

Christophe Colomb
(Christopher Columbus (The Discovery of America))

1992-1993

Friday, December 11, 1992 8:00 PM
Sunday, December 12, 1992 7:00 PM

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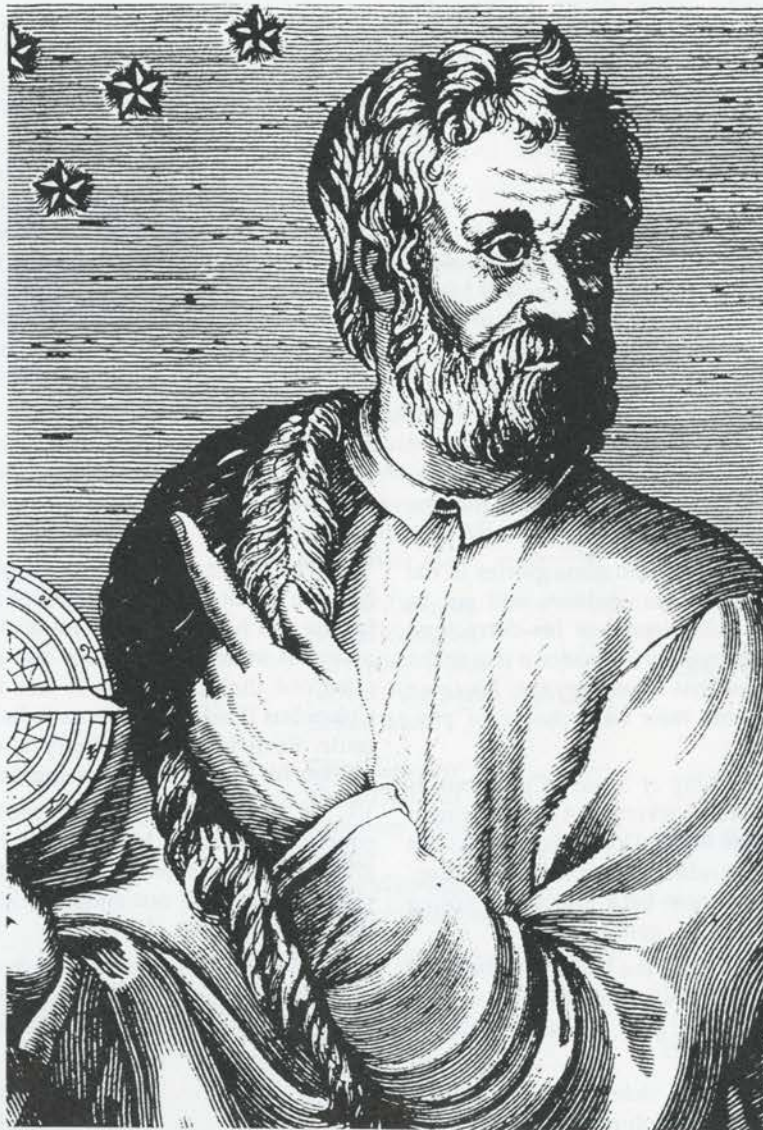
Lotfi Mansouri, *General Director*

Donald C. Runnicles, *Music Director*

presents

Christophe Colomb

by Darius Milhaud



WAR MEMORIAL OPERA HOUSE
DECEMBER 11 AND 13, 1992

Christophe Colomb / Synopsis

PART I

- I. *Processional*
- II. *The Narrator introduces and explains each of the episodes.*
- III. *And the earth was void and shapeless*—A line from the Bible symbolically refers the action to the very beginning of time, when the spirit of God made the earth emerge from darkness and chaos. Columbus's discovery of America will be seen as a continuation of this process.
- IV. *Christophe Colomb and posterity*—The Narrator and Chorus call on Columbus to join with posterity in looking at his past life and the result of his actions.
- V. *The Four Quadrilles*—The Narrator refers to Columbus and his petition to the King of Spain. The scene is dominated by the forces which plagued Columbus during his lifetime—Envy, Ignorance, Vanity and Avarice. As the symbolic figures dance, a Prosecutor and three Defenders appear before posterity to weigh the failings and accomplishments of Columbus. The explorer proudly explains the significance of his name—his first name is literally "the bearer of Christ," while his second links him to the Holy Ghost ("colombe" in French means a dove, the symbol of the Holy Spirit).
- VI. *Irruption of the Doves*
- VII. *The Dove flies over the sea*
- VIII. *The Vocation of Christophe Colomb*—The Narrator continues the story of Columbus, who is discovered reading the travels of Marco Polo in his father's workroom in Genoa. He would like to reach Marco Polo's land by sea, sailing toward the West. His spiritual double, Columbus II, and the Chorus urge him to pursue his dream and seek a life on the sea, despite the explorer's doubts about leaving his home and family.
- IX. *Christophe Colomb at the End of the World*—Leaving Genoa, Columbus says farewell to his family and sets out over the sea, reaching the westernmost limit of Europe.
- X. *Christophe Colomb and his Creditors*—Columbus glories in the sea he has conquered, but the cries of his creditors will not be silenced. As three guitar players (who represent his detractors) mock him, he pleads for just enough money to finance a trip to the court of Spain. The creditors agree that a last voyage, however desperate an undertaking, represents their only chance of payment.
- XI. *Christophe Colomb besieges the King of Spain*—Columbus is greeted by courtiers with protests and mockery, but he is secure in his belief in his mission. He tells the Major Domo that he has not come to ask anything of the King, but rather to give him something. The Major Domo tells Columbus to come back tomorrow, taking care however to slyly ask whether he has gold to offer.
- XII. *The Recruitment for the Caravels*—With the backing of Isabella, Columbus has been given three old galleys to undertake his voyage of discovery. Sailors are recruited in the port of Cadiz—most of them turn out to be convicts.
- XIII. *Christophe Colomb and the Sailors*—A delegate of the sailors, who are on the brink of mutiny, urges Columbus to turn back. Neither threats nor pleas move Columbus, who desires to sail to the end. He is so convinced of his success that he orders all the remaining food and water to be given to the sailors. Suddenly a dove appears and land is sighted.
- XIV. *The Redeemer*—America. The ships can be seen approaching, and from them is heard the "Te Deum" and "Sanctus."

PART II

ENTR'ACTE—The news of the discovery of America is rapidly spreading throughout the world. The Narrator tells of the difficulties which follow the discovery: the cruel treatment of the natives leads to revolt and further repression; the New World does not bring the profit expected of it; and Columbus's enemies are busy in Spain.

I. *The King of Spain and the Three Wise Men*—The King summons three wise men to give him counsel. They deviously give their advice, but warn the King about his subject, Columbus—"You must honor him—you must watch him—you must bury him."

II. *Christophe Colomb holds the mast*—on his fourth voyage, Columbus was put in chains by the man appointed by the King to take over his command. He is lying bound in the hold of the ship, where he is visited by his successor and exhorted to put forth his influence in saving the ship, which has run into dangerous waters. The Commandant is accompanied by the Cook, who begs Columbus to destroy the ship. But Columbus prays and three times the ship weathers the crises which come upon it.

III. *The Conscience of Christophe Colomb*—The Cook acts as guide while Columbus looks back at his past actions and their consequences. He sees the inhabitants of America, on whom his discovery of the new continent has brought ruin and destruction: the slaves he sold to pay his debts; the wife and mother he abandoned; his contented self in Genoa and Lisbon; and his own ghost. The Cook reminds Columbus that there are other unknown seas beyond the one he has discovered, and tells him that the New World will not be named after him but after an obscure member of his own crew, Amerigo Vespucci.

IV. *Christophe and Isabella*—The ship arrives safely in Spain. A Messenger comes from Queen Isabella. On her deathbed, she thought of Columbus and his expedition, and now sends words of comfort to him.

V. *The Inn at Valladolid*—Columbus, old and suffering, is in a humble inn at Valladolid. Almost all of his possessions are gone, but he still has his faithful mule. The Innkeeper threatens to take away his mule if he does not pay room and board. In despair, he cries out that Columbus II has forsaken him. Deeply moved, Columbus II asks the Chorus to help Columbus I at least keep his mule. Realizing that posterity is unable to change the past, he affirms his kinship with his spiritual self.

VI. *In the Paradise of the Imagination*—The scene resembles the court of Isabella in Majorca, but it is actually paradise. Isabella greets her friends and is welcomed by the ladies of her court. She wonders how she can enter the kingdom of heaven without her friend Christopher Columbus.

VII. *Alleluia*—Discovering that it was St. James who guided her safely to heaven, Isabella leads a prayer for Columbus. The Chorus gives thanks with a host of Alleluias as a dove appears in the heavens.

Staged Concert Version

Opera in two parts by DARIUS MILHAUD

Text by PAUL CLAUDEL

English translation of narration by Arnold Perry.

(Used by arrangement with European American Music Distributors Corporation, sole U.S. and Canadian agent for Universal Edition A.G. Vienna, publisher and copyright owner.)

Christophe Colomb

(in French, with English narration)

CAST

Conductor
Kent Nagano*

Stage Director
Lotfi Mansouri

Scenic and Lighting Designer
Thomas J. Munn

Projections By
Barbara Walters*
Thomas J. Munn

Sound Designer
Roger Gans

Chorus Director
Ian Robertson

Musical Preparation
David Triestram
Peter Grunberg

Prompter
Peter Grunberg

Assistant Stage Director
Sandra Bernhard

Stage Manager
Theresa Ganley

First performance:
Berlin, May 5, 1930

First San Francisco Opera performance:
October 5, 1968
(U.S. stage premiere of Part II)

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

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

The performance will last approximately two hours.

The Narrator

Christopher Columbus I

Queen Isabella

Christopher Columbus II

Counsel

Major Domo

Cook

Valet

Delegate of the Sailors

King of Spain

Commandant

Innkeeper

Messenger

First Defender

First Guitarist

Young Man

Executioner

Voice from the Mast

First Wise Man

Second Defender

Second Guitarist

Recruiting Officer

Second Wise Man

Grown Man

Third Defender

Third Guitarist

Reception Officer

Officer

Third Wise Man

Ghost of Columbus

Duchess of Medina Sidonia

Soprano Solo

Mother of Columbus

Alto Solo

Wife of Columbus

Derek Jacobi**

Jean-Philippe Lafont*

Maria Fortuna

Victor Ledbetter

Michel Sénéchal

Philip Skinner

Zheng Zhou

Stephen Guggenheim+

Earle Patriarco

Scott Wilde

Laura Claycomb+

Catherine Cook+

Mary Mills

**U.S. opera debut

*San Francisco Opera debut

+1992 Adler Fellow

THERE WILL BE ONE INTERMISSION

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11 at 8:00
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13 at 7:00

Supertitles by Christopher Bergen, San Francisco Opera.

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Kawai is the official piano of the San Francisco Opera. Pianos provided and serviced by R. Kassman



MARIA FORTUNA

Soprano **Maria Fortuna** sings the roles of Curra in *La Forza del Destino* and Queen Isabella in *Christophe Colomb*. A former member of the Merola Opera Program and a 1990-91 Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, she spent her formative years with the Company, where early roles included Countess Ceprano in *Rigoletto* and Emma in *Khovanshchina*. Last fall, she was seen on the stage of the War Memorial as Violetta in the student matinee performances of *La Traviata*, Frasquita in *Carmen*, and The Confidante in *Elektra*. Opera Center credits include The Young Lady in Reimann's *The Ghost Sonata*, Sandrina in Mozart's *La Finta Giardiniera* and a Schwabacher Debut Recital. Her 1991-92 season was highlighted by several firsts: She made her debut at New York's Lincoln Center as a soprano soloist in the nationally televised "Rossini 200th Birthday Gala," a performance which will soon be available on video. She also made her debut with Seattle Opera as Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*, and appeared in Belgium for the first time as the Contessa de Folleville in performances of Rossini's *Il Viaggio a Reims* led by Edoardo Müller. Highlights from past seasons include Bruckner's *Te Deum* and concert performances of *Nabucco* with the Philadelphia Orchestra under Riccardo Muti, the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro* for Long Beach Opera, Madame Silberklang in Mozart's *Der Schauspieldirektor* with Sinfonia San Francisco, Musetta in *La Bohème* for Marin Opera, and appearances as soloist with the Van Cliburn Foundation. Next season she will appear with Dallas Opera in Falla's *La Vida Breve*. Miss Fortuna is from western New York state, and received her degrees from the Eastman School of Music and the Curtis Institute of Music.



LAURA CLAYCOMB

In her second year as an Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, **Laura Claycomb** appears as Xenia in *Boris Godunov*, Giannetta in both the mainstage and student matinee performances of *L'Elisir d'Amore*, and Duchess Medina Sidonia in *Christophe Colomb*. The native of Dallas attended Southern Methodist University, where she received her bachelor's degree in vocal performance and foreign languages. A winner of numerous awards and competitions, she was a member of the 1989 Merola Opera Program, and appeared as Frasquita in *Carmen*. As a Merola participant in the following year, she sang the role of Ann Page in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* at Stern Grove and won the Cenacolo Award at the Program's Grand Finals. She made her Company debut in 1990 as The Novice in *Suor Angelica*, also appearing in a San Francisco Symphony Pops concert with Victor Borge. Last year she had the honor of traveling to Japan and Guam as Frasquita in the Opera Center's production of *Carmen*, and subsequently sang Papagena in the Company's Mozart Festival production of *The Magic Flute*. She was seen here last fall as the First French Actress in *War and Peace* and as Frasquita. Recently featured in the Schwabacher Debut Recital series, the soprano also sang Dalinda in the Opera Center's 1992 Showcase production of *Ariodante*.

In her second year as an Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, **Catherine Cook** portrays the Innkeeper in *Boris Godunov* and the Mother of Columbus in *Christophe Colomb*. The mezzo-soprano made her first appearance with the Company last fall as Mavra Kuzminichna in *War and Peace* and the Third Maid servant in *Elektra*. She was a 1990 Merola Opera Program participant, singing the role of Meg Page in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*,



CATHERINE COOK

and was chosen by the Opera Center to perform on the Micronesian islands of Guam, Saipan and Pohnpei in 1990, also singing in American Samoa on behalf of the Opera Center earlier this year. The Chicago native's most recent engagements include the title role of *Ariodante* for the Opera Center's '92 Showcase series, soloist in the Rossini *Petite Messe Solennelle* with the S.F. Opera Orchestra at Grace Cathedral, the title role of *Rinaldo* with the Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra, Ottavia in *The Coronation of Poppea* at the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music, and alto soloist in the first recorded version of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony in the Mahler orchestration. She has appeared with the Ohio Light Opera, Music Theater of Wichita, Lyric Opera of Dallas, Shreveport Opera, San Francisco Symphony Pops Concerts, the Toledo Symphony, and also has extensive experience in musical theater and the Gilbert and Sullivan repertoire. Miss Cook was a 1990 Metropolitan Opera National Council Winner, as well as the winner of the 1990-91 Norman Treigle Award in Opera from the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music.

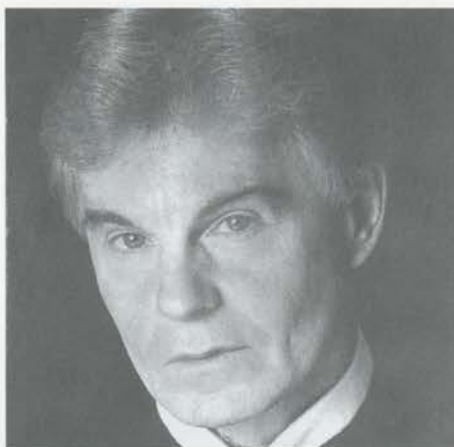
Soprano **Mary Mills** sings the roles of Tebaldo in *Don Carlo* and the Wife of Columbus in *Christophe Colomb*. A 1990-91 Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, she made her 1989 Company debut in *Lulu* and has since appeared here as Wellgunde in the 1990 *Ring* cycle, the First Lay Sister in *Suor Angelica*, a Page in *Rigoletto*, Pedro in *Don Quichotte*, La Fortuna in *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria*, Barbarina in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, and as the Bolonsky Maid and the Second French Actress in last fall's presentation of *War and Peace*. As a member of the 1989 Merola Opera Program, she portrayed Micaëla in *Carmen*, a role she also sang on Western Opera Theater's 1989-90 national tour. The



MARY MILLS

Dallas native received her undergraduate degree from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music and her Master of Music degree from the Yale School of Music. She continued her operatic training at the Banff School of Fine Arts Program, the Mozarteum Summer Academy in Salzburg, Central City Opera Studio Program, the Houston Grand Opera Studio, and made her professional debut as Barbarina with Houston Grand Opera. Miss Mills's most recent appearances include the title roles of *Rusalka* and *The Merry Widow*, as well as Mimì in *La Bohème* for Marin Opera, and her European debut in the title role of *Louise* at the Grand Théâtre de Genève. She will make her Washington Opera debut next spring in the title role of *The Cunning Little Vixen*.

Derek Jacobi, the celebrated English actor and star of stage, screen and television, makes his first appearance with San Francisco Opera performing the role of the Narrator in *Christophe Colomb*. Born in London, he received his degrees in English from St. John's College, Cambridge, and with no formal training in drama, began appearing in leading roles with the Marlowe Society at Cambridge. He made his first professional appearance in 1960 with the Birmingham Repertory Theatre and performed with that company until 1963. That year, he joined Laurence Olivier's company at Chichester, an ensemble which was to become the National Theatre, based at the Old Vic, and where he appeared for the next eight years. During the 1970s there followed a long association with the classical touring company, the Prospect Theatre Company. His Broadway debut followed in 1980 as Semyon in *The Suicide*. A parallel television and film career was also developing. A six-part BBC-TV adaptation of Heinrich Mann's novel, *Man of Straw*, ultimately led to perhaps his most acclaimed work in the medium, the title role in the series *I*,



DEREK JACOBI

Claudius. Television parts that soon followed included the title role of *Mr. Pye*, Guy Burgess in *Philby*, *Burgess and Maclean*, and Adolf Hitler in *Inside The Third Reich*. He joined the Royal Shakespeare Company in 1982, where he appeared for the next three years as Prospero in *The Tempest*, Benedick in *Much Ado About Nothing*, and in the title role of *Cyrano de Bergerac*. The last two plays were also produced on Broadway, where Jacobi received a Tony Award for his performance as Benedick. He then appeared in the movie adaptation of Dickens's *Little Dorrit*, which was followed by a return to the stages of London and Broadway in the critically acclaimed *tour de force* role of Alan Turing in Hugh Whitmore's play *Breaking The Code*. In 1988, he made yet another debut, that of director, for Kenneth Branagh's Renaissance Theatre Company production of *Hamlet*. The actor's most recent stage successes include the title roles of *Richard II* and *Richard III* in London, *Kean* in London and Toronto, *Becket* throughout the United Kingdom, as well as a revival of *Breaking The Code* in Great Britain. He also won recent accolades for his performances in the Branagh-directed films *Henry V* and *Dead Again*.

Jean-Philippe Lafont makes his San Francisco Opera debut in the title role of *Christophe Colomb*. The baritone has been acclaimed in recent seasons at leading theaters including the Paris Opera, Netherlands Opera, the Teatro dell'Opera in Rome, San Carlo in Naples, Barcelona's Gran Teatre del Liceu, and Metropolitan Opera, among others. He has also received plaudits as an actor in film and received special praise for his performance in the movie *Babette's Feast*. Lafont completed his musical studies in his native Toulouse and in Paris, where he joined the studio of the Paris Opera in 1973. His successful performance as Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte* led to



JEAN-PHILIPPE LAFONT

debuts in Lyons, Bordeaux, Avignon, Toulouse and at the Opéra-Comique in Paris. Outside of France, his first professional appearances were in Berlin (1979) in Debussy's *The Fall of the House of Usher* and Geneva (1980) in Rossini's *Le Comte Ory*. Since his first U.S. appearance in 1983 in Berlioz's *Benvenuto Cellini* with the Opera Orchestra of New York, he has made several notable debuts: in Brussels as Golaud in *Pelléas et Mélisande* and as the Count in *Le Nozze di Figaro*; at the Arena di Verona as Escamillo in *Carmen*; in Florence as Valentin in *Faust*; in Barcelona as Mozart's Count; and in Zurich as Escamillo. Lafont has appeared in many new productions at the Paris Opera, including *Alceste*, *Pelléas et Mélisande*, *Medée*, *Il Tabarro* and *Gianni Schicchi*. He made his 1988 Metropolitan Opera debut as Escamillo, and sang Méphistophélès in a new production of *La Damnation de Faust* at the Netherlands Opera the same year. Appearances during the 1989-90 season included Amonasro in *Aida* at the Bonn Opera, *Faust* in Berlin, *Semiramide* in Toulouse, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* in Palermo, *La Damnation de Faust* in Hamburg, as well as performances and a recording of Gluck's *La Rencontre Imprévue* in Lyons. Last season, he sang two title roles for the first time -- those of *Rigoletto* in Bonn and *Don Giovanni* in Marseilles -- and made debuts at Milan's La Scala as Jack Rance in *La Fanciulla del West* and at the Vienna Staatsoper in *Tosca* and *Aida*. Lafont has participated in numerous complete operatic recordings and has appeared in the movies *Parole de Flic*, the Gaumont film version of Bizet's *Carmen*, as well as *Babette's Feast*.

Baritone **Victor Ledbetter** appears in three roles this fall: Shchekalov in *Boris Godunov*, Roucher in *Andrea Chénier*, and Christophe Colomb II in *Christophe Colomb*. In his sixth consecutive season with San Francisco Opera, he has sung over 15 roles with the



VICTOR LEDBETTER

Company, most recently last fall when he portrayed three different characters in *War and Peace*. A participant in the 1986 Merola Opera Program and a 1988-89 Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, his credits with those affiliates include Count Almaviva in Hiram Titus's *Rosina*, Marcello in *La Bohème* for Western Opera Theater's 1986-87 tour which included performances in China, and Scarpia in China's first presentation of *Tosca*. A Schwabacher Debut Recitalist in 1989, Ledbetter's recent engagements include Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly* for the Dublin Grand Opera, Valentin in *Faust* and Sharpless for Cincinnati Opera, Dr. Falke in *Die Fledermaus* for San Diego Opera, Giorgio Germont in *La Traviata* for the New York City Opera, and Alfio in *Cavalleria Rusticana* with Washington Opera. The Georgia native studied at Indiana University with the late Nicola Rossi Lemeni.

Michel Sénéchal appears as the Abbé in *Andrea Chénier* and sings several roles in *Christophe Colomb*. The French tenor made his 1989 San Francisco Opera debut as Dr. Caius in *Falstaff*, and has since appeared here as Monsieur Taupe in *Capriccio* (1990) and as Don Basilio in *Le Nozze di Figaro* (1991). Celebrating over 40 years of professional operatic activity, Sénéchal made his debut at the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie of Brussels in 1950. He has since performed at the major opera houses of the world, and has been a regular guest artist at the Paris Opera and at the Opéra-Comique since 1958. He has sung at all of the major festivals, including those at Aix-en-Provence, Salzburg, and at Glyndebourne. New York's Metropolitan Opera has engaged him in the French repertoire since 1982, and he has been one of the few French tenors to have sung principal Mozart roles at the Vienna Staatsoper. A frequent recitalist and concert performer throughout North America and Europe, he has also performed



MICHEL SÉNÉCHAL

in several operatic films. A prolific recording artist, Sénéchal's discography includes Ravel's *L'Heure Espagnole* and *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges*, Rameau's *Platée*, Berlioz's *L'Enfance du Christ*, and an anthology of songs by Francis Poulenc. He is currently Director of the School of Lyric Art at the Paris Opera, and regularly offers master classes at the Metropolitan Opera. His numerous awards include Officer of the National Order of Merit, Officer of the Order of Arts and Letters, and the coveted Officer of the Legion of Honor.

In his eighth consecutive season with San Francisco Opera, bass-baritone Philip Skinner sings the role of Angelotti in *Tosca*, as well as several parts (including the King of Spain) in *Christophe Colomb*. 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*, Baron Douphol in *La Traviata*, Dolokhov in *War and Peace*, Lorenzo in *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*, Leone in *Attila*, and Leuthold in *Guillaume Tell*. Skinner participated in the 1985 Merola Opera Program and went on to tour with Western Opera Theater in the title role of *Don Giovanni*. The 1986-87 Adler Fellow 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 Opera, the New York City Opera National Company, Baton Rouge Opera, and at the Spoleto and San Antonio festivals. After making an acclaimed debut last season with Houston Grand Opera in the title role of *Le Nozze di Figaro*, he made



PHILIP SKINNER

his first appearance with the Victoria State Opera earlier this year as the four villains in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, and returned to Houston as Roucher in *Andrea Chénier* and as Hoffmann's four villains. A 1990 Schwabacher Debut Recitalist, Skinner is the recipient of a London/Sullivan grant from OPERA America.



ZHENG ZHOU

In his debut season with San Francisco Opera, baritone Zheng Zhou appears as a Surgeon in *La Forza del Destino* and a Messenger in *Christophe Colomb*. He studied at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, where he received his bachelor of music degree, and completed his master's degree in voice at the University of Illinois. Prior to 1987, Zhou sang as a bass-baritone and performed such roles as Méphistophélès in *Faust* (under the baton of Kurt Herbert Adler) at the Shanghai Opera Theater. Since his U.S. debut with the Illinois Opera Theater as Figaro in *The Marriage of Figaro*, he has performed Papageno in *The Magic Flute* and Escamillo in *Carmen*. He sang Enrico in *Lucia di Lammermoor* for the 1990 Merola Opera Program (as well as for Western Opera Theater's 1990-91 national tour), and returned to the Merola Program last year, performing Germont in *La Traviata* at Villa Montalvo and for WOT's 1991-92 tour. The



STEPHEN GUGGENHEIM

young artist has performed a variety of works in concert, including Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms* with the Boston Symphony led by Seiji Ozawa, the world premiere of Qigang Chen's *Poème Lyrique II* with the San Francisco Symphony, and *Carmina Burana* with the California Symphony. The winner of numerous scholarships and awards, Zhou received the Leona Gordon Lowin Memorial Award and the Kent Family Study Grant at the 1991 Merola Opera Program Grand Finals.

A 1992 Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, tenor **Stephen Guggenheim** appears as a Boyar in *Boris Godunov*, the First Prisoner in *Fidelio*, a Royal Herald in *Don Carlo*, and sings several roles in *Christophe Colomb*. He made his first appearance with the Company this summer as an Officer in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*. A native of Saratoga, California, he received his bachelor's degree in voice from San Jose State University, and continued his studies at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. As a participant in the 1991 Merola Opera Program, he appeared as Alfredo in *La Traviata* at Villa Montalvo, and sang the role on Western Opera Theater's 1991-92 national tour. He also traveled to Guam and Japan last year as Don José in the Opera Center's production of *Carmen*. Earlier this year he appeared as Odoardo in the Showcase production of *Ariodante* and was a soloist in Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle* with the S. F. Opera Orchestra at Grace Cathedral. Guggenheim has appeared with West Bay Opera as Cavaradossi in *Tosca* and Max in *Der Freischütz*; with Marin Opera as Master Shallow in the world premiere of Gordon Getty's *Plump Jack*; and with Pocket Opera as Sempronio in *The Apothecary*. With Opera San Jose (where he was an Artist in Residence), he has sung Noah and the Doctor in the world premiere of *Hotel Eden*, the title role of *Albert Herring*, Alfred in *Die Fledermaus*, Count Almaviva in *Il Barbiere di*



EARLE PATRIARCO

Siviglia, Ferrando in *Così fan tutte*, Nemorino in *L'Elisir d'Amore*, Anatol in *Vanessa*, and Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly*. He also portrayed the Leper in a concert version of Messiaen's *St. Francis of Assisi* with the Berkeley Symphony, conducted by Kent Nagano.

In his debut season with San Francisco Opera, baritone **Earle Patriarco** sings Lavitsky in *Boris Godunov*, the Alcalde in *La Forza del Destino*, Fouquier-Tinville in *Andrea Chénier*, and portrays several roles in *Christophe Colomb*. The Southern California native earned his bachelor of music degree from Biola University and his master of music degree from the University of Southern California. In 1990 he became the youngest and only male finalist in the Mozart Concorso Di Canto in Venice, Italy, and last year was awarded the Grand Prize in the Glory of Mozart Competition in Toronto. He has performed with West Coast Opera as Silvio in *Pagliacci*, with the Los Angeles Concert Opera in *The Gypsy Baron*, with Marin Opera as Danilo in *The Merry Widow*, and was heard in concert at the Corona Del Mar Baroque Festival and the 1991 Mozart Festival in Lugano, Switzerland. As a 1991 Merola Opera Program participant, he sang the role of Giorgio Germont in *La Traviata*, a part he also sang on Western Opera Theater's national tour. Returning to the Merola Program this year, he portrayed Marcello in *La Bohème* and was awarded the Florence Bruce Award at the Grand Finals. Next season's assignments include Dr. Malatesta in *Don Pasquale* for Marin Opera.

In his debut season with San Francisco Opera, bass **Scott Wilde** sings Nikitch in *Boris Godunov*, the Marchese di Calatrava in *La Forza del Destino*, Schmidt in *Andrea Chénier*, and several roles in *Christophe Colomb*. A native of Wisconsin and a graduate of the Manhattan School of Music, he was a member of the Juilliard Opera Center where he



SCOTT WILDE

appeared in *L'Amico Fritz*, *The Crucible* and *Così fan tutte*. He also participated in the Glimmerglass Young Artists Program, the Chautauqua Young Artists Studio, the Sarasota Opera Apprentice Program, and at the Aspen Music Festival in *Don Giovanni* and *La Cenerentola*. Engagements during the 1990-91 season included Leporello in *Don Giovanni* with Madison Opera, Don Alfonso in *Così fan tutte* with Virginia Opera, Pistola in *Falstaff* for Utah Opera, Opera Festival of New Jersey, and the Juilliard Opera Center, as well as *Salome* for the Washington Opera and Baltimore Opera. His most recent assignments include his New York City Opera debut in *Tosca*, *Turandot*, *Madama Butterfly* and *La Traviata*, Crespel and Luther in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* for Washington Opera, Don Basilio in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* for Madison Opera, and his first appearance with the Opera Theatre of St. Louis as Theseus in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Next year he makes his Orlando Opera debut as Lodovico in *Otello* and returns to St. Louis as the Commendatore in *Don Giovanni*.

Internationally acclaimed as one of the world's leading young conductors in a wide range of operatic and orchestral repertoire, **Kent Nagano** makes his San Francisco Opera debut leading performances of *Christophe Colomb*. In the last four years, he has been appointed to three major musical organizations: In 1988, he was named Music Director of the Opéra de Lyon; in 1990, Associate Principal Guest Conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra; and, in 1991, Music Director and Principal Conductor Designate of England's famed Hallé Orchestra. His most recent positions include Principal Guest Conductor of Pierre Boulez's Paris-based Ensemble Intercontemporain, and the same post with the Dutch Radio Orchestras. Maestro Nagano has been Music Director and Conductor of the Berkeley Symphony since 1978, and has



KENT NAGANO

elevated that orchestra into an ensemble renowned for its performances of the music of Olivier Messiaen and for its championing of contemporary music via a series of world, U.S. and West Coast premieres. He has led Messiaen's orchestral works all over the world, and has conducted (as well as recorded) the local concert premiere in several countries of the composer's only opera, *Saint-François d'Assise*. In 1984, Nagano received worldwide recognition after successfully conducting the Boston Symphony in a performance of Mahler's Ninth Symphony on one day's notice without rehearsal. He subsequently received the prestigious Seaver/NEA Conducting Award which allowed him to pursue further conducting studies with Seiji Ozawa, Leonard Bernstein, Bernard Haitink, Claudio Abbado and Boulez. At the Opéra de Lyon, he has conducted the traditional repertoire, as well as such rarities as the original French version of Richard Strauss' *Salomé*, Prokofiev's *The Love for Three Oranges*, Martinů's *Three Wishes* and Busoni's *Turandot*. Additional operatic highlights include *Wozzeck*, *Salomé*, and *Elektra* at the Paris Opera; *Salomé* at La Scala, Milan; the world premiere of John Adams's *The Death of Klinghoffer* in Brussels and the same composer's *Nixon in China* and Weill's *Mahagonny* at the Los Angeles Music Center Opera. In addition to *Klinghoffer* and *Saint-François*, Nagano's growing operatic discography includes Busoni's *Turandot* and *Arlecchino*, Poulenc's *Les Dialogues des Carmélites*, and the award-winning *Love for Three Oranges*. The native of California, who earned his undergraduate degree from UC-Santa Cruz and received a master's degree in music from San Francisco State University, currently maintains homes in San Francisco, Paris and Lyon.

San Francisco Opera General Director **Lotfi Mansouri** conceived this fall's presentation of *Andrea Chénier* and stages the concert performances of *Christophe Colomb*.



LOTFI MANSOURI

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 (over 40 productions since 1963) include the 1979 presentation of *La Gioconda* with Renata Scotto and Luciano Pavarotti, telecast live throughout the U.S. and to Europe via satellite; 1988's opening night production of *L'Africaine*; 1989's highly acclaimed new production of *Lulu*; *Wozzeck* and *Die Fledermaus* in 1990; *Tristan und Isolde* and *Attila* in 1991; and this summer's enthusiastically received new production of *Guillaume Tell*, a Company premiere. Recent successes elsewhere include *Anna Bolena* for Seattle Opera, and *Andrea Chénier*



THOMAS J. MUNN

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 film *Moonstruck*.

Thomas J. Munn, Lighting Director and Design Consultant for San Francisco Opera since 1976, designed the lighting for *Tosca*, *Boris Godunov*, *Don Carlo*, *Andrea Chénier*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, as well as the scenery, projections and lighting for *Christophe Colomb*. His lighting schemes were seen this summer for the Company premiere of *Guillaume Tell* and the new *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.

Christophe Colomb

By CHARLES SHERE

1.

"I am a Frenchman from Provence, and by religion a Jew." So runs the proud yet matter-of-fact opening sentence of Darius Milhaud's memoir, *Notes Without Music*. Darius Milhaud: only child of a comfortable bourgeois family; devoted husband to his own first cousin; doting father of an only son; sophisticated friend to Picasso, Satie, Claudel; a man who had conversed with Gide and met Debussy; a legendary teacher here in the Bay Area, where his students, at Mills College, included many of the composers active today. (Among them: jazz pianist Dave Brubeck.)

A garrulous yet insinuating composer, best known for his "jazz" ballet *La Création du Monde*, he was generally identified with music primarily aspiring to entertainment. (He was the inventor, with Erik Satie, of "furniture music," music to be heard in the background rather than actively listened to in the foreground.) Avowedly a lyricist above all, he excelled in small forms: *Saudades do Brasil*, for example, a suite of minute piano pieces depicting the dances of the twelve neighborhoods of Rio de Janeiro.

Milhaud learned those neighborhoods first-hand, in his mid-twenties, as the secretary to Paul Claudel, the poet-playwright whose earnest (if spiritualist) patriotism had been rewarded by a war-beset France with a legation in Brazil. And so was rewarded the young Milhaud's already formed yearning for exotic scenes—reminiscent of another Provençal's, Marius's, in the Marcel Pagnol "Fanny" trilogy.

Restlessness for distant and exotic climes is an honored thread in Milhaud's Mediterranean heritage, one that goes back to Odysseus. Christopher Columbus is not the first sailor to star in a Milhaud opera; the composer had also collaborated with Jean Cocteau two years earlier on the short but lurid tragedy *Le Pauvre Matelot* (The poor sailor), another Marius type, but a tragic one, murdered, mistakenly, on his early surprise return from the sea.

Milhaud was drawn to opera early. He began his first, *La Brebis Égarée* ("The Way-



ward Ewe," to the play by Francis Jammes, first performed in Paris in 1923), in 1910, when he was only eighteen. At twenty, he was living in a studio around the corner from the Paris Opéra. He hated Wagner (and avoided German music in general), but was devoted to the challenge of words and music. Of the 45 opus numbers he had listed by his twenty-fifth birthday, 37 involve voice, including a second opera, *Les Euménides*, his first to a libretto by Paul Claudel.

Three earlier settings of Claudel had declaimed antique stories: *Agamemnon* (1914), *Les Choéphores* (1915), and *Protée* (1919). But the full-length opera of his maturity would transport their chorus-

"The Six" with Jean Cocteau in 1952: Standing—Francis Poulenc, Germaine Tailleferre, Georges Auric, Louis Durey; Seated—Arthur Honegger, Jean Cocteau, Darius Milhaud.

laden Greek ritual to New World settings. After his travels to the Americas, during World War I, and after the half-hour operas for Cocteau, he took up political pageantry with a vengeance; *Christophe Colomb; Maximilien*, based on the ill-fated mid-nineteenth century Hapsburg Emperor of Mexico (libretto by Franz Werfel and Armand Lunel, composed in 1930 and performed the following year in Paris); and *Bolivar*, on the South American liberator (1943, libretto by Jacques Supervielle

Charles Shere is a Berkeley composer and writer, formerly art and music critic of the Oakland Tribune. He participated in Milhaud's final interview for KQED, on the French composer's retirement from the Mills College faculty, and subsequently taught for many years at Mills, where Darius Milhaud had found asylum during World War II. Shere's opera *La Mariée mise à nu par ses célibataires, même* (The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even), to the painting-scenario by Milhaud's friend Marcel Duchamp, was produced at Mills in 1984. He is currently writing biographies of the composers Robert Erickson, Lou Harrison, and John Cage.

and Madeleine Milhaud, the composer's actress wife; given at the Paris Opéra in 1950).

2.

If Milhaud is a self-avowed lyricist, he is an equally proficient dramatist. He was drawn to Greek drama partly for its dramatic use of vocal chant and percussive punctuation. *Les Choëphores* was the first of a remarkably successful series of dramatic exercises in contained violence. (A notable late essay in violence familiar to Bay Area listeners was *Murder of a Great Chief of State*, composed in one day to commemorate the assassination of President Kennedy, and given its premiere a week after the event by the Oakland Symphony under Gerhard Samuel.)

Two scenes in *Les Choëphores* were so violent, Milhaud recalled in his memoir, "that they created a problem that I solved by having the words spoken in time with the music by one ... narrator, while the choruses uttered words or disjointed phrases..." In this opera, he also first composed a chorus in two simultaneous keys, a device he would both pioneer and master. He refers to the resulting "polytonality" as a means of obtaining "a more subtle sweetness and a greater intensity of violence," exactly the virtues Charles Ives had found in the procedure at about the same time on our own side of the Atlantic.

It's important to note that such Modernist essays were made—are made—in the interest of clarity and precision, not (as is often thought by suspicious critics, intent on not being gulled) in the interest of obscurity and vagueness. They are in fact reactions to the soft contours of the Symbolist esthetic that immediately preceded Modernism. "Reacting against the Impressionism of the post-Debussy composers," Milhaud recalled about the post-World War I days, "what musicians asked for now was a clearer, sturdier, more precise type of art that should yet not have lost its qualities of human sympathy and sensitivity."

And from then on, for ten years, Milhaud participated in one of the most fertile, exhilarating, "pluralistic" explosions of art and entertainment since the beginning of the seventeenth century, when European opera came into being. It was a period similar to, though no doubt superior to, the San Francisco of the late 1960s. Jazz and twelve-tone music, movies

and nude stage extravaganzas, cocktails and cocaine, neoclassical enthusiasms for classical antiquity and up-to-the-minute experiments in technology and psychology—all nourished a bewildering variety of new art. Cubism gave way to Dada; Dada gave way to Surrealism. If it wasn't *le dernier cri*, it wasn't *à la mode*. Milhaud composed a shimmy, *Caramel Mou*, for Cocteau, for an entertainment that also featured Satie's *Le Piège de Méduse*, which starred a dancing stuffed monkey.

"Shows of this kind, so variegated in character, were excellent training for us, enabling us to experiment in all sorts of techniques and to strive constantly after new forms of expression," Milhaud later recalled. But note: he brought to these new forms a great depth of humanity, a profound respect for the spirit. It was this that had attracted him to the peasant poetics of Jammes, and to the Catholic devotion of Claudel. And it is this, more than the urge to exotic locale and exploration, that animates *Christophe Colomb*.

3.

And what of the opera itself—the score, the music Milhaud wrote to set Claudel's text?

Like so many other operas, it can boast no final, authentic form. One speaks of performing an opera entire or cut, but even that question is vexing. *Christophe Colomb* exists in two primary versions: the score completed in 1928, first performed two years later in Berlin; and the revision undertaken 25 years later, performed by the French Radio Orchestra and Chorus at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in 1956, and published in 1977. This revision made cuts: some small, presumably to tighten the work (especially for an unseen radio performance), but it also incorporated a few more extensive ones.

(Among them, unfortunately, was a scene [originally near the end of the first act] in which a number of Native American gods—Huichtlipochtli, Quetzalcoatl, Tlaloc, and Ixtlipetzloc—are portrayed churning the waters of the Atlantic as they apprehensively watch Columbus's approaching flotilla. One anonymous god is particularly poignant: "Alas," he sighs, "we've been so comfortable, ever since *la création du monde*, here in America.")

The major change in the 1956 revision, though, was the reversal of the two acts. Claudel's original libretto first presents the story of the factual voyage (well, factual,

but greatly dramatized); then, after intermission, comments on the consequences of that discovery. Milhaud's reversal of this order is unconvincing, and San Francisco Opera has restored the original order, while maintaining the "cuts" that Milhaud himself seems, at least at some time, to have sanctioned.

The omitted tableaux are, from Act I (and apart from the one already mentioned), a short Prayer by the Narrator, asking divine inspiration to explain the Columbus Story to us (a scene directly descending from similar invocations in Homer and Virgil); a short scene in which an exhausted Columbus stops, with his mule, at an inn on his way to the court of Isabella; a scene for orchestra and (wordless) chorus depicting the gentle young Isabella in her garden; and a long scene in which Isabella, praying to St. James (Santiago, or San Diego), reveals her profound spiritualism, symbolized by the Dove which is Christ. ("Colombe," with the final "e," is the French word for "dove.") From Act II only one scene was cut, eighty-four measures of orchestral interlude between the first two tableaux.

The result of these omissions, apart from shortening a longish and speculative first act, is an inevitable lessening of its theological meaning. Claudel was a devout Catholic—he remains best known for his play *L'Annonce faite à Marie*, ("The Tidings Brought to Mary")—and his Catholicism was clad in the rather vaguely contoured veils of late-nineteenth-century Symbolist mysticism. It's tempting to speculate that this appealed to a similar yet quite different strain in Milhaud's temper: the mystical Naturism, descended as much from pagan Greece as from orthodox Judaism, which had found another operatic outlet in the short but magnificent chamber opera *Les Malheurs d'Orphée* (1924, libretto by Milhaud's school-companion Armand Lunel), with its distinctly pastoral, South-of-France (historically a Greek colony) flavor.

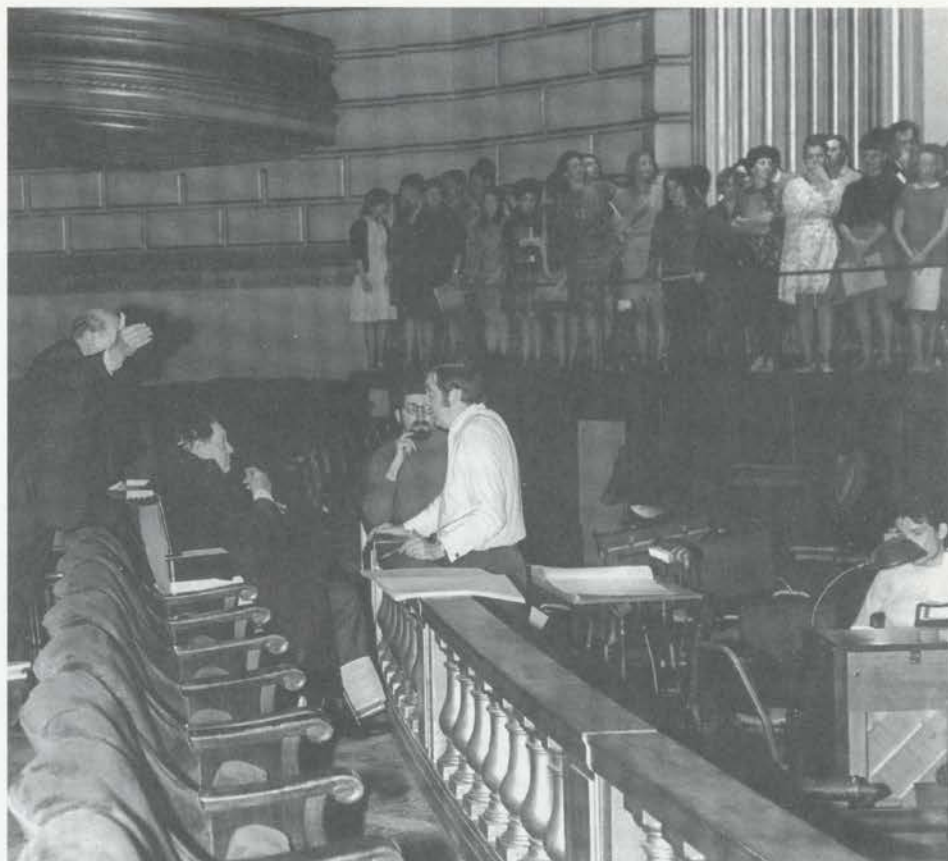
If the specific Catholicism of Claudel's text is somewhat lessened by the revision, though, his more universal humanism is perhaps strengthened—and particularly by the reinstatement of the original order of the acts. Columbus emerges as a relatively simple though obsessive and inspired man, who works for a politician (to whom he literally promises the world) in order to prove the truth of his convictions.

He can't be bothered with the consequences, even when they extend to the reinstatement of slavery in a world—well, a Europe—finally relatively free of that loathsome industry.

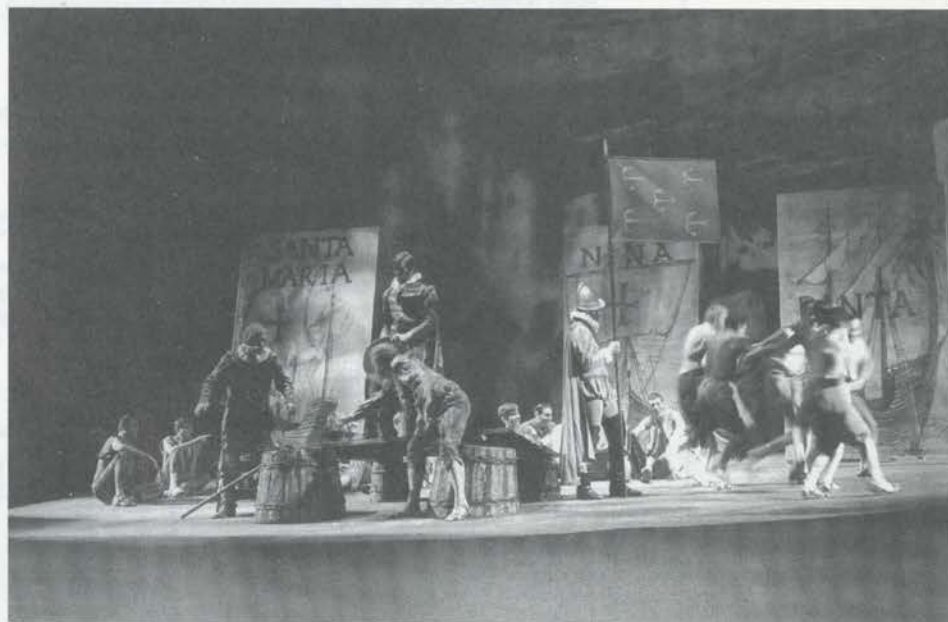
Milhaud understands this limited view, but never bespeaks it. It is said that Milhaud found his humorous depiction of the Aztec gods silly and dated when he prepared his revision of the opera. Today, when so many cultures so easily contend in the American mainstream, and so many sensibilities, once ignored, must be considered, his original approach in that scene might indeed contradict the prevailing humanity of his artistic vision. After all, Milhaud was the man who made the major opening for non-European power in the prevailing narrow and lethargic music of his day, when he startled Paris with *La Création du Monde*. His profound respect for the depth and richness of Black American jazz was an exact analogue of Picasso's for tribal African masks, which re-energized a sadly moribund visual aesthetic a few years earlier.

How should we approach this curious opera today, one hundred years after the birth of its composer, five hundred years after the event it commemorates? Intently, if possible: this is not "furniture music." Rich low colors express its depth, polytonal harmonies its complexity, nervous percussive rhythms its energy, high-placed soprano lines its spiritual aspiration. And, curiously enough for an opera about action, the architecture of *Christophe Colomb* is distancing, the story unrolling through narration (replacing conventional operatic recitative) and arioso, often with choral counterpoint, rather than stage action. The opera's voyage is an inner one; a voyage that searches the meaning, *within* humanity, of external action and discovery.

Christophe Colomb is the heir of many bequests: Greek drama, medieval pageant, French spectacle-opera. It is colored with the languid rhythms of Brazilian dance, the high woodwinds of Provençal folk-music, the percussion orchestra of early Modernist "experimentalism." Above all, it is tense with these and many other oppositions, like the collisions it represents—of received opinion and new ideas, of European court and American "savagery," of Jew and Catholic, intellectual and actor. It takes no definitive form. It is alive. □



NORTON



NORTON

(Top) In 1968, San Francisco Opera gave the U.S. premiere of Darius Milhaud's *Christopher Columbus: The Discovery of America*. The photo shows the composer in conversation with conductor Gunther Schuller and prompter Philip Eisenberg during an early staging rehearsal. The San Francisco Opera Chorus can be seen on a high platform in the back.

(Above) A scene from San Francisco Opera's 1968 staging of *Christopher Columbus*. The work was presented as part of a triple bill which included Kurt Weill's *Royal Palace* and Arnold Schoenberg's *Erwartung*.

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