate love. Magically, the walls open up and spring moonlight streams in on the embracing lovers. From Wehwalp's mention of his father's name, Sieglinde understands that he is her brother. Joyfully she calls him by his true name, Siegmund. Seizing the hilt of the sword, Siegmund names it *Nothung*, the Needed One. Drawing it from the tree, he presents it as a bridal gift to Sieglinde. From her response he, too, understands that they are brother and sister, united in love and in blood.

ACT II, Scene 1—Wotan, his plans developing just as he intended, instructs his favorite Valkyrie, Brünnhilde, to ensure that Siegmund kills Hunding in the impending fight. But no sooner has Brünnhilde left than Fricka, Wotan's wife and goddess of marriage and the home, arrives, angrily protesting the sacrilege of Sieglinde's incest and infidelity. Fricka argues that in *Nothung* Siegmund has an instrument of the gods and is therefore no longer an untrammelled innocent. She then demands that Siegmund die for her honor. Wotan, who must abide by the laws and contracts engraved on his spear, reluctantly pledges to withdraw his protection of Siegmund. Brünnhilde's exuberant return is cut short by the tension between Wotan and his wife. Utterly downcast, Wotan now foresees only the end of the gods. Revealing to Brünnhilde the whole story of the Ring, he commands her to withdraw *Nothung's* power. When Brünnhilde protests, Wotan irately instructs her to ensure Siegmund's death in the fight. Leaving her to carry out his bidding, he departs in angry distress. Miserable over her obligation, Brünnhilde nonetheless goes off to do her duty.

ACT II, Scene 2—After a wild flight through the forest, Siegmund and Sieglinde come upon a clearing. Exhausted, frightened and guilt-ridden, Sieglinde sinks to sleep in her brother's arms. Brünnhilde approaches Siegmund and

tells him he must die, but that she will take his soul to join the heroes of Valhalla. Siegmund, learning that Sieglinde can never join him there, refuses, saying he would rather kill himself and his sister than allow anyone else to touch her. His devotion arouses such pity in the Valkyrie that she vows to disobey Wotan. Experiencing feelings of love for the first time, she prepares to protect Siegmund as Hunding's hounds are heard in the forest nearby. But Wotan's purposes are not so easily deflected. Furious at Brünnhilde's disobedience, Wotan appears in the middle of the fight and with his spear shatters *Nothung*. After Hunding has killed Siegmund, Wotan contemptuously dismisses him. Brünnhilde flees with Sieglinde and the broken pieces of *Nothung*.

Act III—On a remote mountaintop, Brünnhilde's sisters are assembling with newly slain heroes they have gathered for Valhalla's guard. The fleeing Brünnhilde brings Sieglinde to them. When her warrior sisters refuse their help, Brünnhilde reveals that Sieglinde is carrying Siegmund's child, destined to become the greatest of heroes and to bear the name of Siegfried. Giving Sieglinde the shattered *Nothung*, Brünnhilde sends her into the forest to escape Wotan's wrath. Sieglinde has hardly left before Wotan arrives. Shielded at first by the other Valkyries, Brünnhilde turns to face her angry father. Wotan tells her she has forfeited her rights as a demi-god; she shall be cast into a deep sleep on a rock, prey to any man that finds her. Her pleading softens Wotan's anger, and finally he agrees to her request: only the greatest of heroes shall be able to take her. Sadly, Wotan bids farewell to his most-loved daughter. He tells her she shall be surrounded by a wall of flame, and with a final kiss he removes her divine attributes. Gesturing with his spear, he commands Loge, the spirit of fire, to encircle her with flame.





Helga Dernesch

Die Walküre

Photos taken in rehearsal by Larry Merkle



Rebecca Blankenship, Gary Lakes

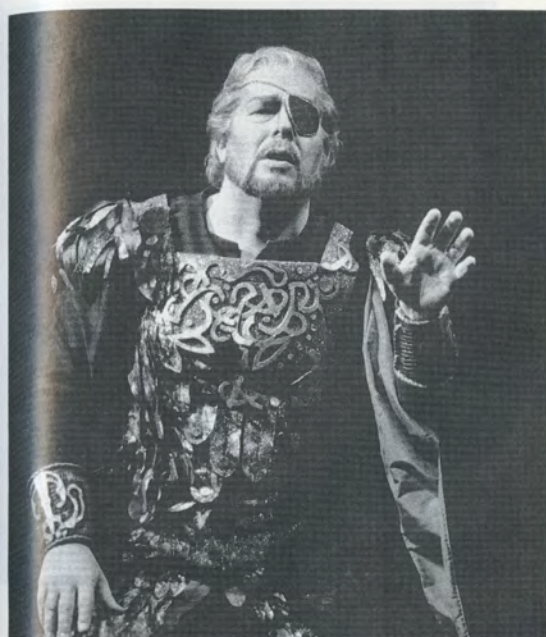


James Morris



John Macurdy

Preceding page: Gwyneth Jones as Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre* in 1985. SCHERL



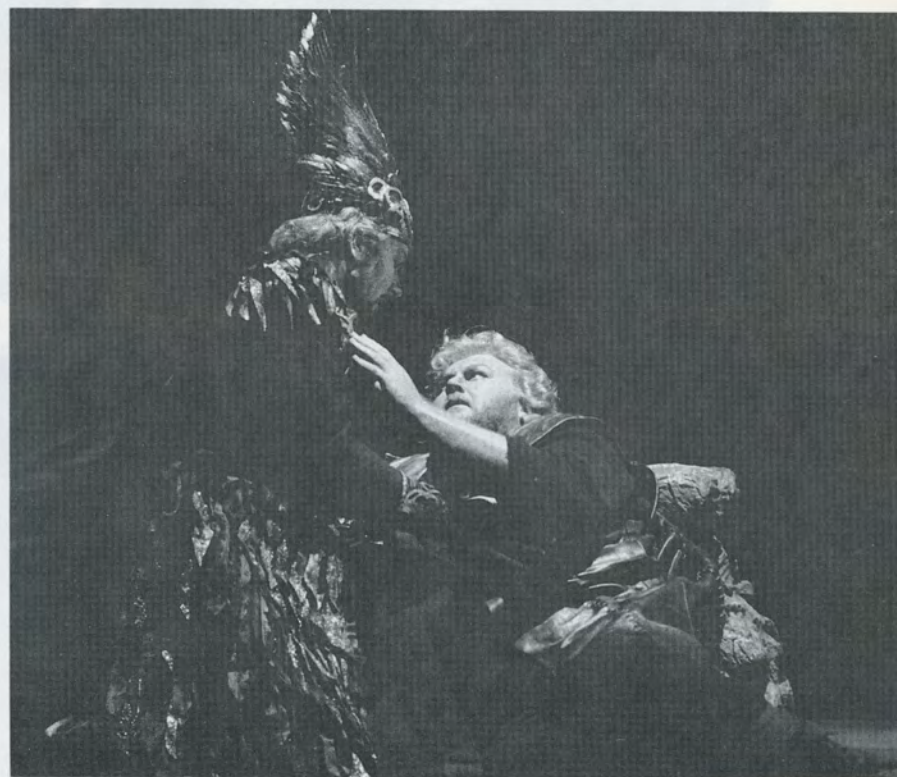
James Morris



Gary Lakes



Gwyneth Jones



James Morris, Gary Lakes



The Valkyries



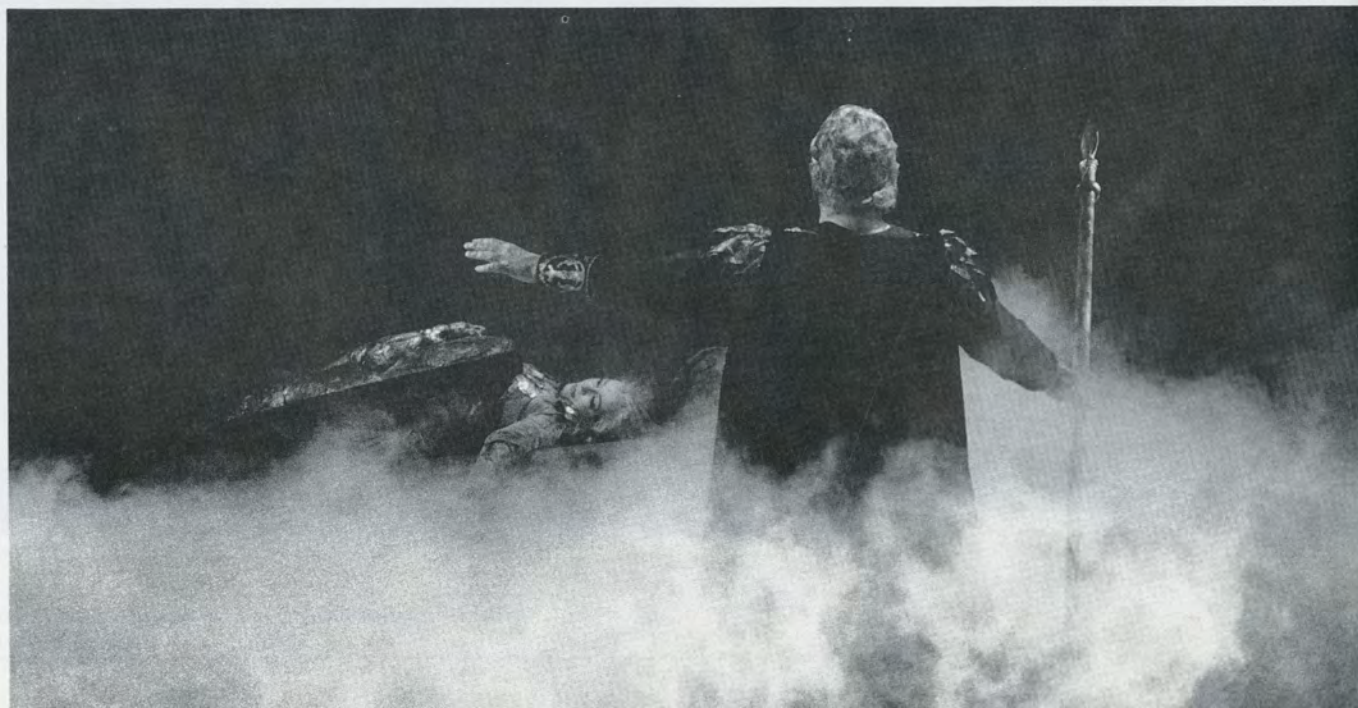
Rebecca Blankenship



James Morris, Gwyneth Jones



(below) James Morris, Gwyneth Jones



ARTIST PROFILES



GWYNETH JONES

Highly acclaimed as an interpreter of the operas of Wagner and Strauss, Welsh soprano **Gwyneth Jones** returns to San Francisco Opera to sing Brünnhilde in the *Ring* cycle. Here last fall as Barak's Wife in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, she has made numerous appearances with the Company: the title roles of *Fidelio* (1969 and 1978), *Aida* (1969) and *Tosca* (1978 and 1982), as well as Elisabetta in *Don Carlo* (1973), the title role of *Salome* (1987), her first Isolde in *Tristan und Isolde* (1980), and Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre* (1983 and 1985). Hailed as a consummate performer of any role she undertakes, Gwyneth Jones regularly sings at all of the world's major opera houses, appearing with leading conductors and at most international opera festivals. Born in Pontnewynydd, Wales, she started her career as a mezzo-soprano and sang Orpheus in *Orpheus und Euridice* in Zurich and Octavian in *Der Rosenkavalier* at Covent Garden. Her international career took off soon after she switched to the soprano range and returned to the Royal Opera in a new production of *Il Trovatore* directed by Luchino Visconti and conducted by Carlo Maria Giulini. A long list of important international debuts followed, mostly in roles from the Italian dramatic soprano repertory. Gradually, she moved towards the heaviest of roles in opera with her first *Götterdämmerung* Brünnhilde at Bayreuth in 1974, followed by all three Brünnhildes in 1975. Her first *Ariadne auf Naxos* occurred in Munich in 1977, Barak's Wife in Cologne in 1979, *Elektra's* Chrysothemis in London in 1977, and the title role of *Elektra* in Cologne in 1983. Los Angeles was the site of her first *Turandot* in 1984, and she has since appeared in the role in London, Vienna, Rome, Paris, Moscow, etc. A Kammersängerin and Honorary Member (a rare honor) of the Vienna State Opera, Dame Gwyneth is also a Kammersängerin with the Bavarian State Opera in Munich. She was awarded the prestigious Shakespeare Award in Hamburg in 1978, and was given the title of Dame of the British Empire in Queen Elizabeth II's 1986 honors. She was most recently granted the



JANIS MARTIN

Commander's Cross of the Order of Merit by the Federal Republic of Germany. Her long list of recordings includes most of her celebrated Wagner and Richard Strauss roles, and also extends from the standard works such as Verdi's *Otello* to rarities such as the recent recording of Franz Schmidt's complete *Notre Dame*. The artist can be seen on a number of video recordings, notably the Bayreuth *Ring*, directed by Patrice Chéreau.

In demand the world over for her interpretations of dramatic roles, California soprano **Janis Martin** portrays the three Brünnhildes in *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. She most recently appeared with San Francisco Opera in 1988 when she stepped in on short notice to replace an ailing colleague as Senta in *Der Fliegende Holländer*. The Sacramento native began her musical training as a mezzo-soprano in the Merola Opera Program and made her operatic debut with the Company in 1960—performing more than 25 roles here during her first four seasons. In 1962 she won the Metropolitan Opera Auditions and sang several roles with that company for three seasons. She undertook her first major Wagnerian role in 1966 for San Francisco Opera, portraying Venus in *Tannhäuser*, the vehicle of her subsequent La Scala and Paris Opera debuts. Acclaimed as a Wagnerian singer, Miss Martin portrayed Brangäne in *Tristan und Isolde* (heard here in 1970), Elisabeth and Venus in *Tannhäuser*, Ortrud in *Lohengrin* (which she sang for the first time in her career in 1978 at San Francisco Opera) and Senta. Her Bayreuth Festival credits include Eva in *Die Meistersinger*, Sieglinde in *Die Walküre* (which she sang here in 1976) and Kundry in *Parsifal*, the role of her triumphant return to the Met in 1974. The most recent addition to her Wagner repertoire is Brünnhilde, which she sang at the Lyric Opera of Chicago in 1982 and has performed in Vienna, Geneva, Zurich, Barcelona and Monte Carlo. A soloist with the Deutsche Oper in Berlin since 1970, Miss Martin has appeared there as Tosca, Eva, Ortrud, Sieglinde, Kundry,

DIE WALKÜRE



HILDEGARD BEHRENS

Senta, the Composer and in the title role of *Ariadne auf Naxos*, and as the Marschallin in *Der Rosenkavalier*. Among the highlights of her appearances with San Francisco Opera are the Composer in *Ariadne auf Naxos* (1969), the title role of *Tosca* (1976), Marie in *Wozzeck* (1981) and the title role of *Elektra* (1984). She is a frequent guest artist at the Vienna Staatsoper and has won acclaim at Covent Garden as well as with the companies of Munich, Cologne, Stuttgart and Hamburg. Her recording credits include complete versions of Wagner's *Rienzi* and *Der Fliegende Holländer* and Schoenberg's *Erwartung*. As a concert artist, she has appeared with many of the world's most famous orchestras conducted by Böhm, Maazel, Abbado, Boulez, Levine, Sawallisch, Sinopoli, Jochum, Dorati and Solti. Recent engagements include her first Leonore in *Fidelio* in Berlin; Ortrud and Kundry in Munich; the Dyer's Wife in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, the Witch in *Hansel and Gretel* and Senta at the Met; the Dyer's Wife in Cologne; and Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre* in Rome with the Santa Cecilia Orchestra under the baton of Giuseppe Sinopoli.

Internationally celebrated for her interpretations of Wagnerian heroines, German soprano **Hildegard Behrens** makes her San Francisco Opera debut as Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre*, *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung*. She has been highly acclaimed in the role in complete *Ring* cycles at Bayreuth, Munich and at the Metropolitan Opera. Born in Oldenburg, she studied voice at the conservatory in Freiburg and joined the Deutsche Oper am Rhein in Düsseldorf, where she came to the attention of Herbert von Karajan. The title role of *Salome* in her 1977 debut at Salzburg under the maestro's direction launched her international career, and she has since appeared with virtually every major opera company and orchestra in the U.S. and Europe. She made her Met debut in 1976 as Giorgetta in *Il Tabarro* and has returned there to sing Brünnhilde, Sieglinde in *Die Walküre*, Marie in *Wozzeck*, Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*, Leonore in



REBECCA BLANKENSHIP

Fidelio, Elettra in *Idomeneo*, Isolde in *Tristan und Isolde*, and the title role of *Tosca*. Another of her acclaimed operatic heroines is the title role of *Elektra*, which she has performed with the London Symphony Orchestra, the Boston Symphony and, most recently, in the Roman and Greek ruins of Pompeii and Siracusa, Italy. Highlights of recent seasons include her first essay of Janáček's *The Makropulos Case* in a new production created for her at the Munich Staatsoper; *Salome* and *Elektra* at the Munich Festival; Act II of *Tristan und Isolde* with the Orchestre de Paris on tour in Europe and at New York's Avery Fisher Hall; *Der Ring des Nibelungen* at the Met; a complete *Ring* cycle in Munich; and Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* with the Orchestre de Paris. A distinguished orchestral soloist, Miss Behrens has performed with the New York Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra and the Vienna Philharmonic. Her extensive discography includes complete recordings of the *Ring*, *Elektra*, *Salome*, *Der Freischütz*, *Fidelio* and *Wozzeck*, as well as solo and duet discs. Her *Tosca* from the Met and *Wozzeck* from Vienna are available both on videodisc and videocassette.

Soprano **Rebecca Blankenship** makes her U.S. debut with San Francisco Opera as Sieglinde in *Die Walküre*, a role she recently sang to great acclaim at the Vienna Staatsoper. Daughter of American tenor William Blankenship, she was raised in Austria, Germany and Switzerland, and received her vocal training in New York. After singing mezzo-soprano roles for two seasons in Germany, she was engaged at the Basel Theater as principal soprano for the seasons 1986-88. She was applauded in Switzerland in the title roles of *Ariadne auf Naxos* and *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* and as Leonora in *Il Trovatore* and Elettra in *Idomeneo*. During the 1988-89 season her engagements included Agathe in *Der Freischütz* and Martha in D'Albert's *Tiefeland* at the Vienna Volksoper, Leonore in *Fidelio* in the Netherlands, Elsa in *Lohengrin* in Bel-



HELGA DERNESCH

gium, and the title role of *The Merry Widow* on the Volksoper's tour to Japan. Earlier this year she was acclaimed in Bregenz as Senta in *Der Fliegende Holländer* and applauded in Japan as Marie in the Vienna Staatsoper's production of *Wozzeck*. Future projects include Abigaille in *Nabucco* in Bern, the title role of *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* (under the baton of conductor Donald Runnicles) at the Vienna Volksoper, and Marie in *Wozzeck* at the Vienna State Opera.

The renowned Viennese mezzo-soprano **Helga Dernesch** portrays Fricka in *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*. Since her Company debut in the summer of 1981 as Goneril in *Lear* (repeated during the 1985 Fall Season), she has been a favorite of San Francisco audiences and has returned frequently. Roles she has performed on the stage of the War Memorial are Herodias in *Salome* (1982, 1987); Fricka in *Die Walküre* (summer 1983); Erda in *Siegfried* and Prince Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus* (summer 1984); Marfa in *Khovanshchina* (fall 1984); and Fricka in *Die Walküre* as well as the Second Norn and Waltraute in *Götterdämmerung* (1985 Ring Festival). Miss Dernesch made her debut at the Bayreuth Festival in 1965 as a soprano, singing such roles as Eva in *Die Meistersinger*, Freia in *Das Rheingold*, and Gutrune in *Götterdämmerung* for five seasons. Turning to heavier dramatic Wagner roles, she first sang at the Salzburg Easter Festival in 1969 as Brünnhilde in *Siegfried*, conducted by Herbert von Karajan, with whom she subsequently performed and recorded the *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung* Brünnhildes, Leonore in *Fidelio*, and Isolde in *Tristan und Isolde*. Under the baton of Georg Solti she appeared at Covent Garden as Chrysothemis in *Elektra* and the Dyer's Wife in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, and recorded the role of Elisabeth in *Tannhäuser*. Since 1979, Miss Dernesch has been singing mezzo-soprano roles with great success in the major opera centers of the world, beginning with the Nurse in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. By now, she is also in great demand as Klytemnestra in



MEREDITH MIZELL

Elektra, Brangäne in *Tristan und Isolde*, as well as Herodias, Fricka and Waltraute. At the 1982 Salzburg Festival she performed and later recorded Othmar Schoeck's *Penthesilea*, and has also recorded Aribert Reimann's *Lear* and Requiem, as well as his new opera, *The Trojan Women* (Troades). Since her 1985 Metropolitan Opera debut in *Khovanshchina*, she has returned to that company as Fricka in *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*, Waltraute in *Götterdämmerung*, Herodias in *Salome*, the Nurse in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, and Prince Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus*. Other recent appearances include Fricka in *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*, as well as Klytemnestra in *Elektra* and Herodias in *Salome*, all for the Royal Opera, Covent Garden; the Nurse in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* at the Munich Opera Festival; Dame Quickly in Los Angeles Opera's *Falstaff*, and Herodias in Amsterdam. The most recent additions to her extensive discography are complete recordings of Strauss' *Arabella* and Weill's *The Threepenny Opera*.

Soprano **Meredith Mizell**, who sings Gerhilde in *Die Walküre*, made her San Francisco Opera debut last fall when she stepped in on short notice to replace an ailing colleague as Elsa in *Lohengrin*. She was also heard here last season as a child and a solo voice in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. The native of Missouri is a graduate of the School of the Ozarks who continued her studies at the University of Illinois and at Oklahoma City University. She has appeared at the Illinois Opera Theater in the title role of *Suor Angelica*, the First Lady in *The Magic Flute*, and Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*, while at Oklahoma City she sang Antonia in *The Tales of Hoffmann*, Micaëla in *Carmen*, and Rosina in *The Barber of Seville*. After apprenticeships with the Central City Opera and Des Moines Metro Opera, she made her operatic debut with Tulsa Opera as Inez in *Il Trovatore* under the baton of Kurt Herbert Adler. She has also appeared as Amelia in *Un Ballo in Maschera*, the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, and Mimi in *La Bohème* with Inspiration Point Fine Arts



PATRICIA RACETTE

Colony. Concert engagements include Beethoven's *Choral Fantasy* and Mass in C Major, Vaughan Williams's *Serenade to Music*, the Brahms Requiem and Michael Haydn's Requiem with the Oklahoma Symphony and the Oklahoma Choral Society.

Soprano **Patricia Racette** sings Freia in *Das Rheingold* and Helmwig in *Die Walküre*. She made her San Francisco Opera debut last fall as Mistress Ford in the Family Performance of *Falstaff*, and also performed in *Aida*, *Idomeneo* and *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. She also appeared as Anastasio in the 1989 Opera Center Showcase production of Handel's *Giustino*. A member of the Merola Opera Program in 1988 and currently an Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, she sang the title role of *Madame Butterfly* on Western Opera Theater's 1988-89 national tour, and traveled to Japan with the Center's Pacific Rim Exchange program. A native of New Hampshire, she received a Bachelor of Music degree in Voice from North Texas State University, where she sang the title role of *Suor Angelica*, Diana in *Orpheus in the Underworld* and Laura in *Luisa Miller*. She also appeared in the title role of Carlisle Floyd's *Susannah* at the Metro Opera Works in Fort Worth. Miss Racette was a National Finalist in the 1988 Metropolitan Opera National Auditions, first place winner in the New York region of the 1988 San Francisco Opera Auditions, and received the Mr. & Mrs. Bernhardt N. Poetz Memorial Award at the 1988 Grand Finals. She recently appeared as Micaëla in *Carmen* with Marin Opera, and will be seen with the Company this fall as Sister Osmina in *Suor Angelica* and as Rosalinda in the Family Performance of *Die Fledermaus*. Additional future engagements include Mimì in *La Bohème* with Marin Opera, and Nedda in *Pagliacci* with Miami Opera.



PAMELA KING

Mezzo-soprano **Pamela King** makes her San Francisco Opera debut as Siegrune in *Die Walküre*. She participated in the 1988 Merola Opera Program and joined the 1988-89 Western Opera Theater National Tour of *Madame Butterfly* as Suzuki. She recently sang the title role of *Carmen* for WOT's 1989-90 tour. Since receiving her master's degree from Yale, the Texas native has appeared as Hermia in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with Chautauqua Opera, Siegrune at Artpark and Hansel in *Hansel and Gretel* with Pittsburgh Opera Theater. Miss King created the role of Deborah, Ben Franklin's wife, in John Carbon's *Benjamin*, commissioned for the 1987 bicentennial celebration of the founding of Franklin & Marshall College. The young singer has been an apprentice artist with Santa Fe Opera and Chautauqua Opera, and has performed with Connecticut Opera, National Grand Opera, New York Lyric Opera and Pittsburgh Opera. She has also appeared as concert soloist with orchestras and chamber ensembles throughout the East Coast, and sang with the Yale Chamber Players in recital at Merkin Hall in New York. She is a recipient of several awards and was a finalist in several vocal competitions, including the Rosa Ponselle, Minna Kaufman Rudd, and New York's Regional Metropolitan Opera Auditions.



SHEILA SMITH

Soprano **Sheila Smith** makes her San Francisco Opera debut as Ortlinde in *Die Walküre*. The native of Oklahoma was a 1980-81 Merola Opera Program participant who toured with Western Opera Theater as Prince Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus*. Since her 1981 Spring Opera Theater debut in the title role of *The Grand Duchess of Gerolstein*, she has come to national attention over the past few seasons in a variety of roles. During the 1984-85 season she sang her first Baba the Turk in *The Rake's Progress* for the Canadian Opera Company (telecast on CBC-TV), appeared as Dora-bella in *Così fan tutte* with Glimmerglass Opera, and sang the title role of *La Belle Hélène* in Toronto and Washington, D.C. Highlights of the 1985-86 season included Lola in *Cavalleria Rusticana* with Fort Worth Opera, Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro* for Opera Omaha, and the Composer in *Ariadne auf Naxos* as well as Offenbach's *Duchess* for Glimmerglass Opera. Miss Smith made her Metropolitan Opera debut the opening night of the 1986-87 season as Siegrune in a new production of *Die Walküre*, followed by her first appearance with Houston Grand Opera as Diana in *Orpheus in the Underworld*. Highlights of the past two seasons include a return to Kentucky Opera as Helena in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Giulietta in *The Tales of Hoffmann* in Miami, her European debut as Octavian in *Der Rosenkavalier* for L'Opéra de Nice, and a Scottish Opera debut as Rosalinde in *Die Fledermaus*. Future engagements include Ortlinde in *Die Walküre* for Dallas Opera, and concerts throughout the U.S. Miss Smith is the winner of numerous competitions and awards including a grant from the National Institute for Musical Theater, and the prestigious MacAllister Award.

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Die Walküre: Lyrical Narratives

By ANDREW PORTER

When someone sets out to recount the story of the *Ring*, omitting nothing significant, it becomes a long (and in good versions an enthralling) tale. Wagner dramatized the tale by presenting only its major events in stage action and relating the rest in narratives. It is classical, this concentration on the crises of dramas that may span decades, generations. Wagner could not have known Monteverdi's *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria* (it was rediscovered, in Vienna, only late in the 19th century); I mention it as an example of a drama that comes to crisis and resolution in the course of action spanning a single eventful day, while behind it lie the 10 years of the Trojan War and then Ulysses' further 10 years of wandering. Wagner did know the *Agamemnon*, a tragedy that unfolds within a single day although the sources of it reach back, through the long Trojan War, to the sacrifice of Iphigenia, and beyond that an ancient curse on Agamemnon's house. And he knew Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*, which also plays in "real time" (stage time and the spectators' time correspond),

though in the course of its revelations carry us back to the protagonist's birth, and before.

Wagner was a master dramatist and he did not work to formulas. The withholding of personal information about the hero, until almost the end of the opera, is an essential part of *Lohengrin*, an opera in which the unities of place are preserved and those of time are but slightly expanded: two nights pass. *Tristan und Isolde* has a wider span. In the first act, we have a narrative—Isolde's—that provides necessary information about the hero's two visits to Ireland, first as the wounded "Tantris," then as the knight come to claim a bride for King Mark. In Act III, the whole time scale suddenly expands, becomes well-nigh hallucinatory, as the whole of Tristan's life seems to be passing, in a vivid past-cum-present, through his fevered brain, and we learn much that we had not known before—and this even though the act proceeds, in another sense, in "real time." *Die Meistersinger*, on the other hand, observes the unities of time and place (the action embraces a single night and

End of the first act of *Die Walküre* in San Francisco Opera's 1985 staging. SCHERL



what happens before and after it), and the events of the drama are sequential.

During the long years that saw the making of the *Ring*, Wagner pondered exactly how and when and most dramatically to reveal the pieces of information needed to give context to and complete the drama enacted on the stage. Unlike Monteverdi, unlike the Greeks, he was working with matter that was to a large extent, as we have seen, all his own invention. He could not count on an audience already familiar with each move of the action. Such an audience does, of course, exist now. Tolkien in *The Lord of the Rings* could present the notion of an omnipotent but accursed Ring—Wagner's invention—as part of his mythology. And Wagner himself, for that matter, could assume audiences had done their homework, and had read the libretto: the whole *Ring* libretto had circulated in a private printing since 1853, 23 years before the Bayreuth premiere, and had been published in 1863. This raises an interesting question, but one easily answered by anyone who knows *Oedipus Rex* or has seen a much-admired movie more than once. Although the first “narrative” excitement of a spectator who does not know what will happen next, does not know what the outcome will be—to preserve that, I never read the film critics who make a point of telling the story—cannot be recaptured after the first encounter, the second-time, the third-time, the many-time viewer responds instead to the dramatist's timing of his revelations. Every spectator knows long in advance what it takes Oedipus himself so long to grasp—but his own moment of revelation, his acceptance of the terrible truth, does not become less dramatically cogent. The modern spectator at *Die Walküre* knows that Sieglinde and Siegmund are sister and brother, Wotan's children, long before they do, but that does not make the stage moment of *their* recognition of it any less exciting. We receive the dramatic information, even though we may know it already, once again through the ears and minds of the stage characters, and respond as they do. In Act II of *Die Walküre* we listen to Wotan's “recap of the story so far” with the attention of Brünnhilde, who is hearing it for the first time.

In *Siegfried's Tod* (which later became *Götterdämmerung*), the first *Ring* libretto



Thomas Stewart as Wotan in San Francisco Opera's 1972 presentation of the *Ring* cycle. The baritone's first *Ring* assignment here was the 1970 *Siegfried Wanderer*. He returned in 1972 as the three Wotans and Gunther; in 1983 as Wotan in *Die Walküre*; and in 1984 and '85 as the Wanderer.

that Wagner wrote, all is present action except for two narratives: the Valkyries (later reduced to the single personage of Waltraute) tell Brünnhilde what has been happening in Valhalla, and in the last act Siegfried sings his autobiographical narrative. But Wagner's friend Eduard Devrient convinced him that more was needed if the full import of the drama was to be understood, and that the terrible strife and misunderstanding between Siegfried and Brünnhilde would be more comprehensible and affecting if first we had glimpsed them happy together. And so Wagner added the Prelude: the Norns scene where in question and answer the three mysterious women summarize the events that have led to the present crisis, and the Brünnhilde-Siegfried duet “Zu neuen Taten,” which tells us of Brünnhilde's long sleep and of Siegfried's braving the flames, and

also that Siegfried has won the Ring from a dragon. Once Wagner had begun to “explain” things in this way, more and more seemed to be needed. And we should remember, I repeat, that he was not dealing with material long-familiar to his audiences but was in effect creating a new mythology, many of whose most important details were of his own invention. So to *Siegfried's Tod* he added *Der junge Siegfried* (which later became plain *Siegfried*), in which Wotan's and Mime's riddles-and-replies session informs us about the gods, the giants, and the dwarfs, and also about the love of the Volsung twins (some of which Hagen had previously revealed in *Siegfried's Tod*), and about Siegmund's drawing of the sword from the tree. Then Wagner decided to give stage form to the Volsung material, in *Die Walküre*, and then in *Das Rheingold* to bring the dwarfs, the gods,

and the giants on stage and tell the story of the Ring itself from the start, so that, as he put it, the entire myth and all its meanings should be perceivable, "through the organs of artistic perception." Each of these four dramas is in classical, or near-classical form, in that it deals with the actions of a crucial day, or day or two, in the long Ring saga. Each drama can stand alone in performance, as the separate plays of the *Oresteia* do. But it is in conjunction and sequence, through the extraordinary patterns of verbal, emotional, visual, and, above all, musical cross-reference and development, that the Ring as a whole casts its mighty spell.

Between the first and second scenes of *Das Rheingold* enough time must elapse, on the literal level, for Alberich to forge the Ring, enslave his band of Nibelung miners, and set them to amass the heap of treasure that he then so proudly displays to Wotan and Loge. Thereafter the action is continuous, "real-time," set within the span of a single day, from dawn to sunset—as Wotan stresses in his final aria, "Abendlich strahlt der Sonne Auge": Valhalla, still masterless, had gleamed in the morning shine; then "from morn to eve, with pains and dread, not happily, it was won." But there is also a sense of continuity as we move from the first scene to the second; the "double time scheme" is in action. The transformation of the Ring motif, as the first scene fades from view, into the Valhalla motif that heralds the second scene seems to lead us directly—as it were, in "real time"—to the airy heights above, even though much must be presumed to have happened during it.

In *Die Walküre*, a great deal happens during the course of perhaps less than 24 hours: on a day that occurs long enough after *Das Rheingold* for Wotan to have sired nine grown Valkyrie daughters and then, by a mortal woman, a pair of now grown twins; and long enough before *Siegfried* for Siegfried—who is conceived between the first and second act of *Die Walküre*—to have grown to be whatever age we presume him to be. *Die Walküre* opens toward nightfall; Sieglinde prepares an evening meal for her husband and their unexpected guest, and slips a narcotic into the former's night-drink. While Hunding sleeps, Sieglinde and Siegmund escape; the next day sees the Wotan-Fricka and Wotan-Brünnhilde

dialogues, the fight between Hunding and Siegmund, Wotan's pursuit of Brünnhilde, and her enchanted somnification. The action turns on two crises: the destruction of the free hero son whom Wotan has so lovingly striven to create, and the unexpected rebellion of his daughter Brünnhilde, hitherto the obedient agent of his will, when love—not sexual love but Wagner's pure human love—first inspires her. The first event brings the collapse of Wotan's plan to save his rule—and the world—from the curse on the Ring. The second, though none of the characters yet realizes it, points the way to the loftier, redemptive conclusion.

Once he had written *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*, Wagner revised the texts of *Der junge Siegfried* and *Siegfried's Tod* in the light of them. He abridged but he did not remove the later narrations of what he had then gone on to present, at an earlier point, in stage form. This gives rise to the Anna Russell-like jibe, "Then he (or she) sits down to tell the whole story all over again." In fact, within the grander structure of the four-opera Ring, these retained narratives now serve a new function. Some information is still deliberately withheld: we have noted that only at the start of *Götterdämmerung* do we learn of Wotan's actions before *Das Rheingold* begins, as the Norns brood over past events from a perspective we have not encountered before. Their final question, "Know you what will happen now?," remains unanswered—except by the drama that is to unfold during the next few hours. Their scene is a somber prelude of troubled response which becomes a springboard. Later in the opera, Siegfried's autobiographical narrative is at once a brilliant piece of foreshortened recapitulation and a highly dramatic "instant replay" leading to the climax of his death.

Die Walküre is particularly rich in narratives. The drama proceeds forward in a series of high dramatic actions: the sudden opening of the great door and the irruption of the spring night; the drawing of the sword from the tree; the Act II battle scene; the welling up of the fiery barrier at the close. Between them, events of the past are filled in by narratives. First, there is Siegmund's account of his rough boyhood, hunting with his father, losing his mother and sister in a ruffian raid, then losing his father

(whose identity the audience learns from a musical motif). Then there is Siegmund's "Ein trauriges Kind" telling of the immediate past, the events shortly before curtain-rise which have brought him to seek shelter in Hunding's house. Sieglinde's "Der Männer Sippe" tells of her forced wedding to Hunding and of the mysterious stranger who looked at her kindly, and drove a sword into the tree. (In Wagner's first version, this visit by Wotan was represented on stage; his sure dramatic instinct for balancing action and narrative led him to remove it.) In Act II, we have a Fricka's-eye account of Wotan's actions since the end of *Das Rheingold*; and the longest of all the Ring narratives, Wotan's "Als junger Liebe Lust mir verblich," which tells us some things that we know and some that we don't. We see the past and possibilities of the future through Wotan's troubled eyes; in this unparalleled scene, the workings of a mind are made manifest.

* * *

In many synopses of the Ring, not only Brünnhilde but also her eight Valkyrie sisters are described as the daughters of Wotan and Erda. I found no evidence to suggest that they are, and some to suggest that they are not. In his *Die Walküre* narrative, when Wotan describes his visit to Erda, he says, "I learned her secrets, but she exacted a fee from me: the world's wisest woman bore me you, Brünnhilde." The other account of that visit to Erda is Erda's own, in the last act of *Siegfried*. She says, "I myself, with all my knowledge, was once mastered by a monarch. A wish-maiden I bore to Wotan." The singular event is never credited with more than a singular result.

Who, then, was the mother—or who were the mothers—of Gerhilde, Ortlinde, Waltraute, Schwertleite, Helmwig, Siegrune, Grimmerde, and Rossweisse? Fricka, I believe, gives us the answer during her reproachful narrative: "Your faithful wife you have cuckolded unceasingly. Into the depths and up to the heights, everywhere you looked with lecherous eyes to see how your changing fancy might be gratified, and mock and wound me to the heart. Much as it has grieved me, I had to bear it when you went into battle with those uncouth girls that a wanton fancy had caused you to father." Yet at least these manifold mistresses were not—so Fricka implies—



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Janis Martin, who is appearing as Brünnhilde in this year's Ring cycle, sang Sieglinde in our 1976 Walküre, at which time Jon Vickers was featured as Siegmund. The soprano's Wagnerian history at the S.F. Opera began in 1960, at which time she was a Page in Lohengrin. She returned as Waltraute in Die Walküre in 1963; an Esquire and a Flower Maiden in Parsifal in 1964; Venus in Tannhäuser in 1966; Gutrune in Götterdämmerung in 1969; Brangäne in Tristan und Isolde in 1970; Ortrud in Lohengrin in 1978; and Senta in Der Fliegende Holländer in 1988.

members of the lower classes; but now something has happened that she cannot bear: her husband has fathered children on "a common human being." The mothers of the eight other Valkyries, then, are surely those supernatural beings, in the depths and on the heights, whom Wotan visited.

In Cosima's diary for May 8th, 1874, soon after the Wagners had moved into Wahnfried, she wrote: "As we are drinking our after-lunch coffee in the hall, and R. is looking at the pictures, he says, 'What a strange night that must have been when Wotan subjugated Erda! It is all my own invention—I know nothing about Zeus and Gaea, for instance, nor did anything strike me in another poet, as sometimes happens when we are struck by some feature that escapes most people. That night when Brünnhilde was conceived—it can only be regarded as something divine: the impulse to subjugate this prophetic woman so as to learn something from her.'" Again, singular and special. In choosing Brünnhilde to be his most important Valkyrie daughter, Wotan is not merely showing a partial favoritism. She alone is the child of the God and the All-Knowing Mother.

A footnote turning on a single, stray adjective: in the last act of *Die Walküre* the Valkyries wonder why Brünnhilde is late for assembly, and Gerhilde says, "Bei dem braunen Wälsung weilt wohl noch Brünnhild": "Brünnhilde is detained by that brown Volsung." However Siegmund looks, so Sieglinde, his twin, must look (Hunding points out the resemblance); and their son Siegfried presumably has the same complexion. Are Siegfried, Siegmund, Sieglinde—usually represented as Nordic blonds—really "brown," dark-hued, swarthy? Or has Gerhilde merely noticed that (a possibly golden-haired) Siegmund has during his forest life acquired a healthy suntan? ■



KATHERINE CIESINSKI

American mezzo-soprano **Katherine Ciesinski** appears as Waltraute in *Die Walküre* and the Second Norn and Waltraute in *Götterdämmerung*. She made her San Francisco Opera debut in 1988 as Laura in *La Gioconda*, and that year made her Metropolitan Opera debut as Nicklausse in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, also appearing as Giulietta in the same opera with the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie in Brussels. She returned to the Met last year as Judith in *Bluebeard's Castle*, a role she also undertook in a new production for the Netherlands Opera. Additional engagements that season include the Dallas Opera's world premiere of *The Aspern Papers* (televised nationally on PBS), and appearances with the Boston Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, Houston Symphony, and Kansas Symphony. Early in her career she received national attention with her performance as Erika in the PBS television production of Barber's *Vanessa* at Spoleto USA. Another landmark was her Santa Fe Opera debut as Countess Geschwitz in the American premiere of the three-act version of *Lulu*, after which came international recognition for her debut as Siebel in the Lyric Opera of Chicago's production of *Faust*, which was filmed for European and American television. Highlights of recent seasons include the title role in the world premiere of Maurice Ohana's *La Celestine* for the Paris Opera, Brangäne in *Tristan und Isolde* for the Canadian Opera Company, Dorabella in *Così fan tutte* at the Mozart Festival in Paris, at the Zurich Opera and with the Israel Philharmonic, Ottavia in *The Coronation of Poppea* with the Santa Fe Opera, Sonya in Prokofiev's *War and Peace* in Paris, and Eboli in *Don Carlo* in Madrid. Her recording credits include the title roles of Dukas's *Ariane et Barbe-Bleue* and Gounod's *Sapho*, Ravel's *Chansons Madécasses*, a lieder recital of songs by Alma Mahler and Clara Schumann, the *Messiah*, *War and Peace* and, most recently, Elliott Carter's *Syringa*. Miss Ciesinski returns to the Company this fall as Dulcinée in the San Francisco Opera premiere of *Don Quichotte*.



ROBYNNE REDMON

After making her San Francisco Opera debut last fall as Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly*, mezzo-soprano **Robynne Redmon** returns to the Company to portray Grimgerde in *Die Walküre*. The native of Virginia received a bachelor's degree in music from the University of Houston and her master's degree from the Eastman School of Music. From 1983 to 1985 she was a member of the Lyric Opera of Chicago's Center, appearing in numerous roles, including Emilia in *Otello* that opened the Lyric's 1985-86 season. Her performances during the 1986-87 season included Cherubino in *The Marriage of Figaro* and Nicklausse in *The Tales of Hoffmann* at Wolf Trap. She returned to the Lyric Opera of Chicago for performances of *Parsifal*, and made her 1987 Opera Theatre of St. Louis debut in the American premiere of Oliver's *Beauty and the Beast*, singing the role of the Elder Sister. She then scored a success in her recital debut in Pasadena at the Ambassador Foundation's Gold Medal Series, and portrayed Sicle in Cavalli's *L'Ormindo* at Wolf Trap. Miss Redmon made her European debut in 1987 at the Wexford Festival, where she appeared as the Prince in *Cendrillon*, followed by performances of the same opera in a new production at the Netherlands Opera in 1988. The recipient of a Richard Tucker Foundation career study grant that same year, Miss Redmon's recent engagements include Maddalena in *Rigoletto* and Isaura in *Tancredi* for the Lyric Opera of Chicago, a debut with San Diego Opera as Suzuki, Elizabeth Proctor in *The Crucible* with Pennsylvania Opera Theater, and Dorabella in *Così fan tutte* for the Opéra de Nice and Sarasota Opera.



CARLA COOK

Mezzo-soprano **Carla Cook** appears as Rossweisse in *Die Walküre*. A member of the 1982 Merola Opera Program, she was heard in Merola productions of *The Magic Flute* and *Rigoletto* and won the Jean Donnell Memorial Award in that year's Audition Finals. The following year she was a winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Auditions and the Munich International Vocal Competition, and sang in the Opera Center's Showcase productions of *L'Ormindo* and *The Rape of Lucretia*. She made her San Francisco Opera debut during the 1983 Fall Season, when she appeared in *Katya Kabanova*, *La Grande Duchesse de Gérolstein* and *La Traviata*. Additional assignments with the Company include Rossweisse (summer 1985), Annina in *Der Rosenkavalier* (fall 1985), Madame Larina in *Eugene Onegin* (fall 1986) and, last year, the Arts Patroness in *Lulu* and a Voice in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. She made her Metropolitan Opera debut in 1984 in *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* and as Waltraute in *Die Walküre*, and that same year made her Seattle Opera debut as Waltraute, and sang her first Venus in a new production of *Tannhäuser*. It was under the auspices of the Metropolitan Opera that she made her Carnegie Hall debut with the National Orchestra of New York. She has also appeared in orchestral concerts in New York, San Francisco, Munich, Washington, D.C., among others, and has performed in oratorio and song recitals the world over. Recent engagements include a critically acclaimed portrayal of Venus in *Tannhäuser* at the Bremen Opera, and Verdi's Requiem with the Schola Cantorum.



CATHERINE KEEN

Mezzo-soprano **Catherine Keen** appears as Schwertleite in *Die Walküre*. Recipient of a 1989-90 Adler Fellowship with the San Francisco Opera Center, she made her Company debut last summer as Kasturbai in Philip Glass' *Satyagraha*, and sang Leocasta in Opera Center's 1989 Showcase production of Handel's *Giustino*. Last fall she was seen here as Mistress Quickly in the Family Performance of *Falstaff* and Emilia in *Otello*. As a member of the 1987-88 Merola Opera Program, she sang the role of Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly* at Villa Montalvo before taking it on tour with Western Opera Theater. A graduate of the Cincinnati Conservatory (where she is currently completing her Doctor of Musical Arts degree), she sang numerous leading roles there and from 1984 to 1986 she was a member of the Young American Artist Program at the Cincinnati Opera. Miss Keen made her European debut last December with the Deutsche Oper Berlin as Dalila in *Samson et Dalila*, and was a participant in Régine Crespin's Farewell Gala in Paris last month. Future engagements include *Samson et Dalila* and *Luisa Miller* at the Netherlands Opera, *El Amor Brujo* with the Cincinnati Symphony, and Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder* with the Orchestre de Radio France. Later this year she will return to the Company to sing the Mistress of Novices in *Suor Angelica*, Maddalena in *Rigoletto*, and Prince Orlofsky in the Family Performance of *Die Fledermaus*.



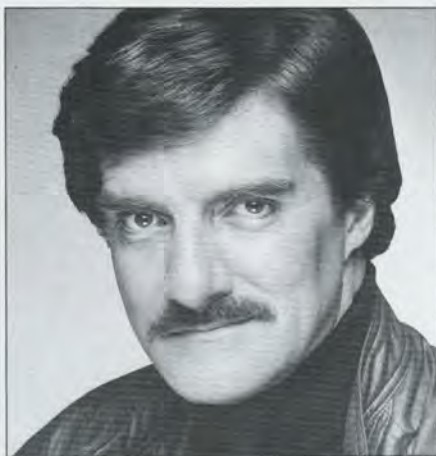
GARY LAKES

American tenor **Gary Lakes** portrays Siegmund in *Die Walküre*, a key role in his young career, which he has sung at the Metropolitan Opera and recorded under the baton of James Levine. He made his professional opera debut with Seattle Opera in 1980 as Froh in *Das Rheingold*, and was subsequently chosen as a member of the Merola Opera Program in 1981, the year of his San Francisco Opera debut as Ruiz in *Il Trovatore*. Since his Met debut in 1985, he has sung such diverse roles there as Don José in *Carmen*, Samson in *Samson et Dalila*, Eric in *Der Fliegende Holländer*, the Emperor in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, and Siegmund in *Die Walküre*. In demand as a concert soloist, Lakes has appeared with most of the major symphony orchestras and music festivals in the U.S. and Europe. Highlights of recent seasons include Schoenberg's *Gurrelieder* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Chicago Symphony; Mahler's *Das Klagende Lied* and concert performances of *Fidelio* with the Cincinnati Symphony; a gala Wagner Concert featuring Act I of *Die Walküre* at the San Diego Opera; Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* with the Detroit Symphony; Berlioz's *The Damnation of Faust* with the Orchestre National de France; *Fidelio* at the Festival d'Orange; concert performances in both New York and Paris of *Tristan und Isolde* (Act II); Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* in Turin; the Verdi Requiem at the Ravinia Festival; and concert versions of *Aida* and Janáček's *Jenůfa* at the Cincinnati May Festival. Later this season he will return to the Met to sing Dimitri in *Boris Godunov*, Florestan in *Fidelio*, and the title role of *Parsifal*. He can be heard on the Grammy Award-winning recordings of *Die Walküre* and *Ariadne auf Naxos*, as well as the recent release of Albéric Magnard's rarely performed *Guercoeur*. He will be recording the title role of *Samson et Dalila* later this year.



JAMES MORRIS

Bass **James Morris** returns to the Company to recreate the role of Wotan in both *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*, and to portray the Wanderer in *Siegfried*. The Baltimore native made his 1981 San Francisco Opera debut as Assur in *Semiramide* and during the 1985 Ring Festival won international acclaim as Wotan, appearing in the *Rheingold* part for the first time in his career. He returned here that fall as Scarpia in *Tosca* and as Claggart in *Billy Budd*. In May of 1987 he performed a recital at the War Memorial Opera House and appeared later that year as the four villains in *The Tales of Hoffmann*. Morris became the youngest male singer on the Metropolitan Opera roster at the age of 23 and four years later was on the Met stage as Don Giovanni, a role he has sung in numerous seasons there, as well as those of the four villains in *The Tales of Hoffmann*, Claggart in *Billy Budd*, Wotan/the Wanderer in the complete Ring cycle, the title roles of *Der Fliegende Holländer* and *Faust*, and leading roles in *Macbeth*, *La Forza del Destino*, *Don Carlo*, *Otello*, *Carmen*, *Peter Grimes*, and *The Barber of Seville*, among others. In addition to his regular appearances at the Met and throughout the U.S. and Canada, he has appeared several times at the Salzburg Festival (*The Marriage of Figaro*, *Tosca*), Milan's La Scala (*Der Fliegende Holländer*), the Vienna Staatsoper (*Die Walküre*, *Don Giovanni*), at the Glyndebourne and Edinburgh Festivals, as well as in Strasbourg, Florence, Madrid, Barcelona, Santiago, Sydney and Melbourne. Last season, he made his Royal Opera Covent Garden debut in *Das Rheingold*, and recently sang in performances of *Die Walküre* with that company, with whom he will perform the complete Ring cycle over a period of several years. He has also taken part in two complete new German Ring cycles—Munich and Berlin. In great demand as a concert singer, he has performed with a number of prominent orchestras including the New York Philharmonic, Berlin Philharmonic, the National Symphony Orchestra, and the symphonies of Atlanta, St. Louis, San Francisco and Chicago. He also joined the Soviet Émigré Orchestra in Carnegie Hall for the first performance outside the Soviet



ROBERT HALE

Union of Shostakovich's "Six Romances." His discography includes two complete Ring cycles, *Maria Stuarda*, *Le Roi de Lahore*, *I Vespri Siciliani*, *Così fan tutte*, Haydn's *The Creation*, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, the Requiems by Mozart and Fauré, as well as a recent release of arias by Wagner and Verdi.

American bass-baritone **Robert Hale** makes his San Francisco Opera debut as Wotan in *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*, and the Wanderer in *Siegfried*. Born in Texas, he completed his master's degree at the University of Oklahoma and continued his studies at Boston University and the New England Conservatory of Music. He made his operatic debut in Frankfurt, Germany, while stationed there as a member of the armed forces. After a U.S. opera debut with the New York City Opera, and several appearances with the opera companies of San Diego, Philadelphia, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh and Winnipeg, he has sung most recently with great success in Europe. He has performed at the Vienna Staatsoper, the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, the Bayerische Staatsoper in Munich, the Deutsche Oper Berlin, and in Zurich, Hamburg, Frankfurt, Stuttgart, Cologne and Düsseldorf. He appeared as Wotan and the Wanderer when the Deutsche Oper Berlin presented the Ring cycle in Tokyo and in Washington, D.C., and will perform these roles in the Vienna Staatsoper's new production of the Ring later this season. Equally successful in the concert hall, he has performed with the symphonies of San Francisco, Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, Cincinnati, Washington, D.C., Toronto and Montreal. Hale has also appeared at the festivals of Ravinia, Tanglewood, and Wolftrap in the U.S., and those of Bergen, Lausanne, Bordeaux, Orange and Bregenz in Europe. Highlights from the 1988-89 season include Jokanaan in *Salome* at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden; Méphistophélès in *Faust* at the Deutsche Oper Berlin; Wotan in *Die Walküre* at Bologna's Teatro Comunale; and the title role of *Der Fliegende Holländer* in a new David Pountney production in Bregenz.



JOHN MACURDY

Leading bass with the Metropolitan Opera since his debut there in 1962, **John Macurdy** is Hunding in *Die Walküre*. He made his San Francisco Opera debut in 1962 when he sang six roles and appeared in an additional six roles for Spring Opera Theater during the 1960s. He returned to the main company in 1979 as Arkel in *Pelléas et Mélisande*, in the summer of 1981 as the Commendatore in *Don Giovanni* and Seneca in *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, and in the fall of 1985 as Timur in *Turandot*. Since his operatic debut as the Old Hebrew in *Samson et Dalila* in New Orleans, he has performed with the major U.S. companies, making debuts in Santa Fe (1958); Houston, Baltimore and New York City Opera (1959); Miami (1975); as well as Washington, D.C. and at the Lyric Opera of Chicago (1980). His European debut took place in France in 1965, when he sang Prince Gremin in *Eugene Onegin* in Marseilles and Banquo in *Macbeth* in Nice. Since then he has performed frequently in Europe, appearing at Milan's La Scala in *Tannhäuser*, *Norma* in Bonn, *Parsifal* in France, *Don Carlo* in Hannover and *Turandot* in Stuttgart. He has performed over 40 roles at the Met, participating in five opening nights and in over a dozen new productions. He has also sung in several live telecasts from the Metropolitan including *Aida*, *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin*. Recent engagements include *Die Meistersinger* in Barcelona, *Fidelio* in Buenos Aires, *Don Giovanni* in Chicago, *Aida* at the Savonlinna Festival, *L'Amore dei Tre Re* in Palermo and several operas at the Met including *Turandot* and that company's 1990 Ring cycle. Future projects include a return to the Met for several roles, a new production of Berlioz's *La Damnation de Faust* in Bonn, and *Don Giovanni* in Houston. Throughout his career Macurdy has received high praise on the concert platform, and has participated in several recordings including two versions of *Don Giovanni*, and has appeared in the Joseph Losey film of that opera as well as in Zeffirelli's film of *Otello*.

Local color.

A kimono the color of a cherry blossom in spring. Another the hue of a blazing sunrise. And the time to notice.

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The 1990 presentation of the *Ring* is sponsored by Cynthia Wood, Mr. & Mrs. Reid W. Dennis and an anonymous friend of the San Francisco Opera. Additional support is provided by **LEXUS**, Mr. & Mrs. John M. Bryan, Barbro and Bernard Osher, Mr. & Mrs. Evert B. Person, Mr. & Mrs. William D. Rollnick, and Mr. & Mrs. Alfred S. Wilsey.

The original 1985 production was made possible by the BankAmerica Foundation, the Carol Franc Buck Foundation, the L.J. and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation and an anonymous friend of the Company.

Music drama in three acts by RICHARD WAGNER
Text by the composer

Siegfried

(in German)

Der Ring des Nibelungen—Part II

Conductor

Peter Schneider (June 10, 16)
Donald Runnicles (June 23, 29)

Original production by
Nikolaus Lehnhoff

Stage Director
Peter McClintock

Designer and
Production Consultant
John Conklin

Lighting Designer and
Special Effects
Thomas J. Munn

Projections
Ron Scherl

Sound Designer
Roger Gans

Musical Preparation
Mark Haffner
James Johnson
Christopher Larkin
Daniel Lockert
Kathryn Cathcart

Prompter
Jonathan Khuner
Assistant Stage Directors
Gina Lapinski
Barbara Donner

Stage Manager
Jamie Call

Scenery constructed in
San Francisco Opera Scenic Studios

Costumes executed by
San Francisco Opera Costume Shop

First performance:
Bayreuth, August 16, 1876

First San Francisco Opera performance:
November 6, 1935

SUNDAY, JUNE 10 AT 1:00
SATURDAY, JUNE 16 AT 7:00
SATURDAY, JUNE 23 AT 7:00
FRIDAY, JUNE 29 AT 7:00

CAST

(in order of appearance)

Mime Helmut Pampuch
Siegfried William Johns
(June 10)
René Kollo
(June 16, 23, 29)

The Wanderer (Wotan) James Morris
(June 10, 16, 29)
Robert Hale
(June 23)

Alberich Tom Fox
(June 10, 23)
Franz Mazura
(June 16, 29)

Fafner James Patterson
Forest Bird Janet Williams
Erda Birgitta Svendén

Brünnhilde Gwyneth Jones
(June 10, 23)
Janis Martin
(June 16)
Hildegard Behrens
(June 29)

ACT I: Mime's dwelling
INTERMISSION

ACT II: Outside Fafner's cave
INTERMISSION

ACT III *Scene 1:* Terrace of the gods
Scene 2: A remote mountaintop

Supertitles by Jerry Sherk and Francesca Zambello,
San Francisco Opera.

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

Siegfried/Synopsis

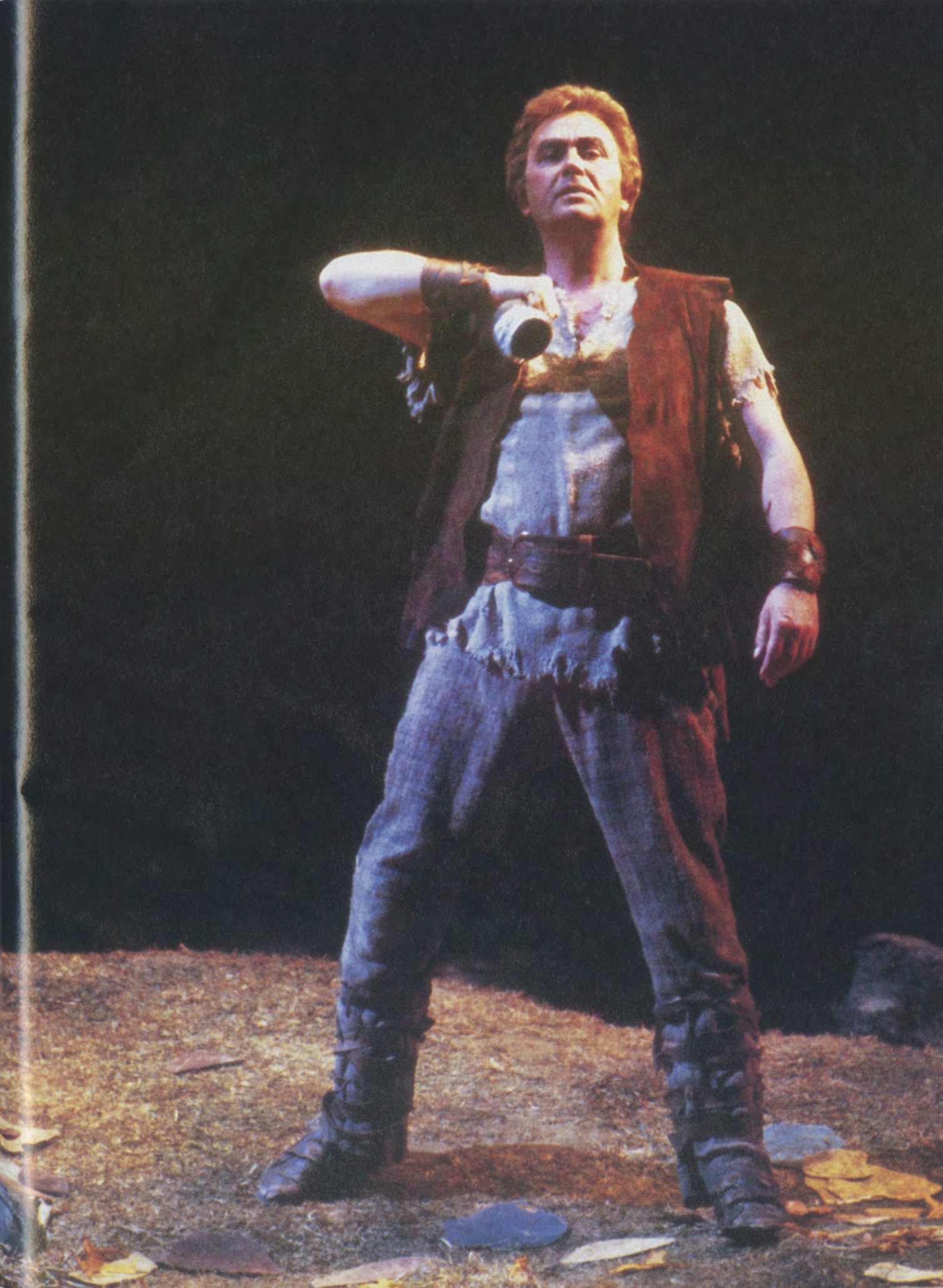
ACT I takes place in the forge of the Nibelung dwarf, Mime, Alberich's brother. (Sieglinde earlier fled to this workshop, gave birth to a child and died. In accordance with his mother's last wishes, this child was named "Siegfried." In order for Mime to possess the Ring he has reared Siegfried to kill its present owner, Fafner.) The young man, Siegfried, asks about the broken sword that his father bore in his last fight. Mime, who has been unable to repair it, evades the subject. Shortly afterward, Siegfried leaves to run exuberantly into the forest and a Wanderer enters. It is Wotan, who no longer rules the world, but rather observes and reflects upon it. Against Mime's will he sits down and offers to play a game in which each will exchange three riddles. If either player is unable to answer any riddle, he will lose his head. The Wanderer answers all three questions Mime asks. In the return match Mime is unable to answer the god's last question, "Who can forge the fragments of the sword Nothung?" The Wanderer departs from the workshop; Mime's head will be taken by the fearless slayer of the dragon. Siegfried returns, and Mime now gives him the fragments of Nothung, which Siegfried files down, melts and forges into a new sword. At the same time, Mime brews a poisonous potion. According to his plan, Siegfried, after slaying Fafner, will drink it and die. Then the treasure will belong to Mime, the dwarf, and make him master of the entire world. Siegfried tests the newly forged sword by striking it on the anvil. The anvil splits.

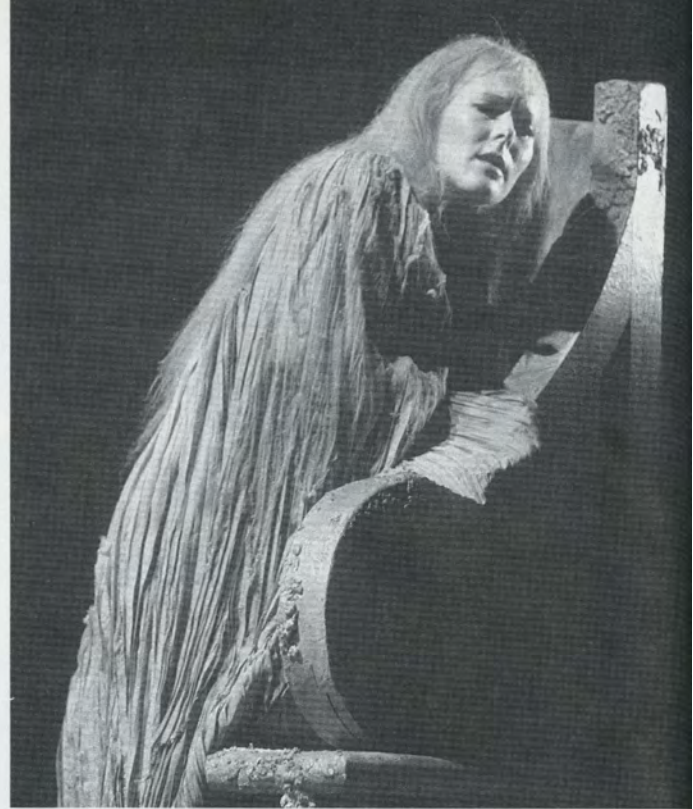
ACT II—Deep in the forest, Alberich waits outside the cave where Fafner, now in the guise of a dragon, dwells and

guards his hoard. Alberich expresses his hope that his curse upon the Ring will take effect so that he can regain possession of it and its powers. The Wanderer joins him; they wake Fafner to warn him that Mime will shortly bring Siegfried to slay him. Alberich offers to protect Fafner if he will peacefully relinquish the Ring to him. But Fafner is uncooperative: "I'll stay and guard my hoard: let me sleep." The Wanderer departs laughing and Alberich disappears too, just before Mime arrives with Siegfried. Mime tries once more to instill fear into Siegfried's heart. He fails and leaves angrily with the comment, "Siegfried and Fafner oh, that they would slay one another." Siegfried lies down in the grass near the cave. He hears the song of a forest bird and the gentle rustling of the leaves—the passage that Wagner called "Forest Murmurs." Siegfried's thoughts turn back to the father and mother he never knew, his heart longing especially for his mother. He tries to imitate the song of the forest bird, first with a reed-flute, then with a horn. This noise awakes Fafner, and after a short struggle, Siegfried drives Nothung into his heart. In his dying moments, Fafner is filled with admiration for the "heroic youth" who has slain him. He foretells Siegfried's future, warning him that Mime is plotting Siegfried's death in order to gain the hoard. As Siegfried pulls his sword from the dead Fafner, a drop of the dragon's blood falls onto Siegfried's hand. The instant he puts his hand to his mouth to lick away the drop, he understands the words and meaning of the forest bird's song. The bird tells him to be sure to take the Ring and the Magic Helmet, which Siegfried does. While Siegfried is in the

cave, Mime and Alberich return to claim the hoard, and fight with each other as they search Fafner's corpse. Siegfried returns with the Ring and Tarnhelm. Just as the dragon's blood has given Siegfried the ability to understand the forest bird, it also enables him to recognize the malicious intent behind Mime's friendly words; as Mime hands him the poisoned drink, Siegfried kills him. The forest bird tells Siegfried of Brünnhilde, the most beautiful of all women, who lies on her rock surrounded by fire and awaits the one who has not learned to fear. The bird flies ahead, showing the way, and Siegfried follows.

ACT III—The Wanderer calls Erda from the earth. She refuses to answer his question regarding the fate of the world; only after he declares that he no longer fears its downfall does she reveal the impending doom. Siegfried arrives, led by the forest bird. The Wanderer bars his way with his spear, feared by all except one man. Siegfried breaks Wotan's spear with Nothung, proving thereby that he is the one man who does not fear it. The Wanderer steps aside, and Siegfried rushes up the rocks until he stands before the sleeping Brünnhilde. Siegfried, who feared neither Fafner, fire nor Wotan's spear, learns fear with his first glimpse of a woman. He wakes her with a kiss; she greets the sun and light; then she sees Siegfried, and they gaze into each other's eyes. But their growing passion is interrupted by her fearful recognition that she has been divested of her godhood, and is now no more than a defenseless mortal woman. However, this emotional obstacle is crossed, and Siegfried and Brünnhilde sink into each other's arms in glowing, and ever-increasing love.

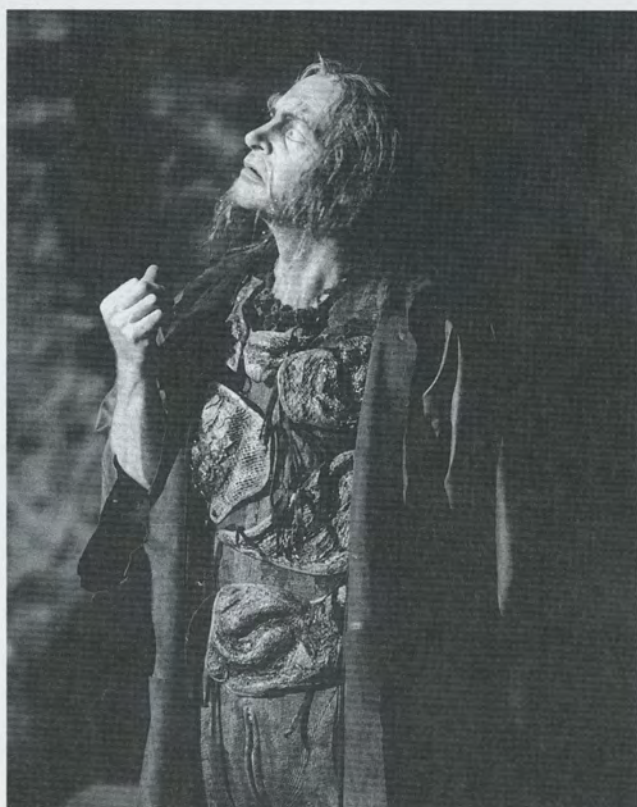




Birgitta Svendén

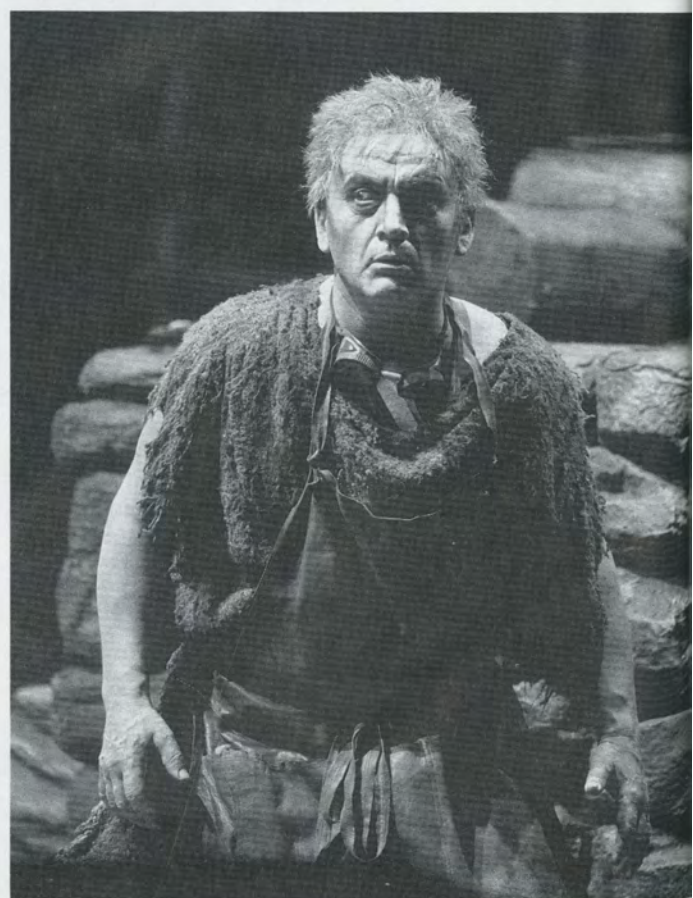
Siegfried

Photos taken in rehearsal by Marty Sohl

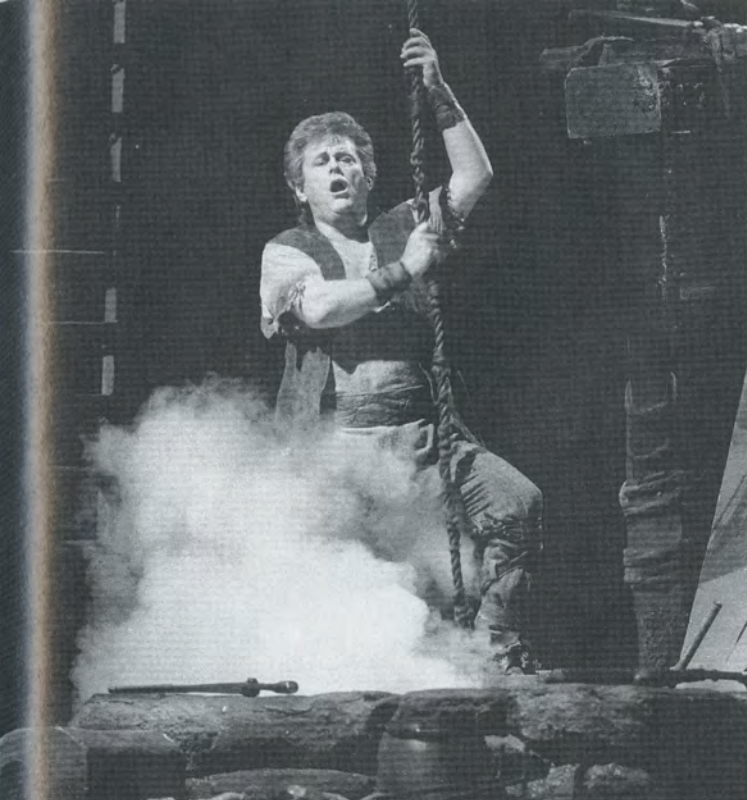


Tom Fox

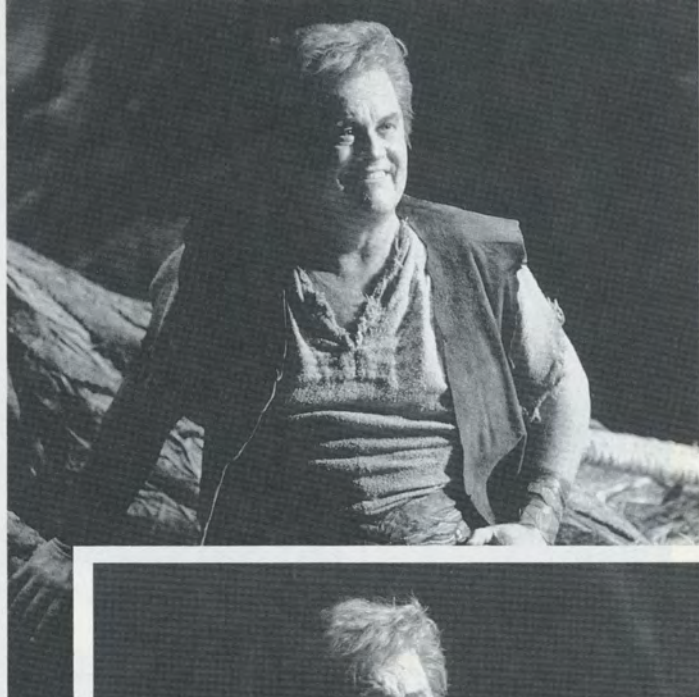
Preceding page: René Kollo as Siegfried in 1985. SCHERL



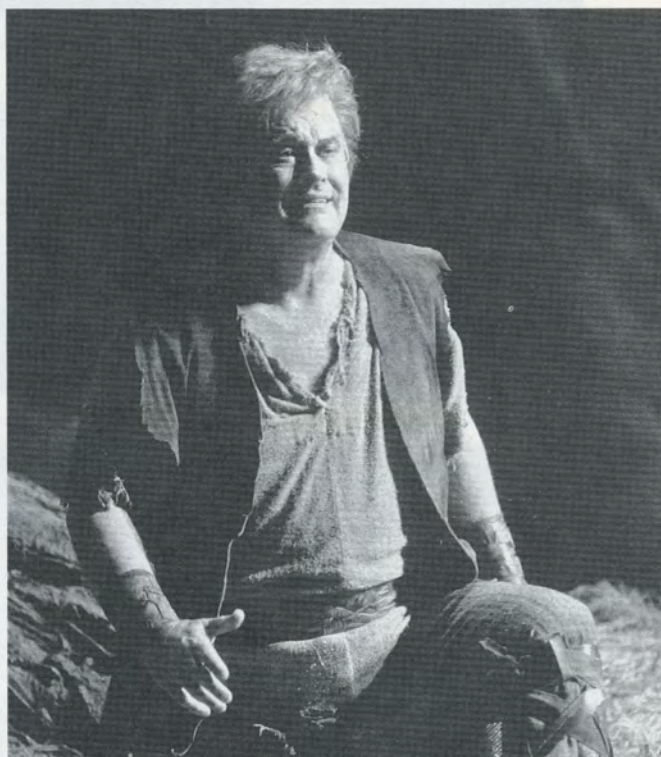
Helmut Pampuch



William Johns



James Patterson



William Johns



William Johns, Fafner



William Johns, Gwyneth Jones



Gwyneth Jones





GWYNETH JONES

Highly acclaimed as an interpreter of the operas of Wagner and Strauss, Welsh soprano **Gwyneth Jones** returns to San Francisco Opera to sing Brünnhilde in the *Ring* cycle. Here last fall as Barak's Wife in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, she has made numerous appearances with the Company: the title roles of *Fidelio* (1969 and 1978), *Aida* (1969) and *Tosca* (1978 and 1982), as well as Elisabetta in *Don Carlo* (1973), the title role of *Salome* (1987), her first Isolde in *Tristan und Isolde* (1980), and Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre* (1983 and 1985). Hailed as a consummate performer of any role she undertakes, Gwyneth Jones regularly sings at all of the world's major opera houses, appearing with leading conductors and at most international opera festivals. Born in Pontnewynydd, Wales, she started her career as a mezzo-soprano and sang Orpheus in *Orpheus und Euridice* in Zurich and Octavian in *Der Rosenkavalier* at Covent Garden. Her international career took off soon after she switched to the soprano range and returned to the Royal Opera in a new production of *Il Trovatore* directed by Luchino Visconti and conducted by Carlo Maria Giulini. A long list of important international debuts followed, mostly in roles from the Italian dramatic soprano repertory. Gradually, she moved towards the heaviest of roles in opera with her first *Götterdämmerung* Brünnhilde at Bayreuth in 1974, followed by all three Brünnhildes in 1975. Her first *Ariadne auf Naxos* occurred in Munich in 1977, Barak's Wife in Cologne in 1979, *Elektra's* Chrysothemis in London in 1977, and the title role of *Elektra* in Cologne in 1983. Los Angeles was the site of her first *Turandot* in 1984, and she has since appeared in the role in London, Vienna, Rome, Paris, Moscow, etc. A Kammersängerin and Honorary Member (a rare honor) of the Vienna State Opera, Dame Gwyneth is also a Kammersängerin with the Bavarian State Opera in Munich. She was awarded the prestigious Shakespeare Award in Hamburg in 1978, and was given the title of Dame of the British Empire in Queen Elizabeth II's 1986 honors. She was most recently granted the Commander's Cross of the Order of Merit



JANIS MARTIN

by the Federal Republic of Germany. Her long list of recordings includes most of her celebrated Wagner and Richard Strauss roles, and also extends from the standard works such as Verdi's *Otello* to rarities such as the recent recording of Franz Schmidt's complete *Notre Dame*. The artist can be seen on a number of video recordings, notably the Bayreuth *Ring*, directed by Patrice Chéreau.

In demand the world over for her interpretations of dramatic roles, California soprano **Janis Martin** portrays the three Brünnhildes in *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. She most recently appeared with San Francisco Opera in 1988 when she stepped in on short notice to replace an ailing colleague as Senta in *Der Fliegende Holländer*. The Sacramento native began her musical training as a mezzo-soprano in the Merola Opera Program and made her operatic debut with the Company in 1960—performing more than 25 roles here during her first four seasons. In 1962 she won the Metropolitan Opera Auditions and sang several roles with that company for three seasons. She undertook her first major Wagnerian role in 1966 for San Francisco Opera, portraying Venus in *Tannhäuser*, the vehicle of her subsequent La Scala and Paris Opera debuts. Acclaimed as a Wagnerian singer, Miss Martin portrayed Brangäne in *Tristan und Isolde* (heard here in 1970), Elisabeth and Venus in *Tannhäuser*, Ortrud in *Lohengrin* (which she sang for the first time in her career in 1978 at San Francisco Opera) and Senta. Her Bayreuth Festival credits include Eva in *Die Meistersinger*, Sieglinde in *Die Walküre* (which she sang here in 1976) and Kundry in *Parsifal*, the role of her triumphant return to the Met in 1974. The most recent addition to her Wagner repertoire is Brünnhilde, which she sang at the Lyric Opera of Chicago in 1982 and has performed in Vienna, Geneva, Zurich, Barcelona and Monte Carlo. A soloist with the Deutsche Oper in Berlin since 1970, Miss Martin has appeared there as Tosca, Eva, Ortrud, Sieglinde, Kundry, Senta, the Composer and in the title role of *Ariadne auf Naxos*, and as the Marschallin in



HILDEGARD BEHRENS

Der Rosenkavalier. Among the highlights of her appearances with San Francisco Opera are the Composer in *Ariadne auf Naxos* (1969), the title role of *Tosca* (1976), Marie in *Wozzeck* (1981) and the title role of *Elektra* (1984). She is a frequent guest artist at the Vienna Staatsoper and has won acclaim at Covent Garden as well as with the companies of Munich, Cologne, Stuttgart and Hamburg. Her recording credits include complete versions of Wagner's *Rienzi* and *Der Fliegende Holländer* and Schoenberg's *Erwartung*. As a concert artist, she has appeared with many of the world's most famous orchestras conducted by Böhm, Maazel, Abbado, Boulez, Levine, Sawallisch, Sinopoli, Jochum, Dorati and Solti. Recent engagements include her first Leonore in *Fidelio* in Berlin; Ortrud and Kundry in Munich; the Dyer's Wife in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, the Witch in *Hansel and Gretel* and Senta at the Met; the Dyer's Wife in Cologne; and Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre* in Rome with the Santa Cecilia Orchestra under the baton of Giuseppe Sinopoli.

Internationally celebrated for her interpretations of Wagnerian heroines, German soprano **Hildegard Behrens** makes her San Francisco Opera debut as Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre*, *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung*. She has been highly acclaimed in the role in complete *Ring* cycles at Bayreuth, Munich and at the Metropolitan Opera. Born in Oldenburg, she studied voice at the conservatory in Freiburg and joined the Deutsche Oper am Rhein in Düsseldorf, where she came to the attention of Herbert von Karajan. The title role of *Salome* in her 1977 debut at Salzburg under the maestro's direction launched her international career, and she has since appeared with virtually every major opera company and orchestra in the U.S. and Europe. She made her Met debut in 1976 as Giorgetta in *Il Tabarro* and has returned there to sing Brünnhilde, Sieglinde in *Die Walküre*, Marie in *Wozzeck*, Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*, Leonore in *Fidelio*, Elettra in *Idomeneo*, Isolde in *Tristan und Isolde*, and the title role of *Tosca*. Another of her acclaimed operatic heroines



BIRGITTA SVENDÉN

is the title role of *Elektra*, which she has performed with the London Symphony Orchestra, the Boston Symphony and, most recently, in the Roman and Greek ruins of Pompeii and Siracusa, Italy. Highlights of recent seasons include her first essay of Janáček's *The Makropulos Case* in a new production created for her at the Munich Staatsoper; *Salome* and *Elektra* at the Munich Festival; Act II of *Tristan und Isolde* with the Orchestre de Paris on tour in Europe and at New York's Avery Fisher Hall; *Der Ring des Nibelungen* at the Met; a complete *Ring* cycle in Munich; and Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* with the Orchestre de Paris. A distinguished orchestral soloist, Miss Behrens has performed with the New York Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra and the Vienna Philharmonic. Her extensive discography includes complete recordings of the *Ring*, *Elektra*, *Salome*, *Der Freischütz*, *Fidelio* and *Wozzeck*, as well as solo and duet discs. Her *Tosca* from the Met and *Wozzeck* from Vienna are available both on videodisc and videocassette.

Mezzo-soprano **Birgitta Svendén** makes her San Francisco Opera debut as Erda in Wagner's *Ring* cycle. Born in Sweden, she studied at the Stockholm Opera School before joining the Royal Opera in Stockholm, where she has performed the roles of Erda, Dorabella in *Così fan tutte*, and Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, among others. In 1983, Georg Solti invited her to appear in a new production of the *Ring* cycle at the Bayreuth Festival. She made her debut at the Opéra de Nice in 1985, and has subsequently appeared there in the title role of *Carmen*, as Meg Page in *Falstaff*, and as Anna in *Les Troyens*. Miss Svendén made her Metropolitan Opera debut during the 1988-89 season as Erda in *Das Rheingold* and *Siegfried* and, that same season, sang Magdalene in *Die Meistersinger* in Seattle, Ulrica in *Un Ballo in Maschera* at the Zurich Opera, Maddalena in *Rigoletto* at the Met, and a performance of Mahler's Second Symphony at Chicago's Ravinia Festival under James Levine. Future performances



JANET WILLIAMS

include her debut at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden as Erda; her debut at Milan's La Scala as Magdalene; and a European tour with the Israel Philharmonic under Zubin Mehta in performances of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.

Soprano **Janet Williams** is the Forest Bird in *Siegfried*. She made her San Francisco Opera debut in 1988 when she stepped in on short notice to replace an ailing colleague as Despina in *Così fan tutte*, and was also seen that season in *Parsifal* and as Musetta in the student/family performances of *La Bohème*. She was most recently seen with the Company last fall as Nannetta in the Family Performance of *Falstaff*. A 1988-89 Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, Miss Williams was a participant in the 1987 Merola Opera Program, singing the role of Lauretta in *Gianni Schicchi* at Stern Grove, and winning the Florence Bruce Award at that year's Grand Finals concert. For the Opera Center she has also performed as soloist in *Carmina Burana*, and sang Madame Silverpeal in *The Impresario*. A native of Detroit and a graduate of Indiana University, where she earned a Master of Music degree in Voice, she has appeared with the Budapest State Opera Orchestra, San Francisco Chamber Orchestra, the Greater Lansing and Sacramento Symphony Orchestras, the Oakland Chamber Orchestra, and the Indianapolis Symphony as soloist in Bach's B Minor Mass, Handel's *Messiah*, and Villa-Lobos's *Bachiana Brasileira No. 5*. She has also performed the roles of Susanna in *Le Nozze di Figaro* for Eugene Opera, Arianna in the Opera Center's 1989 Showcase presentation of Handel's *Giustino* and, in her European debut, Echo in *Ariadne auf Naxos* with the Lyons Opera, as well as appearing in Schoenberg's *Moses und Aron* in Paris and Lyons. Recent engagements include her Michigan Opera Theatre debut as Gretel in *Hansel and Gretel*, and a return to France for Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte* and Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*. Later this year she will be seen with San Francisco Opera as Sister Genovieffa in *Suor Angelica*, Adele in the Family Performance of *Die Fledermaus*, and as Amore in *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria*.



RENÉ KOLLO

Considered one of the leading Wagnerian singers active today, **René Kollo** returns to San Francisco Opera's *Ring* cycle as *Siegfried* in *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung*. He made his Company debut in 1984 in the title role of *Siegfried*, and returned for the SFO's *Ring* cycle *Siegfried* the next year, at which time he performed the role of the *Götterdämmerung* *Siegfried* for the first time in his career. He was most recently seen on the stage of the War Memorial in 1988 in the title role of *Parsifal*. Kollo made his Bayreuth debut in 1969 as the Steersman in *Der Fliegende Holländer* and in 1970 sang the role of Erik. He sang his first *Lohengrin* at Bayreuth in 1971, and made his Metropolitan Opera debut in 1976 in the same role. In subsequent years at Bayreuth he appeared as *Siegfried* and *Parsifal*, making him the youngest singer to undertake those roles in Bayreuth history. Other Wagnerian credits include *Tristan* at Bayreuth and in Cologne, Vienna and Paris; *Die Meistersinger* in Munich and Hamburg; *Tannhäuser* in Geneva and at Covent Garden; and *Rienzi* as well as the *Ring* cycle in Munich. Today he is acknowledged as one of the leading Wagnerian tenors in the world's major opera houses. Kollo's repertoire embraces many styles and composers. His recordings include operetta as well as such works as *Tannhäuser*, *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, *Missa Solemnis* and *Fidelio*. In 1986 he made his American recital debut in San Francisco at Herbst Theatre, and in 1984 he sang the role of *Parsifal* in a San Francisco Symphony concert performance of the opera's third act. *Parsifal* was also the first opera he directed when he undertook a production at Darmstadt in 1986.



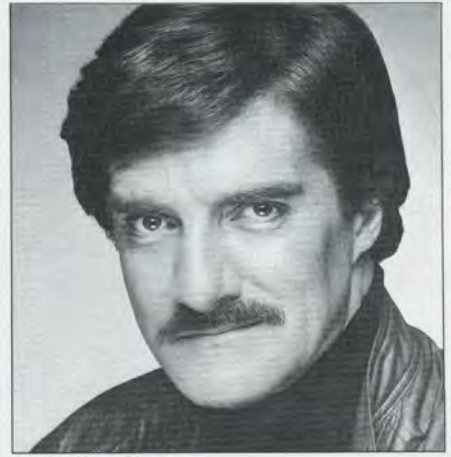
WILLIAM JOHNS

Internationally acclaimed tenor **William Johns** sings the title role of *Siegfried*, as well as *Siegfried* in *Götterdämmerung*. He has been heard here as Walther in *Die Meistersinger* (1981), Don José in *Carmen* (1983), Bacchus in *Ariadne auf Naxos* (1983), Max in *Der Freischütz* (1985) and the Emperor in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* (1989). The Oklahoma-born artist's 1973 operatic debut as Rodolfo in *La Bohème* in Bremen was followed by appearances in other major European opera houses. He made his U.S. debut in the same role in 1975 with Pittsburgh Opera. He has since appeared as a regular guest artist at the leading opera houses of the world. Highlights of his 1986-87 season include his La Scala debut as the Emperor in a new production of *Die Frau ohne Schatten*; his first staged *Tannhäuser* at the Metropolitan Opera; his first *Siegfried* in *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung* in Paris; the first Tristan of his career opposite Gwyneth Jones at the Paris Opera; and *Die Meistersinger* at the Bayreuth Festival. Johns was heard in three new productions of *Tristan und Isolde* during the 1987-88 season: at the Hamburg State Opera, the Canadian Opera Company and at the Los Angeles Opera. That same season he sang *Siegfried* at the Orange Festival, in addition to Bacchus in Toronto and the title role of *Otello* in Marseilles and Frankfurt. Most recently he appeared in *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung* at the Met; *Lohengrin*, *Rienzi* and *Tristan und Isolde* in Hamburg; *Tannhäuser* in Bonn; *Lohengrin* in Cologne; *La Damnation de Faust* at Verona; and *Fidelio* with the Philadelphia Opera. Future engagements include new productions of *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung* at the Cologne Opera; *Tannhäuser* at the Hamburg and Vienna State Opera; and performances of several roles at the Metropolitan Opera. Johns also frequently appears with orchestras in the U.S. and Europe in repertoire including Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* and Eighth Symphony, Schoenberg's *Gurrelieder*, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, and Berlioz's *La Damnation de Faust*.



JAMES MORRIS

Bass **James Morris** returns to the Company to recreate the role of Wotan in both *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*, and to portray the Wanderer in *Siegfried*. The Baltimore native made his 1981 San Francisco Opera debut as Assur in *Semiramide* and during the 1985 Ring Festival won international acclaim as Wotan, appearing in the *Rheingold* part for the first time in his career. He returned here that fall as Scarpia in *Tosca* and as Claggart in *Billy Budd*. In May of 1987 he performed a recital at the War Memorial Opera House and appeared later that year as the four villains in *The Tales of Hoffmann*. Morris became the youngest male singer on the Metropolitan Opera roster at the age of 23 and four years later was on the Met stage as Don Giovanni, a role he has sung in numerous seasons there, as well as those of the four villains in *The Tales of Hoffmann*, Claggart in *Billy Budd*, Wotan/the Wanderer in the complete Ring cycle, the title roles of *Der Fliegende Holländer* and *Faust*, and leading roles in *Macbeth*, *La Forza del Destino*, *Don Carlo*, *Otello*, *Carmen*, *Peter Grimes*, and *The Barber of Seville*, among others. In addition to his regular appearances at the Met and throughout the U.S. and Canada, he has appeared several times at the Salzburg Festival (*The Marriage of Figaro*, *Tosca*), Milan's La Scala (*Der Fliegende Holländer*), the Vienna Staatsoper (*Die Walküre*, *Don Giovanni*), at the Glyndebourne and Edinburgh Festivals, as well as in Strasbourg, Florence, Madrid, Barcelona, Santiago, Sydney and Melbourne. Last season, he made his Royal Opera Covent Garden debut in *Das Rheingold*, and recently sang in performances of *Die Walküre* with that company, with whom he will perform the complete Ring cycle over a period of several years. He has also taken part in two complete new German Ring cycles—Munich and Berlin. In great demand as a concert singer, he has performed with a number of prominent orchestras including the New York Philharmonic, Berlin Philharmonic, the National Symphony Orchestra, and the symphonies of Atlanta, St. Louis, San Francisco and Chicago. He also joined the Soviet Émigré Orchestra in Carnegie Hall for the first performance outside the Soviet



ROBERT HALE

Union of Shostakovich's "Six Romances." His discography includes two complete Ring cycles, *Maria Stuarda*, *Le Roi de Lahore*, *I Vespri Siciliani*, *Così fan tutte*, Haydn's *The Creation*, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, the Requiems by Mozart and Fauré, as well as a recent release of arias by Wagner and Verdi.

American bass-baritone **Robert Hale** makes his San Francisco Opera debut as Wotan in *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*, and the Wanderer in *Siegfried*. Born in Texas, he completed his master's degree at the University of Oklahoma and continued his studies at Boston University and the New England Conservatory of Music. He made his operatic debut in Frankfurt, Germany, while stationed there as a member of the armed forces. After a U.S. opera debut with the New York City Opera, and several appearances with the opera companies of San Diego, Philadelphia, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh and Winnipeg, he has sung most recently with great success in Europe. He has performed at the Vienna Staatsoper, the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, the Bayerische Staatsoper in Munich, the Deutsche Oper Berlin, and in Zurich, Hamburg, Frankfurt, Stuttgart, Cologne and Düsseldorf. He appeared as Wotan and the Wanderer when the Deutsche Oper Berlin presented the Ring cycle in Tokyo and in Washington, D.C., and will perform these roles in the Vienna Staatsoper's new production of the Ring later this season. Equally successful in the concert hall, he has performed with the symphonies of San Francisco, Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, Cincinnati, Washington, D.C., Toronto and Montreal. Hale has also appeared at the festivals of Ravinia, Tanglewood, and Wolftrap in the U.S., and those of Bergen, Lausanne, Bordeaux, Orange and Bregenz in Europe. Highlights from the 1988-89 season include Jokanaan in *Salome* at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden; Méphistophélès in *Faust* at the Deutsche Oper Berlin; Wotan in *Die Walküre* at Bologna's Teatro Comunale; and the title role of *Der Fliegende Holländer* in a new David Pountney production in Bregenz.

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Siegfried: A happy ending?

By ANDREW PORTER

Siegfried has often been called, perhaps rather glibly, the "scherzo" of the *Ring*. The phrase may not mean a lot, but it does mean something—more than just that the opera is the third movement, containing some high-spirited music, of a weighty four-part structure. For one thing, there are more jokes in *Siegfried* than anywhere else in the cycle. Siegfried himself makes several, somewhat unkindly, at Mime's, at the dragon's, at Wotan's/Wanderer's expense. His sense of humor is heavy by comparison with, say, Loge's elegant witticisms in *Das Rheingold*—but it exists, and a Siegfried singing to audiences in a language that they can understand can make them laugh. Much of the romance of the opera comes from the contrast between the hero's heedless, light-hearted, carefree course and the sudden moments when, beneath it, he reveals his loneliness—brought up with no companion but an odious, murderous little dwarf whom he instinctively and for good reason detests, while all around him he sees the birds and beasts of the forest gathered in tender, happy families. The Wanderer can also be jolly: in Act I he is directed to smile, in Act II to laugh loudly, and in Act III to break into a full peal of merry, good-natured laughter.

Then, *Siegfried* is the *Ring* opera with most sunlight in it. Act II may start in a somber, antelucan [pre-dawn] gloom, and Act III with a nocturnal storm, but the former yields to sunlight and bird-song, and the second to a fiery splendor that dissolves into a brilliant dawn. Nature, as I said, plays an important part in the *Ring*, and nowhere more so than in *Siegfried*, where it floods every act. A bear appears in the first act, and a woodbird sings in the second. Siegfried sings of the deer, of foxes and wolves, birds, toads, fish in the streams. When trying to

imagine the mother he never knew, he thinks of the roe-deer's limpid, tender eyes. Freedom from Mime he visualizes as being as free as a fish in the waters, as a finch in the sky. The cynical *Ring* designers who blot out the skies, fell the forests, and cage the woodbird seem to me not just tin-eared but also small-minded. Nature has a positive, symbolic, not merely picturesque role to play in the complicated drama. The lovely Forest Murmurs of Act II, as heard by Siegfried, have their dark counterparts in the Forest Terrors of Act I, as heard and related by Mime, the dwarf who is out of tune with nature. Siegfried is apparently not a vegetarian: when tossing aside the roast meat and the stew Mime has prepared for him he says, "I roasted my own food." But from the animals he has learned what love is, and, as he tells Mime, he never takes cubs from their parents. It was while engaged on the *Ring* libretto that Wagner wrote that all beasts were dearer to him than the human race. In an 1880 essay on *Religion and Art*, he linked socialism, vegetarianism, and the protection of animals as three worthy aims that should be simultaneously pursued.

* * *

The action of *Siegfried* extends across three momentous days during which much happens. On the first of them, the hero refashions his father's sword. During the night, he and Mime make the journey to Neidhöhle, the forest cavern where Fafner the dragon dwells, uselessly, on a golden hoard that includes the powerful Ring. On the second day, Siegfried kills Fafner, gains the Ring, casually (but not without provocation) kills Mime, and then proceeds to shatter Wotan's Spear, and with it all the old "rules"—graven on its shaft—by which Wotan sought, vainly, to create a just,

The final moment of Siegfried, Act II, in the current San Francisco Opera production of Wagner's *Ring*.

SCHERL



harmonious world. During the night, Siegfried ascends the fire-girt mountain, and in the dawn of the third day he awakens Brünnhilde. The pattern of the opera is one of waiting followed by wakening—of events long-planned or long-expected set into motion and swiftly coming to pass. Mime, Alberich, and Wotan have long been impatient for these events: the two first hoping to gain the Ring, the third to abdicate responsibility, lay down his rule, and see the Ring pass into hands readier to renounce it than to use it for self-aggrandizement and general harm. The recurrent imagery is of sleeping followed by waking. At the close of Act I, Siegfried sings of waking to life his father's shattered sword. In Act II, Wotan wakes the dragon, and at the start of Act III the slumbering Erda. Finally, Siegfried's kiss wakes the sleeping Brünnhilde. Although the opera is long, it seems to move swiftly: a curtain-raiser setting the situations, pulling the past into readiness for the sharp-focus confrontations of the climactic *Götterdämmerung*.

The musical structure is one of duologues: tenor/tenor, tenor/baritone (the riddle scene), tenor/tenor in Act I; baritone/baritone (the confrontation of *Licht-Alberich* and *Schwarz-Alberich*), tenor/tenor, tenor/bass (the Siegfried/Fafner exchange), tenor/baritone (Mime/Alberich), tenor/tenor in Act II; and in Act III baritone/contralto, baritone/tenor (Wotan with his grandson), and finally, gloriously, tenor/soprano. Within each act there is one large, lyrical set-piece: the Forging Song, the Forest Murmurs, and the Love Duet—the “Siegfried Idyll”—that begins with Brünnhilde's “Ewig war ich.” It is an opera most beautifully fashioned. Although it seems silly to “play favorites” within the four *Ring* operas, there are nevertheless many people who hail *Siegfried* as the opera of the four that they love most dearly.

* * *

The forging scene of the first act is another small study of man's striving to master the four elements and turn them to his use. Siegfried's vocabulary stresses it: “Wild in the forest there grew a tree, which I felled; I burned the brown ash-tree to charcoal . . . Blow, bellows, blow the blaze . . . How bravely the charcoal burns, as it spits sparks and melts my splinters of steel . . . A fiery stream flowed into the water and sizzled there . . . The tough steel grew firm and hard.”

Then once again, after the first shaping of the blade, air plays upon fire, kindling the glow that makes the mined metal red-hot; once again it is plunged into the water. I see why some directors choose to present an “industrial-age” *Ring*, though this symbolic presentation of the process seems to me equally potent and far more poetic.

Time, perhaps, to consider what power resides in the eponymous Ring that Brünnhilde is to brandish, vainly, against the rapacious Siegfried in Act I of *Götterdämmerung*. Let us marshal the relevant information about it as Wagner first compiled and thought to present it. In *Siegfried's Tod*, the first mention of it is as a trinket, taken from the Nibelung hoard, that Siegfried has given into a woman's keeping. There has been an earlier reference, without specific Ring mention, to the Nibelung treasure the possession of which has made the Nibelungs Siegfried's subjects and can make him a potential world ruler: “To him who knows how to use the treasure, the world bows.” But Siegfried does not know how to “use” the treasure for self-

aggrandizement. Hagen does, and at the close of the scene, during his “Watch” aria, he gloats as he reflects that Siegfried will soon be returning and bringing with him the Ring.

In the next scene, the Waltraute of *Götterdämmerung* (the successor of the massed Valkyries of *Siegfried's Tod*) urges Brünnhilde to renounce the Ring, to return it to the Rhine, to nature: thus, she says, the world will be saved. What if Brünnhilde had done so—had, for the world's good, sacrificed her lover's love-pledge? Interesting speculation, but fruitless, since she didn't. Brünnhilde is human, too—for a while selfish, self-concerned, blinded by sexual love. Wagner's understanding of human frailty finds powerful expression in this scene. Brünnhilde ends as a shining heroine, but before her transfiguration in the last scene of *Götterdämmerung* she has much to learn.

In the Prelude that Wagner added to *Siegfried's Tod*, the Norns refer to the curse on the Ring, and Siegfried bestows the Ring on Brünnhilde as a token of his previous achievement: the slaying of a

Jess Thomas as Siegfried in the Company's 1972 presentation of the *Ring*.





Marek Windheim as Mime; Gustav Schützendorf as Alberich in San Francisco Opera's 1935 *Siegfried*.

dragon. In *Siegfried*, the Woodbird tells Siegfried that if he retrieves the Ring from the cavern it can make him "the ruler of the world." But what exactly the Ring could achieve, and how, was not precisely specified until Wagner had worked back to the writing of *Das Rheingold*. And here we must try for precise translations. Wellgunde tells Alberich, and us, that "the world's inheritance is won by one who from the Rhinegold fashions the Ring that grants him immeasurable might," and Woglinde adds that only one who renounces love has the ability to fashion the Ring. In the second scene of the opera, Mime tells us that Alberich has by his renunciation of love and his fashioning of the Ring enslaved the previously free and playful Nibelungs, the workers, and set them to amassing wealth for him; and Alberich, in his proud declarations to Wotan, makes no secret of the fact that by means of this wealth he plans to suborn the forces of decent government, through bribery and corruption, and make himself master of the world. On the first, 1848, Europe-in-revolution (and later Shavian) level, a plainly political reading of the *Ring* makes a powerful appeal to anyone disgusted by the evidence of greed, bribery, and corruption in local and national government adduced by almost any daily newspaper. The power of the Ring—its corrupting power—is the power of personal wealth, money

amassed by the loveless who care more about themselves than about others; and so of course the Ring is powerless against those who despise the stuff.

* * *

In some productions of *Siegfried*, the Wanderer at the close of the second scene in Act III slinks off despondently, as if heartbroken, his spirits as thoroughly shattered as his Spear has been by Siegfried's sword. This seems to me a mis-

reading of the cycle's sense. I'd say, on the contrary, that, even while Wotan is naturally a bit sad that his own rule has now been decisively ended, he rejoices that his grandson has proved himself to be the necessary hero. Of course he has shown flashes of anger, bitterness, grief. A world ruler does not easily resign before a newcomer. But the real disaster



Lauritz Melchior as Siegfried at the San Francisco Opera in 1935.

FRANKLIN & ROGNON



Robert Hale as Wotan in the Deutsche Oper Berlin production of the Ring.

would have been if the Spear had effectively barred his way, dissuaded him from his progress toward union with Brünnhilde. Then the world would have been in real trouble. In the previous scene, Wotan has announced to Erda, triumphantly, that the god is gladly yielding his rule to the young. And that proclamation, Wagner said, should ring out—its theme will dominate the closing pages of the cycle—"like the proclamation of a new religion."

When I write "Wagner said" I am quoting his words as recorded by Heinrich Porges, the sensitive young musician and writer whom Wagner invited to be present at the rehearsals of the first *Ring* and to keep a record of them. About this scene of *Siegfried*, Porges is especially eloquent. "Every trace of pathos must be eliminated . . . We inhabit the sphere of elevated style . . . The deep feelings voiced from time to time by the Wanderer must be touched by a tender, kindly humor, and in *Siegfried's* outbursts of boyish arrogance the nobility of an essentially heroic nature must never be lost sight of." Porges's *Die Bühnenproben zu den Bayreuther Festspielen des Jahres 1876*—it has been published in English translation by the Cambridge University Press—helps to bring us close to the composer, and to distinguish between his intentions and the admittedly in many ways inadequate 1876 realization of his work.

The four *Ring* operas end each with a kind of triumphant resolution: *Das Rheingold* with the D-flat-major rainbow affirmation that all will be well (even though it is "undermined" by the Rhine-maidens' words); *Die Walküre* in an E-major blaze that promises an heroic outcome to the heroine's present plight; and, above all, *Siegfried* in a C-major proclaiming that all will be well. Wotan's plans have apparently come to fulfillment; the free hero will meet and liberate the imprisoned, emotionally freed heroine. The forces of evil seem to have been routed. The *Ring* has passed to a fearless youth (born of the right stock) whose noble nature, as Wotan tells Erda, will render harmless the curse that Alberich laid on the glittering prize. The young will inherit the earth! It doesn't work out quite that way. How it might work out is something that Wagner changed his mind about many times. But at the close of *Siegfried* all seems set for a happy ending. ■

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HELMUT PAMPUCH

German tenor **Helmut Pampuch** recreates the role of Mime in *Das Rheingold* and *Siegfried*, having made his U.S. debut with San Francisco Opera in 1984 as Mime in *Siegfried*, returning for the 1985 Ring Festival to repeat that role and to sing his first *Rheingold* Mime in this country. Born in Oberschlesien (now part of Poland), he graduated from the Conservatory of Nürnberg and studied with Willy Domgraf-Fassbänder before his professional debut in Regensburg. Engagements in other German houses followed and since 1973 he has been a member of the Deutsche Oper am Rhein in Düsseldorf. He has also appeared in Berlin in *Der Fliegende Holländer* and *The Bartered Bride*; in Geneva as Mime in *Das Rheingold* and *Siegfried* and David in *Die Meistersinger*; and at the Bavarian State Opera in Munich as Monostatos in *Die Zauberflöte*, and Pedrillo in *The Abduction from the Seraglio*. Pampuch took part in the world premiere of the three-act version of *Lulu* in Paris, where he also appeared as Monostatos and as Mime in *Das Rheingold*. He traveled with the Paris Opera to Milan for a repeat of *Lulu* and has since fulfilled numerous guest engagements in the opera houses of Amsterdam, Bordeaux, Rouen, Genoa, Stuttgart, Hamburg and Lisbon. At Bayreuth he has performed in *Tristan und Isolde*, *Parsifal*, *Die Meistersinger* and *Das Rheingold*, in which he sang Mime for several years and in the film televised in 1983. In 1984 he scored a major success as Mime in a new production of *Siegfried* at the Teatro Verdi in Trieste, and in 1985 appeared at Milan's La Scala as Monostatos in a new production of *Die Zauberflöte*. Highlights from recent seasons include *Lulu*, *Die Zauberflöte* and *Das Rheingold* at the Paris Opera, *Das Rheingold* and *Lohengrin* at Bayreuth, *Die Meistersinger* and *Ariadne auf Naxos* at the Grand Théâtre de Genève, a concert version of *Das Rheingold* with the Minneapolis Orchestra, and the Ring cycle in Munich. He is scheduled to perform Mime in the Deutsche Oper am Rhein's entire Ring cycle in the next few seasons.



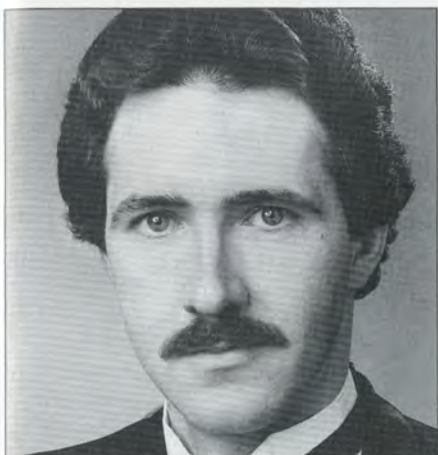
TOM FOX

Baritone **Tom Fox**, in his San Francisco Opera debut, portrays Alberich in *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. After early musical training at the Cincinnati Opera's College Conservatory of Music, he became a resident member of the Cincinnati Opera, singing such roles as Doctor Dulcamara in *The Elixir of Love*, Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly*, and Escamillo in *Carmen*. In 1981, he was engaged as principal guest artist at the Frankfurt Opera, where his roles included Orest in *Elektra*, Amonasro in *Aida*, Pizarro in *Fidelio*, Klingsor in *Parsifal*, Nick Shadow in *The Rake's Progress*, Alberich and Escamillo. His first appearance with the Canadian Opera Company was in 1983 as Orest, and he has since returned to Toronto as Jokanaan in *Salome*, the four villains in *The Tales of Hoffmann*, Scarpia in *Tosca*, and Escamillo. The role of Escamillo also served as his debut with the Vancouver Opera and the Welsh National Opera. During the 1986-87 season, Fox made his debut with Pittsburgh Opera as Claudius in the Ambroise Thomas *Hamlet*, and sang his first Iago in *Otello* at the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires. He returned to Frankfurt for the 1987-88 season as Amonasro and as Ford in *Falstaff*, and made his debut with L'Opéra de Nice at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris as Alberich in their joint production of the Ring cycle. He most recently sang Pizarro and Gessler in *William Tell* in Nice, Pizarro in San Diego, Orest and Scarpia in Pittsburgh, and Escamillo in Toronto. Later this year he is scheduled to sing the title roles of *The Flying Dutchman* and *Eugene Onegin* with Pittsburgh Opera.



FRANZ MAZURA

Bass **Franz Mazura** returns to San Francisco Opera as Alberich in Wagner's Ring cycle. He made his American debut with the Company in 1968 as Jokanaan in *Salome*, appearing that same season as the Commendatore in *Don Giovanni*. The following year he appeared as Pizarro in *Fidelio*, Gunther in *Götterdämmerung*, and the Speaker in *The Magic Flute*. He was most recently seen here in 1979 as Orest in *Elektra*. He has been heard at the Bayreuth Festival since 1970 in such roles as Gurnemanz and Klingsor in *Parsifal*, King Marke in *Tristan und Isolde*, Biterolf in *Tannhäuser*, and Alberich and Gunther in the Ring cycle, and has won acclaim at the Salzburg Festival in *Fidelio* and Mozart's *La Finta Semplice*. In Hamburg, in addition to those roles, he has performed Kaspar in *Der Freischütz*, Daland in *Der Fliegende Holländer*, Pizarro, Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte*, La Roche in *Capriccio*, Orest, Jokanaan, and Moses in *Moses und Aron*. He has also had a huge success with his portrayal of Dr. Schön in the complete three-act version of Berg's *Lulu* at the Paris Opera, the Metropolitan Opera, and at Milan's La Scala. In addition to his numerous appearances at the major opera houses of the world, Mazura has performed every consecutive year at the Met since 1980. Roles there include Gurnemanz, Klingsor, Alberich, Pizarro, and Frank in *Die Fledermaus*. A permanent member of the Mannheim Nationaltheater, his recordings include *Lulu* (1980 Grammy Award), *Parsifal*, *Moses und Aron* (1985 Grammy Award) and *Palestrina*. He was honored with the title of Kammersänger by the Mannheim National Theater in 1980.



JAMES PATTERSON

Bass **James Patterson** recreates the role of Fafner in *Das Rheingold* and *Siegfried* which he sang for San Francisco Opera during the 1985 Ring Festival. A graduate of the 1982 Merola Opera Program and a 1983-84 Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, he has sung over 20 roles here and was last heard in 1988 as Trulove in *The Rake's Progress*, Titirel in *Parsifal*, and the Old Convict in *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*. During the 1987-88 season, Patterson appeared as Sarastro in *The Magic Flute* for Portland Opera, Des Moines Metro Opera and Seattle Opera, where he also sang Fafner for their Ring cycle. Additional engagements that season included his Lyric Opera of Chicago debut in *Tosca*, Colline in *La Bohème* with Opera Hamilton, Hunding in Act I of *Die Walküre* with the Montreal Symphony, and Basilio in Orlando Opera's *Barber of Seville*. The next season saw him as the Commendatore in the Peter Sellars production of *Don Giovanni* in Vienna and Purchase, N.Y., Padre Guardiano in *La Forza del Destino* with the Greater Miami Opera, the Commendatore in Orlando, and the King in a concert performance of *Aida* with the Minnesota Orchestra. He most recently repeated the role of the Commendatore in Sellars's *Don Giovanni* production in Paris, and appeared as Sarastro with the Kentucky Opera, and as Basilio in *The Barber of Seville* and Lodovico in *Otello* for the Canadian Opera Company. A native of Toronto, Patterson received both his bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Michigan.

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The 1990 presentation of the *Ring* is sponsored by Cynthia Wood, Mr. & Mrs. Reid W. Dennis and an anonymous friend of the San Francisco Opera. Additional support is provided by **LEXUS**, Mr. & Mrs. John M. Bryan, Barbro and Bernard Osher, Mr. & Mrs. Evert B. Person, Mr. & Mrs. William D. Rollnick, and Mr. & Mrs. Alfred S. Wilsey.

The original 1985 production was made possible by the BankAmerica Foundation, the Carol Franc Buck Foundation, the L.J. and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation and an anonymous friend of the Company.

Music drama in three acts and a prologue by RICHARD WAGNER
Text by the composer

Götterdämmerung

(in German)

Der Ring des Nibelungen—Part III

Conductor

Peter Schneider (June 13, 19)
Donald Runnicles (June 26, July 1)

Original production by
Nikolaus Lehnhoff

Stage Director
Laurie Feldman

Designer and
Production Consultant
John Conklin

Lighting Designer and
Special Effects
Thomas J. Munn

Projections
Ron Scherl

Sound Designer
Roger Gans

Chorus Director
Ian Robertson

Musical Preparation
Robert Morrison
Kathryn Cathcart
Christopher Larkin
Susan Miller Hult
Ernest Fredric Knell

Jonathan Khuner
Philip Eisenberg

Prompter
Philip Eisenberg

Assistant Stage Directors
Paula Williams
Barbara Donner

Stage Manager
Jerry Sherk

Scenery constructed in
San Francisco Opera Scenic Studios

Costumes executed by
San Francisco Opera Costume Shop
and Jean Lamprell

First performance:
Bayreuth, August 17, 1876

First San Francisco Opera performance:
November 9, 1935

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 13 AT 6:30
TUESDAY, JUNE 19 AT 6:30
TUESDAY, JUNE 26 AT 6:30
SUNDAY, JULY 1 AT 1:00

CAST

(in order of appearance)

First Norn Birgitta Svendén
Second Norn Katherine Ciesinski
Third Norn Kathryn Day

Brünnhilde Gwyneth Jones
(June 13, 26)
Janis Martin
(June 19)
Hildegard Behrens
(July 1)

Siegfried William Johns
(June 13)
René Kollo
(June 19, 26; July 1)

Gunther Michael Devlin
Hagen Eric Halfvarson
Gutrune Kathryn Day
Waltraute Katherine Ciesinski
Alberich Tom Fox
(June 13, 26)
Franz Mazura
(June 19; July 1)

Woglinde Ann Panagulias
Wellgunde Mary Mills
Flosshilde Sandra Walker

Vassals, workers, officers, courtiers,
guards, huntsmen, servants

PROLOGUE Terrace of the gods
A remote mountaintop

ACT I Scene 1: The hall of the Gibichungs
Scene 2: A remote mountaintop

INTERMISSION

ACT II: Outside the hall of the Gibichungs
INTERMISSION

ACT III Scene 1: A rocky slope on the banks of the Rhine
Scene 2: Outside the hall of the Gibichungs

Supertitles by Jerry Sherk and Francesca Zambello,
San Francisco Opera.

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

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

The performance will last approximately five hours and twenty-five minutes.

Götterdämmerung/Synopsis

PROLOGUE: The terrace of the gods is now occupied by the three Norns, daughters of the earth goddess Erda, who are busy spinning the rope of fate. Begotten before the earth was created, they recall Wotan's days of power and predict Valhalla's imminent fall. The second Norn then notices that the rope of destiny is starting to fray and unravel. As the sisters try to make it taut, it snaps. Crying that their eternal wisdom and power of prophesy is at an end, they descend in terror to Erda and vanish.

At dawn, Siegfried and Brünnhilde awaken after their bridal night. Though fearful that she may lose him, Brünnhilde encourages Siegfried to travel in search of heroic deeds. To remind her of his love, he gives her the Ring and, taking her horse Grane in exchange, joins her in a joyous farewell.

ACT I—In their castle on the Rhine, Gunther, king of the Gibichungs, and his sister Gutrune, both unwed, ask counsel from their half-brother Hagen. Plotting to secure the Ring, Hagen advises Gunther to consolidate his power by marrying Brünnhilde. By means of a magic potion, Siegfried could be induced to forget his bride and win her for Gunther in return for Gutrune's hand. At that moment, Siegfried's horn call announces his approach. Gunther welcomes him, and Gutrune seals his fate by offering him the potion. Hailing Brünnhilde, he drinks and instantly forgets all about her. Quickly succumbing to Gutrune's beauty, Siegfried agrees to bring Brünnhilde to Gunther. After sealing their agreement with an oath to blood-brotherhood, the two men depart.

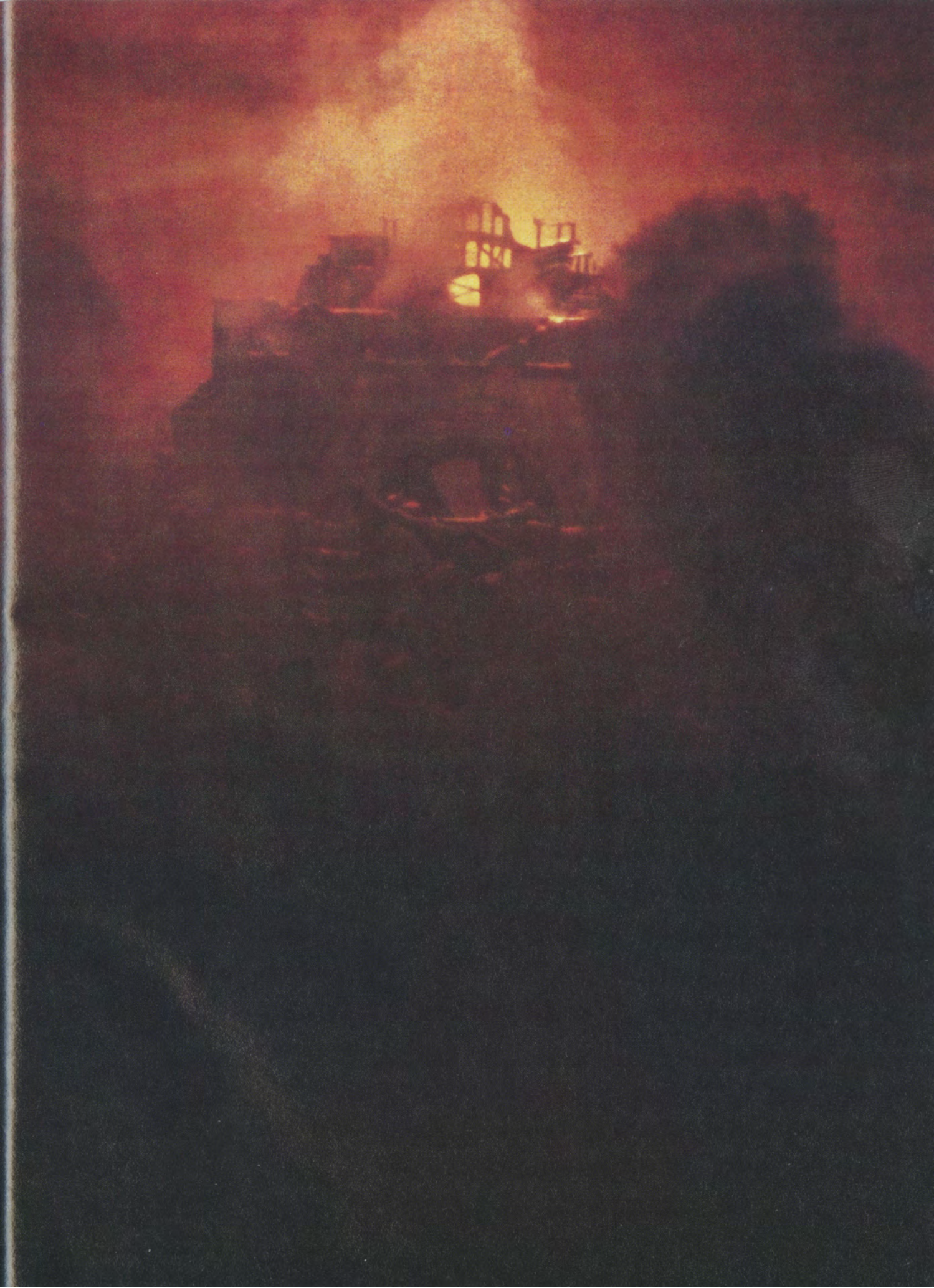
Hagen, keeping watch for their return, gloats over the success of his scheme.

On Brünnhilde's rock, Waltraute visits her sister, telling her that Wotan has warned the gods that their doom is sealed unless Brünnhilde yields the Ring to the Rhinemaidens. When she refuses, Waltraute departs in despair. Dusk falls as Siegfried appears, disguised as Gunther by means of the magic Tarnhelm. He wrests the Ring from the terrified Brünnhilde and claims her as Gunther's bride.

ACT II—At night, outside the Gibichung hall, Alberich forces his sleeping son Hagen to swear that he will regain the Ring. As dawn breaks, Siegfried returns with cheerful news for Hagen and Gutrune: he has won Brünnhilde for Gunther, who follows shortly. Hagen summons the vassals to welcome the returning king and his bride. When Gunther leads in Brünnhilde, she sees Siegfried and recoils. Noticing her Ring on his finger, she deplores the trickery through which she was won, proclaiming Siegfried to be her true husband. The hero, still under the potion's spell, vows upon Hagen's spear that he has never wronged the woman. Taking the spear point from him, Brünnhilde angrily swears that he is lying. Siegfried dismisses her charge and then leaves with Gutrune to prepare for their marriage. The dazed Brünnhilde, bent on revenge, reveals to Hagen the hero's one vulnerable spot: a blade in his back will kill him. Taunted by Brünnhilde and lured by Hagen's description of the Ring's power, Gunther joins in the murder plot.

ACT III—Near a rocky slope on the banks of the Rhine, the three Rhinemaidens bewail their lost treasure. Soon Siegfried approaches, having wandered away from his hunting party. The maidens plead for the Ring, but he ignores their entreaties and warnings. When the hunting party arrives, Siegfried, at Hagen's urging, describes his boyhood with Mime, the killing of Fafner and finally—after Hagen gives him a potion to restore his memory—his wooing of Brünnhilde. Pretending indignation, Hagen plunges a spear into Siegfried's back and stalks off. Hailing Brünnhilde with his last breath, the hero dies. The vassals bear him away.

At the Gibichung hall, Gutrune nervously awaits her bridegroom's return. Hagen, the first to arrive, tells her that Siegfried has been slain by a wild boar. When his body is carried in, however, the woman accuses Gunther of murder. Hagen admits the crime. Quarreling over possession of the Ring, Gunther is killed by Hagen, who falls back in fear from the prize when the dead hero raises his hand. Brünnhilde appears and orders a funeral pyre built for Siegfried. Musing on the gods' responsibility for his death, she takes the Ring and promises it to the Rhinemaidens. Placing it on her own finger, she throws a torch onto the pyre and, greeting her horse Grane, walks into the flames. As the river Rhine overflows its banks and the hall is consumed, the Rhinemaidens, dragging Hagen to a watery grave, regain their treasure. The flames that engulf Valhalla free the Ring of its curse.



Götterdämmerung

Photos taken in rehearsal in 1985 by David Powers, except as noted.



René Kollo

Preceding page: Part of the Götterdämmerung ending, as seen in 1985.

SCHERL

Note: Because of the printing deadline, we were not able to include this year's *Götterdämmerung* rehearsal photos in this magazine. Instead, we selected some 1985 photos of cast members who are returning in the same roles they portrayed five years ago.



Kathryn Day

(below) René Kollo, Michael Devlin



René Kollo



René Kollo



Kathryn Day



Michael Devlin, René Kollo



The Norns Scene



GWYNETH JONES

Highly acclaimed as an interpreter of the operas of Wagner and Strauss, Welsh soprano **Gwyneth Jones** returns to San Francisco Opera to sing Brünnhilde in the *Ring* cycle. Here last fall as Barak's Wife in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, she has made numerous appearances with the Company: the title roles of *Fidelio* (1969 and 1978), *Aida* (1969) and *Tosca* (1978 and 1982), as well as Elisabetta in *Don Carlo* (1973), the title role of *Salome* (1987), her first Isolde in *Tristan und Isolde* (1980), and Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre* (1983 and 1985). Hailed as a consummate performer of any role she undertakes, Gwyneth Jones regularly sings at all of the world's major opera houses, appearing with leading conductors and at most international opera festivals. Born in Pontnewynydd, Wales, she started her career as a mezzo-soprano and sang Orpheus in *Orpheus and Euridice* in Zurich and Octavian in *Der Rosenkavalier* at Covent Garden. Her international career took off soon after she switched to the soprano range and returned to the Royal Opera in a new production of *Il Trovatore* directed by Luchino Visconti and conducted by Carlo Maria Giulini. A long list of important international debuts followed, mostly in roles from the Italian dramatic soprano repertoire. Gradually, she moved towards the heaviest of roles in opera with her first *Götterdämmerung* Brünnhilde at Bayreuth in 1974, followed by all three Brünnhildes in 1975. Her first *Ariadne auf Naxos* occurred in Munich in 1977, Barak's Wife in Cologne in 1979, *Elektra's* Chrysothemis in London in 1977, and the title role of *Elektra* in Cologne in 1983. Los Angeles was the site of her first *Turandot* in 1984, and she has since appeared in the role in London, Vienna, Rome, Paris, Moscow, etc. A Kammersängerin and Honorary Member (a rare honor) of the Vienna State Opera, Dame Gwyneth is also a Kammersängerin with the Bavarian State Opera in Munich. She was awarded the prestigious Shakespeare Award in Hamburg in 1978, and was given the title of Dame of the British Empire in Queen Elizabeth II's 1986 honors. She was most recently granted the Commander's Cross of the Order of Merit



JANIS MARTIN

by the Federal Republic of Germany. Her long list of recordings includes most of her celebrated Wagner and Richard Strauss roles, and also extends from the standard works such as Verdi's *Otello* to rarities such as the recent recording of Franz Schmidt's complete *Notre Dame*. The artist can be seen on a number of video recordings, notably the Bayreuth *Ring*, directed by Patrice Chéreau.

In demand the world over for her interpretations of dramatic roles, California soprano **Janis Martin** portrays the three Brünnhildes in *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. She most recently appeared with San Francisco Opera in 1988 when she stepped in on short notice to replace an ailing colleague as Senta in *Der Fliegende Holländer*. The Sacramento native began her musical training as a mezzo-soprano in the Merola Opera Program and made her operatic debut with the Company in 1960—performing more than 25 roles here during her first four seasons. In 1962 she won the Metropolitan Opera Auditions and sang several roles with that company for three seasons. She undertook her first major Wagnerian role in 1966 for San Francisco Opera, portraying Venus in *Tannhäuser*, the vehicle of her subsequent La Scala and Paris Opera debuts. Acclaimed as a Wagnerian singer, Miss Martin portrayed Brangäne in *Tristan und Isolde* (heard here in 1970), Elisabeth and Venus in *Tannhäuser*, Ortrud in *Lohengrin* (which she sang for the first time in her career in 1978 at San Francisco Opera) and Senta. Her Bayreuth Festival credits include Eva in *Die Meistersinger*, Sieglinde in *Die Walküre* (which she sang here in 1976) and Kundry in *Parsifal*, the role of her triumphant return to the Met in 1974. The most recent addition to her Wagner repertoire is Brünnhilde, which she sang at the Lyric Opera of Chicago in 1982 and has performed in Vienna, Geneva, Zurich, Barcelona and Monte Carlo. A soloist with the Deutsche Oper in Berlin since 1970, Miss Martin has appeared there as *Tosca*, *Eva*, *Ortrud*, *Sieglinde*, *Kundry*, *Senta*, the Composer and in the title role of *Ariadne auf Naxos*, and as the Marschallin in



HILDEGARD BEHRENS

Der Rosenkavalier. Among the highlights of her appearances with San Francisco Opera are the Composer in *Ariadne auf Naxos* (1969), the title role of *Tosca* (1976), Marie in *Wozzeck* (1981) and the title role of *Elektra* (1984). She is a frequent guest artist at the Vienna Staatsoper and has won acclaim at Covent Garden as well as with the companies of Munich, Cologne, Stuttgart and Hamburg. Her recording credits include complete versions of Wagner's *Rienzi* and *Der Fliegende Holländer* and Schoenberg's *Erwartung*. As a concert artist, she has appeared with many of the world's most famous orchestras conducted by Böhm, Maazel, Abbado, Boulez, Levine, Sawallisch, Sinopoli, Jochum, Dorati and Solti. Recent engagements include her first Leonore in *Fidelio* in Berlin; Ortrud and Kundry in Munich; the Dyer's Wife in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, the Witch in *Hansel and Gretel* and Senta at the Met; the Dyer's Wife in Cologne; and Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre* in Rome with the Santa Cecilia Orchestra under the baton of Giuseppe Sinopoli.

Internationally celebrated for her interpretations of Wagnerian heroines, German soprano **Hildegard Behrens** makes her San Francisco Opera debut as Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre*, *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung*. She has been highly acclaimed in the role in complete *Ring* cycles at Bayreuth, Munich and at the Metropolitan Opera. Born in Oldenburg, she studied voice at the conservatory in Freiburg and joined the Deutsche Oper am Rhein in Düsseldorf, where she came to the attention of Herbert von Karajan. The title role of *Salome* in her 1977 debut at Salzburg under the maestro's direction launched her international career, and she has since appeared with virtually every major opera company and orchestra in the U.S. and Europe. She made her Met debut in 1976 as Giorgetta in *Il Tabarro* and has returned there to sing Brünnhilde, Sieglinde in *Die Walküre*, Marie in *Wozzeck*, Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*, Leonore in *Fidelio*, Elettra in *Idomeneo*, Isolde in *Tristan und Isolde*, and the title role of *Tosca*. Another of her acclaimed operatic heroines



KATHRYN DAY

is the title role of *Elektra*, which she has performed with the London Symphony Orchestra, the Boston Symphony and, most recently, in the Roman and Greek ruins of Pompeii and Siracusa, Italy. Highlights of recent seasons include her first essay of Janáček's *The Makropulos Case* in a new production created for her at the Munich Staatsoper; *Salome* and *Elektra* at the Munich Festival; Act II of *Tristan und Isolde* with the Orchestre de Paris on tour in Europe and at New York's Avery Fisher Hall; *Der Ring des Nibelungen* at the Met; a complete *Ring* cycle in Munich; and Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* with the Orchestre de Paris. A distinguished orchestral soloist, Miss Behrens has performed with the New York Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra and the Vienna Philharmonic. Her extensive discography includes complete recordings of the *Ring*, *Elektra*, *Salome*, *Der Freischütz*, *Fidelio* and *Wozzeck*, as well as solo and duet discs. Her *Tosca* from the Met and *Wozzeck* from Vienna are available both on videodisc and videocassette.

Soprano **Kathryn Day** portrays Guttrune and the Third Norn in *Götterdämmerung*, the roles she sang for her San Francisco Opera debut [as Kathryn Bouleyn] during the 1985 *Ring* cycle. Audiences in California have seen her perform Elisabetta in *Don Carlo* with the San Jose and Long Beach Operas; Tatiana in *Eugene Onegin* with the Long Beach and San Diego Operas; and Mahler's Second Symphony with Edo de Waart and the San Francisco Symphony. In recent seasons Miss Day has performed Sieglinde in *Die Walküre* with the Artpark Opera Festival; Elisabeth in *Tannhäuser* with Kansas City Opera; and Santuzza in *Cavalleria Rusticana* with the New York City Opera. During this current season she made debuts as Leonore in *Fidelio* with the Basler Staatstheater; as Santuzza with L'Opéra de Nice; and as Giulietta in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* with Seattle Opera, where she will return to perform *Fidelio* during the 1991-92 season. She has



KATHERINE CIESINSKI

appeared with the major symphony orchestras of the United States, Canada, Mexico and the Netherlands, and is a regular guest at summer festivals, having participated in the Mostly Mozart and Caramoor Festivals in New York, the Edinburgh Festival, and the Festivals of Two Worlds in the United States and Italy.

American mezzo-soprano **Katherine Ciesinski** appears as Waltraute in *Die Walküre* and the Second Norn and Waltraute in *Götterdämmerung*. She made her San Francisco Opera debut in 1988 as Laura in *La Gioconda*, and that year made her Metropolitan Opera debut as Nicklausse in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, also appearing as Giulietta in the same opera with the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie in Brussels. She returned to the Met last year as Judith in *Bluebeard's Castle*, a role she also undertook in a new production for the Netherlands Opera. Additional engagements that season include the Dallas Opera's world premiere of *The Aspern Papers* (televised nationally on PBS), and appearances with the Boston Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, Houston Symphony, and Kansas Symphony. Early in her career she received national attention with her performance as Erika in the PBS television production of Barber's *Vanessa* at Spoleto USA. Another landmark was her Santa Fe Opera debut as Countess Geschwitz in the American premiere of the three-act version of *Lulu*, after which came international recognition for her debut as Siebel in the Lyric Opera of Chicago's production of *Faust*, which was filmed for European and American television. Highlights of recent seasons include the title role in the world premiere of Maurice Ohana's *La Celestine* for the Paris Opera, Brangäne in *Tristan und Isolde* for the Canadian Opera Company, Dorabella in *Così fan tutte* at the Mozart Festival in Paris, at the Zurich Opera and with the Israel Philharmonic, Ottavia in *The Coronation of Poppea* with the Santa Fe Opera, Sonya in Prokofiev's *War and Peace* in Paris, and Eboli in *Don Carlo* in Madrid. Her recording credits include the title roles of



BIRGITTA SVENDÉN

Dukas's *Ariane et Barbe-Bleue* and Gounod's *Sapho*, Ravel's *Chansons Madécasses*, a lieder recital of songs by Alma Mahler and Clara Schumann, the *Messiah*, *War and Peace* and, most recently, Elliott Carter's *Syringa*. Miss Ciesinski returns to the Company this fall as Dulcinée in the San Francisco Opera premiere of *Don Quichotte*.

Mezzo-soprano **Birgitta Svendén** makes her San Francisco Opera debut as Erda in Wagner's *Ring* cycle. Born in Sweden, she studied at the Stockholm Opera School before joining the Royal Opera in Stockholm, where she has performed the roles of Erda, Dorabella in *Così fan tutte*, and Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, among others. In 1983, Georg Solti invited her to appear in a new production of the *Ring* cycle at the Bayreuth Festival. She made her debut at the Opéra de Nice in 1985, and has subsequently appeared there in the title role of *Carmen*, as Meg Page in *Falstaff*, and as Anna in *Les Troyens*. Miss Svendén made her Metropolitan Opera debut during the 1988-89 season as Erda in *Das Rheingold* and *Siegfried* and, that same season, sang Magdalene in *Die Meistersinger* in Seattle, Ulrica in *Un Ballo in Maschera* at the Zurich Opera, Maddalena in *Rigoletto* at the Met, and a performance of Mahler's Second Symphony at Chicago's Ravinia Festival under James Levine. Future performances include her debut at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden as Erda; her debut at Milan's La Scala as Magdalene; and a European tour with the Israel Philharmonic under Zubin Mehta in performances of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.



ANN PANAGULIAS

Soprano **Ann Panagulias**, who was recently featured by San Francisco Opera in a concert with Plácido Domingo at Civic Auditorium, sings Woglinde in *Das Rheingold* and *Götterdämmerung*. A 1988 Adler Fellow with the Opera Center, she scored a storybook success in the title role of Berg's *Lulu* here last fall, singing the demanding role for the first time in her career. She made her Company debut in 1988 in Wagner's *Parsifal* and was also featured in the Schwabacher Debut Recital series. Last year, in addition to *Lulu*, she appeared as Fortuna in the Opera Center's presentation of Handel's *Giustino* and Mrs. Naidoo in the Philip Glass *Satyagraha*, staged at the Opera House. A 1986 Merola Opera Program participant, she performed the role of Mimì in *La Bohème*, repeating the part for Western Opera Theater's tour of the opera, which culminated with performances in China and a special concert with the Shanghai Opera Orchestra. For WOT's 1987-88 tour she sang Norina in *Don Pasquale*, and was also heard in the title role of Titus's *Rosina* in the work's West Coast premiere. As a member of Wolf Trap Opera in 1987, she performed Erisbe in Cavalli's *L'Ormino* and Helena in Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Her most recent opera appearances were as Pamina in Pittsburgh Opera's *The Magic Flute* and as Violetta/Camille in Skylight Opera of Milwaukee's presentation of the Dumas heroine as seen in the original play and the Verdi *Traviata*. Future engagements include her European debut at La Fenice in Venice in the title role of a new production of *Lulu*, and Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte* in Bordeaux, *Carmina Burana* with the Honolulu Symphony, and Susanna in *Le Nozze di Figaro* with Hawaii Opera. Miss Panagulias, a native of Pittsburgh, received her Bachelor of Music degree from the Oberlin College Conservatory and a Master of Music degree from the New England Conservatory.



MARY MILLS

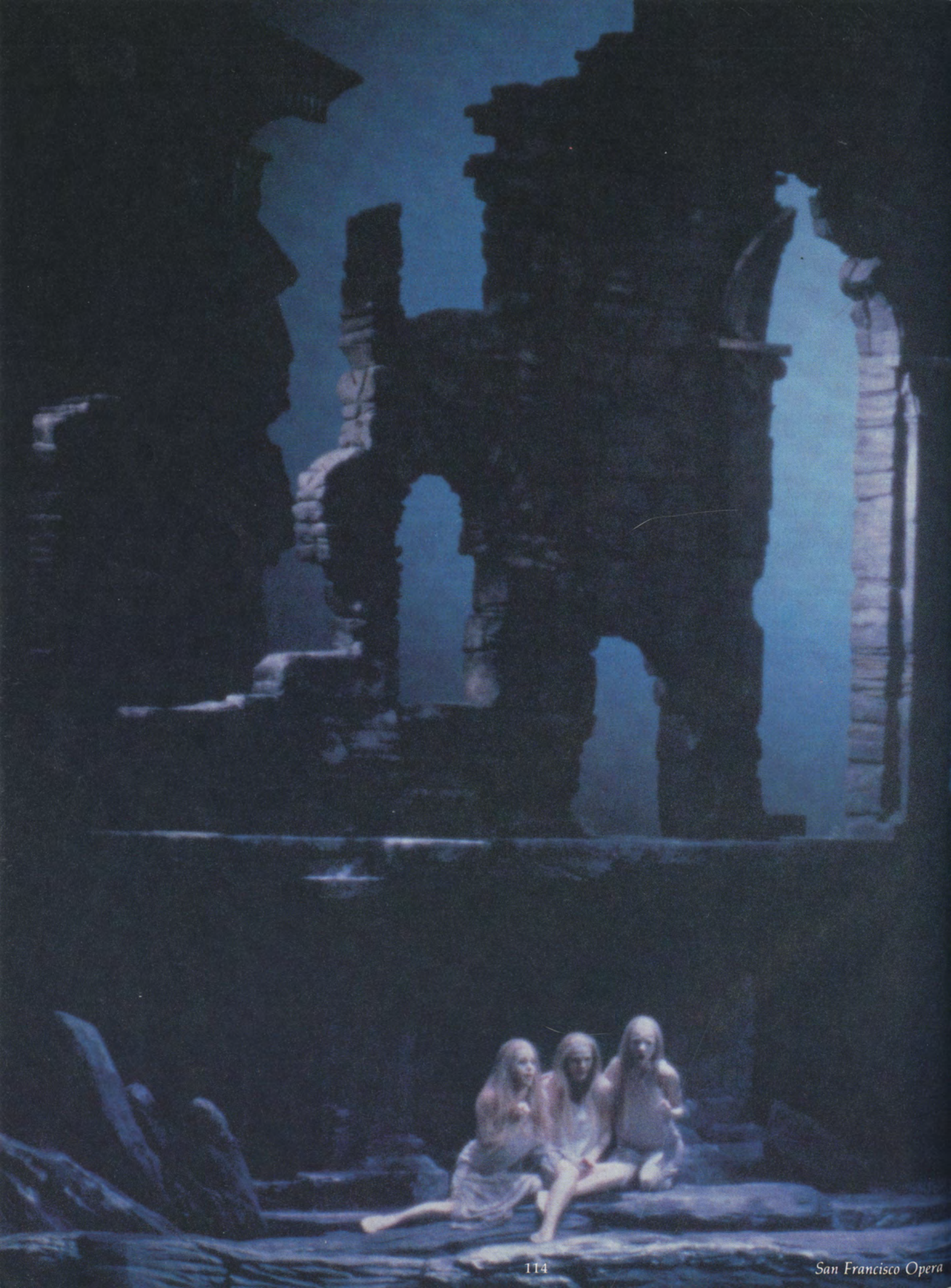
Currently an Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, soprano **Mary Mills** sings Wellgunde in *Das Rheingold* and *Götterdämmerung*. A member of the 1989 Merola Opera Program, she made her Company debut last fall in *Lulu*. The Dallas native received her undergraduate degree from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music and her Master of Music degree from the Yale School of Music. She continued her operatic training at the Banff School of Fine Arts Program in Alberta, Canada, the Mozarteum Summer Academy in Salzburg, the American Institute of Musical Studies in Graz, the Central City Opera Studio Program, and the Houston Grand Opera Studio. She made her professional debut as Barbarina in *The Marriage of Figaro* with Houston Grand Opera, and also appeared in their productions of *Show Boat* and *Dialogues of the Carmelites*. A 1989 National Winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, Miss Mills will be seen with the Company this fall in *Rigoletto*, *Don Quichotte* and *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria*.



SANDRA WALKER

Mezzo-soprano **Sandra Walker** portrays Flosshilde in *Das Rheingold* and *Götterdämmerung*. The North Carolina native made her San Francisco Opera debut in the 1972 production of the *Ring* cycle, and returned in 1974 as Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly*. She appeared with the Company in 1986 as Magdalene in *Die Meistersinger* and Olga in *Eugene Onegin*, and was seen here last fall as Bradamante in *Orlando Furioso*. She made her 1986 Metropolitan Opera debut as Micah in Handel's *Samson*, a role she had previously performed at the Lyric Opera of Chicago and at the Teatro Comunale in Florence. She returned to the Met last year for Olga in *Eugene Onegin* and Maddalena in *Rigoletto*. The 1976 Spoleto Festival was the occasion for Miss Walker's European debut in a highly acclaimed production of *The Rape of Lucretia* in which she sang the title role. Based in Germany since 1980, she has often appeared at the Frankfurt Opera as well as other German opera houses. Her roles there included Fricka in *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*, Brangäne in *Tristan und Isolde*, Octavian in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Isabella in *L'Italiana in Algeri*, Orfeo in Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice*, Ottavia in *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, Judith in *Bluebeard's Castle*, Dorabella in *Così fan tutte*, and Ramiro in *La Finta Giardiniera*. Highlights of recent seasons include her Rome debut in Prokofiev's *Alexander Nevsky*, Berlioz's *Romeo and Juliet* in Paris, and the world premiere of Hans Zender's *Stephen Climax*, in which she created the role of Bella Cohen, in Frankfurt and The Hague. She also sang the Nurse in Dukas's *Ariane et Barbe-Bleue* with the Netherlands Opera. Miss Walker has appeared as soloist with the Chicago Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, St. Louis Symphony and the American Symphony. She has recorded the song cycle *King Midas* by Ned Rorem, and appears in the videos of *Eugene Onegin* with Mirella Freni, *Manon* with Beverly Sills, as well as a forthcoming video of San Francisco Opera's recent production of *Orlando Furioso*.

continued on p.120



Götterdämmerung

Das Ende

By ANDREW PORTER

First, the time scheme. If *Siegfried* opens, on, say, a Monday, then Siegfried kills the dragon on Tuesday, and wakes Brünnhilde on Wednesday morning. In the course of that day, she invests him with "all her wisdom" and with charmed invulnerability (except in the case of a blow from behind). Wednesday night is the rapturous wedding night—when Nothung hangs, scabbarded, on the wall—that Brünnhilde recalls in Act II of *Götterdämmerung*. On Thursday the lovers greet the dawn and Siegfried embarks on his Rhine journey, meets the Gibichungs, and returns that evening, Gunther-guised, to Brünnhilde. On Thursday night—which is what Siegfried recalls in Act II of *Götterdämmerung*—Nothung, unsheathed, lies

between the pair. On Friday morning, in the dawn mists, Siegfried and Gunther change places, and they return to the Gibichung palace, Siegfried by swift Tarnhelm-transport, Gunther and Brünnhilde by boat. The double wedding is celebrated. Saturday is the day of the royal hunt, of Siegfried's death, of the Twilight of the Gods. That is how it seems to work on the literal level, on any close reading of the various bits of information vouchsafed. At the same time, of course, the double time sense suggests a fuller span. More than one day seems to have passed between the close of *Siegfried* and the start of *Götterdämmerung*. The "young Siegfried" has matured much; but perhaps Brünnhilde's instruction has been swift-acting.

Many things could happen during

Götterdämmerung. In Act I, Brünnhilde could respond to Wotan's entreaty, relayed by Waltraute, and restore the Ring to the Rhine. (Would the gods thereby have been saved?) In Act III, Siegfried could follow the Rhinemaidens' advice and do the same, thereby saving his life (but leaving a horrid matrimonial tangle still unsolved). Later in the act, Hagen could seize the Ring, and with it world dominion, from Siegfried's dead hand—had not Wagner foiled him in this purpose by means of a coup de théâtre, a stage trick about whose dramatic validity one may well feel a shade uneasy.

* * *

Wagner sent a copy of the 1853 *Ring* libretto to his friend August Röckel, and Röckel acknowledged it in a letter that

San Francisco Opera's Götterdämmerung, Act III, Scene 1, in a photo taken in 1985. SCHERL



raised many questions about the drama: among them, why, when the Gold has been restored to the Rhine, is it necessary for the gods to perish? It was four months before Wagner answered; then he did so in a long and far from lucid letter, which not even the skillful new translation of Stewart Spencer and Barry Millington can clarify. Before considering his answer, let us look at some of the transformations that the closing scene underwent—the various verbal attempts to explain something that in the end had to be left to the music.

As a utopian revolutionary, Wagner wrote his first draft of the *Ring* scenario. At the close of his drama in its first form, the gods continued to reign. Siegfried had borne their sins and by his death had redeemed their benevolent rule from the corrupting taint of guilt and violence on which it had been founded. The Ring is safely back in the Rhine; a natural order has been restored. The enslaved, laboring Nibelungs are once again free. "Hear then, ye mighty gods," says Brünnhilde, "your wrongdoing is annulled; thank him, the hero who took your guilt upon him." She bids Wotan prepare to welcome the slain hero whom she is leading to Valhalla:

(i)
Only one shall rule:
All-Father! Glorious one!
Rejoice in the freest of heroes!
Siegfried I bear to thee:
Give him greeting sweet,
The warrant of endless might.

To which the chorus adds:

Wotan! Wotan! Ruler of gods!
Bless thou the flames!
Burn hero and bride,
burn too the faithful horse;
so that, wound-healed and pure,
All-Father's free consorts
may gladly greet Valhalla,
joined in endless bliss!

This was then replaced by:

(ii)
Blessed atonement I perceived
for the lofty,
holy, eternal, sole gods!
Rejoice in the freest of heroes!
To the brother-greeting of the gods
his bride leads him.

But in 1851 there came a radical change. No longer would redeemed gods rule on in eternal splendor:

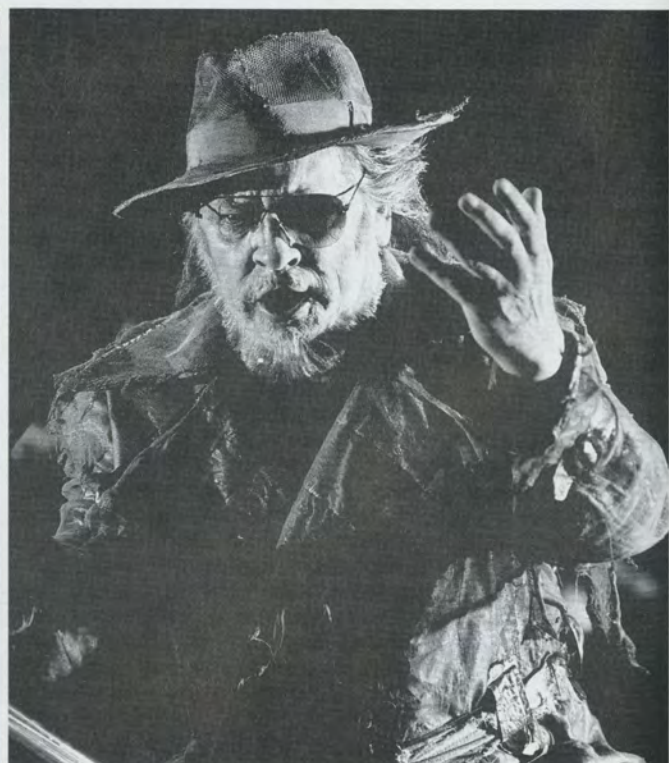
(iii)
Powerless depart,
you whose guilt is forgone.

From your guilt sprang the joyfullest
hero,
whose free deed has redeemed it:
you are spared the anxious conflict
about your ending might:
pass away in joy before the human
deed,
before the hero whom you begat!
I proclaim to you blessed death-
redemption
from your anxious fear.

When *Siegfried's Tod* was recast as *Götterdämmerung*, there was a 30-line passage for Brünnhilde after she has flung the blazing torch into the pyre and, as she says, at Valhalla's glittering fortress. (I give it in the Jameson translation, slightly adapted.) Brünnhilde addresses the chorus:

(iv)
You, race who remain
in blossoming life,
this rede I give you—
heed it well!
When you see, in the glittering fire,
Siegfried and Brünnhilde consumed;
when you see the river-daughters
bear the Ring away in the deep:
northward then
look through the night!
When the heaven there gleams

JONES



RAUHBAYREUTHER FESTSPIELE

Franz Mazura as Gunther in S.F. Opera's 1969 *Götterdämmerung*; and as the Wanderer in the 1988 Kupfer/Schavernoch Bayreuth Festival 1988 presentation of Wagner's *Siegfried*.



A view from the wings at a scene from Act II of the 1935 *Götterdämmerung*; (from the bottom) Friedrich Schorr (Gunther), Kirsten Flagstad (Brünnhilde), Emanuel List (Hagen), Lauritz Melchior (Siegfried) and Dorothee Manski (Gutrune); surrounded by the men and women of the San Francisco Opera Chorus.

with a holy glow,
then know you all
that Valhalla's end you behold.

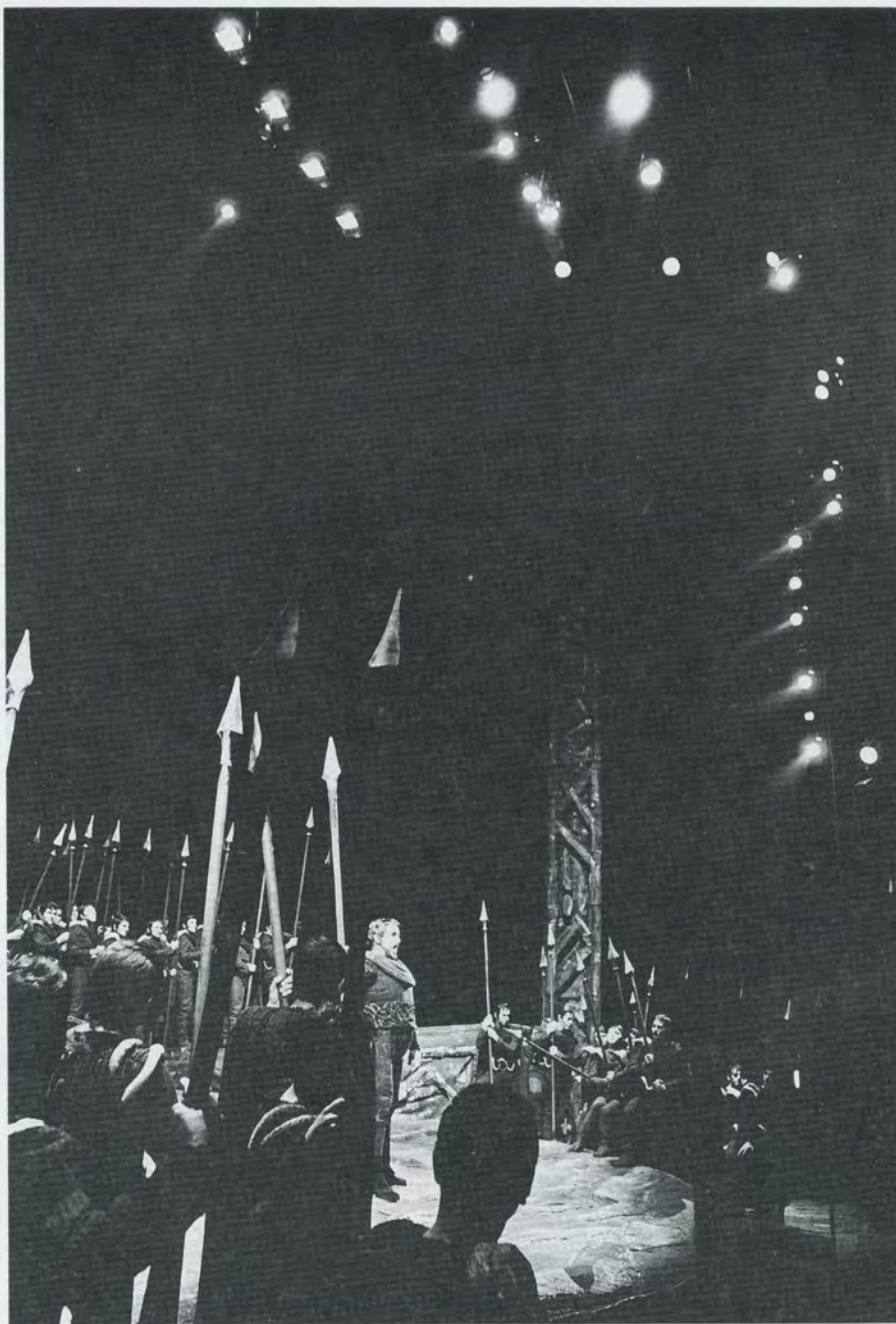
Though gone like breath
be the godly race,
though I leave behind
a world without a ruler,
my holiest wisdom's wealth
to the world I now reveal:
Not goods nor gold,
not godly splendor,
not house or hall,
nor lordly pomp,
not guileful bargains'
treacherous bonds,
nor feigning custom's
harsh decrees—
blessing in weal and woe
Love alone can bestow!

Brünnhilde then turns to Grane; the last 23 lines of the cycle are addressed to the horse. This appears in the 1853 libretto. But in 1856 or so—after the libretto had been printed and composition had begun—Wagner sketched another version:

(v)
Mourning joy's
deepest compassion
opens its portal to me:
who values life above all,
let him turn his eyes away from me!
Who through compassion
watches me as I depart,
on him there glimmers from afar
the deliverance that I yearn for.
So, with greeting,
I take my leave of you, world.

At this time Wagner told a correspondent that he had decided not to produce a public edition of the *Ring* libretto until the composition was finished: "not unanticipated changes in the concluding parts are impending . . . It has become clear to me that the poem has traveled far beyond its original schematic tendency . . . Of course the outcome remains essentially the same, but the explanation put into the mouth of the all-knowing Brünnhilde becomes something quite different, wide-reaching, more decisive." It took this form (I use Deryck Cooke's translation, with small adaptations):

(vi)
If I fare no more
to Valhalla's fortress,



Another *Götterdämmerung* view from the wings: Peter Lager as Hagen, with men of the San Francisco Opera Chorus in the 1969 staging.

do you know whither I go?
 From the land of desire [*Wunschheim*]
 I depart,
 the land of illusion [*Wahnheim*] I flee
 for ever;
 the open gates
 of eternal becoming
 I close behind me:
 to the desire-free, illusion-free
 holiest chosen land,
 the goal of world-wandering,

released from rebirth
 she who understands now departs.
 The blessed end
 of all things eternal,
 do you know how I attained it?
 Deepest suffering
 of grieving love
 opened my eyes:
 I saw the world end.

No setting of any of these passages
 made its way into the *Ring*. In 1876,

Wagner presented King Ludwig with a draft setting—now in the Library of Congress—of the last lines of (iv), from “Though gone like breath” to “Love alone can bestow.” (That final affirmation is set to the theme that should “ring out like the proclamation of a new religion” when Wotan, in the scene with Erda, first proclaims it.) In the “definitive” *Ring* libretto, published in 1872, Wagner included (iv), after Brünnhilde’s flinging of the torch, with the introductory note: “Before the musical execution of the poem, at this point there were the following stanzas for Brünnhilde as she turned round once again.” After giving the lines, Wagner adds: “In these stanzas the poet had endeavored, in a sententious way, to anticipate the musical effect of the drama; but in the course of the long interruptions that kept him from the musical execution, he was impelled toward another version of the farewell stanzas which expressed his idea better”—and Wagner then reproduces (vi). After them he adds: “Since the sense of these stanzas is fully expressed by the agency of the musical drama, the composer finally decided to omit them.”

Could practical considerations also have been a factor—not that with Wagner they would ever be a determinant one? The great closing scene as it stands already takes most sopranos to the limit of their capabilities. The possible inclusion of still further stanzas may have seemed like asking for the impossible. Practicality, puzzlement about exactly what to say, and final artistic decision coincided.

Carl Dahlhaus wrote: “Wagner changed the end of *Götterdämmerung* time and again, as though there were no limit to the drastically different political and/or philosophical convictions that one drama could be expected to express. This is a source of great embarrassment to exegetes who would prefer to grasp an author by his ‘last words.’ Wagner himself was by no means certain what his own work meant.” With some simplification, we can suggest that (v) and (vi) represent the Schopenhauerian, *Tristan*-esque cast of Wagner’s thought during the later 1850s, when work on the *Ring* was set aside, and that the final version (i.e. without any of the passages above) constitutes, in effect, a post-*Meistersinger* return to the more “positive,” more hopeful statement.

In his reply to that Röckel question—Why, when the Gold has been restored to the Rhine, need the gods perish?—Wagner said, in effect: (1) that the music must be allowed to explain that; and (2) that understanding is more a matter of *feeling* than of subtle arguments such as a lawyer or a politician might employ. “I have once again realized how much of the work’s meaning (given the nature of my poetic intent) is made clear only by the music: I can no longer bear to look at the poem without the music.” Why must the gods perish?—“I believe that, at a good performance, even the most naive spectator will be left in no doubt on this point . . . The necessity of this downfall arises from our innermost

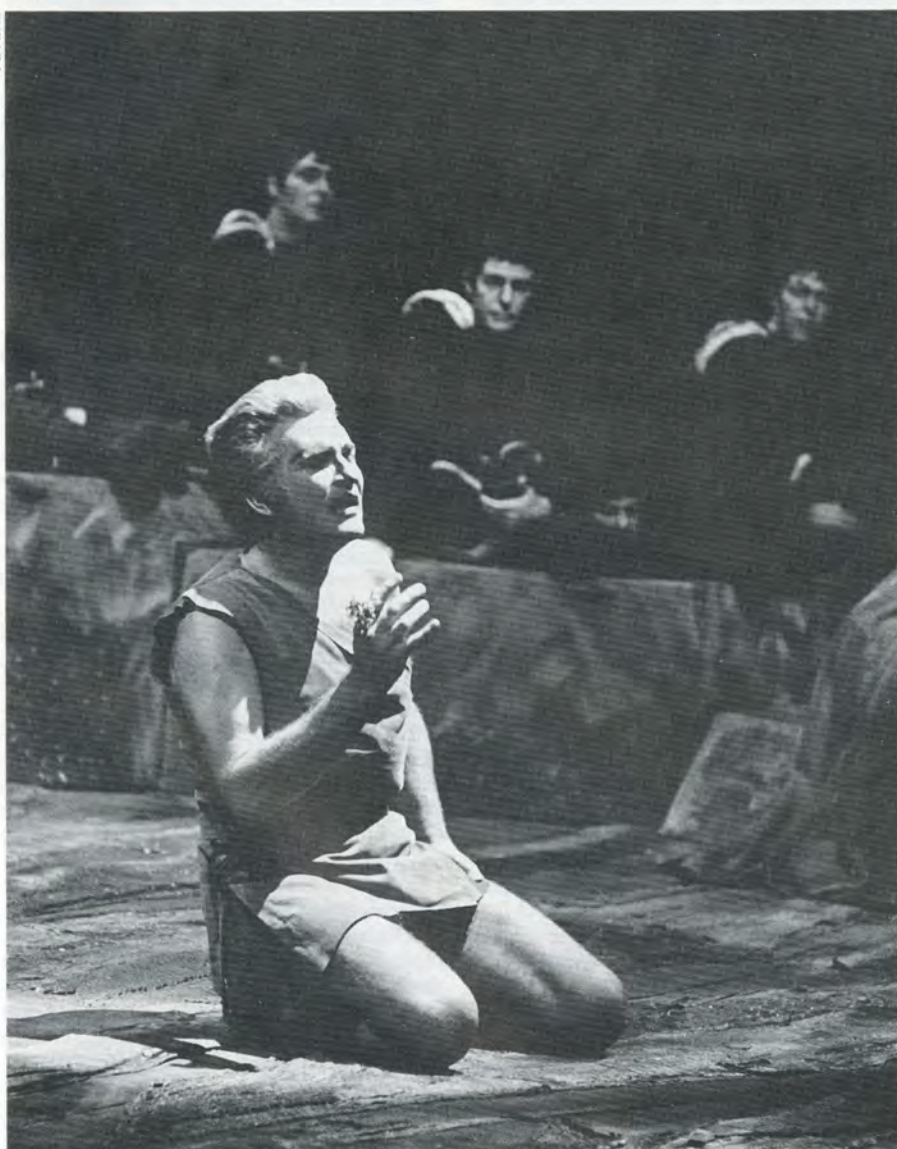
feelings—just as it arises from Wotan’s feelings. Thus it was important to justify this sense of necessity *emotionally*, and this comes about as a matter of course provided only that the spectator follows the course of the entire action through each of its simple and natural motives, and that he follows it, moreover, from the beginning to the end with complete sympathy: when Wotan finally gives expression to the sense of necessity, he is merely repeating what we ourselves already deem to be necessary.”

* * *

It is not belittling to the *Ring* to find paradoxes within it. Wotan’s own will we have seen divided: symbolically, before

our eyes, in Act II of *Die Walküre*, between his express command to Brünnhilde and the breaking of that command by the daughter who enacts his secret, unexpressed will. His supreme act of will is then to abandon all willing: symbolically by his abandonment of Brünnhilde, his will-enactor, and actually by his lack of action (“Zu schauen kam ich, nicht zu schaffen”) in *Siegfried*. His last action that Wagner has dramatized, the attempt to bar Siegfried’s way to Brünnhilde, is one that must end in his willed defeat, even if there is more than a touch of the old, angry spirit in the way he sets about it. For that matter, Siegfried, “the man of the future whom we desire and long for,” is an unconventional hero, almost a puppet. Mime sets him on his first adventure, and the Woodbird on his second; thereafter he is a prey to magic potions, achieving nobility only in his Tristan-like dying moments. In the scene with the Rhinemaidens, Wagner wrote to Röckel, “we learn that Siegfried is infinitely wise”; but can we forget that during this scene the hero is still “under the influence”? “My hero should not leave behind the impression of a totally unconscious individual,” but the significance of his consciousness “can almost never be stated in words”—only by the music. The wonderful Brünnhilde herself is not unscathed by distorting human passions. In the scene with Waltraute, she remains selfishly rapt in her dream of love; in Act II of *Götterdämmerung*, that love turns to murderous, vengeful hate. She, too, is at the close transfigured: “the deepest suffering of sorrowful love opened my eyes.” The visual end may be destruction, but the rich musical texture is dominated by the shining motif of Redemption through Love.

The music alone resolves the paradoxes. In *Götterdämmerung*, the first of the dramas to be written in words but the last to be set to music—we experience simultaneously Wagner’s first conception of the *Ring*, a drama of a single, world-cleansing action, and the manifold layers of further, post-*Tristan*, post-*Meistersinger* meanings which it acquired during the long years that it was in the making while, without ever ceasing to be a stirring mythological tale, it became at once a mirror of the psyche, a philosophical and political world history, a drama of living characters, and a musical structure of unprecedented size and scope. ■



Jess Thomas as the dying Siegfried in S.F. Opera's 1969 *Götterdämmerung*.



RENÉ KOLLO

Considered one of the leading Wagnerian singers active today, **René Kollo** returns to San Francisco Opera's *Ring* cycle as Siegfried in *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung*. He made his Company debut in 1984 in the title role of *Siegfried*, and returned for the SFO's *Ring* cycle Siegfrieds the next year, at which time he performed the role of the *Götterdämmerung* Siegfried for the first time in his career. He was most recently seen on the stage of the War Memorial in 1988 in the title role of *Parsifal*. Kollo made his Bayreuth debut in 1969 as the Steersman in *Der Fliegende Holländer* and in 1970 sang the role of Erik. He sang his first *Lohengrin* at Bayreuth in 1971, and made his Metropolitan Opera debut in 1976 in the same role. In subsequent years at Bayreuth he appeared as Siegfried and *Parsifal*, making him the youngest singer to undertake those roles in Bayreuth history. Other Wagnerian credits include *Tristan* at Bayreuth and in Cologne, Vienna and Paris; *Die Meistersinger* in Munich and Hamburg; *Tannhäuser* in Geneva and at Covent Garden; and *Rienzi* as well as the *Ring* cycle in Munich. Today he is acknowledged as one of the leading Wagnerian tenors in the world's major opera houses. Kollo's repertoire embraces many styles and composers. His recordings include operetta as well as such works as *Tannhäuser*, *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, *Missa Solemnis* and *Fidelio*. In 1986 he made his American recital debut in San Francisco at Herbst Theatre, and in 1984 he sang the role of *Parsifal* in a San Francisco Symphony concert performance of the opera's third act. *Parsifal* was also the first opera he directed when he undertook a production at Darmstadt in 1986.



WILLIAM JOHNS

Internationally acclaimed tenor **William Johns** sings the title role of *Siegfried*, as well as Siegfried in *Götterdämmerung*. He has been heard here as Walther in *Die Meistersinger* (1981), Don José in *Carmen* (1983), Bacchus in *Ariadne auf Naxos* (1983), Max in *Der Freischütz* (1985) and the Emperor in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* (1989). The Oklahoma-born artist's 1973 operatic debut as Rodolfo in *La Bohème* in Bremen was followed by appearances in other major European opera houses. He made his U.S. debut in the same role in 1975 with Pittsburgh Opera. He has since appeared as a regular guest artist at the leading opera houses of the world. Highlights of his 1986-87 season include his La Scala debut as the Emperor in a new production of *Die Frau ohne Schatten*; his first staged *Tannhäuser* at the Metropolitan Opera; his first Siegfried in *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung* in Paris; the first *Tristan* of his career opposite Gwyneth Jones at the Paris Opera; and *Die Meistersinger* at the Bayreuth Festival. Johns was heard in three new productions of *Tristan und Isolde* during the 1987-88 season: at the Hamburg State Opera, the Canadian Opera Company and at the Los Angeles Opera. That same season he sang Siegfried at the Orange Festival, in addition to Bacchus in Toronto and the title role of *Otello* in Marseilles and Frankfurt. Most recently he appeared in *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung* at the Met; *Lohengrin*, *Rienzi* and *Tristan und Isolde* in Hamburg; *Tannhäuser* in Bonn; *Lohengrin* in Cologne; *La Damnation de Faust* at Verona; and *Fidelio* with the Philadelphia Opera. Future engagements include new productions of *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung* at the Cologne Opera; *Tannhäuser* at the Hamburg and Vienna State Opera; and performances of several roles at the Metropolitan Opera. Johns also frequently appears with orchestras in the U.S. and Europe in repertoire including Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* and Eighth Symphony, Schoenberg's *Gurrelieder*, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, and Berlioz's *La Damnation de Faust*.



MICHAEL DEVLIN

American bass-baritone **Michael Devlin** returns to San Francisco Opera to recreate the role of Gunther in *Götterdämmerung*. Since his 1979 Company debut as Golaud in *Pelléas et Mélisande*, he has been applauded here in the title role of Dallapiccola's *Il Prigioniero*, as Jokanaan in *Salome*, Escamillo in *Carmen*, Count Almaviva in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Dr. Falke in *Die Fledermaus*, Don Pedro in *L'Africaine* and Boris Ismailov in *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*. He sang the first Wotan of his career in the 1983 Summer Season *Das Rheingold* and returned for the 1985 *Ring* Festival to sing Gunther. Born in Chicago and raised in New Orleans, Devlin made his professional debut with New Orleans Opera while still a voice student. Following his 1966 New York City Opera debut in Ginastera's *Don Rodrigo*, he sang there for 14 seasons in a variety of leading roles, including Escamillo, which was also the vehicle of his 1978 Metropolitan Opera debut. He has since returned to the Met for several roles including Dr. Falke, the title role of *Eugene Onegin*, the four villains in *The Tales of Hoffmann*, as well as Peter in *Hansel and Gretel*, which was televised nationally in the "Live from the Met" series. His portrayal of Don Giovanni has earned him great praise in Houston, San Diego, Santa Fe and Toronto, as well as in Hamburg, Prague, Mannheim, Munich, Aix-en-Provence, Frankfurt and at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden. Highly popular as a concert artist, Devlin has appeared as soloist with nearly every major orchestra in this country. Recent appearances include *Oedipus Rex* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and *Faust* and *Samson et Dalila* at the Metropolitan Opera. Future performances include Pizarro in *Fidelio* in Los Angeles, Jokanaan in Washington, D.C., the Count in *Le Nozze di Figaro* in Santa Fe, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with the St. Louis Symphony, and the Mozart Requiem with the San Francisco Symphony.



ERIC HALFVARSON

Bass **Eric Halfvarson** portrays Fasolt in *Das Rheingold* and Hagen in *Götterdämmerung*. He made his San Francisco Opera debut during the 1981 Summer Festival in *Die Meistersinger* and *Rigoletto*, and that fall appeared in *Semiramide*, *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* and *Le Cid*. After appearing here during the 1982 Fall Season as the Marquis in *Dialogues of the Carmelites*, Surin in *The Queen of Spades* and Angelotti in *Tosca*, he returned to the Company in the fall of 1983 as Lodovico in *Otello*. The Illinois-born artist made his professional debut in *The Barber of Seville* at the 1973 Lake George Opera Festival. Since then he has made numerous appearances with opera companies across the U.S., Canada and South America. Highlights of Halfvarson's recent seasons include *I Capuleti ed i Montecchi* in London as well as at the Kennedy Center; *Don Carlo* in Columbus and Cincinnati; the world premiere of Argento's *Aspern Papers* (which was telecast nationally over PBS) for Dallas Opera; *Die Zauberflöte* in Dallas and *Die Walküre* in Miami; *Faust* with Opera Hamilton; *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* with Tulsa Opera; and *Die Walküre* and *Götterdämmerung* at Artpark. After performing Baron Ochs in Santa Fe Opera's production of *Der Rosenkavalier* last year, he appeared in *Lucia di Lammermoor* and *Aida* in Washington, *Der Fliegende Holländer* in Edmonton, and *Die Zauberflöte* with the Florentine Opera. A popular concert artist, he recently appeared as soloist in the premiere of Shostakovich's *Rayok* with the National Symphony (a work which was recorded), Mahler's Eighth Symphony and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with the Columbus Symphony, and Shostakovich's *The Execution of Stepan Razin* with the composer's son leading the New Orleans Symphony. Future engagements include *Prince Igor* and *Die Walküre* in Dallas, *Aida* and *Lohengrin* in Houston, *Antony and Cleopatra* in Chicago, and *Der Rosenkavalier* in Columbus, Montreal and at Santa Fe.



TOM FOX

Baritone **Tom Fox**, in his San Francisco Opera debut, portrays Alberich in *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. After early musical training at the Cincinnati Opera's College Conservatory of Music, he became a resident member of the Cincinnati Opera, singing such roles as Doctor Dulcamara in *The Elixir of Love*, Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly*, and Escamillo in *Carmen*. In 1981, he was engaged as principal guest artist at the Frankfurt Opera, where his roles included Orest in *Elektra*, Amonasro in *Aida*, Pizarro in *Fidelio*, Klingsor in *Parsifal*, Nick Shadow in *The Rake's Progress*, Alberich and Escamillo. His first appearance with the Canadian Opera Company was in 1983 as Orest, and he has since returned to Toronto as Jokanaan in *Salome*, the four villains in *The Tales of Hoffmann*, Scarpia in *Tosca*, and Escamillo. The role of Escamillo also served as his debut with the Vancouver Opera and the Welsh National Opera. During the 1986-87 season, Fox made his debut with Pittsburgh Opera as Claudius in the Ambroise Thomas *Hamlet*, and sang his first Iago in *Otello* at the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires. He returned to Frankfurt for the 1987-88 season as Amonasro and as Ford in *Falstaff*, and made his debut with L'Opéra de Nice at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris as Alberich in their joint production of the *Ring* cycle. He most recently sang Pizarro and Gessler in *William Tell* in Nice, Pizarro in San Diego, Orest and Scarpia in Pittsburgh, and Escamillo in Toronto. Later this year he is scheduled to sing the title roles of *The Flying Dutchman* and *Eugene Onegin* with Pittsburgh Opera.



FRANZ MAZURA

Bass **Franz Mazura** returns to San Francisco Opera as Alberich in Wagner's *Ring* cycle. He made his American debut with the Company in 1968 as Jokanaan in *Salome*, appearing that same season as the Commendatore in *Don Giovanni*. The following year he appeared as Pizarro in *Fidelio*, Gunther in *Götterdämmerung*, and the Speaker in *The Magic Flute*. He was most recently seen here in 1979 as Orest in *Elektra*. He has been heard at the Bayreuth Festival since 1970 in such roles as Gurnemanz and Klingsor in *Parsifal*, King Marke in *Tristan und Isolde*, Biterolf in *Tannhäuser*, and Alberich and Gunther in the *Ring* cycle, and has won acclaim at the Salzburg Festival in *Fidelio* and Mozart's *La Finta Semplice*. In Hamburg, in addition to those roles, he has performed Kaspar in *Der Freischütz*, Daland in *Der Fliegende Holländer*, Pizarro, Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte*, La Roche in *Capriccio*, Orest, Jokanaan, and Moses in *Moses und Aron*. He has also had a huge success with his portrayal of Dr. Schön in the complete three-act version of Berg's *Lulu* at the Paris Opera, the Metropolitan Opera, and at Milan's La Scala. In addition to his numerous appearances at the major opera houses of the world, Mazura has performed every consecutive year at the Met since 1980. Roles there include Gurnemanz, Klingsor, Alberich, Pizarro, and Frank in *Die Fledermaus*. A permanent member of the Mannheim Nationaltheater, his recordings include *Lulu* (1980 Grammy Award), *Parsifal*, *Moses und Aron* (1985 Grammy Award) and *Palestrina*. He was honored with the title of Kammersänger by the Mannheim National Theater in 1980.

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Tuesday, June 19
Saturday, June 23
Tuesday, June 26

The cost is \$2 for Guild members (limit 2 tickets per member); non-members \$5. Advance reservations required. For further information, please call (415) 565-6432.

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

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

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Special service for SFO patrons! Many opera-goers who live in the northern section of San Francisco are regular patrons of the Municipal Railway special "Opera Bus."

This bus is added to Muni's north-bound 47 line following all evening performances of the Opera. The service is also provided for all Sunday matinees.

Look for this bus, marked "47 Special," after each performance in the bus zone at Van Ness Avenue and Grove Street—across Van Ness from the Opera House. Its route is: North on Van Ness to Chestnut, then left to Divisadero where it turns left to Union. It continues on Union over Russian Hill to Columbus, then left to Powell—then right to the end of the line at North Point.

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

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

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

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

Ticket Information San Francisco Opera Box Office, Lobby, War Memorial Opera House, Van Ness at Grove, 10 A.M. to 6 P.M. Monday through Saturday. 10 A.M. through first intermission on all performance days. Phone charge (415) 864-3330 10 A.M. to 6 P.M. Monday through Saturday.

Important Notice: The box office in the outer lobby of the Opera House will remain open through the first intermission of every performance.

Unused Tickets Patrons who are unable to attend a performance may make a worthwhile contribution to the San Francisco Opera Association by returning their tickets to the Box Office or telephoning (415) 864-3330. Donors will receive a receipt for the full value, but the amount is not considered a contribution to the fund drive or fulfillment of a fund drive pledge.

Opera glasses are available for rent in the lobby. Please note that no cameras or tape recorders are permitted in the Opera House. Children of any age attending a performance must have a ticket.

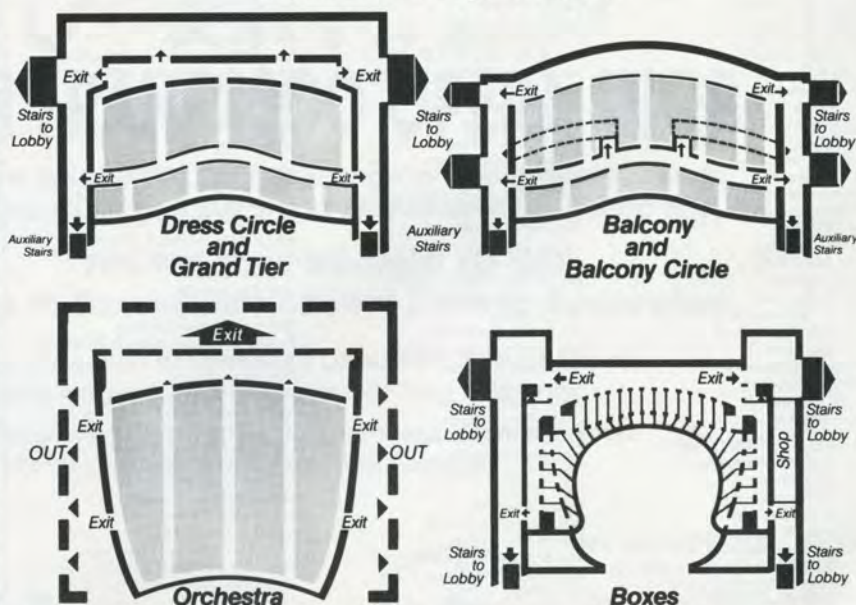
Management reserves the right to remove any patron creating a disturbance.

For lost and found information, inquire at check room No. 3 or call (415) 621-6600, 8:30 A.M. to 11:30 A.M. Monday through Friday. For the safety and comfort of our audience all large parcels, backpacks, luggage, etc., must be checked at the Opera House cloakrooms.

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

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

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



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



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