

Guillaume Tell  
(William Tell)

1991-1992

Saturday, May 30, 1992 7:00 PM  
Wednesday, June 3, 1992 7:00 PM  
Saturday, June 6, 1992 7:00 PM  
Thursday, June 11, 1992 7:00 PM  
Sunday, June 14, 1992 1:00 PM

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Publications Collection

San Francisco Opera Archives

# SAN FRANCISCO OPERA



GUILLAUME TELL

A CELEBRATION OF ROSSINI • 1992



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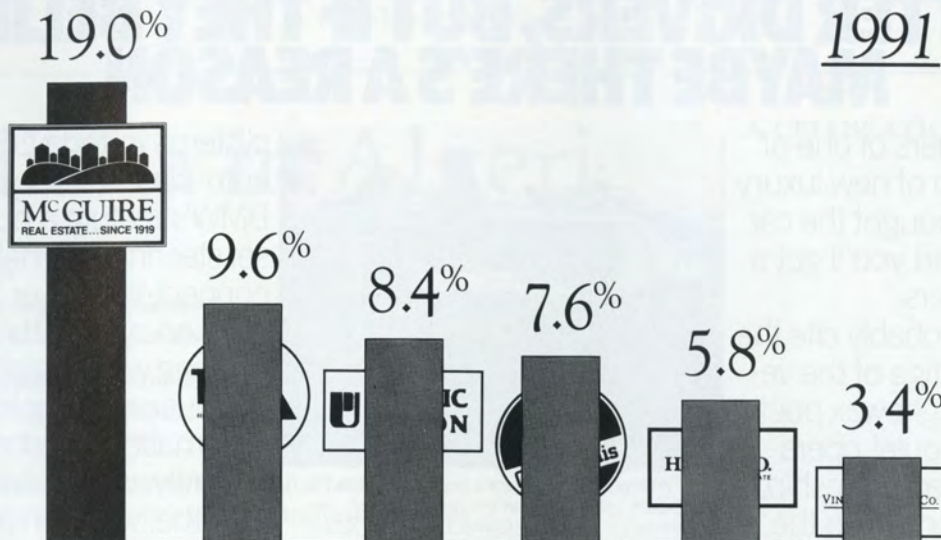
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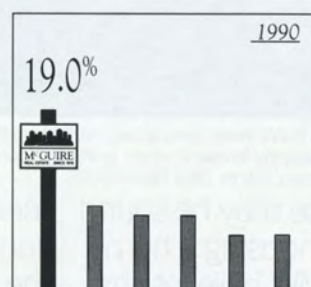
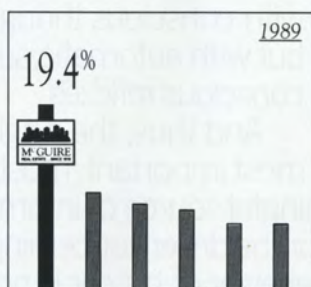
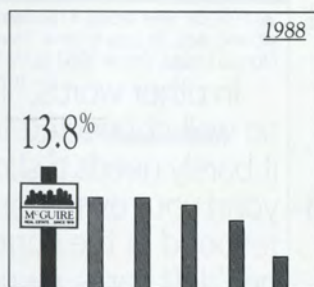
## MARKET SHARE UPDATE 1992

\$500,000+ single family homes, co-ops and condominiums sold between 1/1/91 and 12/31/91.

Source: San Francisco Association of REALTORS® Multiple Sales Service.



# If you're not already sold on McGuire, maybe this will help.



We looked at the figures for 1991 and found that yet again, we had almost double the share of our nearest competitor. Our dominance in this category continues.

And this time, we decided to go back a couple of years and show you just how dominant McGuire has been, and continues to be, in this all important category.

When you look at \$500,000+ single family homes, co-ops and

condominiums sold in 1991, McGuire was involved in more of these transactions than anybody. In fact, our share was almost twice that of our nearest competitor.

That's right. Twice. It's no fluke. It's a fact. And when you look at the share data for the preceding three years...well, we're belaboring the obvious. Just call McGuire. You're going to like what happens next.



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# WE CAN'T PROVE THAT BMW OWNERS ARE BETTER DRIVERS, BUT IF THEY BELIEVE IT, MAYBE THERE'S A REASON.

Ask the owners of one of the current crop of new luxury cars why they bought the car they bought, and you'll get a variety of answers.

Some will probably cite the image and prestige of the vehicle. Others might wax poetic about the car's quiet operation and fine craftsmanship. Still others may offer up the concept that a car is just a car is just a car, so why not buy the one that costs the least?



◆ "You sit up high in a BMW, there's glass all around. It's easy to see, you've got lots of visibility to take in what's going on around you. I like that." Don Orman, Owner 1969 BMW 2000A

While these may be sound reasons for choosing a home appliance, BMW believes that a car is not just a car, and a car with a premium price should do more than simply improve the driver's image.

It should improve nothing less than the driver's ability. And our owners seem to agree.

"The BMW brakes, accelerates and handles so well, it will correct your mistakes much quicker than a lot of other vehicles." Victor Bruno, owner 1991 BMW 850i Coupe.



◆ "When I took the car for a test drive, I knew the difference. I could feel it in the steering wheel... we were one." Dr. Jim Dacey, Owner 1980 BMW 320i

Improving the driver's ability means every BMW design begins not with a clean sheet of paper, but with the driver. Research conducted at the University of Freiburg, for example, found that most emergency corrections are made not with conscious thought, but with automatic, sub-conscious reflexes.

And thus, the single most important, most meaningful source of information for the driver concerning the behavior of his car is not,

◆ "The car gives you a fair understanding of where it's at, at all times. It constantly gives you feedback through the steering wheel and other controls. It's very predictable." Jeff Parks, Owner 1988 BMW M6



as generally supposed, his eyes, but his steering wheel.

So rather than deprive the driver of road feel — as do some of the "dead" steering

systems in today's passive, auto-piloted luxury sedans — BMW's feature a positive off-set steering geometry to better connect the driver to the suspension system through the steering wheel itself.

Thus providing him with the information needed to react instantly and confidently whenever the occasion arises.



◆ "The car feels strong. It handles well. It doesn't slip and slide. It's easy to drive. It's enjoyable to drive." Monica Dragul, Owner 1987 BMW 325es

In other words, "The car is so well-connected to you that it barely needs a stimulus beyond your own thoughts to respond in the correct manner." Jeff Parks, owner 1988 BMW M5.

All of which begins to explain what BMW owners mean when they say, "It just feels different."

Or, "It spoils you for driving any other car." And of course, our favorite, "It really is the Ultimate Driving Machine."



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# SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

Lotfi Mansouri, *General Director*

## Guillaume Tell

A CELEBRATION OF ROSSINI, 1992  
Vol. 70, No. 1

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Ferdinand Hodler (Swiss, 1853-1918),  
*Wilhelm Tell*, 1896/97  
Oil on canvas, 99 x 76 in.

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## FROM THE PRESIDENT AND THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

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

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

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

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

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

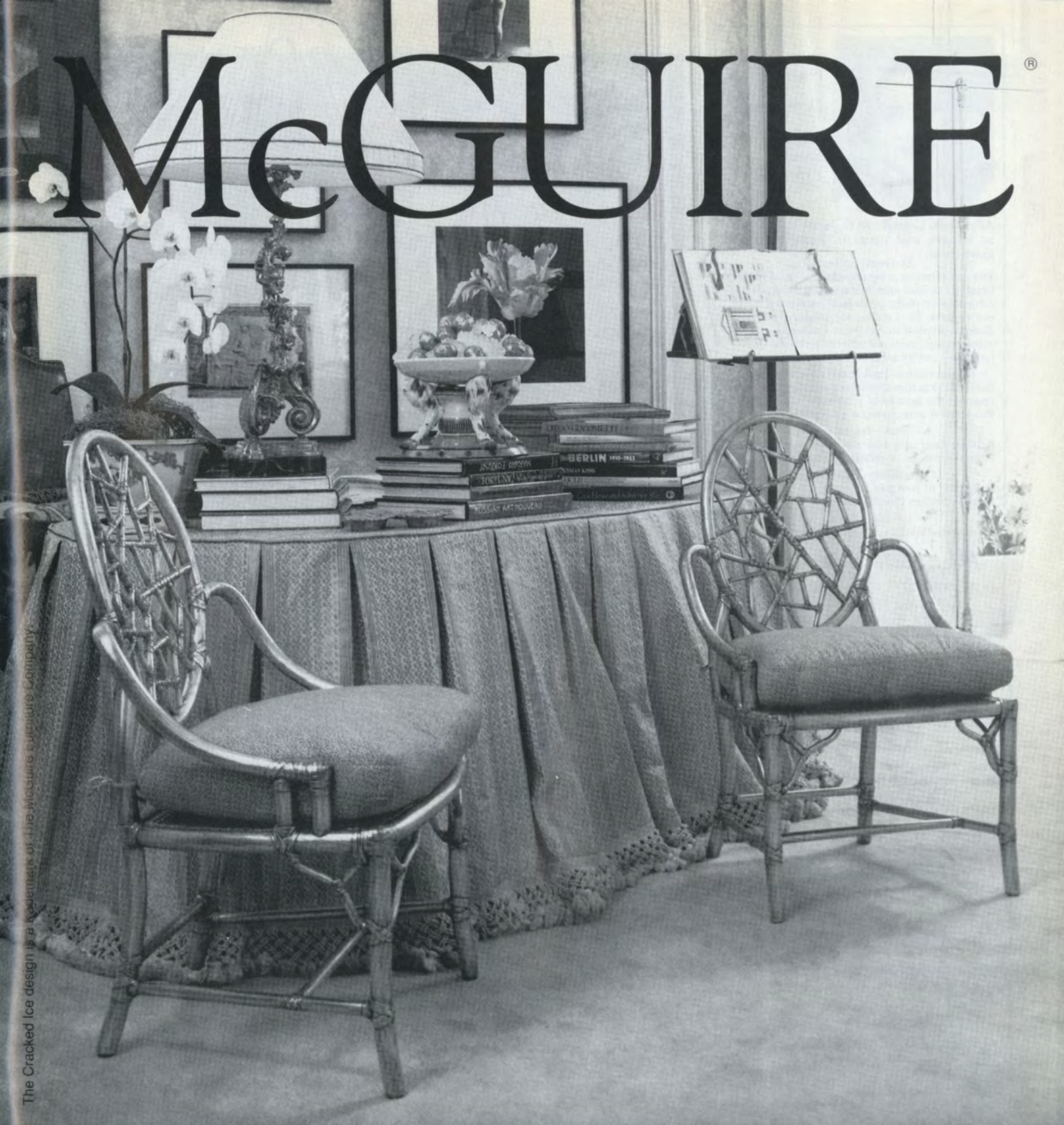
Other individuals and private foundations have also given generously: our Company premiere production of Bellini's *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* was made possible by a major gift from Herman J. Miller and Edward J. Clark; our newly refurbished *Don Giovanni* has been underwritten by a gift from the Bernard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

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

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

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# SAN FRANCISCO OPERA 1992 ROSSINI CELEBRATION

Saturday, May 30, 7:00

San Francisco Opera Premiere  
*New Production*

## Guillaume Tell

Vaness, Williams, Walker; Noble, Merritt,  
Rose, Wells\*, Travis  
Runnicles/Mansouri/Howland\*\*/  
Ray/Munn

*This production was underwritten by a  
generous gift from Herman J. Miller and  
Edward J. Clark.*

Tuesday, June 2, 8:00

*Production new to San Francisco*

## Il Barbiere di Siviglia

Von Stade, Racette; Lopez-Yañez, Black\*,  
Antoniozzi\*\*, Rose, Vasquez+  
Marin\*/Copley/Conklin/Stennett/  
Arhelger

*Production from the Lyric Opera of Chicago.  
This production is made possible, in part  
by BankAmerica Foundation.*

Wednesday, June 3, 7:00

## Guillaume Tell

Friday, June 5, 8:00

## Il Barbiere di Siviglia

Saturday, June 6, 7:00

## Guillaume Tell

Sunday, June 7, 2:00

## Il Barbiere di Siviglia

Tuesday, June 9, 8:00

San Francisco Opera Premiere

*Production new to San Francisco*

## L'Italiana in Algeri

Horne, Williams, Keen; Lopardo, Alaimo,  
Antoniozzi, Travis  
Renzetti\*/Ponnelle/Frisell/Ponnelle/  
Munn

*Production from the Metropolitan Opera.*

*This production was underwritten by a  
generous gift from Mr. and Mrs. John N.  
Rosekrans, Jr.*

Thursday, June 11, 7:00

## Guillaume Tell

Friday, June 12, 8:00

## L'Italiana in Algeri

Saturday, June 13, 8:00

## Il Barbiere di Siviglia

Sunday, June 14, 1:00

## Guillaume Tell

Tuesday, June 16, 8:00

## Il Barbiere di Siviglia

Wednesday, June 17, 8:00

## L'Italiana in Algeri

Friday, June 19, 8:00

## Il Barbiere di Siviglia

Sunday, June 21, 2:00

## L'Italiana in Algeri

Wednesday, June 24, 8:00

## L'Italiana in Algeri

Thursday, June 25, 7:00

Grace Cathedral

## Petite Messe Solennelle

Racette, Cook+; Guggenheim+,  
Baldvinsson+

Robertson/Members of the S.F. Opera  
Chorus, S.F. Opera Orchestra, Grace  
Cathedral Choir

Friday, June 26, 8:00

United States Premiere

Concert Version

## Ermione

Antonacci\*, Kuhlmann; Li, Lopez-Yañez,  
Estep, Wells  
Summers/Bernhard/Norris

Saturday, June 27, 8:00

## L'Italiana in Algeri

Sunday, June 28, 2:00

## Ermione

\*\*United States opera debut  
\*San Francisco Opera debut  
+1992 Adler Fellow

All opera performances are in the original  
language with English Supertitles.

Repertoire, casts and dates subject to  
change.

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## GENERAL DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

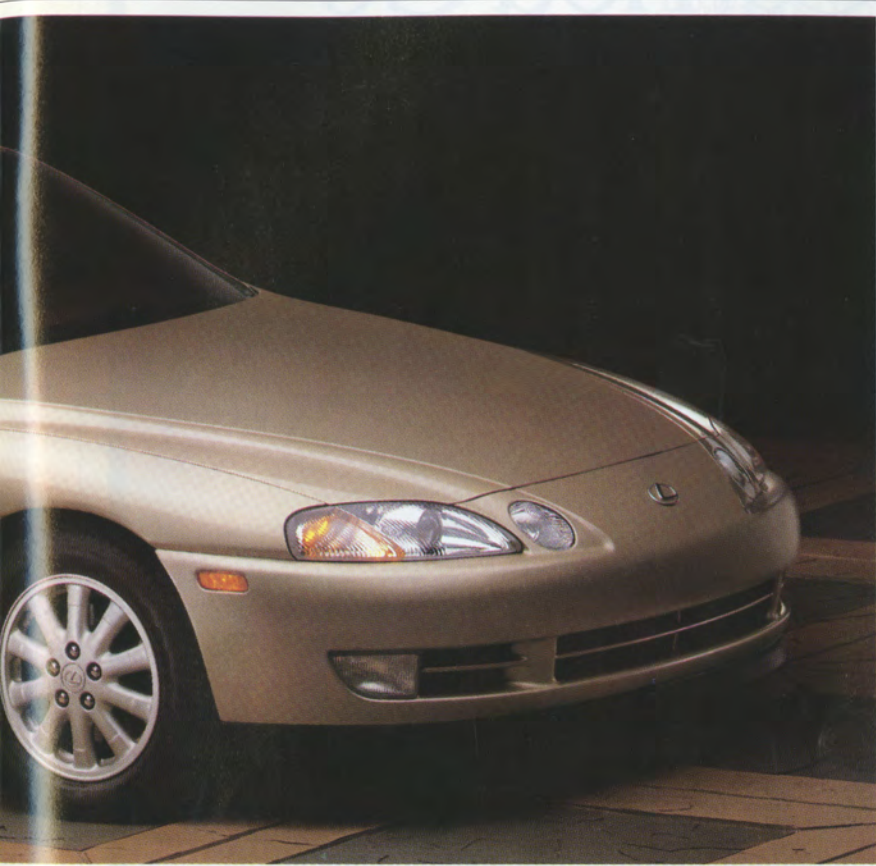
Enjoy the season!



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★★★ Jim Wood, *San Francisco Examiner*

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# SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

## 1992 FALL SEASON

### Opening Night

Friday, September 11, 8:00

*New Production*

**Tosca** Puccini

Guleghina\*; Larin\*\*, Pons, Loup\*

Oren\*/Galati\*/Walton\*/Kim\*/Munn

*Co-production with the Lyric Opera of Chicago.*

*This new production is underwritten by a generous gift from Mr. and Mrs. F.P. Johnson, Jr.*

Saturday, September 12, 7:30

**Boris Godunov** Mussorgsky

Quittmeyer, Cook+; Morris, Baker, Ochman, Estep, Leiferkus (Sept. 12, 16, 19, 24), Held\* (Sept. 27, 29; Oct. 3), Ledbetter, Howell

Runnicles/Lawless\*/Arhelger

*Sets and costumes from the Kirov Opera after the original Tarkovsky production for the Royal Opera House Covent Garden.*

*This production is underwritten, in part, by a generous gift from the L.J. and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation.*

Tuesday, September 15, 8:00

**Tosca** Puccini

Wednesday, September 16, 7:30

**Boris Godunov** Mussorgsky

Friday, September 18, 8:00

**Tosca** Puccini

Saturday, September 19, 7:30

**Boris Godunov** Mussorgsky

Sunday, September 20, 2:00

**L'Elisir d'Amore** Donizetti

Swenson, Claycomb+; Hadley, Quilico, Alaimo  
Campanella\*\*/Brovsky\*/Darling/  
Arhelger

Tuesday, September 22, 8:00

**L'Elisir d'Amore** Donizetti

Wednesday, September 23, 7:30

**Tosca** Puccini

Thursday, September 24, 7:30

**Boris Godunov** Mussorgsky

Friday, September 25, 8:00

**L'Elisir d'Amore** Donizetti

Saturday, September 26, 8:00

**Tosca** Puccini

Sunday, September 27, 1:30

**Boris Godunov** Mussorgsky

Tuesday, September 29, 7:30

**Boris Godunov** Mussorgsky

Wednesday, September 30, 7:30

**L'Elisir d'Amore** Donizetti

Thursday, October 1, 7:30

**Tosca** Puccini

Friday, October 2, 8:00

**L'Elisir d'Amore** Donizetti

Saturday, October 3, 7:30

**Boris Godunov** Mussorgsky

Sunday, October 4, 2:00

**Tosca** Puccini



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Tuesday, October 6, 7:30

**L'Elisir d'Amore** Donizetti

Saturday, October 10, 8:00

**L'Elisir d'Amore** Donizetti

Sunday, October 11, 2:00

**Fidelio** Beethoven

Behrens, Panagoulas; Lakes, Wlaschiha\*,  
Tschammer, Schade, Held  
Runnicles/Hampe/Gunter/Arhelger

*This production was originally made possible  
by Mr. and Mrs. Reid W. Dennis and the L.J.  
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Tuesday, October 13, 7:30

**L'Elisir d'Amore** Donizetti

Friday, October 14, 7:30

**Fidelio** Beethoven

Saturday, October 17, 8:00

**Fidelio** Beethoven

Sunday, October 18, 1:30

*Production new to San Francisco*

**La Forza del Destino** Verdi

Mitchell, Forst; Giacomini (Oct. 18, 21, 24,  
27, 30), TBA (Nov. 6, 10), Chernov,  
Scandiuizzi\* (Oct. 18, 27, 30; Nov. 6, 10),  
Langan (Oct. 21, 24)

R. Abbado\*\*/Frisell/Brown/Samaritani/  
Munn

*Production from The Washington Opera.*

Tuesday, October 20, 8:00

**Fidelio** Beethoven

Wednesday, October 21, 7:30

**La Forza del Destino** Verdi

Friday, October 23, 8:00

**Fidelio** Beethoven

Saturday, October 24, 7:30

**La Forza del Destino** Verdi

Tuesday, October 27, 7:30

**La Forza del Destino** Verdi

Thursday, October 29, 7:30

**Fidelio** Beethoven

Friday, October 30, 7:30

**La Forza del Destino** Verdi

Saturday, October 31, 7:00

**Don Carlo** Verdi

Vaness, Terentieva\*, Mills; Margison\*,  
Lloyd, Allen, Howell  
Runnicles (Oct. 31; Nov. 4, 8, 11, 14)/  
Robertson (Nov. 18, 21)/Cox/  
McClintock/Lazaridis/Munn

*This production was originally made possible  
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Sunday, November 1, 2:00

**Fidelio** Beethoven

Wednesday, November 4, 7:00

**Don Carlo** Verdi

Friday, November 6, 7:30

**La Forza del Destino** Verdi

*Continued on page 59*

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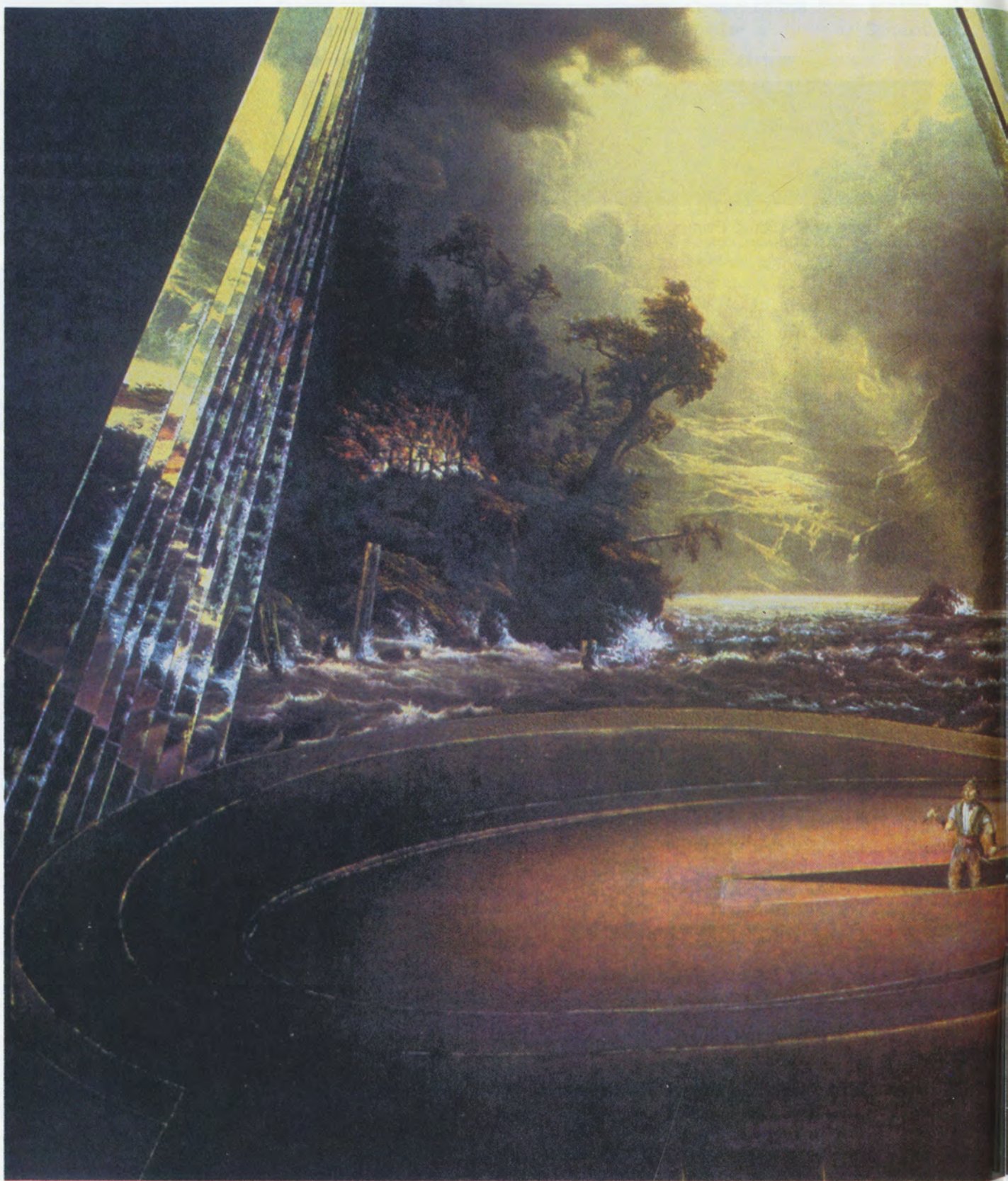


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*Gerard Howland's design for the storm scene in San Francisco Opera's new production of Rossini's Guillaume Tell.*





# Guillaume Tell: On Target

By PHILIP GOSSETT

With the premiere of *Guillaume Tell* at the Académie Royale de Musique on August 3rd, 1829, Rossini finally offered Parisian audiences an original opera in French. No one in Paris was unaware that his three previous works, *Le Siège de Corinthe* (1826), *Moïse* (1827), and *Le Comte Ory* (1828), had Italian models: the first two were derived from Neapolitan originals (*Maometto II* of 1820 and *Mosè in Egitto* of 1818); while half the music of the third was taken from *Il Viaggio a Reims*, the work Rossini composed to celebrate the coronation of Charles X in 1825. After Auber's *La Muette de Portici* of 1828, all Paris awaited Rossini's new opera. But there was nothing casual about his hesitation in preparing a completely original work for the Opéra. The most fêted composer in Europe was undergoing a lengthy apprenticeship, studying French and its declamation, working intensively at the Opéra, and absorbing its history and customs.

## The Background

*Guillaume Tell* was intended to begin Rossini's true career as a French composer, after his years at the Théâtre Italien and his earlier work at the Opéra. During the months preceding its premiere he struggled to obtain two long-term commitments from the French government: a lifetime annuity, which would solidify his place in the French musical establishment; and a contract commissioning him to compose and produce five operas over the next ten years, the first of which would be *Guillaume Tell*. To protest a delay in governmental approval, Rossini suspended rehearsals of *Tell* until the King signed the agreement.

Matters turned out quite differently. The revolution of July 1830 overthrew Charles X. Rossini, in Bologna

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*Philip Gossett, Dean of the Division of Humanities at The University of Chicago, is the General Editor of the Edizione critica delle opere di Gioachino Rossini (published by the Fondazione Rossini of Pesaro) and the Works of Giuseppe Verdi (published jointly by The University of Chicago Press and G. Ricordi & C. of Milan). He writes extensively on Italian opera and works closely with singers and opera houses throughout the world in productions of Rossini operas based on the new critical editions. For his services to Italian culture, education, and the arts, he was awarded the Medaglia d'Oro, first class, of the Italian Government in 1985. On the occasion of the Rossini bicentennial, he was named an honorary member of the Accademia Filarmonica of Bologna.*

since the fall of 1829 (ostensibly awaiting a libretto for his second French opera), rapidly returned to Paris, where he remained until 1836. He insisted that the new government fulfill the terms of the annuity he had previously negotiated, a position ultimately sustained by the courts. But even before the premiere of *Guillaume Tell*, Rossini had dropped many hints about retiring.

The reasons are as varied and complex as the man: with his earlier successes and shrewd investments, he had no financial need; the terrible strains under which he worked for twenty years profoundly affected his health; his favored position at the Opéra was threatened after the premiere of Meyerbeer's *Robert Le Diable* in 1831; new styles of singing, adumbrated in *Tell*, were becoming common, and Rossini realized he would have to alter significantly his compositional technique. Add to these factors other psychological issues that reflected Rossini's relations with his art, public, and family (especially his mother, who died in 1827), and the silence begins to seem comprehensible. *Guillaume Tell*, then, far from opening Rossini's true career in Paris, turned out to be his final opera. Though he lived for almost forty more years, he never again composed for the stage.

Critical reaction to *Tell* was and has continued to be enthusiastic. Writing in 1834, Berlioz, no friend of Rossini or of Italian opera, viewed the score as one "seriously thought out, considered at leisure, and conscientiously executed from beginning to end." And Wagner, in his 1860 meeting with Rossini, cited a section from the scene of the apple, "Sois immobile," Tell's plea to his son to remain absolutely still, a model for declamatory music. It is a passage, which, in Wagner's words, "accentuating each word and sustained by the breathing strokes of the violoncellos, reached the highest summits of lyric expression." To which Rossini responded, "So I made music of the future without knowing it," leaving Wagner to conclude, "There, Maestro, you made music for all times, and that is the best."

Having suffered countless indignities in Paris during the preparation of *Don*



*Anonymous lithograph, made in the first half of the 19th century, shows Rossini surrounded by some of his operatic creations.*





MUSÉE DE L'OPÉRA, PARIS

Henri-Bernard Dabadie (1797-1853), the first interpreter of the title role of *Guillaume Tell*, shown in a portrait made in 1836 by François-Gabriel-Guillaume Lepaulle. Monsieur Dabadie was also the first Pharaon in Rossini's *Moïse* and Raimbaud in *Le Comte Ory*, as well as the first Belcore in Donizetti's *L'Elisir d'Amore*.

Carlos, Verdi reflected his own frustrations when he commented in 1869: "One detects [in *Guillaume Tell*] that fatal atmosphere of the Opéra." Verdi had two problems in mind: first, the complex process by which a work at the Opéra passed from conception to performance; second, the ways in which an Italian composer, writing for the Opéra, needed to adapt his style to a foreign musical culture.

For Rossini, the former problem was less troublesome than it would prove for Verdi. However complex the gestation of *Guillaume Tell*, there is no reason to think the composer was unable to exercise personal control over the work's production.

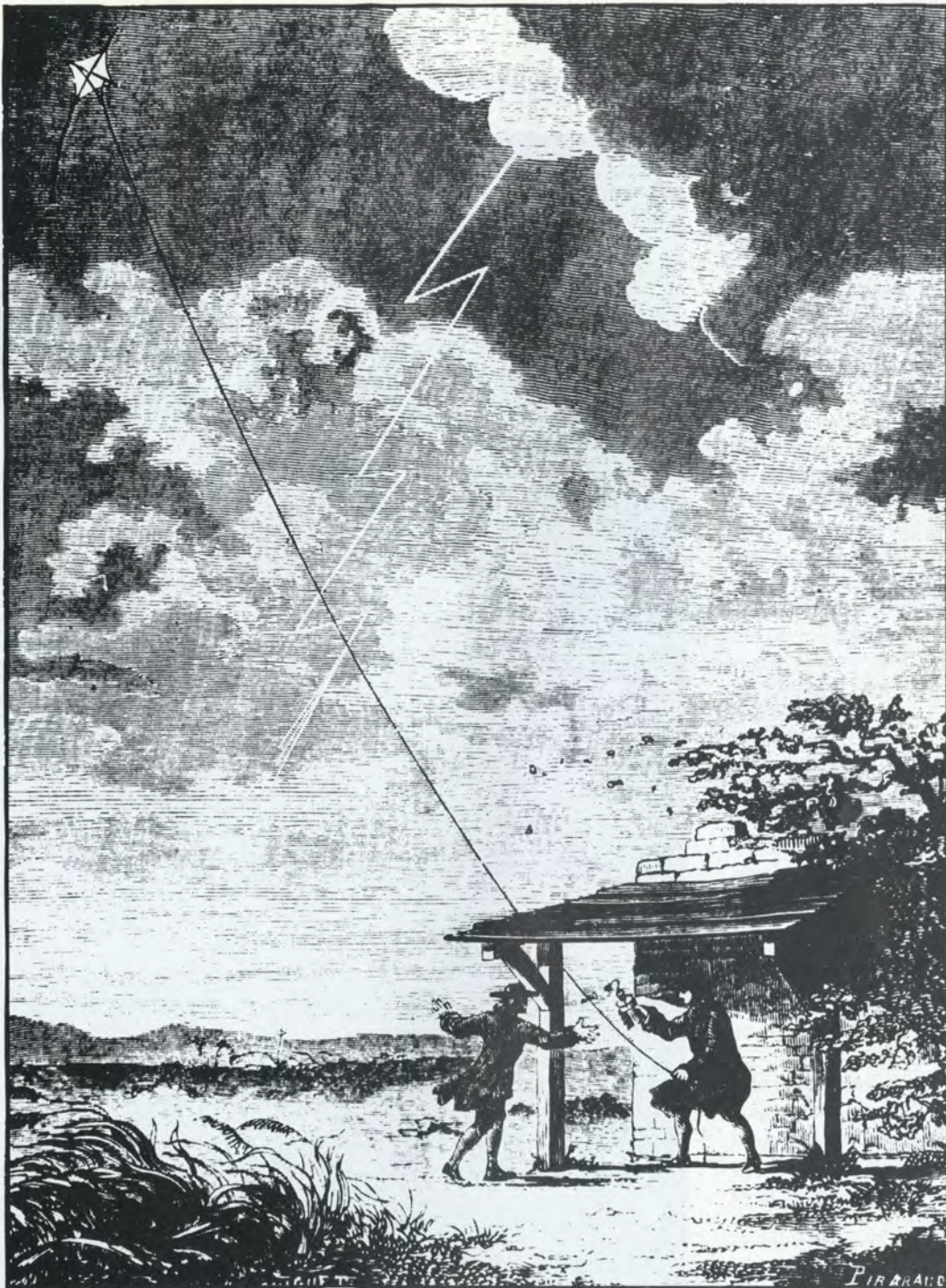
Rossini's patrons were at the highest level of government, including the King. Thus, when *Guillaume Tell* emerged from its long gestation period, it was the opera Rossini wanted it to be.

Still, the development of the libretto was tormented: the original draft by Étienne de Jouy, freely derived from the 1804 play by Schiller, underwent considerable alteration at the hands of Hippolyte Bis; further modifications were introduced by Armand Marrast and Aldophe Crémieux, responsible in particular for giving the second-act Finale its definitive form. Finally, many changes were made in *Guillaume Tell* during the long rehearsal period. Some were incorporated into printed editions of the opera (which began to be prepared before the first performance); others, made late during the rehearsal process or after the premiere, survived only in manuscripts at the Opéra, lost to posterity until they were reconstructed by Professor Elizabeth Bartlett for the critical edition you are hearing today.

What is most fascinating about *Guillaume Tell*, however, is the imaginative way in which its composer responded to the challenge of creating a work for the French Opéra without abandoning his Italian roots. Though certain elements are more "Italian," others more "French," it is the interpenetration of these elements that is extraordinary. More than in any other work, Rossini integrates the *bel canto* lyricism and formal refinement of Italian opera with the declamatory immediacy and scenic splendor (the latter associated with the extensive choral participation and ballet) characteristic of French opera. The grandiose structure, finally, is tied together with a system of musical motives derived from popular Swiss melodies known as "ranz des vaches." First heard in a pure state in the first-act festivities, they are later transformed into a remarkable variety of forms.

#### Italian Traits

Rossini's mature Italian operas were constructed as a succession of closed numbers (separated by accompanied recitative), each number usually in multiple sections with a unifying tonality. By a careful arrangement of its individual parts, differentiated in tempo and meter, the closed number could accommodate significant dramatic activity. A few standard procedures typically governed the



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*Adolphe Nourrit (1802-1839), who created the role of Arnold in Guillaume Tell, was also the world's first Robert in Robert le Diable, Raoul in Les Huguenots, Masaniello in La Muette de Portici and Eleazar in La Juive. He also wrote scenarios for several ballets, including that of La Sylphide.*

internal structure of these parts: parallel passages sung successively by different characters, canonic movements, concluding cabalettas (in which a principal theme, after a short transition, would be repeated to allow for vocal ornamentation). Though the outlines were classical, Rossini's ways of realizing these cavatinas, arias, duets, trios, etc., were extraordinarily varied.

Many parts of *Guillaume Tell* adhere to this structural tradition, most obviously the duet for Mathilde and Arnold in Act II, Mathilde's aria at the opening of Act III, and Arnold's aria "Asile héréditaire". All three pieces are part of the dramatically ancillary (though musically splendid) sub-plot: the love between the Austrian Princess and a "simple inhabitant of

these fields," roles first interpreted by Laure Cinti-Damoreau and Adolphe Nourrit, important French singers. Cinti-Damoreau had already worked with Rossini at the Théâtre Italien, creating the role of the Contessa di Folleville in *Il Viaggio a Reims*. Nourrit, who had made his debut at the Paris Opéra in 1821 (where he sang until 1837), adapted his technique to Italian practice under Rossini's watchful eye when the composer shifted his allegiance to the Opéra. Although Nourrit performed all the tenor roles in Rossini's French operas, he never developed the highly florid style the composer employed in Italy for singers such as Giovanni David or Andrea Nozzari. Still, Cinti-Damoreau and Nourrit were masters of Italian technique and Rossini thoroughly exploited their talents in *Tell*.

Mathilde's aria (whether in its original version with the participation of Arnold or in the revised version, for Mathilde alone) is similar to the composition Rossini expressly prepared in the French *Moïse* for the same singer: an extended, agitated opening section, followed by a more melodic cabaletta (with striking, modally inflected vocal chromaticism). Arnold's aria, on the other hand, adopts a new tone. Its splendid opening section (lyrical and delicately scored) and heroic cabaletta point the way to melodic procedures that defined the tenor voice for Donizetti and Verdi. Although Rossini preferred Nourrit's singing style, with its dependence on "head" voice in a stratospheric register, Arnold's rather declamatory melodic writing could easily be adapted to the very different sort of vocal production, emphasizing "chest" voice, associated with Nourrit's successor at the Opéra, Gilbert-Louis Duprez. (The only solo number of *Tell* in the Italian tradition is Mathilde's *romance* in Act II, "Sombre forêt," the simplicity of whose strophic structure, typical of French opera, is enriched by its subtle orchestration.)

Not only the duet for Mathilde and Arnold but also two other ensembles (the duet for Arnold and Tell in Act I and the trio for Arnold, Tell, and Walter in Act II) show a fascinating mixture of Italian principles of large-scale organization and dramatically responsive internal details. Rossini is at his best in the slow sections at the heart of both second-act ensembles,

*Continued on page 26*

# TALKING ABOUT TELL

Just as the rehearsals for San Francisco Opera's new production of *Guillaume Tell* were getting underway, we sought out a few thoughts on the Rossini work from three of the people instrumental in bringing it to life on stage: Director Lotfi Mansouri, Conductor Donald Runnicles, and Designer Gerard Howland.

Lotfi Mansouri's thoughts flowed freely in his introductory talk to the cast just before the beginning of the first staging rehearsal. With the *Tell* turntable set looming in the background, he outlined the basic facts on the opera and its Schiller-based libretto, then zeroed in: "It's about freedom. It's written on an incredibly large scope, and the freedom theme handled throughout the opera makes it as appropriate today as the day it was written. It is also historically important, because it provided the foundation for what was to become the typical French *grand opéra*, eventually also influencing Verdi and all who came after him.

"Yes, it is based on a legend, but the person of William Tell represents the spirit of freedom that ignited the Swiss national pride. When the Schiller play was converted into the operatic libretto, some characters were altered, but the *essence* of the piece remained intact. In approaching this monumental work, we tried to arrive at a strong combination of stylization and romanticism through which individual performances would shine; a concept that would not overwhelm, but would at the same time give a sense of variety and be an integral part of the drama."

Gerard Howland, who is making his United States debut with the set design for this production, approached the *Guillaume Tell* project with the aim of making "... nature, as Rossini used it, the protagonist in this piece. Nature reflects the spirit of this opera at any given moment, and our challenge was

in finding a way to let it all flow, from situations of calm to those of tempestuous movement. Our set will accomplish this very quickly and effortlessly, both because we believe in reflecting the spirit of the piece and because the performance should proceed without pauses.

"The helmet the audiences will face at the beginning, and again later, was selected as a symbol of the Austrian occupation of Switzerland and the oppression of the Swiss. Originally, the Swiss had to parade in front of Gessler's hat, but we have taken a medieval helmet as a symbol instead."

The helmet, called "The Mask of Power" by Director Lotfi Mansouri, is just one of the stage elements he singled out to his cast. "We will also have mirrors, nine on each side, 30 feet tall. In calmer moments, these will reflect the scenery, but in moments of storm and conflict, they will move and create constant change and visual turbulence."

San Francisco Opera's new Music Director Donald Runnicles, who conducts these performances of *Guillaume Tell*, was reached in Europe prior to his arrival here. He finds that this particular Rossini work is "...uncharacteristic for what regular audience members expect out of Rossini, which is generally comic, witty, light-hearted, fast-moving material. In *Guillaume Tell*, we find a Rossini who is serious, expansive, dramatic and experimental—in form, harmony, vocal writing and instrumentation. His handling of the orchestra also forewarns of later operas of the nineteenth century, and it is significant to note that this work was the last in Rossini's operatic output, leading one to assume that he might have thought he had reached his limits and sown seeds for composers who were yet to come.

"The special challenge," Runnicles

continues, "is in finding and conveying to the public the huge sweep of *William Tell*, not unlike dealing with Wagner's *Ring*. Then, there is the matter of the famous overture. That particular piece of music makes so much more sense when heard in conjunction with the entire opera. Everything is in it: the music of Switzerland, the natural beauty of the storm, the ensuing clear skies, the nationalistic sentiment, the quest for freedom from tyranny ... It is all there, in the overture, but familiarity (not to mention abundant plagiarism) has bred contempt. Do we really hear and experience this beautiful world which Rossini conjures up in the overture? Only in hearing it with the complete opera do we come to understand the overture; wish I could perform it again at the end, in retrospect!"

As to what audiences should expect at a performance of *Guillaume Tell*, Runnicles concludes: "Their attitude is important: one should listen to *Tell* as one listens to Verdi's *Don Carlo* or Wagner's *Lohengrin*, which means free of all pre-conceptions. Forget Rossini the comedian, forget the witty cook. This is a remarkable piece of drama, an amazing forerunner, a very inspired piece."

Lotfi Mansouri concurs. "This is a unique work. It marks the beginning of the romantic movement in opera. It almost acts like a bridge from what went on before Rossini towards what was to come with Verdi. In spite of its giant scope, it is dominated by individual characters, something we will try to develop during rehearsals. The internal monologues are of utmost importance, and have to be put across with total conviction.

"But, in the final analysis, it is the quest for freedom that matters, freedom from tyranny. And, when we look at the world events during the last few years, we realize that *Guillaume Tell* is as timely today as it was at the time of its inception."

—K.L.



Laure Cinti-Damoreau (1801-1863), who portrayed the role of Mathilde in *Guillaume Tell* at the opera's premiere.

the touching "Doux aveu, ce tendre langage" of the Mathilde-Arnold duet, and Arnold's wrenching "Ses jours qu'ils ont osé proscrire" in the trio, when he learns of the death of his father at the hands of Gessler. But the composer builds a ringing climax to this trio by constructing its cabaletta theme, following the oath "Ou l'indépendance ou la mort," as a most effective, and most Italianate, "Rossini crescendo." The most flexible of these ensembles is the Arnold-Tell duet in Act I, much of which consists of an extended dialogue held together by the orchestra. Rossini effectively sets the two characters against one another in the lyrical "Ah! Mathilde! idole de mon âme," intensifying Arnold's torment by repeating the passage (first presented in G-flat major) in a higher key (A-flat major). The upward strain that Rossini imposes upon the tenor's range could be taken as a meta-

phor for Arnold's internal strife.

Also frankly Italianate in design is the first-act Finale, whose action (the arrival of Austrian soldiers in search of Leuthold and the defiance of the Swiss) comes into focus in two major ensembles, a central *Andantino* and a concluding *stretta*. The *Andantino*, "Vierge que les Chrétiens adorent," is one of the most beautiful slow ensembles in all Rossini. It is also characteristic of how Rossini adapts an Italian form to French practice: the entire ensemble takes shape from a broad melody whose harmonic restlessness gives direction and purpose that continue through the cadences. Nothing seems superfluous.

Rossini eliminated another Italianate number soon after the premiere of the opera, the trio in the last scene, a single movement constructed as a canon, in which Mathilde returns Jemmy to his mother: "Je rends à votre amour." An elegant composition, with accompaniment for winds and brass alone, it freezes the action at a crucial dramatic moment. One can therefore understand both Rossini's having included the piece in the opera's premiere and his subsequent decision to cut it. A reasonable compromise might be to include the trio (together with the following Prayer, also an early casualty) in a recorded performance, while sacrificing its musical beauties to dramatic needs in a staged performance. [These performances *do* include the trio and Prayer.]

#### French Elements

Traditionally, opera in France had been more concerned with declamation, spectacle, chorus, and dance than had Italian opera. Already during his Neapolitan years, however, under the influence of French operas by Spontini (performed in Italian translation at the Teatro San Carlo), Rossini began integrating these elements into his Italian operas: extensive ballets in *Armida*, dramatic declamatory scenes in *Ermione*, the choral presence in *Mosè in Egitto*, the importance of local color in *La Donna del Lago*, all attest to this integration. His revisions of two Neapolitan operas for Paris continued the process, which reaches its apogee in *Guillaume Tell*.

Throughout the opera, the recitative is extremely powerful, blending almost magically into passionate, yet lyrical declamation. This occurs not only in obvious

places, recitatives that introduce solo numbers or small ensembles, but also in complex scenes, especially the third-act Finale (including Tell's admonishment to his son) and the concluding scene of the opera. These effects are seconded orchestrally: by employing a consistently rich texture (even when strings alone are playing), Rossini breaks down the division in sound between recitative and lyrical numbers and even runs such passages imperceptibly into one another.

Still, despite the importance of declamation and dramatic action for soloists in the opera, the chorus remains the central protagonist of *Guillaume Tell*. Even when we are most involved in the tribulations of Tell and Jemmy or of Mathilde, Arnold, and Melcthal, the Swiss people and their fate are primary to the drama and music. Their presence is most obvious in the festival of the three marriages, which dominates the first act, during which Rossini employs a wide variety of music—pastoral, solemn, joyous. This is equally true of the Finale of this act, whose central elements are the fear of the people before the Austrian soldiers, their gathering courage, and their defiance. None of the principal characters in the opera, Arnold, Mathilde, Tell, or Walter, even appears during this Finale.

Nor does the role of the chorus diminish in importance as the opera progresses. The highly original second-act Finale is built around three separate choral groups, representing the three cantons of Unterwald, Schwitz, and Uri, who come through the woods, over the mountains, and on the waters to swear an oath at Rütli. Rossini uses characteristic music for each group in an antiphonal chorus in which they ask Tell for guidance. His strong, declamatory responses unite them for the magnificent conclusion to the act, one that flies in the face of the conventions against which Donizetti railed (without ever freeing himself) and with which Verdi would be struggling twenty years later in *Luisa Miller*. Equally impressive is the ensemble Finale of the last act, built up from a simple orchestral phrase, a final mutation of the most prominent *ranz des vaches* motif, modulating from key to key and arriving at a glorious solemnity of sound at the words "Liberté redescends des cieux."

Though other choral passages in *Guillaume Tell* may be less original in con-

ception, they are no less omnipresent: the lovely double chorus for hunters and shepherds at the beginning of Act II, in which the two groups are well differentiated (and in which Rossini uses to fine effect a "forbidden" series of parallel major chords in root position); the extensive choral movement that opens the festival given at Gessler's command in Altdorf in the third act; the ever-popular Tyrolean chorus in the third act, presented here in its definitive form (the final choral reprise was added by Rossini too late for inclusion in the printed editions). Berlioz lamented its "truly incredible success," imagining that it was "doubtless written one morning at the breakfast table."

Some of these choruses are part of large-scale *divertissements* in the first and third acts, in which the composer uses chorus and dance within formal festivities that are integrated into the story. It is easy to consider these passages expendable, and they were frequently passed over in nineteenth-century performances (especially in Italy), but doing so seri-

*William Tell defying Gessler's power, as represented in an anonymous 19th-century etching.*



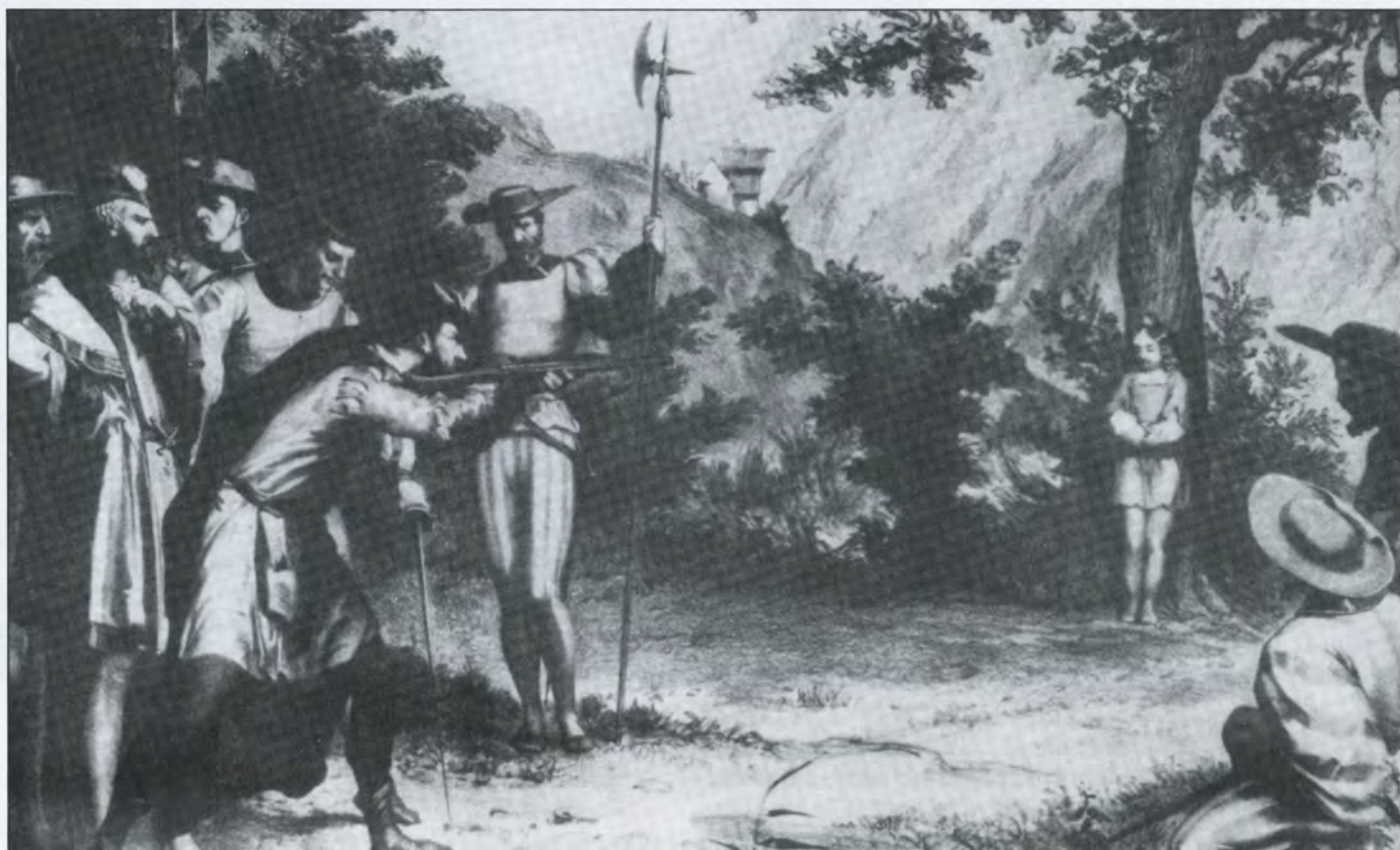
ously disfigures Rossini's score. Quite apart from the weight the *divertissements* must have in both acts to allow sufficient preparation for the following dramatic events, Rossini's ballet music is superb: the orchestral effects in the *Pas de Six* (notice the expressive and sustained cello line against the main melody); the contrapuntal writing in the *Choeur Dansé*, the disconcerting syncopations in the *Pas des Soldats*. In his French operas, and particularly in *Tell*, Rossini not only defined the musical style that dominated nineteenth-century French opera and ballet but also composed its finest example.

Among orchestral pieces in *Guillaume Tell*, finally, one must not neglect the opera's most famous single number, its "programmatic" overture, quite different from any Rossini had earlier composed. Though the orchestration of the whole opera has new richness and variety, nowhere is this more apparent than in the overture. Rossini did not have a significantly larger group of instruments available in Paris than in Naples, yet his orchestral palette is fuller than ever before. There are models for divided solo celli in earlier French opera, but the richness of sonority at the beginning of this overture is unparalleled. The first hints of the ensuing storm music avoid cellos and double basses altogether, so that when the storm finally breaks, the full complement of in-

struments is heard to breathtaking effect for the first time. The lovely English horn solo (with virtuosic flute accompaniment) and a rousing finale bring the overture to a close. Rossini himself later underlaid words to the concluding section, ending with the cry "Victoire et liberté," as part of a new Finale demanded by the Opéra in 1831 to shorten *Guillaume Tell* to three acts.

But the new conclusion was no "victoire" for Rossini. As with many of his other operas, *Guillaume Tell* was met by much of the public with incomprehension. Its Italian performances were heavily censored and cut; even in France it was rarely performed complete. Everyone knows the anecdote about Rossini's meeting with Louis Véron, director of the Opéra, in the streets of Paris. Informed that the theater would be performing the second act of *Tell* that evening, the composer quipped, "All of it?" To which this performance allows us to respond: "Yes, all of it!" together with the rest of this operatic masterpiece, in a form as close as possible to the version the composer himself directed in Paris. With our increased knowledge of Rossini's great Italian *opera seria*, it is finally possible to place *Guillaume Tell* in context, to recognize its unique qualities and at the same time to understand its place in the composer's broader development. □

Anonymous 19th-century  
William Tell etching.



# ROSSINI AT THE SUMMIT

By JOHN ARDOIN

Everyone loves Rossini's music. Just mention his name and wait for the smile. I am talking about the comic Rossini, of course, for though the music world has made an impressive effort in rehabilitating and getting to know the tragic Rossini, it is still his infectious comedies *The Barber of Seville*, *La Cenerentola*, and *L'Italiana in Algeri* that are the coin of the realm.

Yet, as much pleasure as Rossini has given operagoers in the 200 years since his birth, no one in recent times has been so smitten by his music to be willing to place him alongside of such icons as Beethoven and Wagner. But this wasn't always the case.

There was a time when Vienna stood on its head for Rossini while ignoring Beethoven, and when Wagner came hat-in-hand to call on Rossini in Paris in the hope of enlisting support for his "music of the future." With the distance only time and tide can provide, this strikes us today as amazing—not only that Rossini knew Beethoven and Wagner, but that he once stood shoulder-to-shoulder with them.

A slight but intriguing digression: Rossini was also close friends with Camille Saint-Saëns, and if you put the lifetimes of these two men of longevity together, you encompass virtually all of modern music history. Rossini (1792-1868) was born a year after Mozart died, and Saint-Saëns (1835-1921) was at the premiere of *Le Sacre du Printemps* and missed the premiere of *Rhapsody in Blue* by three years.

The meeting between Rossini and Beethoven in Vienna in 1822 was one of the great summit meetings of music. Rossini was 30 and the toast of Europe and had gone to the Austrian capital for the local premiere of his opera *Zelmira*. Beethoven was 51 and had only five years left to live. Though already of legendary status, by choice he chose a solitary, asocial existence.

But let Rossini himself tell you what it was like to come face to face with Beethoven, just as he described it to

Wagner in Paris in 1860:

"As I went up the staircase that led to the poor apartment in which the great man lived, I had difficulty in controlling my emotions. When the door opened, I found myself in a kind of den as dirty as it was in a dreadful state of disorder. I remember above all that the ceiling, directly under the roof, was criss-crossed with cracks, through which the rain must have poured in.

"The portraits we have of Beethoven convey his overall physiognomy quite well. But what no etcher's tool could express is the indefinable sadness that permeated all his features, whilst under thick eyebrows burned, as in the depth of caves, eyes which though small, seemed to burn right through one. His voice was soft and ever so slightly veiled.

"When we first entered, he paid no attention to us, but for some moments remained bent over a piece of printed music, which he was correcting. Then, raising his head, he said to me brusquely in Italian that was comprehensible enough: 'Ah! Rossini, you are the composer of *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*? I congratulate you; it is an excellent *opera buffa*; I read it with pleasure, and it delights me. It will be played as long as Italian opera exits. Never try to do anything but *opera buffa*; wanting to succeed in another genre would be trying to force your destiny.'

"Carpani [Giuseppe, the Austrian Imperial Poet Laureate, who arranged the meeting between the two composers], who was with me—you must understand that he wrote out the words, and in German, there being no other way to pursue the conversation with Beethoven, whose words Carpani translated for me one after the other—interrupted immediately: 'But Maestro Rossini has already composed a large number of *opera seria* scores: *Tancredi*, *Otello*, *Mosè*; I sent them to you not long ago and suggested you examine them.'

"'In fact, I have looked through them,' Beethoven replied. 'But look, *opera seria*—that's not the Italians' nature. They don't have enough musical science to deal with true

---

John Ardoin is music critic of The Dallas Morning News and author of  
*The Callas Legacy* and *Callas at Juilliard*.



drama; and how could they acquire it in Italy? In *opera buffa*, he went on, 'nobody would have the wit to match you, you Italians. Your language and your vivacity of temperament destine you for it.

"Look at Cimarosa: how superior the comic part of his operas is to all the rest! It's the same with Pergolesi. You Italians, you make a great thing of his religious music, I know. I agree that there is very touching feeling in his *Stabat Mater*; but its form lacks variety....' Then, wishing me a good performance and success for *Zelmira*, he got up, led us to the door, and said to me again: 'Above all, make a lot of *Barbers*.'

"Going down that ramshackle staircase, I felt such a painful impression of my visit to that great man—thinking of that destitution, that privation—that I couldn't hold back my tears. 'Ah!' Carpani said, 'that's the way he wants it. He is a misanthrope, morose, and doesn't know how to hold on to a single friendship.'"

Years later in Paris, Rossini told the Viennese critic Eduard Hanslick that "The visit did not last very long, for conversation with Beethoven was nothing less than painful. His hearing was especially difficult on that day, and in spite of my shouting very loudly, he was unable to understand me."

Rossini, however, seems not to have been too bloodied by what Wagner termed the "blow from the lion." In fact, he tended to agree with Beethoven:

"To tell you the truth, I really felt more aptitude for *opera buffa*. I preferred to treat comic rather than serious subjects. But I never had a choice among librettos. I can't tell you how many times it happened that at first I received only parts of the scenario, an act at a time, for which I had to compose the music without knowing what followed...I had to do it to earn a living for my father, my mother and my grandmother."

Rossini had heard string quartets by Beethoven in Milan and also knew some of his piano works. But in Vienna he attended for the first time a performance of one of his symphonies, the *Eroica*. "That music bowled me over," Rossini told Wagner. "I only had one thought: to meet

*Continued on page 47*

*Rossini in a lithograph made by L. Dupré in 1829, the year of the premiere of Guillaume Tell.*

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CAROL VANESS

Soprano **Carol Vaness** sings her first Mathilde in the Company premiere of *Guillaume Tell*. A first-place winner in the 1976 San Francisco Opera Auditions, she has had a close association with the Company since then. She was an Affiliate Artist for two years in the San Francisco/Affiliate Artists-Opera Program, during which time she appeared as Vitellia in Mozart's *Titus* and Cleopatra in *Julius Caesar* for Spring Opera Theater. She made her 1977 Company debut as the Priestess in *Aida* and appeared that same season in *Turandot* and *I Puritani*. During the 1978 season Miss Vaness sang Mimì in the English-language performances of *La Bohème*. She has since been seen on the stage of the War Memorial as Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* (1981), Blanche in *Dialogues of the Carmelites* (1982), as guest soloist at the Kurt Herbert Adler Memorial Concert in 1988, and as Violetta in *La Traviata* last fall. A leading artist at the Metropolitan Opera, her debut was as Armida in Handel's *Rinaldo* during the company's 100th anniversary season. This was followed by acclaimed performances as Vitellia in *La Clemenza di Tito*, Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*, Tatyana in *Eugene Onegin*, the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Elettra in *Idomeneo*, Marguerite in *Faust*, Rosalinde in *Die Fledermaus*, in the title role of *Manon*, and as Donna Anna, which was also the role of her debut at the Glyndebourne Festival, Munich State Opera, Deutsche Oper Berlin, and the Vienna State Opera, among other companies. Additional debuts include Nedda in *Pagliacci* at the Paris Opera; Mimì in *La Bohème* at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden; Marguerite in *Faust* at the Rome Opera; and her debut at Milan's La Scala as Elettra in *Idomeneo* on the opening night of the 1990 season. She made her Salzburg Festival debut on the opening night of the 1988 season in a new production of *La Clemenza di Tito*, and has returned each season since, adding Mozart's Donna Elvira to her repertoire for the 1990 Festival. In demand as a concert soloist, the San Diego native has sung with the major orchestras of the world including the Philadelphia Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra, American Symphony, Seattle Symphony, Boston Symphony, Bavarian Radio Orchestra, and the English Chamber Orchestra. She is a veteran of numerous television appearances whose growing discogra-



JANET WILLIAMS

phy includes two complete recordings of *Don Giovanni* (as Donna Anna under Bernard Haitink and as Donna Elvira under Riccardo Muti), as well as *Così fan tutte*, two solo albums of Mozart and Verdi arias, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and *Missa Solemnis*, Rossini's *Stabat Mater*, and an album of Haydn masses. Miss Vaness will return to San Francisco Opera this fall as Elisabetta in *Don Carlo*, and will sing all three heroines in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* to open the Metropolitan Opera's 1992-93 season.

Soprano **Janet Williams** appears as Jemmy in *Guillaume Tell* and Elvira in *L'Italiana in Algeri*. She made her 1988 San Francisco Opera debut as Despina in *Così fan tutte* when she stepped in on short notice to replace an ailing colleague. She was also heard that season in *Parsifal* and as Musetta in the student/family performances of *La Bohème*. She appeared here in 1989 as Nannetta in the family performance of *Die Fledermaus*, Amore in *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria*, and was applauded here last summer as Despina. 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. For the Opera Center, she has also performed as soloist in *Carmina Burana*, and sang Madame Silverpeal in *The Impresario*. She has appeared with the Budapest State Opera Orchestra and several U.S. orchestras as soloist in Bach's B Minor Mass, Handel's *Messiah*, Haydn's *The Seasons*, 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 presentation of Handel's *Giustino* and, in her European debut, Echo in *Ariadne auf Naxos* with the Lyons Opera, as well as appearing in Schönberg's *Moses und Aron* in Lyons. Additional engagements include her Michigan Opera Theatre debut as Gretel in *Hansel and Gretel*, *Roméo et Juliette* with the Detroit Symphony, Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte* at Wolf Trap, Blondchen in *The*



SANDRA WALKER

*Abduction from the Seraglio* with the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, and debuts at the Opéra de Nice as Elise in *Il Re Pastore* and at the Miami Opera as Despina. Last year she was a Schwabacher Debut Recitalist, recorded the *Messiah* with the Philharmonia Baroque conducted by Nicholas McGegan, and appeared at the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival in *Bastien und Bastienne* under the baton of Maestro McGegan. Her most recent assignments include Rezia in Gluck's *La rencontre imprévue* at Ireland's Wexford Festival, Sister Genovieffa in *Suor Angelica* and Nella in *Gianni Schicchi* for her Dallas Opera debut, Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* in Lyons, Aennchen in *Der Freischütz* with Washington Concert Opera, and a recording of Cimarosa's *Il Matrimonio Segreto*. Upcoming engagements include a debut at the Berlin Staatsoper singing Pamina, Blondchen, Despina, and Cleopatra in Graun's *Cleopatra e Cesare*, her first appearance at the Opéra de Bastille in Paris as Oscar in *Un Ballo in Maschera*, and performances in Avignon, Seville, Salzburg and Brussels singing Mozart concert arias. Miss Williams is a native of Detroit and a graduate of Indiana University, where she earned a Master of Music degree in Voice.

Mezzo-soprano **Sandra Walker** appears as Hedwige in *Guillaume Tell*. 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*, in 1989 as Bradamante in *Orlando Furioso*, and in 1990 as Flosshilde in the *Ring* cycle. 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), and returned to the Met during the 1988-89 season as Olga in *Eugene Onegin* and Maddalena in *Rigoletto*. Based in Germany until 1989, she 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*



TIMOTHY NOBLE

*Euridice*, Ottavia in *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, Judith in *Bluebeard's Castle*, Dorabella in *Così fan tutte*, Dame Quickly in *Falstaff*, and Ramiro in *La Finta Giardiniera*. Prior to her move to Europe, Miss Walker was a leading artist with the New York City Opera for six seasons, appearing with that company as Desideria in *The Saint of Bleeker Street*, Marchesa in *The Voice of Ariadne*, Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly*, and in the title role of *Carmen*. She has appeared with virtually all the major U.S. opera companies including those in Chicago, Houston, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., and Santa Fe. Her South American debut was in the title role of *Carmen* at the Teatro Colón in Bogotá, Colombia, and her European debut was as Lucretia in *The Rape of Lucretia* in Spoleto, Italy. Highlights of recent seasons include her Rome debut with the Santa Cecilia Orchestra in Prokofiev's *Alexander Nevsky* under the baton of Mstislav Rostropovich, Berlioz's *Romeo and Juliet* in Paris, the world premiere of Hans Zender's *Stephen Climax* (in which she created the role of Bella) in Frankfurt, Dukas's *Ariane et Barbe-Bleue* with the Netherlands Opera, *Eugene Onegin* in Chicago, *Falstaff* in Calgary, and *Un Ballo in Maschera* in Winnipeg. Miss Walker has also 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 San Francisco Opera's 1989 production of *Orlando Furioso*. Future assignments include a recording of the *Ring* cycle with the Cleveland Orchestra, *Eugene Onegin* in Toulouse, as well as concert appearances with the San Francisco Symphony, Houston Symphony, and in Lisbon, Portugal.

American baritone Timothy Noble appears in the title role of the Company premiere of *Guillaume Tell*. He made his Spring Opera Theater debut in 1981 as Agamemnon in John Eaton's *The Cry of Clytemnestra*, the role he created for the work's world premiere with the Brooklyn Philharmonia. He made his San Francisco Opera debut as the Duke of Albany in the 1981 American premiere of Reimann's *Lear* (repeating the assignment in 1985) and has since sung numerous roles here, including

the title role of *Macbeth*, Count Tomsy in *The Queen of Spades*, the title role in the family performance of *Falstaff*, Amonasro in *Aida* and, most recently in 1990, Tonio in *Pagliacci* and Shaklovity in *Khovanshchina*. The Indiana native created roles in the premieres of two additional Eaton operas: Robespierre in *Danton and Robespierre* and Prospero in *The Tempest* with Santa Fe Opera. He made his Metropolitan Opera debut in 1988 as Shaklovity, and has returned to the Met as Michele in *Il Tabarro*, Albert in *Werther*, Peter in *Hansel and Gretel*, Leporello in *Don Giovanni*, and as Amonasro. Noble has sung the title role of *Simon Boccanegra* in concert performances conducted by Georg Solti in Frankfurt and Stuttgart, and also in a new production at the Glyndebourne Festival directed by Peter Hall and conducted by Bernard Haitink. His other Verdi portrayals include the title role of *Falstaff* with the Netherlands Opera and Houston Grand Opera, Germont in *La Traviata* at Glyndebourne and the Opéra-Comique, Stankar in *Stiffelio* at La Fenice in Venice, and Posa in *Don Carlo* with the Dallas Opera. Another notable role in his repertoire is Jack Rance in *La Fanciulla del West*, which he sang last season at the Lyric Opera of Chicago and in a new production at Santa Fe Opera. Other recent successes include Michele and Gianni Schicchi in Puccini's *Il Trittico* at the Dallas Opera, Tonio for the Washington Opera, and the title role of *Falstaff* for the Canadian Opera Company. Future engagements include Amonasro at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Alfio in *Cavalleria Rusticana* at the Met, a concert version of *Rigoletto* with the Minnesota Orchestra, and Scarpia in *Tosca* in Toronto and San Francisco. He will also appear as Christopher Columbus in the world premiere of *The Voyage* by Philip Glass, commissioned by the Metropolitan Opera in honor of the Columbus quinquennial. In addition to numerous concert appearances, he has also recently recorded the role of Professor Harold Hill in *The Music Man*, as well as Benjamin in Marc Blitzstein's *Regina*. Noble received his musical education at Indiana University, where his teacher and coach was the late world-renowned bass, Nicola Rossi-Lemeni.

Tenor Chris Merritt, who made his 1988 San Francisco Opera debut as Paolo Erisso in the U.S. premiere of Rossini's *Maometto II*, returns to sing one of his most celebrated roles, Arnold Melchthal in the Company's first mounting of



CHRIS MERRITT

*Guillaume Tell*. A graduate of Oklahoma State University, he has by now become one of the leading interpreters of the tenor bel canto repertoire, with particular affinity for the music of Rossini. In addition to appearing at the major opera houses and festivals of the world, numerous new productions are mounted for him, and Milan's La Scala invited him to open two consecutive seasons — 1988-89 with *William Tell* and 1989-90 with Verdi's *Sicilian Vespers*. He thus became not only the first American tenor to open La Scala in 39 years, but the first in its history to open the season for two consecutive years. Merritt's huge success in Europe was achieved without extensive U.S. exposure: he sang only one season with the New York City Opera in their 1981 production of *I Puritani*. Since returning to America, he has been acclaimed in *Tancredi* in Los Angeles and Chicago, opened the Lyric Opera of Chicago's 1990-91 season in Gluck's *Alceste*, and made his Metropolitan Opera debut in a new production of *Semiramide*. Most recently, he was heard in a series of concerts in Japan, and appeared in *I Puritani* at Chicago's Lyric Opera. He then opened the seasons at the Teatro San Carlo in Naples with *Elisabetta*, *Regina d'Inghilterra*, and at Verona's Teatro Filarmónico with *William Tell*. Earlier this year he sang in the "Live from Lincoln Center" Rossini Gala which was televised nationally, appeared in concert in Paris, and returned to London's Covent Garden in *Guillaume Tell*. Future assignments include Rossini's *Stabat Mater* with the Philadelphia Orchestra led by Riccardo Muti, *La Donna del Lago* at La Scala, and a concert of Rossini cantatas with Rome's Accademia di Santa Cecilia conducted by Riccardo Chailly. He ends the season at the Rossini Opera Festival in *Il Viaggio a Reims* under the baton of Claudio Abbado. Merritt's list of recordings includes Rossini's *Ermione*, *Stabat Mater*, *William Tell*, *Armida*, *Zelmira* and *Bianca e Falliero*; Donizetti's *Emilia di Liverpool* and *L'Elisir d'Amore*; Glinka's *Ivan Susanin*; Bellini's *I Puritani*; and *Sicilian Vespers*. Upcoming releases include *Faust*, *Il Trovatore*, *Tancredi*, and several solo recital albums. He can also be seen in a new motion picture, *Music in May*, in which, along with actor Malcolm McDowell, he plays the leading role of a temperamental tenor.

Continued on page 43

This production was underwritten by a generous gift from Herman J. Miller and Edward J. Clark.

*New Production*

*San Francisco Opera Premiere*

Opera in three acts by GIOACHINO ROSSINI

Libretto by ÉTIENNE DE JOUY, HIPPOLYTE BIS, and ARMAND MARRAST

After the play *Wilhelm Tell* by FRIEDRICH VON SCHILLER

(Critical edition by Elizabeth C. Bartlet, Fondazione Rossini Pesaro, in cooperation with G. Ricordi & Co., S.p.A., Milan.)

# Guillaume Tell

(in French)

## Conductor

Donald Runnicles

## Production

Lotfi Mansouri

## Set Designer

Gerard Howland\*\*

## Costume Designer

Liz da Costa\*\*

## Lighting Designer

Thomas J. Munn

## Chorus Director

Ian Robertson

## Choreographer

Robert Ray

## Assistant to Maestro Runnicles

Patrick Summers

## Musical Preparation

Peter Grunberg

Susanna Lemberskaya

Bryndon Hassman

Svetlana Gorzhevskaya

Philip Eisenberg

## Prompter

Philip Eisenberg

## Assistant Stage Directors

Peter McClintock

Paula Suozzi

## Stage Manager

Gretchen Mueller

## Scenery constructed in

San Francisco Opera Scenic Studios

## Costumes from the

Royal Opera, Covent Garden

## First performance:

Paris, August 3, 1829

SATURDAY, MAY 30 AT 7:00

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 3 AT 7:00

SATURDAY, JUNE 6 AT 7:00

THURSDAY, JUNE 11 AT 7:00

SUNDAY, JUNE 14 AT 1:00

## CAST

(in order of appearance)

*Ruodi, a fisherman* Jorge Lopez-Yañez  
(May 30; June 3)  
Craig Estep  
(June 6, 11, 14)

*Guillaume Tell, Swiss patriot* Timothy Noble

*Jemmy, Tell's son* Janet Williams

*Hedwige, Tell's wife* Sandra Walker

*Arnold Melcthal, Swiss patriot* Chris Merritt

*Melcthal, Arnold's father* Dale Travis

*Leuthold, a shepherd* Philip Skinner

*Rodolphe, captain in Gessler's guard* Euro Nava\*+

*A huntsman* Hector Vasquez+

*Mathilde, Princess of the  
House of Hapsburg* Carol Vaness

*Walter Fürst, Swiss patriot* Jeffrey Wells\*

*Gessler, Austrian governor of the Swiss  
states of Schwyz and Uri* Peter Rose

*Knights, hunters, ladies, soldiers, guards*

Corps de ballet

\*\*United States opera debut \*San Francisco Opera debut +1992 Adler Fellow

TIME AND PLACE: Fourteenth century Switzerland

ACT I At Bürglen on Lake Lucerne in the  
canton of Uri

INTERMISSION

ACT II The heights of Rütli

INTERMISSION

ACT III Scene 1: A ruined chapel near Gessler's palace  
Scene 2: The main square at Altdorf  
Scene 3: At the burned remains of Melcthal's  
house  
Scene 4: On the edge of the lake

Supertitles by Christopher Bergen, San Francisco Opera.

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

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

*The performance will last approximately four and one-half hours.*

# Guillaume Tell / Synopsis

## ACT I

Guillaume (William) Tell, a Swiss patriot, his wife Hedwige, and some of their neighbors are working on the land and on various family pursuits; others are decorating three arbors destined for the brides and grooms of a triple wedding to be celebrated as soon as the day's work is over. Jemmy, Tell's son, is practicing with his bow and arrows. But Tell is in low spirits, unable to forget the thought of foreign subjection under which they all live. Into the scene comes Arnold, a young Swiss in the service of the Austrian garrison, and his father Melcthal, who as a respected patriarch is to preside over the ceremony and give his blessing to the happy couples. When the old man expresses his disappointment in his son's disinterest in marriage, it is Arnold's turn to become uneasy, for he cannot reveal his secret love for Mathilde, Princess of the Austrian ruling house, whose life he had once saved from an avalanche. He tries to leave the gathering, but is stopped by Tell, who, counting on Arnold's loyalty, is assured that his friend will join the conspirators when the time comes for insurrection. The wedding couples are brought in and the ceremony begins, to the distant sound of a hunt. As the sound of the horns grows nearer, Arnold succeeds in escaping, noticed by Tell only after he has gone. Tell decides to follow him and keep watch on his movements, leaving it to Hedwige to supervise the festivities. These include, besides singing and dancing, an archery contest that is won by Jemmy. The joyful atmosphere is suddenly interrupted when a shepherd, Leuthold, staggers toward them in obvious distress. He is being chased, he tells them, by the soldiers of the Austrian governor, Gessler, one of whom he has killed while protecting his daughter's honor. He pleads with the fisherman Ruodi to row him to safety on the opposite bank. But Ruodi refuses—the dangers are too great. Tell intervenes and gets Leuthold into the boat, rowing into the rocky torrent just as Gessler's soldiers, under the command of Rodolphe, come into sight. With Tell's aid, the shepherd escapes. Despite threats, the peasants refuse to divulge the name of the man who has rowed the "murderer" to safety. But the last word is with the soldiers, who seize old Melcthal and successfully prevent all attempts at rescue.

## ACT II

A hunting party, which includes Mathilde and her companions, arrives on the heights of Rütli, overlooking the lake. They halt for refreshments and praise the glories of the chase before continuing their journey home. When they depart, Mathilde lingers behind. In love with Arnold, she muses on how she prefers a simple life with her beloved to the luxury of her father's palace. When Arnold appears, the lovers passionately greet each other and curse the destiny that keeps them apart. Mathilde departs as Tell and another Swiss patriot, Walter Fürst, come to inform Arnold that his father has been killed at the hands of Gessler's men. Arnold's thoughts turn to vengeance. The three patriots vow to overthrow Gessler and free Switzerland. Almost at once a contingent of men from the cantons of Unterwalden, Schwyz and Uri emerge from the forest. The Swiss patriots, inspired by a rousing speech from William Tell, swear to throw off the Austrian yoke.

## ACT III

**Scene 1**—At a ruined chapel near Gessler's palace, Arnold comes to bid farewell to his beloved Mathilde. He breaks the news to her of his father's death at Gessler's hands; he must renounce her and stay to take revenge. Sadly, they both recognize that, for the time being at least, their love must be forgotten.

**Scene 2**—At the main square at Altdorf, preparations are in hand for a festival arranged by Gessler in celebration of a hundred years of Austrian rule in Switzerland. A monument, or "trophy," bearing his arms has been erected. Angered by the undercurrent of hatred among the crowd, Gessler humiliates the Swiss by

commanding them to pass before the trophy and bow to the symbol of Austrian rule. Only after he has watched this degrading spectacle does he allow the festivities to begin. Men and women from the Tyrol are made to dance for his gratification. To the indignation of the crowd, the women are forced by Gessler's soldiers to dance with them. At the end of the dance, all present prostrate themselves before the monument except Tell and his son Jemmy, who remain standing. Tell goes so far as to defy Gessler to his face. This boldness allows Rodolphe to recognize Tell as the man who had helped the shepherd Leuthold to escape. As Tell is seized, he orders his son to escape and see that the signal beacons for the uprising are lit. But Gessler holds the boy back: the sight of Tell's affection for his son has given him an idea for revenge. Taking an apple, he commands that it be placed on Jemmy's head. If Tell wishes to save his son's life, let him shoot the apple from Jemmy's head with a single arrow. Tell begs his son to remain still and put his trust in God. Tell calls for his weapons to be returned to him. He selects two arrows from his quiver, concealing the second of them, unnoticed, in his garments. He takes aim, and succeeds. The apple falls safely away to the joy of the crowd and the rage of Gessler and his men. Tell bitterly informs the governor that, had he missed his target and hurt his son, he would have sent a second arrow into Gessler's heart. The tyrant orders Tell to be seized and put in chains. Suddenly Mathilde, alerted by her pages, arrives from the castle and is appalled to learn of Gessler's plans for his captives. He will not have the boy, she orders: in the Emperor's name she will protect him. Gessler accepts the situation but, he announces, Tell shall be taken away that evening to the castle at Küsnacht, where he will be tortured and killed. He remains deaf to appeals for mercy as his men hail their governor and the people curse him.

**Scene 3**—Arnold has come to pay a final visit to his birthplace. As he recalls the happy days of his youth, he is interrupted by the arrival of his companions who inform him of Tell's arrest. He must be rescued, but they have no weapons. Arnold shows them a cache of arms hidden by his father and Tell for the day of insurrection. With Arnold at their head, to fervent cries of "Victory or death," they set upon their mission.

**Scene 4**—On the edge of Lake Lucerne, the distraught Hedwige announces to her neighbors that she is off to find Gessler: what is life to her now that she no longer has a husband or son? Jemmy runs in, closely followed by Mathilde, who returns the boy to his mother. Impressed by Jemmy's courage, Mathilde announces that she has decided to come and live with them and to offer herself as hostage for Tell. Mathilde and Jemmy also bring the news that Tell is no longer in Altdorf, but at this moment is being ferried across the water to his imprisonment—alarming news in view of an approaching storm. Jemmy, suddenly remembering his father's instruction to light the beacon as a signal for insurrection, rushes off to do so. As the storm breaks, Hedwige, joined by the others, offers a prayer for her husband's safety. Leuthold appears and tells the people to follow him. The boat carrying Tell and his captors is coming ashore with Tell at the helm. His hands have been freed since he is the only one capable of controlling the boat. Tell staggers ashore and is told by Jemmy that for lack of any other signal, he has set their own house on fire—but he has saved his father's crossbow. Now, Tell announces, he is ready for Gessler! As the tyrant comes into view, Tell shoots an arrow which finds its mark. Attracted by the fire, Walter and his fellow patriots enter, hunting for Gessler, only to be told that the tyrant's body is in the lake. They are followed by Arnold and the rest of the patriots, proudly bearing the flag that had flown over the castle at Altdorf. Victory seems assured. As the storm clears, the patriots sing a hymn of joy—a heartfelt prayer that the reign of liberty may now begin once more.

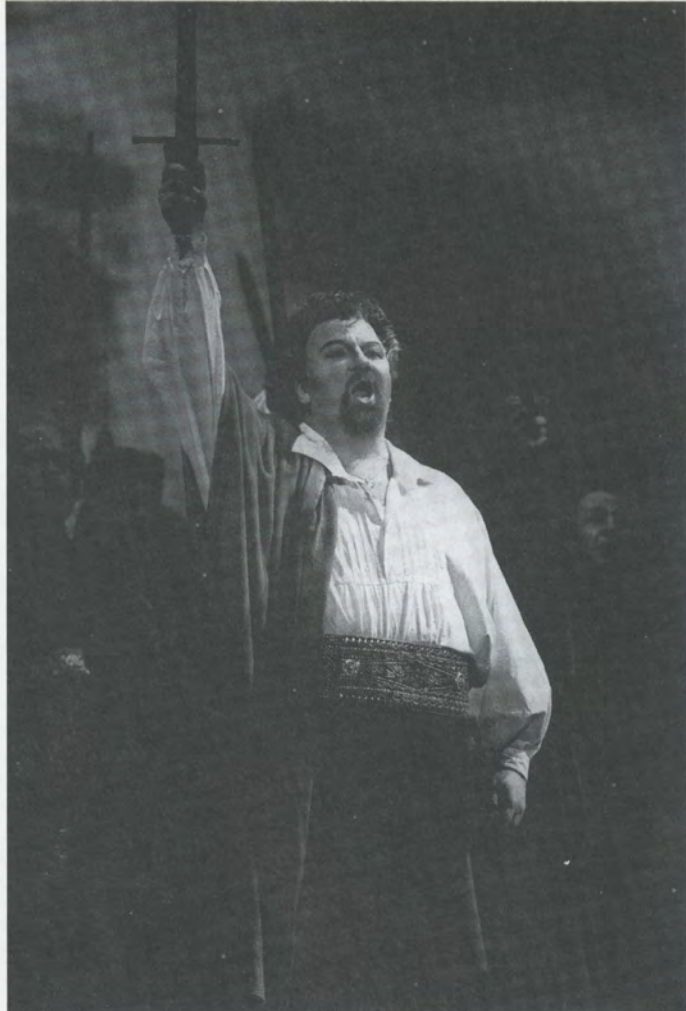
# Guillaume Tell

Photos taken in rehearsal by Marty Sohl

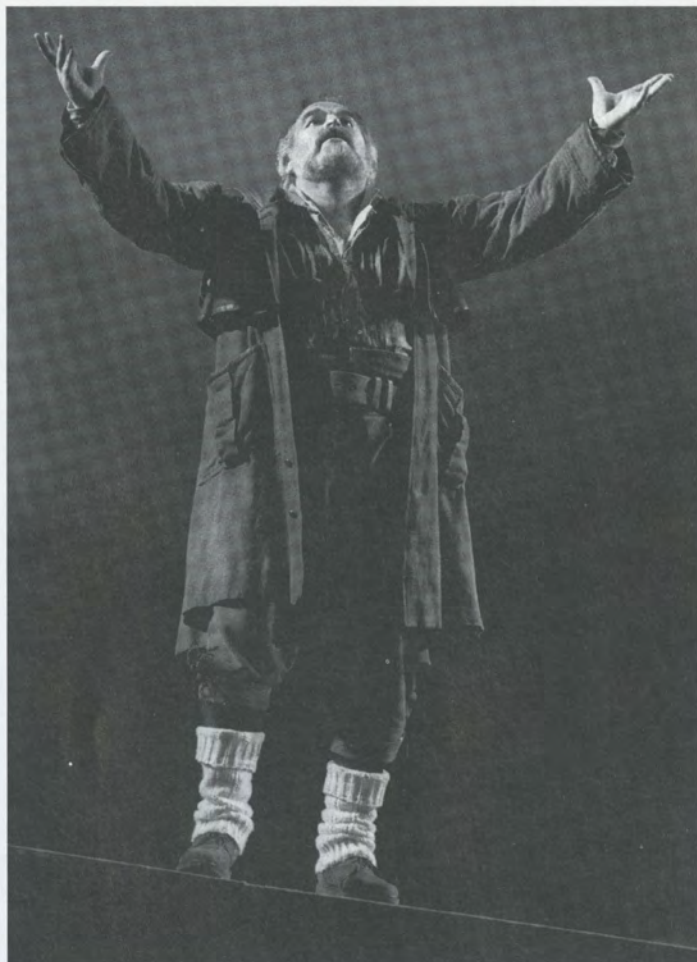
*Timothy Noble, Janet Williams*

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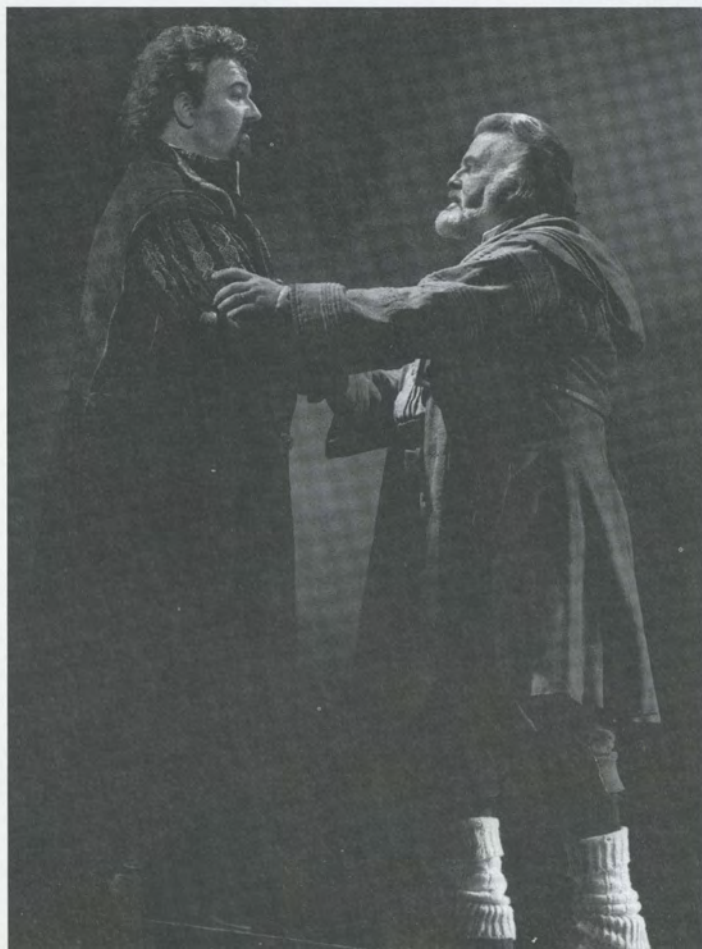
*Chris Merritt, Men of the San Francisco Opera Chorus*

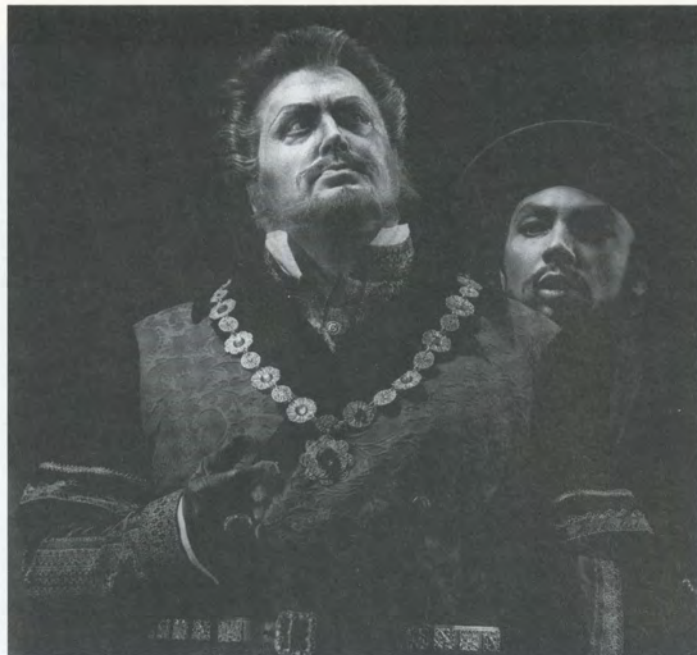


*Timothy Noble*

*Chris Merritt, Timothy Noble*

*Chris Merritt, Carol Vaness*





*Peter Rose, Euro Nava*



*Jeffrey Wells*



*Philip Skinner*

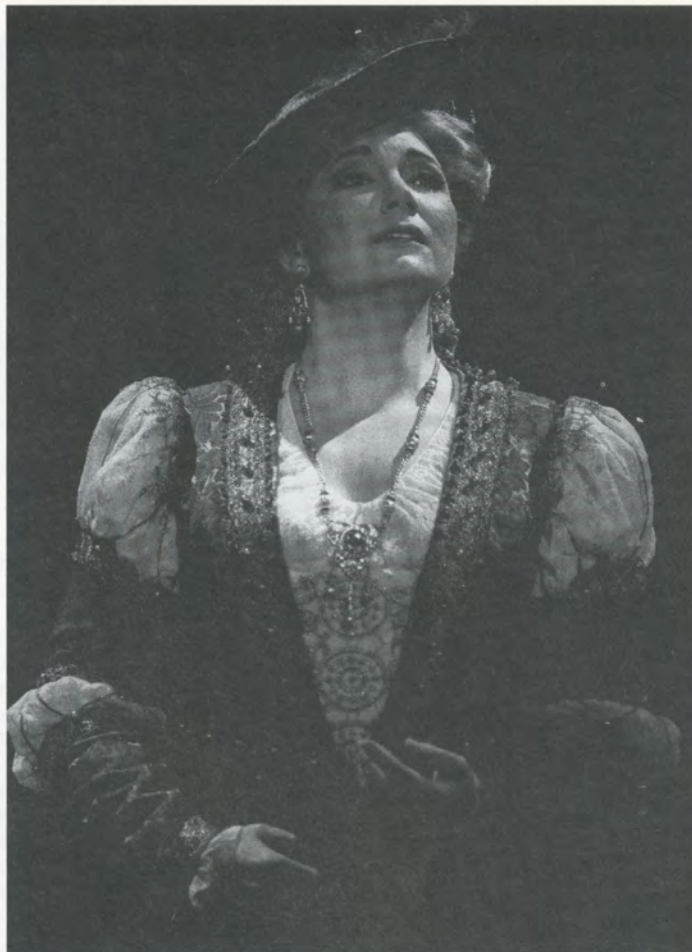


*Dale Travis*



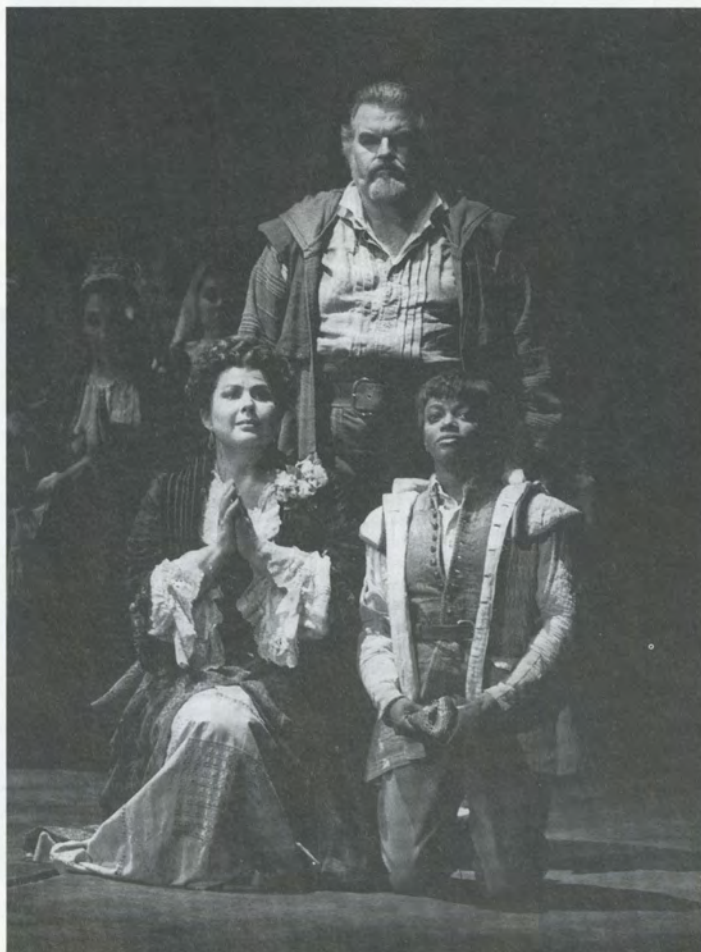
*Craig Estep*

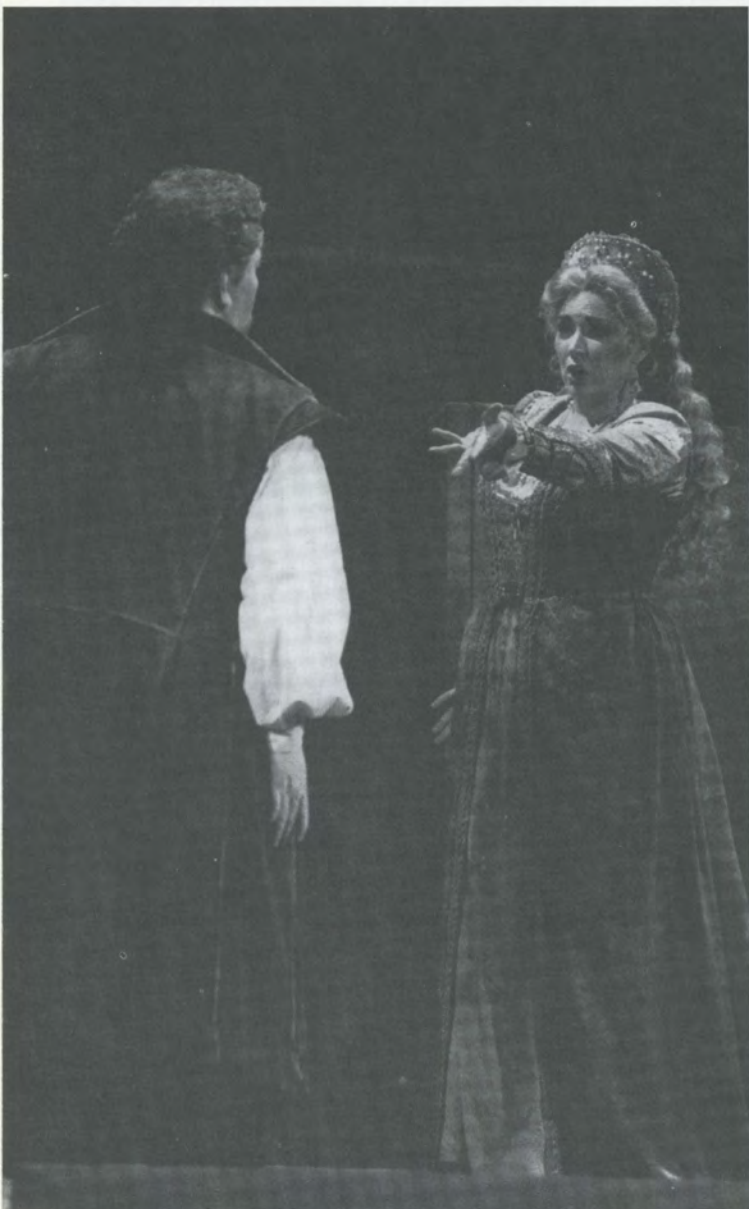
*Members of the Corps de Ballet*



*Carol Vaness*

*Timothy Noble, Sandra Walker, Janet Williams*



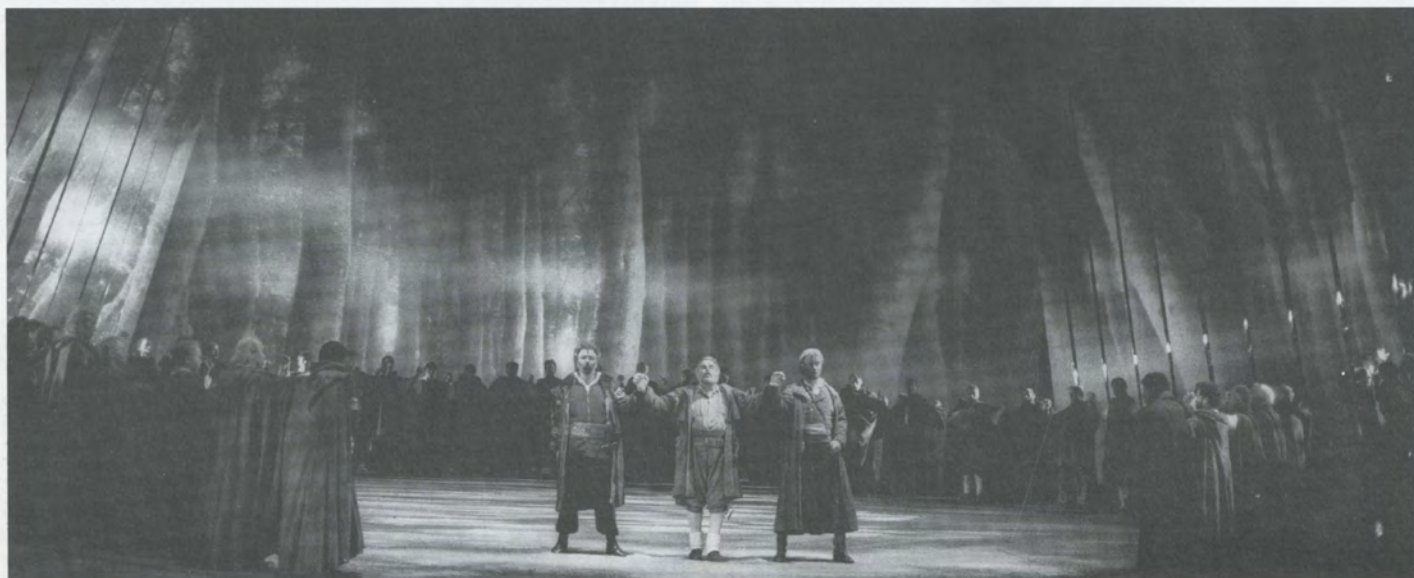


*Chris Merritt, Carol Vaness*



*Janet Williams, Timothy Noble*

*Chris Merritt, Timothy Noble, Jeffrey Wells, Men of the San Francisco Opera Chorus.*





PETER ROSE

Continued from page 36

Bass **Peter Rose** returns to San Francisco Opera this summer as Gessler in *Guillaume Tell* and Don Basilio in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*. He made his first operatic appearance in the United States with the Company last fall as the Commendatore in *Don Giovanni*, a role he also sang at the Glyndebourne Festival under the baton of San Francisco Opera's Music Director, Donald Runnicles. Born in Canterbury, England, he studied music at the University of East Anglia, the Guildhall School of Music, and at the National Opera Studio. After winning several prizes, including the 1985 Kathleen Ferrier Memorial Scholarship, he made his operatic debut in 1986 as the Commendatore with the Glyndebourne Festival Opera in Hong Kong. Subsequent roles at Glyndebourne include Osmin in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, Don Inigo in *L'Heure Espagnole*, Basilio in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Publio in *La Clemenza di Tito*, and Trulove in *The Rake's Progress*. From 1986-89, he was principal bass with the Welsh National Opera, where he appeared as Dr. Bartolo in *The Marriage of Figaro*, Prince Gremin in *Eugene Onegin*, the Tutor in *Le Comte Ory*, as well as Osmin and Basilio. He made his Royal Opera House, Covent Garden debut in 1988 as Rochefort in *Anna Bolena* with Joan Sutherland, returning to that company to portray Cadmus in *Semele* and Lodovico in *Otello*. Additional engagements include Narbal in *Les Troyens* for Scottish Opera, the King of Clubs in *The Love For Three Oranges* at the English National Opera, the Commendatore under Zubin Mehta at the Florence May Festival, *The Damnation of Faust* conducted by Georg Solti in Chicago, London and Salzburg, Walter in *Luisa Miller* in Amsterdam, Abimelech in *Samson et Dalila* in Pittsburgh, and Mozart's Requiem with the Chicago Symphony. Future plans include Kecal in *The Bartered Bride* at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, the First Nazarene in *Salome* at the Salzburg Festival, Lodovico at the Théâtre de la Monnaie in Brussels and at Covent Garden, King Marke and Gremin in new productions of *Tristan und Isolde* and *Eugene Onegin* at the Welsh National Opera, Dosifei in *Khovanshchina* at the Hamburg Staatsoper, Ramfis in *Aida* and Hunding in *Die Walküre* at the Berlin Staatsoper, and his debut at the Aix-en-Provence Festival as Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Rose has recorded *The Marriage of Figaro* with Daniel Barenboim and the Berlin



JEFFREY WELLS

Philharmonic, and will record the Commendatore with Maestro Mehta and the Maggio Musicale Orchestra.

American bass-baritone **Jeffrey Wells** makes his first San Francisco Opera appearance as Walter Fürst in *Guillaume Tell* and Fenicio in *Ermione*. His 1988 debut at the Metropolitan Opera as Ferrando in the opening night production of *Il Trovatore* marked him as one of the most promising young artists active today. He first attracted international attention during the 1986-87 season as Assur in *Semiramide* at the Opéra de Nice, and was immediately re-engaged for leading roles in *Les Troyens*, *Guillaume Tell* and *Pique Dame* in Nice, as well as *Guillaume Tell* in Paris. Additional engagements that season included Ferrando in *Il Trovatore* with Washington Opera, Raimondo in *Lucia di Lammermoor* with Canadian Opera and Cleveland Opera, and Timur in *Turandot* with the Baltimore Opera. A bel canto specialist, Wells appeared as Oroveso in *Norma* and as Raimondo in his debut season with the New York City Opera, and also sang Count Rodolfo in *La Sonnambula* with Washington Opera, Basilio in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* with Canadian Opera, and Capellio in the U.S. premiere of Rossini's *Bianca e Falliero* for Miami Opera. He has also appeared at the Spoleto Festivals in the U.S. and Italy as Antony in *Antony and Cleopatra*; at San Diego Opera as Colline in *La Bohème*, Sparafucile in *Rigoletto* and Ferrando; and at the Dallas Opera as Collatinus in *The Rape of Lucretia*. Wells made his British debut at the 1989 Glyndebourne Festival as Nick Shadow in *The Rake's Progress*, and was first seen in Italy at Palermo's Teatro Massimo as John Sorel in *The Consul*. He has appeared on the concert stage in Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle*, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and *Missa Solemnis*, the Verdi Requiem, Haydn's *Creation*, and Mendelssohn's *Die Erste Walpurgisnacht*, a work which he has recorded, in addition to the role of Antony in the Grammy Award-winning recording of Barber's *Antony and Cleopatra*. Recent highlights include *La Bohème*, *Turandot*, *Aida* and *Don Carlo* at the Met, *Don Giovanni* for Washington Opera, *Anna Bolena* in Seattle, *La Forza del Destino* in New Orleans, and *Don Carlo* in Houston. He returns to the Met next season for nine operas, including *La Fanciulla del West*, *Semiramide*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, and *Il Trovatore*.



DALE TRAVIS

Bass-baritone **Dale Travis** appears as Melthal in *Guillaume Tell* and Haly in *L'Italiana in Algeri*. A 1988-89 Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center and a member of the Merola Opera Program in 1986 and '87, the artist is quickly earning a growing reputation as a talented young performer specializing in the character repertoire and has appeared with the Company in numerous roles since his 1988 debut. They include Frank in the Family Performance of *Die Fledermaus*, Don Alfonso in *Così fan tutte* and, last fall, Doctor Grenville in *La Traviata* and the parts of Denisov and General Bennigsen in *War and Peace*. Opera Center credits include Don Alfonso, the three bass roles in *La Bohème* (a production which was also presented in the Peoples Republic of China), and the title role of *Don Pasquale* for Western Opera Theater's 1987-88 tour. Travis has also appeared with Marin Opera, San Jose Opera, the Opera Festival of New Jersey, and at the Carmel Bach Festival, and has sung in concert with the San Francisco Symphony and Sacramento Symphony. He recently appeared as Masetto in *Don Giovanni* and Ottone in Handel's *Agrippina* for the Washington Opera, and made his European debut with the Komische Oper in Berlin as Don Alfonso. Future engagements include his first appearance with Santa Fe Opera in a new production of Hans-Jürgen von Bose's *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers*, Dr. Bartolo in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* for Tulsa Opera, Pistola in *Falstaff* at New Orleans Opera, and a return to the Company this fall for *Andrea Chénier*, *Tosca*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Dulcamara* in the matinee performances of *L'Elisir d'Amore*. Travis was chosen by *Musical America* magazine as a "Young Artist of 1990" in its annual survey of rising talent in the U.S.

**Jorge Lopez-Yañez** appears as a Fisherman in *Guillaume Tell*, Count Almaviva in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and Oreste in *Ermione*. The Mexican tenor made his 1990 San Francisco Opera debut as Alfredo in *Die Fledermaus* and was seen here last fall as Alfredo in *La Traviata*. Since his debut in Hannover in 1988 as the Duke in *Rigoletto*, he has been performing leading roles with important European houses and has been a regular guest at several German opera houses including those in Munich, Frankfurt, Cologne, Düsseldorf and Stuttgart. His busy 1989-90 schedule included *Le Postillon de Longjumeau* and Handel's *Alcina* for the



JORGE LOPEZ-YAÑEZ

Geneva Opera, Fenton in *Falstaff* at the Los Angeles Music Center Opera, his debut with the Lyric Opera of Chicago as Alfred in *Die Fledermaus*, and debuts at the Châtelet in Paris in *Alcina* and at the Cologne Opera as Nemorino in *L'Elisir d'Amore*. He began the 1990-91 season with a return to Europe for various assignments including *La Cenerentola*, *Rigoletto*, and *La Fille du Régiment* in Zurich. The 1991-92 season included debuts with the Canadian Opera, where he opened the season in *La Traviata*, and with the Pittsburgh Opera in *La Cenerentola*. He most recently appeared in *Rigoletto*, *La Bohème*, and *Der Rosenkavalier* in Düsseldorf, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* at the Vienna Staatsoper, *Der Rosenkavalier* at San Diego Opera, and in a Rossini concert in Frankfurt. Future engagements include *Rigoletto* for the Canadian Opera, *La Traviata* for the Sydney Opera, as well as *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and a new production of *I Puritani* at the Vienna Staatsoper. After earning an engineering degree in Mexico, Lopez-Yañez came to the U.S. for vocal studies at California State University in Northridge. He began his professional career with the Los Angeles Music Center Opera, where he sang the Prince in student performances of *La Cenerentola*, and the Long Beach Civic Light Opera, where he gained experience in operetta, appearing in *The Merry Widow* and *The New Moon*. He won second and third prizes, respectively, in the 1985 and 1986 Metropolitan Opera West Coast Regional Auditions and was a finalist in several other competitions, including the San Francisco Opera Auditions and the Zachary Auditions, which awarded him first prize in 1987. The tenor has sung a number of recitals in California and has appeared in concert and on several television programs in Mexico.

Tenor **Craig Estep** appears as a Fisherman in *Guillaume Tell* and Pilade in *Ermione*. A 1990 Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, he made his Company debut in 1989 as Dr. Caius in the family performance of *Falstaff*, and was also seen in *Madama Butterfly* and *Lohengrin*. In 1990, he appeared here as Borsa in *Rigoletto*, the Italian Tenor in *Capriccio*, Alfred in the family performance of *Die Fledermaus*, and Anfimono in *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria*. During last summer's Mozart Festival he was seen as Don Curzio in *Le Nozze di Figaro* and as Il Contino Belfiore in *La Finta*



CRAIG ESTEP

*Giardiniera*, and was here last fall as a French Abbé, Kutuzov's Aide-de-Camp and Gérard in *War and Peace*, Noboru in *Das Verrätene Mere*, and Uldino in *Attila*. A 1987 and 1988 Merola Opera Program participant, Estep sang in *Madame Butterfly* on Western Opera Theater's national tour and in Japan with the Center's Pacific Rim Exchange Program. The tenor traveled to Shanghai in 1988 to sing Spoletta in the first production of *Tosca* ever seen in China. In 1989 he appeared in the Opera Center's Showcase production of Handel's *Giustino*, and was a soloist in the San Francisco Symphony Pops series. Last year he visited Japan and Guam with other Company and Opera Center personnel for a collaborative presentation of *Carmen*. Earlier this year, he made an acclaimed debut with Miami Opera as Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, and was recently seen on national television in the Rossini Bicentennial Celebration from New York's Avery Fisher Hall. Estep will travel to Siena, Italy, later this season to appear in Rossini's rarely performed pasticcio *Ivanhoe*. The North Carolina native has a master's degree in vocal performance and has also sung with the North Carolina Opera, Connecticut Grand Opera, the Charleston Opera, Calgary Opera and Marin Opera.

A 1992 Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, tenor **Euro Nava** makes his first appearance with the Company as Rodolphe in *Guillaume Tell* and Attalo in *Ermione*. The native of Caracas, Venezuela, received his undergraduate degree from the Central University of Venezuela, and continued his graduate studies in opera performance at Philadelphia's Academy of Vocal Arts. His professional appearances in Caracas have included Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni*, Grimoaldo in *Rodelinda*, Arturo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, and Goro in *Madama Butterfly*. Roles at the Vocal Arts Academy include Count Almaviva in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Alfred in *Die Fledermaus*, Belmonte in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, and Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte*. He sang the Podestà in the Opera Center's 1991 Showcase production of *La Finta Giardiniera*, and Alfredo in *La Traviata*, both for the Merola Opera Program and on Western Opera Theater's 1991-92 national tour. Recent appearances include Handel's *Messiah* with the Stockton Symphony and the Reno Chamber Orchestra, as well as



EURO NAVA

the role of Lurcanio in Handel's *Ariodante* for the Opera Center. Nava is the winner of the Alfred Hollander Competition (the national competition of Venezuela), the Carmen Teresa de Hurtado Latin American Competition, the Gargiari Bel Canto Competition at the Academy of Vocal Arts, the Grand Prize of the Greater Buffalo Opera Competition, and the Mario Lanza Competition.



PHILIP SKINNER

In his eighth consecutive season with San Francisco Opera, bass-baritone **Philip Skinner** appears as Leuthold in *Guillaume Tell*. He made his Company debut as Quinault in the 1985 production of *Adriana Lecouvreur*, and has since appeared here in over 20 different operas in such roles as Ferrando in *Il Trovatore*, Méphistophélès in the student/family performances of *Faust*, Colline in the family performance of *La Bohème*, Don Diego in *L'Africaine*, Monterone in *Rigoletto*, Count Horn (Samuele) in *Un Ballo in Maschera*, the Second Armored Man in *The Magic Flute* and, last fall, Baron Douphol in *La Traviata*, Dolokhov in *War and Peace*, Lorenzo in *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*, and Leone in *Attila*. Skinner participated in the 1985 Merola Opera Program and went on to tour with Western Opera Theater in the title role of *Don Giovanni*. He was a 1986-87 Adler Fellow and appeared in several Opera Center Showcase productions. He has sung with Kentucky Opera, Edmonton Opera, Seattle Opera, Canadian Opera Company, the Minnesota Orchestra, the Columbus Symphony, San Jose Symphony, San Francisco Symphony, Atlanta



HECTOR VASQUEZ

Opera, the New York City Opera National Company, Baton Rouge Opera, Sacramento Symphony, Honolulu Symphony, and at the Spoleto and San Antonio festivals. He made an acclaimed debut last year with Houston Grand Opera in the title role of *Le Nozze di Figaro*, and returned to Houston this season as Roucher in *Andrea Chénier*. A 1990 Schwabacher Debut Recitalist, Skinner is the recipient of a London/Sullivan grant from OPERA America.

Baritone **Hector Vasquez**, in his second year as an Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, portrays a Huntsman in *Guillaume Tell* and Fiorello in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*. He made his first appearance with the Company last fall as the Second Madman, Métivier and Belliard in *War and Peace*, Giorgio Germont in the student matinee performances of *La Traviata*, and Le Dancaïre in *Carmen*. As a member of the 1989 Merola Opera Program, he portrayed Escamillo in *Carmen*, a role in repeated during Western Opera Theater's national tour. He returned to the Merola Program in 1990 and appeared as Enrico in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, a role he subsequently sang on WOT's 1990-91 tour. The native of California studied at Fullerton College and the University of Southern California. He has performed at the Berliner Festwochen, the Bach festivals of Los Angeles, Carmel and Long Beach, the music festivals of Aspen, Ojai, Lake Arrowhead and Long Beach, as well as with the Pacific Symphony, Los Angeles Baroque Orchestra, Long Beach Opera, Marin Opera, Los Angeles Philharmonic and the Aspen Opera Theater. Opera Center roles include Bengtsson in Reimann's *The Ghost Sonata* (1990) and, last year, Escamillo in *Carmen* which toured to Guam and Japan, as well as Nardo in *La Finta Giardiniera*. Vasquez will be seen with the Company this fall in *Tosca*, *La Forza del Destino*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Andrea Chénier*.



DONALD RUNNICLES

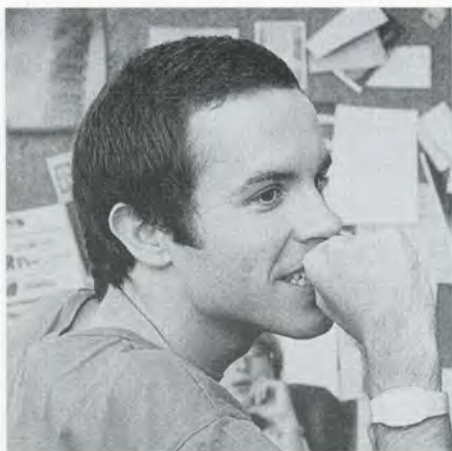
**Donald Runnicles**, in his first conducting assignment in his new capacity of Music Director for San Francisco Opera, leads the Company premiere of *Guillaume Tell*. After studying music at Edinburgh University, St. John's College, Cambridge, and the London Opera Centre, his first professional engagement as répétiteur was with the National Theater in Mannheim, where he made his operatic conducting debut with *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* in 1980 and was made first Kapellmeister in 1984. By the time he left Mannheim in 1987, he had conducted over 40 operas there, including *Fidelio*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Un Ballo in Maschera*, *Don Carlo*, *La Bohème*, *Die Walküre* and *Parsifal*. For the next two years he served as principal conductor at the Hannover Opera, where he led productions of *Tosca*, *Salome*, *Jenůfa*, *Don Giovanni* and *Werther*. Since 1986, Runnicles has been a regular guest at the Hamburg State Opera, where he has conducted a wide range of operas by Mozart, Rossini, Puccini, Bizet, Verdi and Wagner. His most recent assignments in Hamburg include *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, *Don Carlo*, *Der Fliegende Holländer* and *Otello*. Currently the General Music Director of the Städtische Bühnen in Freiburg, his upcoming projects there demonstrate the breadth of his repertoire: *Die Fledermaus*, *Carmen*, *Idomeneo*, *Die Entführung*, *Anna Bolena* and *Ariadne auf Naxos*. He made a highly acclaimed San Francisco Opera debut with two complete performances of Wagner's *Ring* cycle during the summer of 1990. Since then he has been winning international accolades in a series of debuts and guest engagements. He made a triumphant debut at the Glyndebourne Festival last fall leading Sir Peter Hall's production of *Don Giovanni*. He most recently made his Vienna Volksoper debut with *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, and has embarked upon an extensive guest contract with the Vienna State Opera, where he has conducted *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *Don Giovanni*, *La Traviata* and *La Bohème*. Maestro Runnicles's experience at the Bayreuth Festival, where he assisted Georg Solti and Peter Schneider on the *Ring* cycle and James Levine on the centenary production of *Parsifal*, led to his engagement at the Metropolitan Opera, where he made his 1988 debut conducting the three-act version of *Lulu* on five hours' notice. He is scheduled to conduct *Die Zauberflöte* there in early 1993, and this year will return to Bayreuth to open the festi-



LOTFI MANSOURI

val with a new production of *Tannhäuser*. Between operatic assignments, Runnicles maintains a busy schedule of concert appearances, radio productions and tours, and will make his long-awaited American symphonic conducting debut with the Seattle Symphony in November. He will also return to the War Memorial podium this fall for *Boris Godunov*, *Fidelio* and *Don Carlo*.

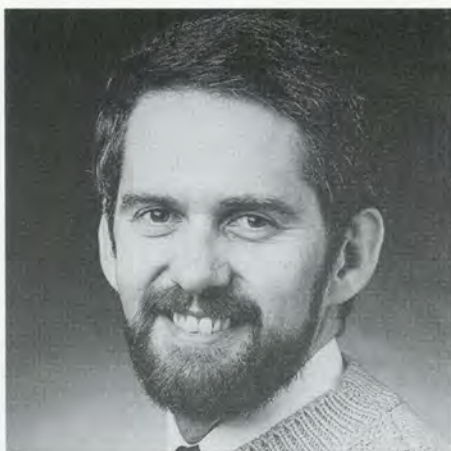
San Francisco Opera General Director **Lotfi Mansouri** conceived and directs the new production of *Guillaume Tell*, a Company premiere. His productions of *Tristan und Isolde* and *Attila* (another SFO premiere) were seen on the War Memorial stage last fall. Born in Iran, he attended college at UCLA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



GERARD HOWLAND

presentations of *Wozzeck* and *Die Fledermaus* in 1990. Recent successes elsewhere include *Anna Bolena* for Seattle Opera, and *Andrea Chénier* at Houston Grand Opera. Next year he travels to Sydney to direct *The Merry Widow* for the Australian Opera. His film credits include opera sequences in *Yes, Giorgio* and the critically praised 1987 film *Moonstruck*.

**Gerard Howland**, set designer for San Francisco Opera's premiere production of *Guillaume Tell*, studied at the English National Opera Design School. He has served as Associate Designer for the Royal Academy and the Royal Shakespeare Company. Among his designs for plays are *Tom Jones* and *The Way of the World* for the Royal Academy, *Henry IV* (Parts 1 & 2), *The Winter's Tale*, *Hyde Park*, *Divine Gossip* and *Scenes from a Marriage* for the Royal Shakespeare Company, and *Major Barbara* for the Chichester Festival. He has also designed a number of plays and musicals for London's West End, as well as for television and film throughout Europe. Howland has designed numerous productions in Germany, including the operas *L'Elisir d'Amore*, *Madama Butterfly*, *La Bohème*, *Jenůfa*, *The Makropulos Case*, *The Magic Flute*, *Gianni Schicchi*, *La Traviata*, *Cardillac* and *Mahagonny*, and such plays as *Andorra*, *Uncle Vanya*, *The Father*, and *Accidental Death of an Anarchist*. His operatic designs in England include *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Pagliacci* for the English National Opera, *Ruddigore* and *The Gondoliers* for Sadler's Wells Opera, *Tosca* for Opera North, and *Ariodante* for the Buxton Festival. Since moving to the Bay Area in 1989, the native of England has designed several productions for the American Conservatory Theatre and is currently designing three projects for the Disney Studios. *Guillaume Tell* marks his first operatic assignment in the United States.



ROBERT RAY

Australian choreographer **Robert Ray**, who made his 1988 San Francisco Opera debut with *L'Africaine*, returns for the Company premiere of *Guillaume Tell*. He received his early training at the Australian Ballet School before joining the London Festival Ballet. With that company he performed throughout Great Britain, Europe and Asia, dancing in all the standard repertoire. He has also danced with the Australian Opera Ballet, Sydney Dance Company (where he began to choreograph), and the West Australian Ballet, where he furthered his choreography. His successful choreography was rewarded with a WA Arts Council Grant and a Myer Foundation Award to study modern dance with Merce Cunningham and composition at the Juilliard School in New York. He also continued his choreography with the Dance Collective, the Joffrey Performing Group, and with his own ensemble of dancers. In 1979, he was appointed the first full-time teacher of modern dance and composition at the Australian Ballet School. His first professional choreographic project was his 1981 *Poems*, which was performed by the Australian Ballet and The Dancers Company. Other projects for the Australian Ballet included *City Dances* (1982), *The Sentimental Bloke* (1985) and, for the Australian Ballet School, *The Nutcracker* (1985). For the Victorian Arts Centre, he choreographed the dances in *The Soldier's Tale*, and created the modern works *Orfeo* and *Metamorphoses* for their Open Mind series. Last year, he directed and choreographed the extravagant *Gift of Life* for the opening of Melbourne Central. His operatic choreography credits include *Hamlet*, *Adriana Lecouvreur*, *The Merry Widow* and *La Belle Hélène* for the Australian Opera and the Victoria State Opera, as well as operas for the Canadian Opera Company, Dallas Opera and the Lyric Opera of Chicago. Ray has received full financial support from both The Australia Council and the Victorian Ministry of the Arts to stage an evening of his own works, *Dances for the Theatre*, at the Malthouse, Melbourne, later this year.



THOMAS J. MUNN

**Thomas J. Munn**, Lighting Director and Design Consultant for San Francisco Opera since 1976, designed the lighting for the Company premiere of *Guillaume Tell* and the new production of *L'Italiana in Algeri*. He has created the lighting and special effects for over 145 productions for the Company, including the highly acclaimed *Ring* cycle, as well as the Mozart Festival productions of *The Magic Flute* and *Così fan tutte* and last fall's presentations of *War and Peace*, *Tristan und Isolde*, *Elektra*, *Das Verratene Meer*, *La Traviata* and *Carmen*. As scenic adviser, he has designed scenery for SFO productions of *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, *Roberto Devereux*, *Pelléas et Mélisande*, *Billy Budd* and *Nabucco*, as well as for last fall's revival of *Don Giovanni*. Munn has designed scenery and lighting for Broadway, Off-Broadway, regional theater, ballet, and films. His television credits include San Francisco Opera productions of *La Gioconda* (for which he received a 1979 Emmy Award), *Samson et Dalila*, *Aida*, *L'Africaine*, *La Bohème*, *Orlando Furioso* and *Mefistofele*. Last year, he toured Japan with the Opera Center production of *Carmen* as scenic supervisor and lighting director. Credits for other companies include *Andrea Chénier* and *Mefistofele* for the Houston Grand Opera, *Madama Butterfly* for the Netherlands Opera, and scenery and lighting for Hartford Ballet's productions of *Coppélia* and *The Nutcracker*. In addition to his many theatrical endeavors, Munn is often engaged as consultant for architectural projects, the Muziektheater in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, being one of his most notable achievements.

## Rossini at the Summit

Continued from page 31

the great genius, to see him, even if only once."

Rossini had at first tried to enlist Antonio Salieri's help in reaching Beethoven, who informed him that he, Salieri, sometimes saw Beethoven "but warned me that because of his [Beethoven's] distrustful and fantastic character, what I was asking for could not be arranged easily."

Incidentally, Rossini, having heard the gossip that Salieri poisoned Mozart, could not resist commenting jokingly one day to his countryman, "It's a lucky thing for Beethoven that, out of an instinct for self-preservation, he avoids having you at meals; for you might well send him wandering in the other world, as you did Mozart." "Do I have the air of a poisoner, then?" Salieri replied. "Oh, no!" I answered. "You have more the air of a real coward."

In his new book on Rossini's life, Alan Kendall points out that Rossini "could not fail to note the contrast between the esteem in which he himself was held [at a banquet given in his honor by Prince Metternich during the visit to Vienna] ... and the condition of Beethoven. He even voiced his opinions there and then, about the way the Court and the aristocracy had treated the great genius of the age, but the response he elicited was the same as the one Carpani had given him: it was entirely Beethoven's fault...."

Beethoven later was more candid about Rossini in his conversation books. There is this entry, for example: "The Bohemians are born musicians. The Italians ought to take them as their models. But what do they have to show for their famous conservatories? Look at their idol, Rossini! If fortune had not given him a pretty talent and pretty melodies by the score, the things that he learned at school would only have provided him with potatoes for his big belly." Perhaps the last word on this encounter may be left to [Robert] Schumann: "The butterfly crossed the path of the eagle, but the latter turned aside so as not to crush it with the beating of his wings."

The other great summit meeting in Rossini's life, the one with Wagner, took place the year before the notorious first production of *Tannhäuser* at the Paris Opéra. By then, Rossini had become the

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Ludwig van Beethoven as he looked in 1823. The engraving was made after a drawing by Martin Tejček.

éminence grise of the age. His approval of anything musical was virtually a must in the Paris theatrical life. He had given up the writing of operas much earlier. In fact the only major work still to come from his pen was the *Petite Messe Solennelle*.

Wagner was brought to Rossini by Edmond Michotte, an amateur composer-

pianist. It is thanks to Michotte that we have a written record of the Rossini-Wagner meeting, a slim volume published in 1906. As Herbert Weinstock, who edited a modern edition of Michotte, puts it, the ninety-page booklet "performs the near miracle of bringing us, across the decay and destruction of more than a century, an approximate transcript of their conversation."

Wagner had come to Paris in January of 1860, in hopes of having his *Tannhäuser*

staged there and in order to conduct a concert of his music at the Théâtre-Italien. It was the capital's first hearing of music from *Der Fliegende Holländer*, *Tannhäuser*, *Lohengrin* and *Tristan und Isolde*. Michotte tells us that "It was the sort of event to arouse Parisian curiosity to a fever because of the violent polemics that had been provoked in the public press by the appearance of Wagner's revolutionary writings concerning his very daring ideas about reforming the music drama. People went in crowds to see the man, to hear his works."

Before Wagner met Rossini he had caricatured him as "A great epicurean, stuffed not with music, but with mortadella." As for Rossini, the story goes that at one of his famous dinner parties the menu listed *Turbot à l'allemande*, but when the fish course arrived, the perplexed guests were served only a sauce. Rossini, mischievously enjoying their embarrassment while gulping down the sauce, said "Alas! At the last moment the fisherman forgot to bring the turbot...Isn't it the same with the music of Wagner? Good sauce, but no turbot!"

Of course, those around Wagner made certain he heard of this quip, and he understandably was reluctant to seek out Rossini. But Michotte convinced him that he would be welcomed cordially, a fact he had previously ascertained from Rossini. So early one morning, Wagner came to Michotte's house, which was near Rossini's. This time, it was the eagle of the day who went calling on the butterfly.

As they were shown in, Rossini greeted Wagner—their conversation was in French—by saying, "Like a new Orpheus, you don't fear to enter this redoubtable precinct." Before Wagner could answer, Rossini continued: "I know that they have thoroughly blackened me in your mind." He then made it clear that he had also been told about some of Wagner's choicer remarks made at Rossini's expense, and added "I am neither Mozart nor Beethoven. Nor do I pretend to be a wise man, but I do hold to being polite and refraining from insulting a musician who, like you...is trying to extend the limits of our art. Those great devils who take pleasure in busying themselves with me should at least grant that, though I lack other merits, I do have some common sense.

"As for slighting your music, I should

have to be familiar with it first; to know it, I should have to hear it in the theater, as only in the theater, and not by the mere reading of the score, it is possible to bring equitable judgment to bear on music intended for the stage....And now that—I hope—all this misunderstanding between us has been dissipated, tell me how you are finding your stay in Paris.”

Thoroughly disarmed, Wagner thanked Rossini for his “friendly words,” and told him he had just played the *Tannhäuser* score for Léon Carvalho, then the stage director of the Paris Opéra adding that “Unhappily, the ill will that has raged against me in the press for so long threatens to take the form of a real cabal...I fear Carvalho may fall under its influence.”

The word “cabal” was like waving a red flag at Rossini, who launched into a recital of his experiences with anti-Rossini factions in his younger years. “It was no different in Vienna,” he continued “when I arrived there in 1822...[Carl Maria von] Weber himself...pursued me relentlessly after the performance of my operas at the Italian court theater.”

“Weber, oh!” Wagner interjected. “I know he was very intolerant. He became intractable above all when it was a question of defending German art...A great genius, and so prematurely dead.” “A great genius certainly,” Rossini agreed, “for being creative and strong within himself, he imitated no one...I didn’t see him in Vienna; but, you see, as a result of those circumstances I saw him later in Paris...”

“I felt an emotion not too unlike the one I had felt earlier upon finding myself in the presence of Beethoven. [Weber was] very pallid, breathless from having climbed my stairs....As soon as he saw me the poor fellow thought it necessary to tell me...that he had been very hard on me in his critical articles on music....‘Look,’ I said, ‘let’s not discuss that. To begin with,’ I added, ‘I’ve never read them; I don’t know German....’

“‘Furthermore,’ I continued, ‘you have done me too much honor by discussing my operas, I who am such a small matter alongside the great geniuses of your country. I want to ask you to let me embrace you; and believe me that if my friendship has any value in your eyes, I offer it to you completely and with all my heart.’”

Rossini went on to tell Wagner that Weber was “in a pitiable state: with livid



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Richard Wagner in a photo taken in 1867.

coloring, emaciated, racked by the consumptive's dry cough...limping, too. He came back to see me a few days later, to ask for some introductions for London, as he was about to go there. I was appalled by the idea of seeing him undertake such a journey. I tried energetically to dissuade him, telling him that he would be committing a crime—suicide!

"'I know,' he answered, 'my life will end there [Weber died three months later]...But I must do it. I must go to stage *Oberon*; my contract obliges me to; I must, I must....' With a broken heart, I embraced that great genius for the last time with the foreboding that I should never see him again. That was only too true. *Povero* Weber.

"But we were discussing cabals....For my part I spat on such attacks—the more they buffeted me, the more I replied with roulades; I fought sobriquets with my triplets, satires with my *pizzicati*; and all that hurly-burly stirred up by those who didn't like them, did not keep me from one less blow on the big drum in my crescendos or prevent me, when it suited me, from horrifying them with one more *felicità* in my finales. Believe me, the fact that you see me wearing a wig does not mean that those [expletive deleted] succeeded in making me lose a single hair from my head."

Wagner then shifted the conversation to Rossini's visit with Beethoven, and af-

ter Rossini had recounted this episode, Wagner said that he was glad that Rossini had not taken Beethoven's advice to write only more *Barbers*, adding that he found in *Otello* and *Mosè* "superior pages that bear the mark, not of improvisation, but of thought-out labor after a concentration of all your mental forces."

"Oh," Rossini commented, "I had facility and lots of instinct. Having to get along without a really thorough musical education...I found in German scores the little that I know....But what is all [I have done] alongside the work of Mozart, of a Haydn? I don't know how to tell you strongly enough how much I admire those masters for that supple science, that certainty which is so natural to them in the art of composing...."

"As for Bach...his is an overwhelming genius. If Beethoven is a prodigy of humanity, Bach is a miracle of God!...How I would like to hear a complete performance of his great [*St. Matthew*] *Passion* before leaving this earth. But that's not to be dreamed of here among the French."

Wagner nodded in agreement, adding that it was Mendelssohn who allowed Germans to know the *Passion*. The mention of Mendelssohn brought an animated response from Rossini:

"I recall with pleasure the good hours I spent in his company at Frankfurt in 1836...How charmed I was to hear him play on the piano...some of his delicious *Songs Without Words*. Then I asked for Bach, plenty of Bach....At first Mendelssohn seemed stupefied by my request. 'How,' he asked, 'does it happen that you, an Italian, love German music so much?' 'I don't love any other kind,' I answered....'As for Italian music, I don't give a damn for it.' "

Wagner admonished Rossini not to underestimate himself, telling him that in *William Tell* he had created a sublime moment with the aria "Sois immobile" where "the very freedom of the singing line, accentuating each word and sustained by the breathing strokes of the violoncellos, reached the highest summits of lyric expression."

Slyly, Rossini asked, "So I made music of the future without knowing it?" To which Wagner replied, "There, Maestro, you made music of all times, and that is the best." □

# A B O U T ROSSINI

By TIMOTHY PFAFF

The Rossini Year, the 1992 international celebration of the 200th anniversary of the birth of Gioachino Rossini, among the most famous and beloved of opera composers, comes at a fortuitous as well as a simply ceremonial time. A generalized perception of Rossini as the savior of Italian opera—the composer who recrafted a floundering form and gave it a direction that far outlasted his personal influence on it—may be a commonplace. But a clear understanding of this complex figure and his goals and achievements—in the area of opera alone—is a relatively recent phenomenon, and by no means a complete one yet. When it comes to appreciating Rossini fully, most everyone still has some work to do. What better time than during a festival?

That myths still cling to "The Swan of Pesaro," as he was sometimes called, seems natural enough in the case of Rossini, whose most active years as a composer are poorly documented in contemporary sources. (The world of Italian opera at the time was a frenetically busy one, as we shall see). As Philip Gossett, one of the pre-eminent Rossini scholars of our time, writes in the beginning of his Rossini article in *The New Grove*, "The fascinating insights into a composer's growth that can be gained from the correspondence of Bellini or Verdi, the interrelations of the composer and his librettists, the aesthetic

MUSÉE DE L'OPÉRA, PARIS



*Gioachino Rossini in an engraving made in 1843 after a painting by Ary Scheffer.*

*Timothy Pfaff is editor of Piano Quarterly and Historical Performance and the West Coast correspondent of London's Financial Times.*



*Rossini is the subject of a marble medallion, carved by H. Chevalier in 1864*

creeds formulated in moments of artistic inspiration, all these are lacking." But routes to a more precise understanding of this fascinating figure—not the least of them the scores themselves (or at least most of them)—are not lacking. What seems particularly fortunate about this celebration coming when it does is that the tools are at hand: the investigators—historians, music scholars, opera producers and musicians—seem inclined toward maximum cooperation in the exciting enterprise; and the audience, its appetite whetted by recent exposure to once obscure scores, (like that of *Maometto II*, which so moved San Francisco audiences in 1988) is hungry for more from this generous but still largely misunderstood genius. Happy birthday, Gioachino!

In fact, Rossini may stand to benefit more from "name-year" exposure than almost any other composer so honored in recent years. Mozart clearly didn't "need" it. Bach, Handel, and Berg didn't need it. Prokofiev, perhaps.

Verdi knew it; witness not only the profound effect Rossini's reworking of Italian opera forms had on his own, even more revolutionary operas, but also his effort to elicit a suitable Requiem on the occasion of the master's death. Mendelssohn knew it, returning from a personal visit with Rossini to write of his "intelligence, vivacity and polish at all times and in every word; ...whoever doesn't think him a genius must hear him hold forth only once, and he'll change his mind immediately." Beethoven, in his Beethovenian way, knew it; at his audience with his Italian counterpart, he encouraged Rossini to write more *Barbers*. Even Wagner knew it. To judge from Edmond Michotte's record of an 1860 meeting between Wagner and Rossini (when the former was in Paris to secure a performance of his *Tannhäuser*), the great German composer, already an admirer of his Italian colleague, left their long conversation marveling at the latter's passion for and understanding of German music, remarking, "I must declare: of all the musicians whom I have met in Paris, *he alone is truly great*." (Not to be misleading, Wagner prefaced that judgment with a more qualified, and, as scholars have come to see, spurious one: "In a word, he was a genius who was led astray by not having been well prepared and not having found the milieu for which his high

creative abilities had designed him.”)

Berlioz knew it; Meyerbeer knew it. Rossini's urbane biographer Stendhal not only knew it but took it as an article of faith and ran with it: “Since the death of Napoleon another has been found who is talked of daily from Moscow to Naples, from London to Vienna, from Paris to Calcutta.”

Now it is for us, ideally in a more measured and intellectually responsible way, to come to know it again and anew. Modern Rossini scholars and opera historians have recognized the greatness of Rossini and his achievement for some time now—or, perhaps more precisely, have rediscovered it, steadily reaching more precise and sophisticated understandings of this brilliant composer and proposing important new critical re-evaluations of both the man and his work. Yet the gap has yet to close between new insights into Rossini and the prevailing public perception of the composer as a tune-spinner and creator of enduring comic masterpieces (and the occasional taxing, if intermittently interesting, *opera seria*).

Perhaps the whole of 1992 will pass without a Rossini revelation as major as the modern premiere of *Il Viaggio a Reims*, one of the two operas of Rossini's maturity (the other being *Ugo, Re d'Italia* of 1824) once thought to be lost. In 1984, years of enterprising detective work and skillfully applied musicology by young American scholar Janet Johnson yielded a reconstruction of *Il Viaggio* that both amazed and delighted the opera-going world (and continues to, by way of Claudio Abbado's bracing recording of it), significantly enlarged our understanding of the composer's output (and experimentation with forms) and started the enormously appealing work on a promising road to full repertory status. But if the right musical and scholarly forces conspire—and audiences open themselves to discovery—the Rossini year augurs to leave us with a more valid and complete understanding of the composer, glad that instead of writing “more *Barbers*,” he composed the operas he did. If a public already kindly disposed to Rossini can grasp the significance of the fact that a legitimate debate still rages over what is the “real” overture to *The Barber*, what may result is not just a new appreciation of the familiar but a rekindled interest in

others of Rossini's 40 operas—as well as the treasure trove of major music in other genres including the songs, sacred choral works, chamber music, salon fare and the impressive anthology of piano pieces.

Born on February 29, 1792 in the small Adriatic city of Pesaro, Rossini was blessed with musical parents both of whom worked in opera, his father as a horn player and his mother as a comprimaria singer. By the age of ten he was studying horn with his father in the family's new home in Lugo—and singing and composition with one Giuseppe Malerbi, a local priest with apparently considerable musical acumen and an impressive collection of scores. By the time of the Rossini family's move to Bologna four years later, the boy's skills as a singer were sufficient to gain him entry into Accademia Filarmonica, and while still an adolescent he was active as a singer, theater harpsichordist and budding composer.

Private studies with Padre Angelo Tesei soon afforded him entrance to the Liceo Musicale, where he continued studies in voice and piano and took up cello and the study of counterpoint, the latter under the Liceo director Padre Stanislao Mattei. Although his interest in counterpoint was alleged by some to be selective, modern scholars see his manifest (if indeed pragmatic) contrapuntal skills—and his devoted, passionate exploration of the music of Mozart and Haydn—as keys to his subsequent success, and ease, in composing rigorously constructed music.

Rossini composed (or had a major hand in composing) his first opera, *Demetrio e Polibio*, during his student years. One is tempted to say that “the rest is history,” but in fact it also is a travelogue. The 34 operas he composed for Italy between 1810 and 1823 (or, between the ages of 18 and 31) were commissioned by theaters throughout the peninsula, the composer extending his powerful influence in Italy via travels too fatiguing for a modern reader to contemplate.

Among the more important cities, predictably, was Venice, a center of Italian operatic life from the genre's very beginning. His real debut as an opera composer was with the one-act *farsa* *La Cambiale di Matrimonio*, commissioned by Venice's Teatro San Moisè in 1810. *La Scala di Seta* (1812) had its premiere in the same theater, as did *L'Occasione Fa il Ladro*

later the same year and *Il Signor Bruschino* the next. In May of 1813 the madcap *L'Italiana in Algeri*, which plays in our festival this summer, opened at the Teatro San Benedetto, which saw the premiere of *Eduardo e Cristina* in 1819. The Teatro La Fenice mounted the now little-known *Sigismondo* in 1814—but also was the first home of two of Rossini's most influential Italian operas, *Tancredi* (1813) and, for the Carnival season of 1823, his last opera for Italy, *Semiramide*.

Gossett calls *Tancredi* “Rossini's first great *opera seria*,” adding that “it exhibits the freshness of first maturity, of first formulated principles. There is little in *Semiramide* whose roots cannot be traced here. Formal procedures in particular, uncertain and tentative in earlier operas, assume the characteristics that were now to dominate Italian opera.” *Semiramide*, written to a libretto by the author of *Tancredi*, Gaetano Rossi (and once again after a tragedy by Voltaire), proved the culmination of Rossini's vigorous experimentation with and development of the forms of *opera seria*. Its ingenious re-forging of the elements of *opera seria* into long, sustained dramatic units—and its reintroduction of overture, arias and duets either missing from or subordinated in the *opere serie* Rossini composed for Naples—prompted Gossett, in a program essay for the Company's 1981 production of the opera, to proclaim it “certainly one of the composer's greatest operas, a work considered by many of his contemporaries to contain the essence of his art.”

Rossini's travels throughout the peninsula chart a map of the operatic Italy of his day. Milan audiences cheered his triumphant *La Pietra del Paragone* at La Scala in 1812, heard revivals of two of his Venetian operas at the Teatro Re, and witnessed La Scala premieres of *Aureliano in Palmira* (1813), *Il Turco in Italia* (1814), *La Gazza Ladra* (1817, an adventurous comedy preceded by one of the composer's best overtures), and *Bianca e Falliero* (1819). Rome first heard Rossini by way of *Torvaldo e Dorliska* (Teatro Valle, 1815) and enjoyed its last Rossini premiere in 1821, with *Matilde di Shabran*. On February 20, 1816, a new comedy, called *Almaviva*, composed and prepared in a mere three weeks, flopped at Rome's Teatro Argentina. A Bologna revival of it later that year, under its better-known title, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, marked the

## ROSSINI CHRONOLOGY

Born on February 29, 1792, in Pesaro

Died on November 13, 1868, in Paris

### Premieres of Rossini Operas

- 1810 *La Cambiale di Matrimonio*
- 1811 *L'Equivoco Stravagante*
- 1812 *Demetrio e Polibio*  
*L'Inganno Felice*  
*Ciro in Babilonia*  
*La Scala di Seta*  
*La Pietra del Paragone*
- 1813 *Il Signor Bruschino*  
*Tancredi*  
*L'Italiana in Algeri*  
*Aureliano in Palmira*  
*L'Occasione fa il Ladro*
- 1814 *Il Turco in Italia*  
*Sigismondo*
- 1815 *Torvaldo e Dorliska*  
*Elisabetta, Regina d'Inghilterra*
- 1816 *Almaviva* (later, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*)  
*La Gazzetta*  
*Otello*
- 1817 *La Cenerentola*  
*La Gazza Ladra*  
*Armida*  
*Adelaide di Borgogna*
- 1818 *Mosè in Egitto*  
*Ricciardo e Zoraide*
- 1819 *Ermione*  
*Eduardo e Cristina*  
*La Donna del Lago*  
*Bianca e Falliero*
- 1820 *Maometto II*
- 1821 *Matilde di Shabran*
- 1822 *Zelmira*
- 1823 *Semiramide*
- 1825 *Il Viaggio a Reims*
- 1828 *Le Comte Ory*
- 1829 *Guillaume Tell*

beginning of the opera's subsequent reputation—and worldwide reception—as one of the greatest comic operas ever composed. Indeed, *Barbiere* was to become one of only two Rossini operas (the other being *La Cenerentola*, first produced at the Teatro Valle in 1817) never to have left the active repertory since its premiere.

But by common scholarly consensus, the city that was the composer's laboratory for the development of new forms for Italian opera was Naples. Invited in 1815 by the impresario Domenico Barbaja to be the musical and artistic director of his theaters in that city, Rossini had to overcome public prejudice over his being from the north, and initial audience resistance to the *opere serie* that increasingly became his focus. But by the time of his departure in 1822, the composer had attained "adopted-son" status.

Although it was not the only Neapolitan theater in which he worked, Barbaja's Teatro San Carlo, its excellent facilities, expert orchestra, exemplary singers and ample rehearsal schedule afforded the composer precisely the opportunity he needed to plumb the depths of the *opera seria* conventions he was to transform so completely. His first Neapolitan opera, *Elisabetta, Regina d'Inghilterra* (1815), may have included much music borrowed from his earlier operas (a practice at which he was as adept, and sensitive, as Handel), but it marked the first time *secco* recitative was replaced entirely by accompanied recitative. Innovations, only beginning with the general elimination of overtures, became far more ambitious with *Otello*, presented at Teatro del Fondo in 1816 (while the burned San Carlo was being rebuilt). More ambitious work—with aria forms, act structures, and harmonic schemes, all designed to develop charac-



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*Rossini in his later years.*

ter and enhance dramatic direction—continued apace through *Armida* (1817, at the reopened San Carlo), *Mosè in Egitto* (1818), *Ermione* (1819), *La Donna del Lago* (1819), *Maometto II* (1820) and *Zelmira* (1822).

Among Rossini's most important musical colleagues was the Spanish soprano Isabella Colbran, an adept at vocal fioriture whose singing style exerted a strong influence on Rossini—and who herself created most of the composer's Neapolitan prima donna roles. Apparently Barbaja's mistress at the time of Rossini's arrival in Naples, she at some point became Rossini's. They were married in Bologna in 1822, soon after leaving Naples. For his part, Barbaja proved an important ally to Rossini in ways beyond the artistic. The composer who, according to the custom of the time, was paid only for operatic performances in which he himself took part, amassed consider-

able wealth by his partnership with the impresario in a casino under the roof of the San Carlo. He was further aided by what proved to be history's first Rossini festival, when Barbaja took his company, and the composer and his operas, to Vienna's Kärntnertor-Theater in 1821. The hero's welcome Rossini received in the home of the composers he admired most perhaps meant even more to him than the financial profit he reaped from the "festival."

The final chapter in Rossini's life as an opera composer takes place in France, which he and Colbran reached by way of other Italian cities (most notably Venice, for the *Semiramide* premiere) and London (where the hoped-for *Ugo* project collapsed before completion; Rossini recouped the potential loss by lucrative private concerts with Colbran for English aristocrats). Assuming the directorship of the Paris Théâtre-Italien in 1824, he composed *Il Viaggio a Reims* for the coronation of Charles X. He further introduced the best of his Neapolitan operas (and some of his homeland's finest singers), as well as the works of others, among other things launching Meyerbeer's career with the premiere of the latter's *Il Crociato in Egitto*.

But his primary goal was to produce *grands opéras* at the Paris Opéra. He negotiated a contract there in 1826 and soon introduced two Neapolitan operas he had intended for the Théâtre-Italien in extensively revised, grand opera versions, *Maometto II* as *Le Siège de Corinthe* and *Mosè in Egitto* as *Moïse*. He concluded his celebrated tenure at the Opéra with two entirely fitting new creations: *Le Comte Ory* (1828), an *opéra comique* admired by important musical thinkers from Berlioz to the present, and his final masterpiece, *Guillaume Tell*, which, as the centerpiece of San Francisco Opera's current festival, will be discussed fully elsewhere. Like Verdi after him, Rossini was tempted to compose one more opera on a great subject, Goethe's *Faust*; like Verdi in the case of *King Lear*, he did not. There were no more operas from the last four decades of his life.

Although in many ways the best documented period of his life, the post-*Tell* years remain laden with myths and other distortions of fact. The popular picture of a life of subsequent indolence and excess

# Guillaume Tell



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is perhaps buttressed by the title he gave to the collection of salon pieces he wrote late in life—*Péchés de Vieillesse* (later translated as “Sins of My Old Age”)—works more known of than known. The fact is that Rossini, a long-term sufferer of severe bouts of neurasthenia, fell prey to a variety of other major ailments that made much of his late life a prolonged misery. (His second wife, Olympe Pélissier, began their acquaintance as his nurse.) Understandable exhaustion, serious concerns about the political instability throughout much of Europe, financial worries (the tale of his determined pursuit of the commission he was promised by Charles X is a saga in itself), and rapid changes in an overall artistic climate he once all but controlled, further contributed to a far from carefree retirement.

Yet retirement itself is not an accurate word. With the aid of Parisian physicians, Rossini did enjoy significant improvements in his health, and his fortune allowed him to enjoy residences both within Paris and in the suburb of Passy. And though he produced no more operas, he did continue to compose, producing in his “old age” a body of compositions that would, certainly in quantity and in many cases in quality, outstrip the lifetime efforts of many a noted 20th-century composer. They range from the light-hearted (but skillfully made) compositions collected in the *Péchés* to the important *Soirées Musicales* to the prized *Stabat Mater* and the sublime, Bach-influenced *Petite Messe Solennelle*.

A final illness overtook him in the fall of 1868, and he died on November 13 in his Passy villa. First buried in Paris, he was, after the death of his widow Olympe, exhumed, his remains transported to Florence’s Santa Croce in May of 1887. His will endowed the founding of a conservatory in Pesaro, to which he left many important autographs. To this day, the

*Rossini's tomb at the church of Santa Croce in Florence. The composer was first buried in Paris, but his remains were moved to Florence on May 2, 1887, and carried into the Santa Croce to the accompaniment of a 500-voice chorus who sang the celebrated Prayer from Mosè in Egitto, twice. Two days later, a special performance of Rossini's Stabat Mater took place at the Palazzo Vecchio, which was then followed by — the overture to Guillaume Tell.*

Fondazione Rossini promotes serious study of his music, and the annual Pesaro Rossini Festival, staging productions at the Teatro Rossini and the small concert hall of the conservatory, continues to draw scholars and Rossini lovers to performances of both the composer's masterpieces and those that have become rarities.

An important critical edition of Rossini's work, seeking to restore the composer's originals by scouring off the accretions of 150 years of performance "traditions," is already well along. Better yet, volumes of this important edition are finding their ways onto podiums throughout the opera world. One important example of these is the Alberto Zedda edition of *Barbiere* which Maestro Zedda himself conducted for San Francisco audiences as opener to the 1987 fall season.

Since World War II, the opera world has enjoyed two significant Rossini "revivals"—both, perhaps tellingly, identified more with singers than with scholars. Without wishing to slight the brilliant contributions of a host of singers to the ongoing Rossini "tradition," it is safe to

say that the Rossini landscape would be infinitely more sparse without the groundbreaking championship of the composer by Maria Callas in the 1950s and, from the 1960s to the present, by Marilyn Horne. Musical scholarship may have taken the driver's seat in the present-day Rossini revival, but it would count for less without the singers to bring the works to life. With the heartening presence of artists like this summer's casts and conductors, and promising newcomers like the Italian mezzo-soprano Cecilia Bartoli, a revival in the fullest sense becomes possible.

Like many another Rossini commentator, Wagner was liable to silliness as great as anything to be found in the master's *opere buffe*. Preceding his remarks about Rossini quoted above are these: "Like Mozart, [Rossini] possessed melodic inventiveness to the highest degree. Further, that was marvelously seconded by his instinct for the stage and for dramatic expression. What mightn't he have produced if he had been given a strong, complete musical education—especially if, less Italian and less skeptical,

he had felt inside him the religion of his art? There can be no doubt that he would have taken off on a flight that would have raised him to the highest peaks."

The more sober, informed modern view returns to us a Rossini who added to "inventiveness" and "instinct" both deep, thorough study (as but one manifestation of his profound respect for serious, "German" music, Rossini subscribed to the critical edition of Bach's works published during his lifetime) and bold, imaginative composition—an art sufficient to bridge, more successfully and significantly than any other opera composer before him, the Classic and the Romantic opera styles. Is it going too far to say that he alone allowed Italian opera to proceed? In the better, braver new world of Rossini revival, one glimpses at the vistas of a masterpiece such as *Guillaume Tell* with Wagner's regret now an affirmation: "To the highest peaks!" □



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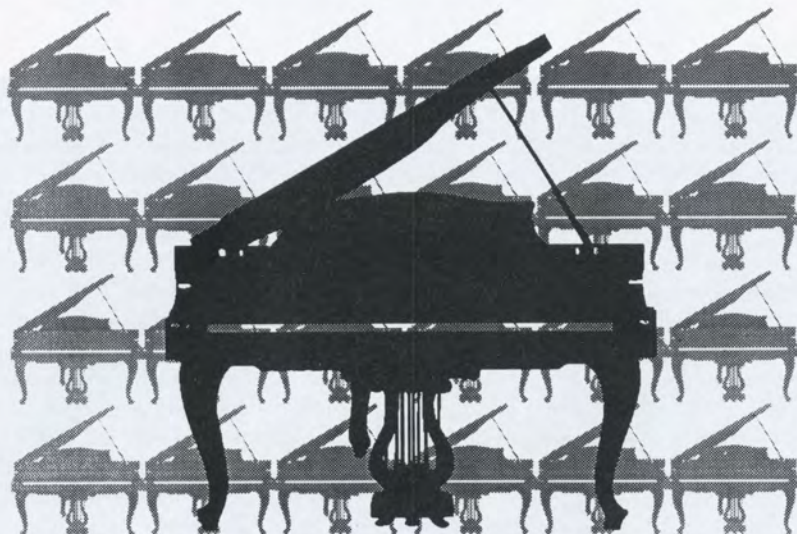
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**Schedule:**

Saturday, May 30

*Guillaume Tell*

Tuesday, June 2

*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*

Wednesday, June 3

*Guillaume Tell*

Friday, June 5

*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*

Saturday, June 6

*Guillaume Tell*

Tuesday, June 9

*L'Italiana in Algeri*

Friday, June 12

*L'Italiana in Algeri*

Wednesday, June 17

*L'Italiana in Algeri*

Sunday, June 21

*L'Italiana in Algeri*

Wednesday, June 24

*L'Italiana in Algeri*

Friday, June 26

*Ermione*

Saturday, June 27

*L'Italiana in Algeri*

**1992 Fall Season**  
Continued from page 16

Saturday, November 7, 8:00  
West Coast Premiere  
New Production  
**The Death of Klinghoffer** Adams  
Friedman, Nadler, Felty; Young\*, Sylvan\*,  
Maddalena\*, Perry\*, Hammons\*  
Adams\*/Sellars\*/Tsypin\*/Ramicova\*/  
Morris\*/Boesch\*/Deans\*/Ingalls\*  
*Co-commissioned with the Théâtre de la  
Monnaie, Brussels; Opéra de Lyon;  
Glyndebourne Festival; Brooklyn Academy of  
Music; and Los Angeles Music Center Opera.*  
Sunday, November 8, 1:00  
**Don Carlo** Verdi  
Tuesday, November 10, 7:30  
**La Forza del Destino** Verdi  
Wednesday, November 11, 7:00  
**Don Carlo** Verdi  
Friday, November 13, 8:00  
**The Death of Klinghoffer** Adams  
Saturday, November 14, 7:00  
**Don Carlo** Verdi  
Sunday, November 15, 2:00  
**The Death of Klinghoffer** Adams  
Wednesday, November 18, 7:00  
**Don Carlo** Verdi  
Thursday, November 19, 7:30  
**The Death of Klinghoffer** Adams  
Friday, November 20, 8:00  
**Andrea Chénier** Giordano  
Millo\*, Guo+; Beccaria\*, Gavanelli\*  
Santi/Mansouri/Williams/Skalicki/  
Skalicki/Munn  
*Co-production with the Houston Grand Opera.*  
Saturday, November 21, 7:00  
**Don Carlo** Verdi  
Sunday, November 22, 2:00  
**The Death of Klinghoffer** Adams  
Tuesday, November 24, 8:00

**The Death of Klinghoffer** Adams  
Wednesday, November 25, 7:30  
**Andrea Chénier** Giordano  
Saturday, November 28, 8:00  
**Andrea Chénier** Giordano  
Sunday, November 29, 2:00  
*Production new to San Francisco*  
**A Midsummer Night's Dream** Britten  
McNair\*, Patterson, Keen, Taylor\*;  
Asawa+, Streit, Malis, Langan, Adams,  
Travis, Cole, Frank  
Mauceri/Copley/Bardon/Stennett/Munn  
*Production from the National Arts Centre of  
Canada, Ottawa.*  
*This production is underwritten, in part, by a  
generous gift from the Bernard Osher  
Foundation.*  
Tuesday, December 1, 8:00  
**Tosca** Puccini  
Mitchell; Sylvester\*, Noble, Travis  
Summers/Galati/Walton/Kim/Munn  
Wednesday, December 2, 8:00  
**A Midsummer Night's Dream** Britten  
Thursday, December 3, 7:30  
**Andrea Chénier** Giordano  
Friday, December 4, 8:00  
**A Midsummer Night's Dream** Britten  
Saturday, December 5, 2:00  
**Tosca** Puccini  
(Same cast as December 1)  
Sunday, December 6, 1:00  
**Andrea Chénier** Giordano  
Sunday, December 6, 7:30  
**A Midsummer Night's Dream** Britten  
Tuesday, December 8, 8:00  
**Andrea Chénier** Giordano  
Wednesday, December 9, 8:00  
**Tosca** Puccini  
(Same cast as December 1)  
Thursday, December 10, 7:30  
**A Midsummer Night's Dream** Britten  
Friday, December 11, 8:00

*Semi-Staged Concert Performance*  
**Christophe Colomb** Milhaud  
Fortuna; Lafont\*, Ledbetter, Skinner,  
Sénéchal  
Nagano\*/TBA/Munn  
Saturday, December 12, 1:00  
**Tosca** Puccini  
(Same cast as December 1)  
Saturday, December 12, 8:00  
**A Midsummer Night's Dream** Britten  
Sunday, December 13, 1:00  
**Andrea Chénier** Giordano  
Sunday, December 13, 7:00  
**Christophe Colomb** Milhaud

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|                    |                                         |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------|
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| KURT HERBERT ADLER | Artistic Director, 1953-1957            |
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|                    | General Director Emeritus, 1982-1988    |
| TERENCE A. McEWEN  | General Director, 1982-1988             |
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| LOTFI MANSOURI     | General Director, 1988-                 |

# Bel Canto Society

San Francisco Opera is honored to acknowledge those individuals who, with special generosity and foresight, have included San Francisco Opera in their estate plans. By arranging to provide support to the endowment through bequests, charitable remainder trusts, the San Francisco Opera Pooled Income Fund, named funds and other planned gifts, Bel Canto Society members enable the Company to plan far into the future. At the same time, these gifts allow the Bel Canto Society member, during his or her lifetime, to make a statement of support that will ultimately become a lasting legacy to the Company.

We invite you to join the Bel Canto Society by notifying us that you have included San Francisco Opera in your estate plans.

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## **"Do You Mean That San Francisco Opera Will Send Us Four Checks Every Year?"**

Absolutely! When you make a life income gift to San Francisco Opera, you and/or someone you love will receive quarterly income payments every year for life. And the income you receive may very well be greater than the income you were previously earning from the securities you gave.

In addition, your life income gift gives you the benefit of an immediate income tax deduction and avoidance of capital gains tax liability. Above all, you will have the satisfaction of knowing that your gift will help to ensure the future of the Opera for many years to come.

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

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

*san francisco*  
**OPERA**



# Corporate Council

## Benefits & Privileges

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

### Leadership Circle (\$50,000 and above)

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

### Gold Circle (\$25,000 to \$49,999)

- V.I.P. ticket privileges with priority seating for all opera performances and special events
- Feature article with photographs highlighting your corporation's support in *San Francisco Opera News*, sent to over 20,000 patrons
- Private meeting with the Opera's General Director, Chairman or President
- Information on international opera schedules, upon request
- *All privileges and benefits which follow:*

### Silver Circle (\$10,000 to \$24,999)

- Opportunity to participate in the Corporate Employee Discount Ticket Program for reduced single ticket prices to selected performances (subject to availability)
- Four complimentary tickets to an opera in a priority seating area
- Opportunity for a private concert featuring acclaimed Opera Center singers for your meeting, party, or special event
- Opportunity to participate in patron travel program to opera houses throughout the world
- *All privileges and benefits which follow:*

### Corporate Benefactor (\$5,000 to \$9,999)

- Invitation to a special donor event with the General Director and Opera artists in an exclusive location
- Recognition in all publicity and advertising prior to your sponsored opera performance or event \*
- Your corporation's name on recognition signage displays in the War Memorial Opera House lobby \*
- Your corporation's name on handbills of sponsored performance \*
- Framed Program Magazine cover and program page of your sponsored opera signed by a renowned singer or conductor \*
- *All privileges and benefits which follow:*

### Corporate Sponsor (\$3,000 to \$4,999)

- Free reserved parking at the Performing Arts Center Garage for any opera performance or subscription series
- *All privileges and benefits which follow:*

### Corporate Founder (\$2,000 to \$2,999)

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

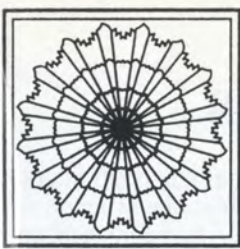
*\* denotes exclusive benefits for corporate sponsors of productions, performances or events*

### Triple Gold Circle (\$100,000 and above over three years)

A new recognition program for those companies that pledge gifts of a minimum of \$33,000 over a three-year period for a total of \$100,000 or more. Members receive the following:

- Special listing in the Corporate Council section of all Program Magazines
- Recognition as a *Night at the Opera* sponsor each year
- A unique piece of jewelry by Tiffany
- *All privileges and benefits at the Gold Circle level above*

*Please call 565-3264 for additional information about this exciting new giving opportunity.*



# Corporate Council

San Francisco Opera appreciates the generous support of the following businesses whose leadership contributions made for performance years 1991 or 1992 (recorded February 1, 1991 through March 15, 1992) are recognized through their membership in the Corporate Council. Donors of \$2,000 and above are eligible for membership in the Corporate Council.

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

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## LEADERSHIP CIRCLE \$50,000 and above

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## GOLD CIRCLE \$25,000 - \$49,999

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## SILVER CIRCLE \$10,000 - \$24,999

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## BENEFACTOR \$5,000 - \$9,999

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## SPONSOR \$3,000 - \$4,999

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# SAN FRANCISCO WAR MEMORIAL PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

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Trustees of the War Memorial

The Honorable Frank Jordan  
*Mayor, City and County of San Francisco*

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# Public Support

California Arts Council

National Endowment for the Arts

Grants for the Arts

# Donor Categories and Benefits

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

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

## **GUILD MEMBER \$50-\$99**

- Passes to Opera Insights programs featuring guest artists, conductors and production experts
- Subscription to San Francisco Opera News
- Copy of San Francisco Opera Commemorative Book
- Reservation priority and discount tickets to Opera House backstage group tours
- Advance notice of special events and ticket availability

## **PATRON \$100-\$199**

- All of the above, plus
- Invitation to observe a technical demonstration
  - Invitation to a working rehearsal

## **SUPPORTING PATRON \$200-\$299**

- All of the above, plus
- Invitation to a Sitzprobe (musical rehearsal with principal singers)

## **VOTING MEMBER \$300-\$499**

- All of the above, plus
- Invitation to two working rehearsals
  - Voting membership in San Francisco Opera Association
  - Invitation to Annual Meeting and Reception

## **SUPPORTING MEMBER \$500-\$999**

- All of the above, plus
- Invitation to three working rehearsals
  - Listing of your name in all program magazines

## **SUSTAINING MEMBER \$1,000-\$1,999**

- All of the above, plus
- Invitation to four working rehearsals
  - Invitation to a lecture and an additional working rehearsal with supper

## Medallion Society

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

## **FOUNDER \$2,000-\$2,999**

- Personalized ticket service using the Medallion Society phone number for special assistance in purchasing, exchanging or donating tickets
- Opportunity to purchase reserved parking at the Performing Arts Center Garage for your subscription series
- Invitation to the Annual Awards Luncheon
- Invitation to two guided tours of the Opera House Stage, Scenery Shop, Costume Shop or Wig and Make-Up Department
- Invitation to the Medallion Society Members' Working Rehearsal and Reception
- Personalized backstage tours upon request
- Preferred seating for all open rehearsals
- Listing of your name in the special Medallion Society section of all Program Magazines
- All privileges at the Sustaining Member level

## **SPONSOR \$3,000-\$4,999**

- Further privileges:
- Free reserved parking at the Performing Arts Center Garage for your subscription series
  - Increased ticket priority (subject to availability)

## **BENEFACTOR \$5,000-\$9,999**

- Further privileges:
- Invitation to a special donor event with the General Director and Opera artists in an exclusive location
  - Increased ticket priority (subject to availability)

## **SILVER CIRCLE \$10,000-\$24,999**

- Further privileges:
- Opportunity for a private concert featuring Opera Center singers for your meeting, party or special event
  - Increased ticket priority (subject to availability)
  - Opportunity to participate in patron travel program to opera houses throughout the world

## **GOLD CIRCLE \$25,000-\$49,999**

- Further privileges:
- Private meeting with the General Director, Board Chairman and President
  - First-hand opportunity to follow the stages of an opera's production from first rehearsal to opening night
  - Increased ticket priority (subject to availability)
  - Information on international opera schedules, upon request

## **MEDICI CIRCLE \$50,000 and above**

- Further privileges:
- Individualized benefits as appropriate
  - Highest priority in all patron privileges and benefits (subject to availability)

## **TRIPLE GOLD CIRCLE**

### **\$100,000 and above over three years**

A new recognition program for those who pledge gifts of a minimum of \$33,000 annually over a three-year period for a total of \$100,000.

Every year of the pledge, each member may select an opera performance to be designated in his or her honor. On that evening, the title page of the program will recognize the donor, and the donor's party will be escorted backstage during an intermission to see the activity behind the curtain.

Members receive special listing in the Medallion Society / Corporate Council section of all Program Magazines.

Members receive as a gift a piece of jewelry by Tiffany and all privileges at the Gold Circle level.

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



# Medallion Society

San Francisco Opera gratefully acknowledges members of the Medallion Society who have made contributions for Performance Years 1991 or 1992 (recorded February 1, 1991 through March 15, 1992.)

## MEDICI CIRCLE \$50,000 and above

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## GOLD CIRCLE \$25,000 - \$49,999

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## SENNHEISER LISTENING DEVICES

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

## OPERA HOUSE TOURS

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

Wednesday, June 3  
Saturday, June 13  
Sunday, June 21  
Sunday, June 28

Tickets are \$5 per person. Advance reservations required. For further information, please call (415) 565-6433.

## IF YOU DRIVE TO THE OPERA...

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

## SERVICES

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Make a Valued Contribution to San Francisco Opera** You can make an important contribution to San Francisco Opera by returning any tickets you cannot use to the Box Office for resale. These ticket returns are of great value to San Francisco Opera and to other patrons who may be unable to obtain tickets to sold-out performances. If you are unable to use your tickets or exchange them for another performance of the same opera, you may make a full-value, tax-deductible contribution of your tickets. To make a donation, simply return your tickets to the Opera Box Office, or call (415) 864-3330, 10 A.M. to 6 P.M. You may also call (415) 565-6485 from 6 P.M. to ten minutes before curtain. Unfortunately, we are unable to apply the donations towards membership benefits.

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

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

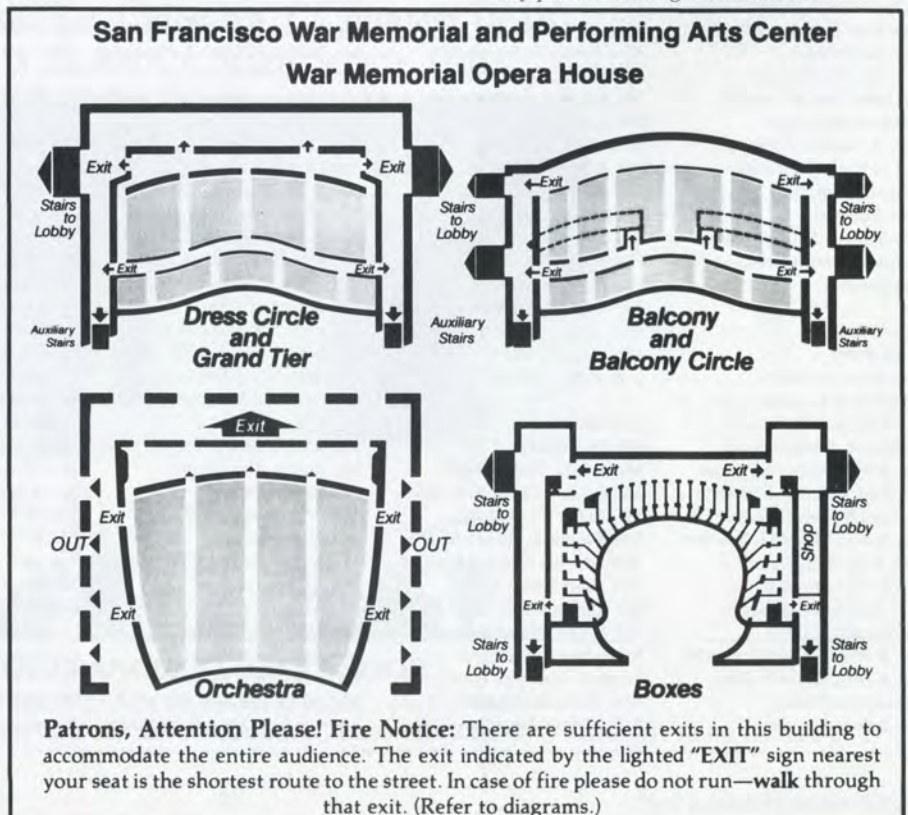
For **Lost and Found** information, inquire at check room No. 3 or call (415) 621-6600, 8:30 to 11:30 Monday through Friday.

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

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

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

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



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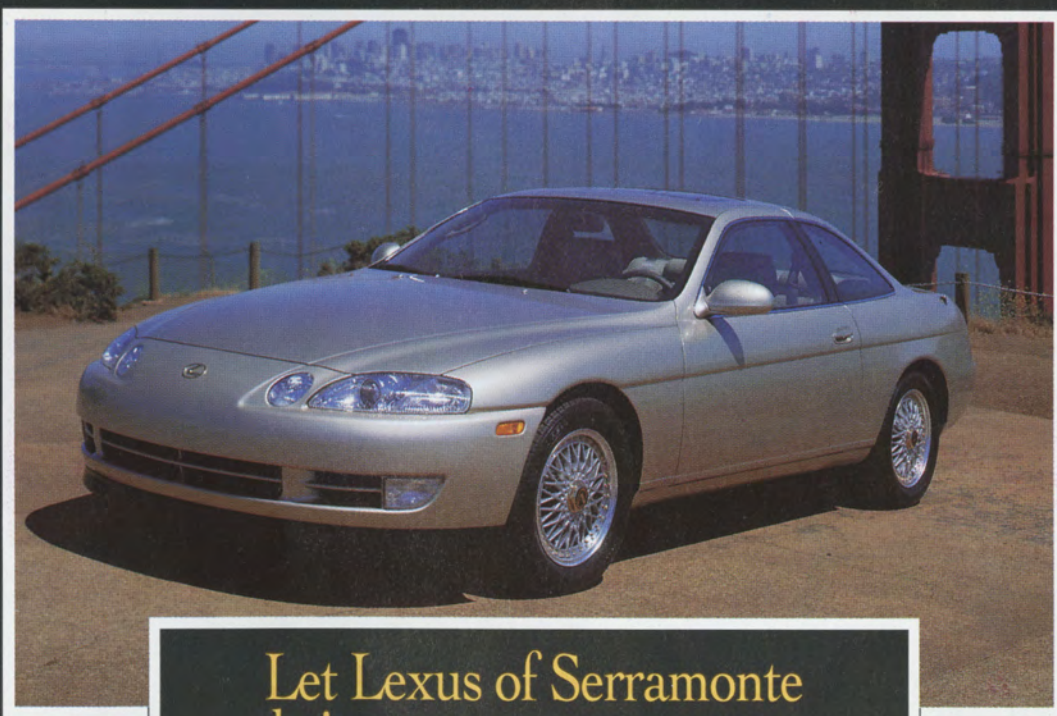
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