

I Vespri Siciliani
(Sicilian Vespers)

1993-1994

Friday, September 10, 1993 7:30 PM
Tuesday, September 14, 1993 7:30 PM
Friday, September 17, 1993 8:00 PM
Thursday, September 23, 1993 8:00 PM
Sunday, September 26, 1993 1:00 PM
Wednesday, September 29, 1993 7:30 PM
Saturday, October 2, 1993 8:00 PM

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SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

1993 SEASON



I VESPRI SICILIANI



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I Vespri Siciliani

Sept. 10, 14, 17, 23, 26 (M), 29, Oct. 2
Giuseppe Verdi

Daughter of the Regiment

(*La Fille du Régiment*)
Sept. 11, 15, 18, 21, 24, 26, 30, Oct. 3 (M)
Gaetano Donizetti

La Bohème

Sept. 19 (M), 22, 25, 28, Oct. 6, 9, 13, 16,
Dec. 2, 5 (M), 9, 11
Giacomo Puccini

Turandot

Oct. 7, 10 (M), 12, 15, 18, 20, 23, 26, 29, Nov. 2
Giacomo Puccini

The Makropulos Case

(*Věc Makropulos*)
Oct. 14, 17 (M), 22, 27, 30
Leoš Janáček

Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg

Oct. 28, 31 (M), Nov. 3, 6, 9, 12, 17
Richard Wagner

La Clemenza di Tito

Nov. 7 (M), 11, 13, 19, 22, 24, 28 (M)
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

I Puritani

Nov. 16, 21 (M), 27, 30, Dec. 3, 7, 10
Vincenzo Bellini

The Queen of Spades

(*Пиковая Дама*)
Nov. 23, 26, Dec. 1, 4, 8, 12 (M)
Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

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War Memorial Opera House

1993 FALL SEASON
SEPTEMBER 10 • DECEMBER 12, 1993

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

Lotfi Mansouri, General Director

I Vespri Siciliani

1993 Fall Season
Vol. 71, No. 4

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Church, Frederic (1826-1900)
Sunset (1856)
Oil on canvas, 16^{1/4} x 24^{3/8} in.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT AND THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

MESSICK



Welcome to San Francisco Opera's 1993 Fall Season!

Preparation for every opera season can be divided roughly into two areas: the artistic plans, along with the myriad negotiations, meetings and highly skilled labor necessary to implement them; and securing the financial resources to bring those plans to life on stage.

This year, both areas are of special interest. As our General Director will elaborate, this fall's lineup is especially interesting and varied. As for financial support, that is a topic that takes on special significance this year, as arts organizations all across the country are facing unprecedented economic challenges.

It is all the more gratifying at such a time to acknowledge the generous benefactors who have helped make this Fall Season possible. Our new *I Vespri Siciliani* has been generously underwritten by The L.J. and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation, with supertitles made possible by a gift from The Stanley S. Langendorf Foundation; *La Fille du Régiment* is co-sponsored by Sybase, Inc., with supertitles financed by Pacific Gas & Electric Company; *La Bohème* has been made possible in part through a gift from Mr. and Mrs. Alfred S. Wilsey; *Turandot* has been underwritten by Mr. and Mrs. John N. Rosekrans, Jr., with supertitles again made possible by The Stanley S. Langendorf Foundation; *The Makropulos Case* is co-sponsored by the Carol Franc Buck Foundation and The Bernard Osher Foundation; *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* is sponsored by Mr. and Mrs. Reid W. Dennis; and *The Queen of Spades* has been made possible by a generous gift from Mr. and Mrs. John R. Hamilton.

We are always happy to welcome new names to our roster of production sponsors, and we hope that more individuals, corporations and foundations will consider the satisfaction and benefits of joining this very special group.

In addition, we are always happy 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 sincere gratitude to Mayor Frank Jordan and Chief Administrative Officer Rudolf Nothenberg for their invaluable support; to San Francisco Opera Guild; and to the War Memorial Board of Trustees, for their ongoing support and assistance.

Reid W. Dennis
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MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL DIRECTOR

LIEBERMAN



It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to our 1993 Fall Season, a season that offers so much for opera-lovers, whatever your personal taste and musical preferences.

Our repertoire — which features two works new to San Francisco — includes representative works by many of the most celebrated opera composers of all time, reflecting the incredible diversity of this art form in all its glory. Theatrical genres, languages, musical styles, subject matter, production styles — you'll be treated to a wide variety of them all.

We have also lined up a terrific roster of stellar singers, both local favorites as well as major debuts; and our conducting duties will be carried out by a select list of names headed by Music Director Donald Runnicles and Principal Guest Conductor Charles Mackerras, who together are responsible for helping to hone our wonderful musicians' skills to the highest degree possible.

Our Celebration of Strauss resulted not only in glowing critical accolades, but also the taping of one production (*Capriccio*) for telecast and videocassette release.

This fall we will add yet another San Francisco Opera production to the growing list of videos representing our Company throughout the world: the stunning David Hockney production of *Turandot*.

There is so much to choose from this fall, I would hesitate to single out any one production; every member of our highly knowledgeable and discerning opera audience has his or her own favorites, and I'm sure you won't need me to steer you in the right direction.

It is no secret that arts organizations throughout the country, including San Francisco Opera, are facing financial challenges more daunting than any encountered in the past. In the complicated process of planning for our future, our goal has always been and will remain to present to you the finest opera available anywhere, without endangering the future stability of this great Company. Our ultimate aim has always been the highest quality, and that isn't about to change. You, our loyal audience members, deserve no less.

Lotfi Mansouri
General Director



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Vaness, Guo; Merritt, Noble, Morris,
Locke*, Wilde, Caputo+, Skinner,
Baldvinsson+, Guggenheim+
Mackerras/Alden/Steinberg/Munn

Sept. 10	7:30 p.m.	Sept. 26	1:00 p.m.
Sept. 14	7:30 p.m.	Sept. 29	7:30 p.m.
Sept. 17	8:00 p.m.	Oct. 2	8:00 p.m.
Sept. 23	8:00 p.m.		

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Mary C. Skaggs Foundation.

La Fille du Régiment Donizetti
Battle, Palmer*, Sugden**, Lopardo,
Trempont, Sénéchal
Campanella/Donnell/Montresor/
Arhelger

Sept. 11	8:00 p.m.	Sept. 24	8:00 p.m.
Sept. 15	8:00 p.m.	Sept. 26	7:30 p.m.
Sept. 18	8:00 p.m.	Sept. 30	7:30 p.m.
Sept. 21	7:30 p.m.	Oct. 3	2:00 p.m.

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La Bohème Puccini
Sept. and Oct. performances:
Villarroel*, Panagulias; Aronica**/
De La Mora (Oct.), Shimell (Sept., Oct.
6)/Ledbetter, Skinner, Vasquez,
Capecchi, Caputo+, Sumegi+
Dec. performances:
Racette, Fortuna; Lima, Ledbetter,
Milne, Vasquez, Capecchi, Caputo+,
Sumegi+
Mackerras (Sept., Oct. 6, 16)/Summers
Bernhard/Mitchell/Mahoney/Munn

Sept. 19	2:00 p.m.	Oct. 13	8:00 p.m.
Sept. 22	7:30 p.m.	Oct. 16	8:00 p.m.
Sept. 25	8:00 p.m.	Dec. 2	7:30 p.m.
Sept. 28	8:00 p.m.	Dec. 5	2:00 p.m.
Oct. 6	7:30 p.m.	Dec. 9	8:00 p.m.
Oct. 9	8:00 p.m.	Dec. 11	8:00 p.m.

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New Production

Turandot Puccini
Marton/Voss* (Oct. 20; Nov. 2, 5),
Mazzaria*; Sylvester/Popov (Oct. 20,
Nov 5), Langan, Baerg, Petersen, Estep,
Frank, Patton+
Runnicles/Robertson (Nov. 2, 5)/
McClintock/Hockney/Falconer*/
Munn

Oct. 7	7:30 p.m.	Oct. 20	7:30 p.m.
Oct. 10	2:00 p.m.	Oct. 23	8:00 p.m.
Oct. 12	8:00 p.m.	Oct. 26	8:00 p.m.
Oct. 15	8:00 p.m.	Oct. 29	8:00 p.m.
Oct. 18	7:30 p.m.	Nov. 2	7:30 p.m.
		Nov. 5	8:00 p.m.

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Donald C. Runnicles, *Music Director*

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Sundine*, Brett*, Cook, Plette*, Clark*,
Fox, Švejda**, Jedlička**, Burden,
Patriarco+, Rideout
Mackerras/Mansouri/Söderström*/
Bauer-Ecsy/Stennett/Munn

Oct. 14	7:30 p.m.	Oct. 27	8:00 p.m.
Oct. 17	2:00 p.m.	Oct. 30	8:00 p.m.
Oct. 22	8:00 p.m.		

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Rootering*, Magnusson, Petersen,
Del Carlo, Rideout, Ledbetter/Cox
(Nov. 3, 6), Vasquez, Guggenheim+
Locke, Sumegi+, Condy, Baldvinsson+
Runnicles/Mansouri/Oswald/
Mahoney/Munn

Oct. 28	6:30 p.m.	Nov. 9	6:30 p.m.
Oct. 31	1:00 p.m.	Nov. 12	6:30 p.m.
Nov. 3	6:30 p.m.	Nov. 17	6:30 p.m.
Nov. 6	6:30 p.m.		

Made possible by a gift from Mr. and Mrs.
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San Francisco Opera Premiere
Production new to San Francisco
La Clemenza di Tito Mozart
Kazarnovskaya*/Lister (Nov. 22, 24,
28), Von Stade, Graham, Parrish;
Heppner (Nov. 7, 11, 19)/TBA, Cox
Runnicles/Takazauckas*/Lynch/
Ramicova/Arhelger

Nov. 7	2:00 p.m.	Nov. 22	8:00 p.m.
Nov. 11	7:30 p.m.	Nov. 24	7:30 p.m.
Nov. 13	8:00 p.m.	Nov. 28	2:00 p.m.
Nov. 19	8:00 p.m.		

Production from Houston Grand Opera
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Production new to San Francisco
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Kunde, Frontali*, Patton+, Caputo+
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Nov. 16	8:00 p.m.	Dec. 3	8:00 p.m.
Nov. 21	2:00 p.m.	Dec. 7	7:30 p.m.
Nov. 27	8:00 p.m.	Dec. 10	8:00 p.m.
Nov. 30	7:30 p.m.		

Production from the Welsh National
Opera.

The Queen of Spades Tchaikovsky
Guleghina, Rysanek, Petersen,
Claycomb+, Guo, Plette; Atlantov,
Redkin*/Quilico (Dec. 4, 8, 12),
Alexeiev, Petersen, Baldvinsson+,
Guggenheim+, Sumegi+, Locke
De Waart/Copley/O'Hearn/Ray/Munn

Nov. 23	7:30 p.m.	Dec. 4	7:30 p.m.
Nov. 26	7:30 p.m.	Dec. 8	7:30 p.m.
Dec. 1	7:30 p.m.	Dec. 12	1:30 p.m.

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Kathleen Brett*	Maria Guleghina	Karita Mattila	Marie Plette*	Carol Vaness
Laura Claycomb+	Yanyu Guo	Lucia Mazzaria*	Patricia Racette	Verónica Villarroel*
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	Catherine Keen	Ann Panagulis	Mika Shigematsu+	Ealynn Voss*
Valery Alexeiev	Kenneth Cox	Gregory Kunde	James Morris	Michel Sénéchal
Roberto Aronica**	Fernando De La Mora	Kevin J. Langan	Timothy Noble	William Shimell
Vladimir Atlantov	John Del Carlo	Victor Ledbetter	Earle Patriarco+	Philip Skinner
Theodore Baerg	Craig Estep	Luis Lima	Chester D. Patton+	Daniel Sumegi+
Magnus Baldvinsson+	Tom Fox	Randolph Locke*	Dennis Petersen	Miroslav Švejška*
William Burden	Joseph Frank	Frank Lopardo	Vladimir Popov	Michael Sylvester
Renato Capecchi	Roberto Frontali*	Lars Magnusson	Gino Quilico	Michel Trempont
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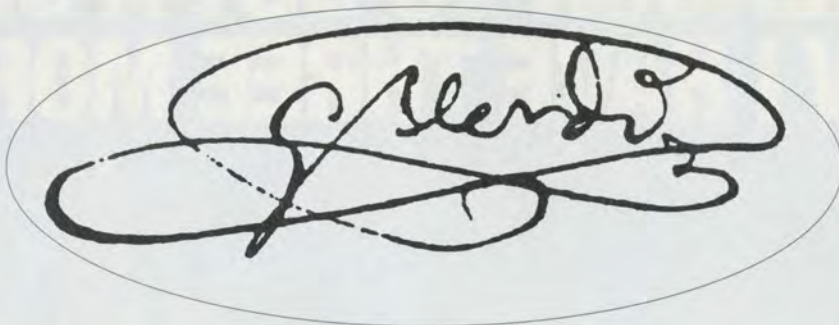
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The Road To France

BY JULIAN BUDDEN



"The noblest prospect that a Scotchman ever sees is the high road which leads him to England." Dr. Johnson's words could apply equally well to Italian composers and the road to France during the late eighteenth century and a good half of the nineteenth. It was in Paris that Piccinni and Sacchini reached their respective pinnacles with *Didon* and *Oedipe à Colone*; that Cherubini and Spontini succeeded in making their mark on musical history; that Rossini set the seal on a career of operatic glory with *Guillaume Tell*. Donizetti would spend his last years mostly commuting between Vienna and Paris. Even Bellini, master of Italian bel canto, was negotiating for a contract with the Paris Opéra at the time of his early death.

Wherein lay the attraction? Chiefly in the absence of those restraints that had long governed Italian theaters, where the star singer was king (or more often queen) and public taste sedately conservative. Indeed it was the lack of superlative voices that had encouraged French opera to develop along more adventurous lines, with greater attention paid to the orchestra, more abundant use of chorus and ensemble and hence spectacular tableaux of a kind unknown in Italy. Moreover, ballet, which south of the Alps formed a separate entertainment entrusted to inferior composers, was here integrated into the operatic scheme. All this permitted an Italian a far wider scope in which to deploy his musical and dramatic skills. Parisian audiences, too, were accounted the most sophisticated in Europe; and the products of their leading opera house, the *Académie Royale* (later *Imperiale*) *de Musique*, more carefully prepared, better remunerated and more attentively listened to than those of any other country.

During the second quarter of the nineteenth century French "grand opera," as it was generally called, reached a peak of international renown under the aegis of Eugène Scribe and Giacomo Meyerbeer. Works such as Meyerbeer's *Robert le Diable* (1831), *Les Huguenots* (1836) and *Le Prophète* (1849) and Halévy's *La Juive* (1835) were acclaimed as having set a new standard of

musical dramaturgy. Admittedly, Wagner would deride their sensational *coups de théâtre* as "effects without causes," but this did not prevent him from aiming in the same direction with his own *Rienzi* (1843), wittily dubbed by Hans von Bülow "Meyerbeer's best opera." Verdi, like Rossini and Donizetti before him, had chosen to enter the lists with an adaptation of one of his earlier Italian operas—*I Lombardi alla Prima Crociata*, which he transformed into *Jérusalem* (1847) with the aid of Scribe's lieutenants, Royer and Vaëz. With the so-called "romantic trilogy" of *Rigoletto*, *Il Trovatore* and *La Traviata* behind him, he felt that the time had come for him to take the French capital by storm with a wholly original work in five acts with ballet to a libretto by the master himself.

Unfortunately, it was rather late in the day. Grand opera in the Meyerbeerian mold was born in the age of Louis Philippe, when France kept a low profile abroad and indulged in nostalgic dreams of former grandeur at home. With the Revolution of 1848 and the advent of Napoleon III, all this would change. The presiding genius of the Second Empire was no longer Meyerbeer but Offenbach, whose first operette, *Les deux aveugles*, ended with an uproarious parody of the gambling scene from *Robert le Diable*; and, although the Opéra continued its annual turn-out of grandiose historical frescoes, few of them outlasted the year in which they appeared. Worse still, Scribe, now in his sixties, was beginning to run short of ideas. *Les Vêpres Siciliennes* which he offered to Verdi was based on a libretto previously submitted to Donizetti and abandoned by him half-way through its composition—*Le duc d'Albe*, dealing with the revolt of the Netherlands against Spanish rule. The Dutch became the Sicilians, who in 1282 threw off their Angevin yoke with a bloody massacre of the French soldiery. The consequent dis-

tortion of historical events would worry nobody. If the patriot Jean de Procida had a hand in fomenting the uprising, it was from a safe distance in Aragon. Guy de Montfort (Monforte), son of the English baron Simon, commemorated to this day by a statue in Leicester, was never governor of Sicily. A former adherent of Charles

d'Anjou, he was ignominiously dismissed from his service for the murder of Prince Henry of Cornwall.

Verdi accepted the scheme without demurring (though he later seems to have forgotten about this) and arrived in Paris for rehearsals in the autumn of 1854. Problems began at once. Sofia Cruvelli, a leading lady renowned for eccentricity, disappeared without warning (shades of Greta Garbo!) on a pre-marital honeymoon with her future husband the Baron Vigier. True, she returned a few days later and resumed her duties, but the hiatus had cost the Intendant, Roqueplan, his job. In the confusion that followed Verdi asked for his contract to be rescinded; but naturally this was refused. Early in January he addressed a long letter of remonstrance to Roqueplan's successor Crosnier, the burden of which was the general indifference to his opera, especially on the part of Scribe, who, it seems, rarely set foot in the theater. Even the plot had not worked out as Verdi wished. "I had hoped," he wrote, "that M. Scribe . . . would have found to finish the drama, one of those moving pieces which bring tears to the eyes and whose effect is always sure. I would point out, Monsieur, that this would have made all the difference to the work in general which is totally lacking in pathos, except for the romance in the fourth act . . . Finally I was counting on the fact that M. Scribe, as he had promised me right from the beginning, would have altered everything that attacked the honor of the Italians. The more I think about this subject the more I am convinced that it is dangerous. It injures the French because they are massacred. It injures the Italians because M. Scribe, in altering Procida's historical character, has made him—according to his favorite system—a common conspirator with a dagger in his hand. For God's sake, there are virtues and crimes in the history of every people and we

Julian Budden, internationally renowned musicologist, is the author of a landmark three-volume series, The Operas of Verdi.

are no worse than the rest. In any event, I am Italian above all and, come what may, I will never be an accessory to any injury done to my country."

All this is very noble, but hardly justified by the facts. Recently discovered letters to Scribe show that the opera's construction proceeded very much under Verdi's guidance, and that all implications of Sicilian cowardice were carefully removed from the text, though one or two survived in the printed libretto. Nor is the dénouement ineffective. The leisurely succession of numbers in the fifth act overhung by the shadow of the impending cataclysm builds up a tension that reaches an almost unbearable climax in the terzetto for Elena, Arrigo and Procida ("Sorte fatal!"). Highly skilled in the technique of every theatrical genre from ballet scenario to spoken play, Scribe never misjudged the pacing of an opera.

The premiere, which took place on June 13, 1855, was greeted, if not with rapture, at least with respect. All the critics recognized in it an advance over Verdi's previous works in musical craftsmanship. Berlioz, absent in London on the first night, was particularly generous on his return: "Without casting a slur on the merits of *Il Trovatore* and of so many other moving works of his, it must be agreed that in *Vêpres*, the penetrating intensity of melodic expression, the sumptuous variety, the judicious sobriety of the orchestration, the amplitude, the poetic sonority of his morceaux d'ensemble, the warm colors glowing everywhere and that sense of power, impassioned but slow to deploy itself, that is one of the characteristics of Verdi's genius, stamp the whole work with a grandeur, a sovereign majesty more marked than in the composer's previous creations."

True enough; but not sufficient to guarantee the opera's admission into that charmed circle of favorites, such as *Robert le Diable*, *Les Huguenots* or even Auber's *La Muette de Portici*, which were repeated year after year when the latest novelty failed to please. Once Sofia Cruvelli had retired from the scene, *Les Vêpres Siciliennes* began to sputter under inferior successors before being dropped altogether from the *affiche*. In an attempt to retrieve its fortunes Verdi returned to Paris in 1863 armed with a new romance written for the young tenor Villaret to replace the original "O jour de peine." But the singer failed to come up to expectations, and the opera fared accordingly. It would re-appear briefly in 1865, the year of Meyerbeer's posthumous *L'Africaine*. Thereafter no more was heard in Paris of *Les Vêpres Siciliennes*.

Even in Italy, given at first under the title of *Giovanna de Guzman* for reasons of censorship, with the setting changed to seventeenth-century Portugal, its popularity was relatively ephemeral. Abramo Basevi, author of the earliest systematic study of Verdi's operas, was probably echoing the general opinion when he described it in 1859 as an uneasy mixture of French and Italian



ARCHIVES OF LA SCALA

(Above, l. to r.) Boris Christoff (Procida), Maria Callas (Elena), Eugene Conley (Arrigo) and Enzo Mascherini (Monforte) in *I Vespri Siciliani*, the opera that opened Milan's La Scala 1951 season.

(Below) When *I Vespri Siciliani* received a new production at La Scala in 1970, the action was moved forward by a few centuries, and the opera featured Renata Scotto in the role of Elena.



styles, too long and drawn-out and therefore the least dramatic product of a composer who prided himself on rapidity of action—a judgment which survives almost word for word into Ferruccio Bonavia's study of 1930. Other commentators have been no more flattering. "Prolix, empty of ideas, lacking in novelty and melodic discourse" (Gatti, 1931), "Stiff and pretentious... an uninspired essay in 'grand' opera" (Hussey, 1942), "Conventional... mechanical... unsuccessful" (Toye, 1931)—these are just some of the epithets hurled at Verdi's first full-length essay in the grand Parisian manner.

Undoubtedly he himself had provided a notable armory in the above-mentioned letter to Crosnier—no matter that this was little more than the product of a moment's ill-humor. Then, too, Italian chauvinism has always played a part in the opera's evaluation; for how, it was thought, could Verdi have put his heart into a work conceived to a foreign text and designed to meet the tastes of a foreign audience? (Be it remembered that up until fifty years ago *Don Carlos*, iso-

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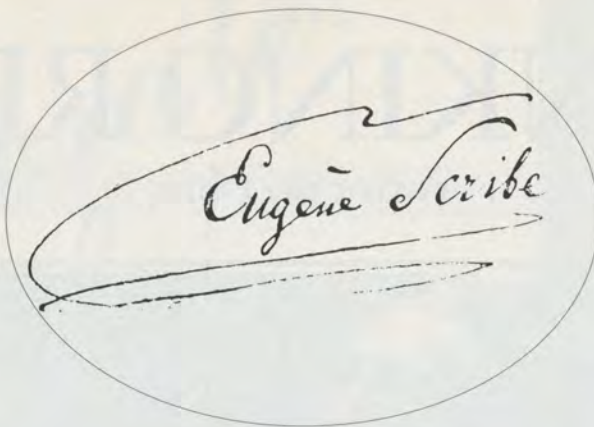


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lated numbers apart, was often dismissed as a French aberration!) As for riots, seizures of women and mass slaughter, they order these matters better in Meyerbeer—so ran the general belief. Yet in France it was not *L'Africaine* that killed *Les Vêpres*; its health had been fatally undermined eight years earlier by *Le Trouvère*, an adaptation for the Opéra of *Il Trovatore*. This was the Verdi that everyone knew and loved.

Well, *I Vespri Siciliani*, as it is called in Italy, certainly is different. Gone is the heart-on-sleeve manner, the headlong impetus of the earlier works; but this is not necessarily a backward step. Having summed up the Italian Romantic tradition with three masterworks as different one from the other as the last three symphonies of Mozart, Verdi was faced with the problem of self-renewal, as important to him as it would be to Puccini. As always, the nearest available source for an Italian was Paris and the French language. Boito, one of the opera's few champions (though rather oddly preferring it in its Portuguese setting) aptly remarked, "French verse, being less measured than our own, and having smoother, less pronounced accents, has benefitted the music, since it has removed the tedium of symmetrical cantilena, that mighty dowry and mighty sin of Italian prosody which generates a meanness and poverty of rhythm within the musical phrase." For confirmation one has only to turn to the broad theme that forms the second subject of the overture and reappears twice in the pivotal duet between father and son ("Quando al mio seno per te parlava"); every phrase has a different rhythmic cut. Note too the abundance throughout the score of "masculine" cadences (i.e. those which end on a strong beat), likewise a legacy from the French text. Inevitably, some of the melodies sound at first hearing curiously un-Verdian, none more so than Arrigo's Act V "Melodia" ("La brezza aleggia intorno")—a jewel nonetheless. Then observe the persistence during the first two acts and much of the overture of those "rat-a-tats" which in nineteenth century music so often connote the imminence of death. Only in French opera are they generally sung, as by the Sicilians in the course of the Act II finale, so setting a problem for the Italian translator, forced to ride roughshod over the double consonants ("Troppo già—favellò" etc.) which render the words intelligible. Indeed, the Italian text, it must be admitted, is none of the happiest.

This was not the first time that Verdi had set a drama of individuals against the back cloth of momentous historical events. In both *Ernani* and *Il Trovatore* history is on the march; but it is of little consequence to the dramatic essence of either. What counts in each case is the clash of personalities, fierce-



ly lit from the front. The most immediate predecessor of *I Vespri Siciliani* is *La Battaglia di Legnano*, Verdi's most conscious tribute to the uprising of 1848. But, though the political element is here brought fully into the foreground, the balance between love and patriotism is distinctly uneasy. The Arrigo (no relation!) who confronts his country's foes



Monument to the Sicilian Vespers in Palermo, unveiled in 1873.

by the side of his comrade-in-arms has little in common with the hothead who bitterly denounces his comrade's wife for having, as he thinks, betrayed him. Scribe's Arrigo and his beloved Elena are patriots above all, capable of holding their personal feelings in check. Hence a lower emotional temperature in *I Vespri* than in most of its Verdian predecessors. Indeed, Arrigo's romanza "Giorno di pianto," with its restless alternation of major and minor modes, explores a twilight of sentiment rarely encountered in an Italian operatic hero. But this too has its advantages. Balzac complained that in the novels of Walter Scott, whom he otherwise admired, the love interest is always static;

and the same could be said of Verdi's earlier works. But in the mutual relations of Arrigo and Elena there is movement, constraint gradually yielding to tenderness. Not until the final terzetto, when to outward appearance the political conflict has been resolved, do both parties give full rein to their emotions, with heartrending effect. Monforte, too, develops across the action; haughty and overbearing at first, he proceeds to win our sympathy with his aria "In braccio alle dovizie," pre-echoing the sorrows of King Philip of Spain, lonely and unloved amid the trappings of power. His final command in Act V, "V'unisco, o nobil coppia" is suffused with an almost Sarastrian warmth. Only Procida remains strictly one-dimensional throughout. But by way of compensation Verdi has given him one of the finest arias in the bass repertoire ("O tu, Palermo, terra adorata"), which makes of him something more than "a common conspirator with a dagger in his hand."

Throughout the opera Verdi's debt to Meyerbeer, constantly harped on by commentators, is real enough but confined mostly to small details—the woodwind introduction to Procida's aria, the melodic shape and rhythmic articulation of Monforte's, the two-part writing with stalking bass line in the concertato finale of Act III ("O patria adorata"), all redolent of pages from *Les Huguenots*. Faced, however, with those spectacular happenings so dear to the heart of his German predecessor, Verdi used a different technique. For illustration we need only compare two similar moments from *I Vespri* and *Le Prophète*: a popular uprising suddenly quelled by the unexpected appearance of a figure of authority. Meyerbeer holds the attention with a kaleidoscopic succession of contrasted ideas. Verdi launches the entire episode on a single melodic breath issuing from Elena's cabaletta ("Coraggio, su coraggio"). For all his French lessons, he was never prepared to renounce his Italian heritage. In a word, the road that led Verdi to Paris would take him by way of *Don Carlos* back to Italy infinitely enriched, to achieve the masterpieces of *Aida* and *Otello*. □

The THINKING REED

By TIMOTHY PFAFF



SOHL

Charles Mackerras in the San Francisco Opera orchestra pit in 1993.

It's sobering to think that something as slender as a reed helped determine the career path of San Francisco Opera's first-ever Principal Guest Conductor. World-renowned maestro Sir Charles Mackerras, who assumed his new post with *Der Rosenkavalier* in the Company's Celebration of Richard Strauss last summer, began his orchestral career as an oboist. "I was quite a good player," the American-born Australian acknowledges in the quiet privacy of his new Opera House office. "But I could never get the hang of making reeds and had to rely on others to make them for me. That in itself is a terrible handicap.

"I'm rather clumsy with my hands — except when I'm conducting, I hope," he continues, with characteristic candor and mind-boggling

modesty. "So reed-making was torture for me. Now, you'll find that all the best oboe players make beautiful reeds. In fact, the ability to make a good reed — and to know how to change one — is a large part of being able to play the oboe." And hence, for him, conducting — as simple as that. "I suppose all's well that ends well," he chirps, before embarking on the remarkable journey that is his life story in music.

Esteemed both for the breadth of his repertoire and the depth of his understanding of it, Mackerras is the kind of conductor who oversees the operas of both Handel and Janáček, performing from his own editions — and who, in an entirely characteristic move, makes his Company fall-season debut as Principal Guest

Timothy Pfaff is editor of Piano & Keyboard, West Coast correspondent for London's Financial Times, and a freelance writer on the arts.

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conducting works as varied as Verdi's *I Vespri Siciliani*, Janáček's *The Makropulos Case*, and Puccini's *La Bohème*. Although he is acknowledged as the world's leading exponent of Janáček, Mackerras transcends "specialist" status by approaching everything he undertakes with insight, passion, and a manifest love for the complete range of music styles and full palette of orchestral sonorities.

His enthusiasm for this season-opening *Vespri* is typical, and revealing. "I've done a lot of Verdi — all periods of Verdi — and *Vespri* is interesting because it is exactly half way between Verdi's earlier style and his late one. The more I get to know the piece, the more I hear things in it that foretell *Don Carlos* and *Aida* and *Otello* — and that are not present in any of the previous operas up to *La Traviata*, the one just before it. So quite apart from the fact that it was Verdi's first 'go' at a full-fledged French opera, it is a crucial opera in his overall output."

Mackerras is sensitive to the rigors of putting on an opera as complex, problematic and difficult to stage as *Vespri*. Acknowledging the "silly coincidences" that pepper the

libretto, he is prone to speak of its poet as "the aptly-named [Eugène] Scribe. Yet the opera has some strong dramatic touches as well as some rather corny ones." Considering its climactic moment, the famous massacre of the invading French by Sicilians in 13th-century Palermo, he comments, "This incident could take place today as easily as it did in the 13th century. So I think the best way to stage such an opera is to be as unspecific about time as possible. Looking at the designs, I'm pleased that the director, Christopher Alden, has set it in a kind of neutral period."

"I usually find myself railing at updating an opera, because often the presuppositions underlying the plots are made nonsense of in the process. But at the same time, these Meyerbeerian, big-pageantry, costume operas can look rather dated and corny, too. I think that in operas such as these, a timeless feeling is the best one."

Predictably, the saga of the growth of Mackerras's own repertoire over time is more fun the way he tells it. Noting that the British Council Scholarship that took him to Prague to study with Václav Talich in 1947

"pushed my career forward," he goes on to cite the two subsequent productions that helped, he says, "put me on the map. The first was conducting the first performances in England of *Katya Kabanová*, at Sadler's Wells. The other was *Pineapple Poll*, a sort of mishmash of Gilbert and Sullivan music, to a Gilbert story, that the Sadler's Wells Ballet did. Choreographer John Cranko, who is from South Africa, and I, from Australia, did it, so it was a kind of 'colonial' ballet — and a huge success." Breadth of repertoire can seldom have been so saliently defined.

Years spent steeping in tragic masterworks such as *Katya*, *Tristan und Isolde*, and the operas of Benjamin Britten seem to have done little to subdue Mackerras's underlying jollity, which surfaces often, particularly in recalling his early days in the pit. "I was badgering to leave school at 16, which was very early for someone of my background, but I wanted to get into an orchestra as soon as possible. There were very few good oboe players in Sydney at the time, so I saw that as my way in. I became a professional oboe player by playing in radio orchestras and in

Continued on page 35



The year's (1969) British contingent, assembled backstage at the San Francisco Opera after a performance of *The Magic Flute*: (L. to r.) Anthony Besch, stage director for *Aida*; Stuart Burrows, Tamino in *The Magic Flute*; Amy Shuard, Brünnhilde in *Götterdämmerung*; Gwyneth Jones, title role of *Aida*; Kurt Herbert Adler, general director of San Francisco Opera; Margaret Price (in her U.S. debut season), Pamina in *The Magic Flute*; Geraint Evans, Papageno in *The Magic Flute*; Charles Mackerras (in his S.F. Opera debut season), the evening's conductor. Towering behind Mr. Adler is David Ward, the *Flute's* Sarastro.

STARRING: MARY C. SKAGGS

By MAC MCGINNES

Turn to the cast page of *I Vespri Siciliani's* program magazine and you will discover a familiar credit above the title: "This production was underwritten by a generous gift from The L.J. and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation." For the past 22 years, The Skaggs Foundation has been one of San Francisco Opera's most generous donors. The first grant, made in 1972, supported student programs; from 1974 through 1981, awards went toward radio broadcasts.

With the 1982 presentation of *The Rake's Progress*, featuring David Hockney's witty decor, the emphasis shifted to sponsoring new productions. General Director Lotfi Mansouri notes, "New productions are the way an opera company creates its reputation." If that's the case, The Skaggs Foundation has played a starring role in establishing SFO's position as one of today's most innovative companies. *Vespri* is the latest in a long line of musically satisfying, visually spectacular works mounted under the Skaggs aegis. Who can forget the high drama of *Khovanshchina* and *Macbeth*, the lyric pathos of *Idomeneo* and *Fidelio* or the rollicking comedy of *Falstaff* and *The Abduction from the Seraglio*? Certainly, the excitement generated by the 1985 *Ring* would have been impossible without Skaggs support.

The foundation, established in 1967 by L.J. and Mary C. Skaggs, initially focused on diabetes research. Following Mr. Skaggs's death in 1970, and the increase in the size of the foundation due to estate bequests and gifts from Mrs. Skaggs, the foundation expanded its interests and now supports programs in four categories: Performing Arts, Environment/Ecology, Projects of Historic Interest and Special Projects. Mr. Skaggs's goal was to "fund the unfundable" and the foundation quickly gained a reputation for boldness and creativity in the awards it made.

The Skaggs Foundation has made an impressive impact. Although performing arts funding is concentrated in Northern California, it has ventured farther afield in other program areas. In 1993, the foundation built a voyaging canoe for the Alele Museum and Library in the Marshall Islands, helped publish an edition of 13th-century Welsh court poets for the Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies in Aberystwyth and aided archaeological research at Mt. Vernon.

The foundation's standards for giving are rigorous; competition for grants is fierce. For 1992 alone, the staff fielded approximately 1,100 inquiries and processed 250 completed proposals. Out of this number,



LEDBETTER

PRODUCTIONS SPONSORED BY SKAGGS FOUNDATION

<i>The Rake's Progress</i>	1982
<i>Das Rheingold</i>	1983
<i>Khovanshchina</i>	1984
<i>Ring Cycle</i> (co-sponsor)	1985
<i>Falstaff</i>	1985
<i>Macbeth</i>	1986
<i>Fidelio</i>	1987
<i>Maometto II</i>	1988
<i>Idomeneo</i>	1989
<i>The Abduction from the Seraglio</i>	1990
<i>Tristan und Isolde</i>	1991
<i>Boris Godunov</i>	1992
<i>I Vespri Siciliani</i>	1993

Also co-sponsors of S.F. Opera
radio broadcasts 1972-81

73 grants were made for a total of \$2,441,990. Since the cachet of winning a Skaggs Foundation grant is just as important as the funds given, San Francisco Opera is extremely proud that it is the foundation's longest continuous grantee.

A small, vivacious woman, Mary C. Skaggs is the foundation's guiding spirit and president. Born in Holland in 1900, her family immigrated to the United States in 1906, eventually settling in Utah. Music was important in her early life. Her father, a printer, sang with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir and an Edison record player with a big blue horn filled their home with sound. Mrs. Skaggs fondly recalls the excitement of getting into costume and makeup for a school production of *Madame Butterfly* and attending *The Girl of the*

Golden West in Salt Lake City.

L.J. Skaggs, the youngest son in a Baptist minister's family of six boys and six girls, came to Utah from Missouri. The couple married in 1919 and soon left Utah to work for his older brother's grocery stores. Working together as a team, Mr. and Mrs. Skaggs opened up new territories throughout the Northwest and Midwest, using Portland, Oregon, as their home base. In 1927 the Skaggs stores became the core of the newly organized Safeway chain; six years later, L.J. and Mary struck out on their own and founded Pay Less Drug Stores.

According to Mrs. Skaggs, her husband was "generous to a fault. Nobody ever came on this ranch but they didn't leave with a horse or something. The children especially." She speculates, "Maybe it was the old Baptist raising, the Puritan ethic. Every time he bought two new suits, he gave away two. He limited himself in every respect. He never indulged himself."

After serious discussion, the couple decided to create a foundation to formalize their private philanthropy. Papers of incorporation were drawn by Philip M. Jelley, the other constant in the foundation's history, now acting as the organization's secretary and manager. He likens his relationship with Mrs. Skaggs to that of Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli to Queen Victoria: "I may run the foundation, but Mary is still the Queen!" Although Mrs. Skaggs has retired to her Northern California ranch, she actively participates in all decisions.

When questioned about what piqued her interest in opera, she replied, "It was just something I enjoyed. I have a good ear, for one thing. And if somebody sings a false note, that's painful!" She added, "It's not just the music, though. It's the people, the costumes, the scenery, the color. To me, that means a lot. Even the paper in the program. I'm interested in everything!" She loved attending the War Memorial Opera House and escaping into the beauty and excitement of the performance. "The rest of the world doesn't exist for you there. It's like going fishing. You're out in a boat; there aren't all these problems. You're just alone with the fish pop-popping under the water."

Asked what is the biggest lesson she has learned from her years with the foundation, Mrs. Skaggs quickly asserts, "It's hard work! Hard work to earn the money — hard work to spend it wisely." All of us enjoying *I Vespri Siciliani* — and the other extraordinary productions sponsored by The Skaggs Foundation — thank Mrs. Skaggs for her hard work. □



CAROL VANESS



YANYU GUO



CHRIS MERRITT



TIMOTHY NOBLE

Fresh from her recent San Francisco Opera triumphs — as Mathilde in the Rossini Festival's *Guillaume Tell* and as Elisabetta in *Don Carlo* last fall, **Carol Vaness** returns to sing her first Elena in *I Vespri Siciliani*. Currently recognized as one of the foremost sopranos of our time, she was a first-place winner in the 1976 Merola Opera Grand Finals, and has had a close association with the Company since then. As an Affiliate Artist with the Company, she appeared as Vitellia in Mozart's *Titus* and Cleopatra in *Julius Caesar* for Spring Opera Theater. Her debut season with the Company was in 1977 when she performed in *Aida*, *Turandot* and *I Puritani*, and returned here the following year to sing Mimì in the English-language performances of *La Bohème*. She has also appeared on the stage of the War Memorial as Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*, Blanche in *Dialogues of the Carmelites*, as guest soloist at the Kurt Herbert Adler Memorial Concert, and as Violetta in *La Traviata*. A leading artist at the Metropolitan Opera (where she opened their 1992-93 season as all three heroines in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*), she has also been acclaimed at the Glyndebourne and Salzburg Festivals, Munich State Opera, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Vienna State Opera, Paris Opera, Royal Opera at Covent Garden, Rome Opera, and Milan's La Scala, among other companies. In demand as a concert soloist, she has sung with the major orchestras of the world and is a veteran of numerous television appearances. The American artist's discography includes two 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 recordings of Mozart and Verdi arias, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and *Missa Solemnis*, Rossini's *Stabat Mater*, an album of Haydn Masses, and the recently released *Tosca* led by Riccardo Muti.

Yanyu Guo sings the roles of Ninetta in *I Vespri Siciliani* and Paulina in *The Queen of Spades*. The mezzo-soprano, a 1990 Merola Opera Program participant and a 1991-92 Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, made her Company debut in 1990 in *Suor Angelica* and *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, and received critical acclaim that year as Penelope in *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria*. Since then, she has performed with San Francisco Opera and its affiliates in *Die Zauberflöte*, *La Finta Giardiniera*, *La Traviata*, *War and Peace*, *Carmen*, *Elektra*, *Ermione*, *Ariodante* and *Andrea Chénier*. A native of Beijing, China, she studied at the Beijing Central Conservatory and continued her studies in the U.S. at the Eastman School of Music and at the Juilliard School. The recipient of numerous prizes and awards, she has appeared with many U.S. orchestras and opera companies. Roles she

has performed include Dorabella in *Così fan tutte*, the title role of *La Cenerentola*, Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly*, Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus*, and Nicklausse in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*.

Tenor **Chris Merritt**, Arrigo in *I Vespri Siciliani*, made his 1988 San Francisco Opera debut as Paolo Erisso in the U.S. premiere of Rossini's *Maometto II*, and returned here in 1992 to sing another of his celebrated Rossini roles, Arnold Melcthal in *Guillaume Tell*. A graduate of Oklahoma City University, he has by now become one of the most musically diverse artists in the world of opera with a career that has taken him to such major operatic centers as the Metropolitan Opera, Milan's La Scala, the Royal Opera at Covent Garden, Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona, Los Angeles Music Center Opera, Vienna State Opera, Paris Opéra, the Grand Théâtre in Geneva, the Teatro San Carlo in Naples, and the stages of Madrid, Amsterdam, Hamburg, Munich and Rome, among many others. He has also performed with the orchestras of Vienna, London, New York, Philadelphia, Toronto, Tokyo, etc., and has made numerous recordings and videos for 10 major labels. Highlights from 1992-93 included opening the seasons of three opera houses: the Lyric Opera of Chicago in the title role of Rossini's *Otello*, the Rome Opera with *Lucia di Lammermoor*, and the Teatro La Fenice in Venice in the title role of *Faust*. Additional recent successes include a debut at the Teatro Colón in *Ermione*; his first appearance at the Paris Opéra Bastille in the title role of Berlioz's *Benvenuto Cellini*; Enée in *Les Troyens* at Amsterdam's Holland Festival; and the title role of Reyer's *Sigurd* for the Montpellier Festival.

One of the leading baritones in the world today, **Timothy Noble** sings the role of Monforte in the Company premiere of *I Vespri Siciliani*. 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 U.S. premiere of Reimann's *Lear* (repeating the assignment in 1985) and has since sung numerous roles here, including the title part of *Macbeth*, Count Tomskey in *The Queen of Spades*, Amonasro in *Aida*, Tonio in *Pagliacci*, Shaklovity in *Khovanshchina* and, last year, the title role of *Guillaume Tell* and Scarpia in *Tosca*. The Indiana native created roles in the premieres of two additional Eaton operas: Robespierre in *Danton* and Robespierre and Prospero in *The Tempest*.

Continued on page 31

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

San Francisco Opera Premiere

Opera in five acts by GIUSEPPE VERDI

Libretto by EUGÈNE SCRIBE and CHARLES DUVEYRIER

Italian translation by ARNALDO FUSINATO

I Vespri Siciliani

(in Italian)

Conductor

Charles Mackerras

Production

Christopher Alden

Designer

Paul Steinberg

Lighting Designer

Thomas J. Munn

Chorus Director

Ian Robertson

Assistant to Maestro Mackerras

Michel Singher*

Musical Preparation

Susanna Lemberskaya

Robert Morrison

Prompter

Jonathan Khuner

Assistant Stage Director

Paula Williams

Movement Assistance,

Wedding Dance

Victoria Morgan

Stage Manager

Jerry Sherk

Scenery constructed in

San Francisco Opera Scenic Studios

Costumes executed by

San Francisco Opera Costume Shop

First performance:

Paris, June 13, 1855

CAST

(in order of appearance)

Tebaldo			James Caputo+
Roberto		French soldiers	Scott Wilde
Bethune			Philip Skinner
Count Vaudemont		French officers	Magnus Baldwinsson+
Duchess Elena, Sicilian sympathizer			Carol Vaness
Ninetta			Yanyu Guo
Daniele		her retainers	Randolph Locke*
Guido di Monforte, French Governor of Sicily			Timothy Noble
Arrigo			Chris Merritt
Giovanni da Procida		Sicilian patriots	James Morris
Manfredo			Stephen Guggenheim+

French soldiers, Sicilian men and women

*San Francisco Opera debut +1993 Adler Fellow

ACT I The great square at Palermo

ACT II A valley near Palermo, by the sea

INTERMISSION

ACT III Monforte's palace

INTERMISSION

ACT IV The courtyard of the French fortress

ACT V In front of the church

Supertitles by Christopher Bergen, San Francisco Opera.
Underwritten by The Stanley S. Langendorf Foundation.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 10 AT 7:30

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14 AT 7:30

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 17 AT 8:00

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 23 AT 8:00

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 26 AT 1:00

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29 AT 7:30

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 2 AT 8:00

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 three hours and forty minutes.

I Vespri Siciliani (Sicilian Vespers) / Synopsis

The opera is set in French-occupied Sicily, under the command of a French Governor, Monforte.

Act 1 — *The great square at Palermo in front of the Governor's palace.* On one side a detachment of French soldiers is drinking, singing songs of homesick longing and eyeing the Sicilians across the square. They, in turn, sing their hatred of the occupying French oppressors. The French soldiers add insult to injury by voicing the proprietary attitude of the army towards the women of an occupied country. The duchess Elena, sympathetic to the Sicilian cause, crosses the square, praying for the soul of her brother who was executed by Monforte. A drunken French soldier bids her entertain them with a song. Elena sings. Her song, mournful and calm, suddenly changes to a fast, inflammatory declamation to the downcast Sicilians, inspiring them to take destiny into their own hands. The Sicilians respond to her song and threaten the French. Suddenly, Monforte appears at the door of his palace. The power of his presence quells the uprising and the square is quickly emptied of all but Elena and her two attendants.

A Sicilian patriot just released from prison, Arrigo, enters to greet Elena whom he loves. Monforte observes the young man with favor and offers him glory if he will abandon his devotion to Elena, change sides, and serve with the French. Contemptuously, Arrigo refuses and follows Elena.

Act 2 — *A valley outside Palermo, near the sea.* The former leader of the Sicilian patriots, Procida, has returned to stir up resistance against the French. He exhorts a small band of patriots to help him. Elena and Arrigo come to meet Procida, who enrolls Arrigo as one of the leaders of the revolt to come. Arrigo declares his love to Elena and swears to avenge the death of her brother. A messenger from Monforte comes to invite Arrigo to attend a ball. Arrigo refuses, is surrounded by soldiers, and is marched away.

A betrothal festivity is about to take place. Procida, thinking to trick the Sicilians into vengeance against the French, cunningly suggests to the French that they forcibly kidnap the young women and carry them away. The French immediately set upon the women and carry them off to their ship, leaving the helpless Sicilians outraged, and Procida and Elena fuming, while the French take their pleasure aboard ship.

INTERMISSION

Act 3 — *Monforte's palace.* A deathbed letter to Monforte states that Arrigo is the son he fathered eighteen years ago. The mother raised Arrigo to hate his father as the oppressor of the Sicilians. Monforte reveals his identity to his son before the ball.

Bent on Monforte's murder, Sicilian conspirators, led by Elena and Procida, infiltrate the party. Arrigo vacillates between allowing Monforte to be murdered and betraying his friends. He attempts to warn Monforte, but fails. As Elena advances to kill Monforte, Arrigo steps between them. The conspirators are arrested and the thwarted Sicilians unite in cursing Arrigo as a traitor.

INTERMISSION

Act 4 — *The courtyard of the French fortress.* Arrigo comes to visit the prisoners, aware that they hate and despise him. When Elena appears she greets him as a traitor. Arrigo reveals that he is the son of Monforte, their enemy. Elena pities his dilemma, and their love is rekindled.

Monforte orders the immediate execution of Elena and Procida, and Arrigo begs to die with them. Procida is stupefied to learn from Monforte that Arrigo is his son. He sings a farewell to his country for whose ideals he has fought. Monforte promises pardon for all and general amnesty if only Arrigo will publicly acknowledge Monforte as his father. Elena and Procida say they prefer death to such dishonor. Arrigo gives in to Monforte's wishes. The betrothal of Elena and Arrigo is announced.

Act 5 — *In front of the church.* Elena sings a joyous and lively bolero. Arrigo joins her for a lyrical interlude. As Arrigo leaves her side, Elena is joined by Procida, now fanatically determined to massacre the French. All the Sicilians are in place. Procida has arranged that the ringing of the wedding bell will signal the attack. Elena cannot persuade him against the plan. Desperate, she refuses to go through with the wedding. Monforte arrives on the scene. Unaware of the reason for Elena's reluctance, Monforte sweeps her protests aside and orders the wedding bell to be rung. The Sicilians rush upon their victims and Procida's revenge is accomplished.

Opening Night floral arrangements courtesy of Kalman Belli, San Francisco.

*Opening Night post-performance reception courtesy of the San Francisco Opera Guild and San Francisco Opera.
Confections courtesy of See's Candies • Champagne courtesy of Heublein Wines Division and Beaulieu Vineyard.*

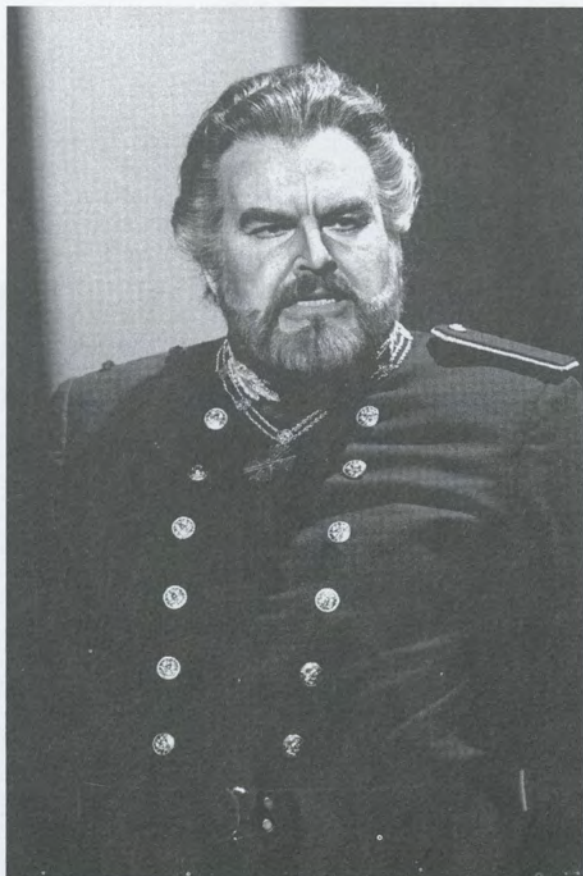
The performance of September 10th is sponsored by Lexus.

I Vespri Siciliani

Photos taken in rehearsal by Marty Sohl



Carol Vaness



Timothy Noble



Carol Vaness, Members of the San Francisco Opera Chorus



Magnus Baldvinsson, Philip Skinner

Carol Vaness, Chris Merritt



Chris Merritt





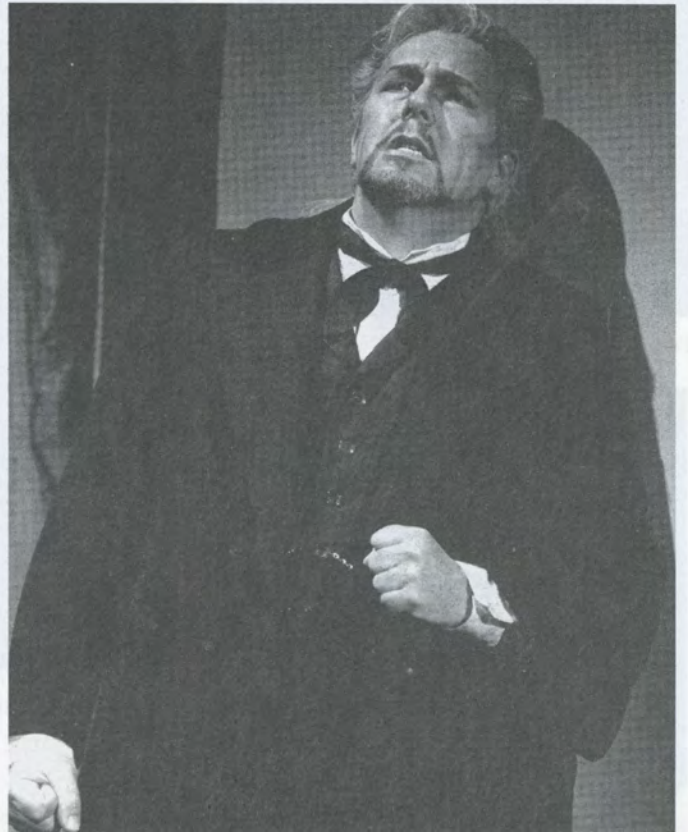
Chris Merritt, Carol Vaness

James Morris, Carol Vaness



Carol Vaness

James Morris





Principals, San Francisco Opera Chorus and Supernumeraries



Yanyu Guo, Randolph Locke



Carol Vaness



Carol Vaness

with Santa Fe Opera. He made his Metropolitan Opera debut in 1988 as Shaklovity, and has returned to the Met as Amonasro, Michele in *Il Tabarro*, Albert in *Werther*, Peter in *Hansel and Gretel*, Leporello in *Don Giovanni*, and Christopher Columbus in the world premiere of *The Voyage* by Philip Glass. Noble has also successfully performed in Chicago, Houston, Dallas, Washington, D.C., Toronto, Frankfurt, Stuttgart, Amsterdam, Venice, Paris, and at the Glyndebourne Festival. He has made notable appearances in concert, and 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 he studied with the late world-renowned bass, Nicola Rossi Lemeni.

An artist recognized for his multi-faceted talents in opera, concert and recital, **James Morris** sings the role of Procida in *I Vespri Siciliani*. Since his 1981 San Francisco Opera debut as Assur in *Semiramide*, the American bass has appeared here as Wotan in the 1985 *Ring* Festival (singing the *Rheingold* Wotan for the first time anywhere), Scarpia in *Tosca* and Claggart in *Billy Budd* that fall, in recital and as the four villains in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* in 1987, in the *Ring* cycle in 1990, and in the title role of *Boris Godunov* last fall. Morris became the youngest male singer on the Metropolitan Opera roster at the age of 23 and at 27 was on the Met stage as Don Giovanni, a role he has sung in numerous seasons there. In addition to his regular appearances at the Met, and throughout the U.S. and Canada, he has appeared several times at Milan's La Scala, the Vienna State Opera, Royal Opera at Covent Garden, Paris Opera, Hamburg Opera, etc., at the Glyndebourne, Salzburg and Edinburgh Festivals, as well as in Strasbourg, Florence, Madrid, Barcelona, Santiago, Sydney and Melbourne. In demand as a concert singer, he has performed with a number of prominent orchestras including the New York Philharmonic, Berlin Philharmonic, National Symphony Orchestra, Chicago Symphony, San Francisco Symphony, and the symphonies of Atlanta and St. Louis. His discography includes two complete *Ring* cycles, *Maria Stuarda*, *Le Roi de Lahore*, *I Vespri Siciliani*, *Così fan tutte*, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, *Aida*, Berlioz's *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Beggar's Opera*, Haydn's *The Creation*, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, the Requiems by Mozart and Fauré, as well as a recording of arias by Wagner and Verdi.

Bass **Scott Wilde**, who made his San Francisco Opera debut last fall in *Boris Godunov*, *La Forza del Destino*, *Andrea Chénier* and *Christophe Colomb*, portrays Roberto in *I Vespri Siciliani*. A native of Wisconsin and a graduate of the Manhattan School of Music, he was a member of the Juilliard Opera Center and also participated in

the Glimmerglass Young Artists Program, the Chautauqua Young Artists Studio, the Sarasota Opera Apprentice Program, and at the Aspen Music Festival. 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 and the Opera Festival of New Jersey, as well as *Salome* for the Washington Opera and Baltimore Opera. Wilde's 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, his debut with the Opera Theatre of St. Louis as Theseus in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Lodovico in *Otello* for Orlando Opera, a return to St. Louis as the Commendatore in *Don Giovanni*, as well as Ferrando in *Il Trovatore* and Don Basilio in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* with The Festival Opera of Walnut Creek.

In his ninth consecutive season with San Francisco Opera, bass-baritone **Philip Skinner** sings the roles of Bethune in *I Vespri Siciliani* and Colline in *La Bohème*. Since his 1985 Company debut in *Adriana Lecouvreur*, he has 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 presentation of *La Bohème*, Don Diego in *L'Africaine*, Monterone in *Rigoletto*, Count Horn (Sam) in *Un Ballo in Maschera*, Leuthold in *Guillaume Tell* and, last fall, Angelotti in *Tosca*. Skinner participated in the 1985 Merola Opera Program and went on to tour with Western Opera Theater in the title role of *Don Giovanni*. A 1986-87 Adler Fellow, he appeared in several Opera Center Showcase productions and was a 1990 Schwabacher Debut Recitalist. He has also performed with the opera companies of Houston, Seattle, Vancouver, Toronto, Minneapolis, Edmonton, Atlanta, Minneapolis and Melbourne, Australia, among others, as well as with several U.S. orchestras. The American artist, a graduate of Northwestern University, received his master's degree from Indiana University.

In his debut season with San Francisco Opera, tenor **Randolph Locke** performs the roles of Danieli in *I Vespri Siciliani* and Augustus Moser in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. His most recent appearances include a debut with the Hong Kong Opera singing the title role of *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* for the first time; his first Don José in *Carmen* at Sarasota Opera; his first Bacchus in *Ariadne auf Naxos* at the Opera de Bellas Artes in Mexico City; his first Cavardossi in *Tosca* for Virginia Opera; Hagenbach in Catalani's *La Wally* in Amsterdam; as well as *The Bartered Bride*, *Pelléas et Mélisande* and



JAMES MORRIS



SCOTT WILDE



PHILIP SKINNER



RANDOLPH LOCKE



MAGNUS BALDVINSSON



STEPHEN GUGGENHEIM



JAMES CAPUTO

Prokofiev's *The Gambler* at the Lyric Opera of Chicago. During the 1991-92 season, the young tenor scored successes in his debut with Chicago Opera Theater as Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* and as Lensky in *Eugene Onegin* with the Flint Symphony. Following his performances as Lukas in the U.S. premiere of Smetana's *Hubička* with the Sarasota Opera, he was invited to perform this role with the National Theater in Prague. Other past appearances have included the Duke of Mantua in *Rigoletto* with the Eugene Opera, the title role of *Faust* for Chautauqua Opera, Rodolfo in *La Bohème* for the Virginia Opera, Alfredo in *La Traviata* at the Boston Lyric Opera, Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte* at Knoxville Opera, and Hagenbach in *La Wally* at Sarasota Opera. Locke, a native of Texas, is a graduate of Southwest Texas State University and the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music.

A 1992-93 Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, bass **Magnus Baldvinsson** portrays Count Vaudemont in *I Vespri Siciliani*, Hans Foltz in *Die Meistersinger*, and Surin in *The Queen of Spades*. He appeared with the Company for the first time last fall in *Tosca*, *Boris Godunov*, *Fidelio* and *Andrea Chénier*, and returned for this summer's Celebration of Strauss in *Salome*, *Capriccio* and *Daphne*. A native of Iceland, he studied at the Reykjavik School of Singing, receiving his bachelor of education degree from Teachers University of Iceland and his master of music degree at Indiana University. He made his professional debut at Kentucky Opera in *Salome*. In addition to his operatic work, Baldvinsson has appeared as soloist with the Icelandic Symphony, Icelandic Chamber Orchestra and with the San Francisco Opera Orchestra in Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle*. A 1991 Merola Opera Program participant, his Opera Center credits include Kecai in *The Bartered Bride*, the King in Handel's *Ariodante* and Dr. Grenvil in *La Traviata* on Western Opera Theater's 1991-92 national tour. He was awarded the Florence Bruce Award at the 1991 Merola Opera Program Grand Finals.

In his second year as an Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, tenor **Stephen Guggenheim** sings the roles of Manfredo in *I Vespri Siciliani*, Ulrich Eisslinger in *Die Meistersinger*, and Chaplitsky in *The Queen of Spades*. After making his debut in the Company's Rossini Festival production of *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, he appeared here last fall in *Boris Godunov*, *Fidelio*, *Don Carlo* and *Christophe Colomb*, and performed in the Celebration of Strauss presentations of *Salome*, *Der Rosenkavalier* and *Capriccio*. 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. A 1991 Merola Opera Program

participant, his Opera Center credits include Alfredo in *La Traviata* at Villa Montalvo and on Western Opera Theater's 1991-92 national tour; Don José in *Carmen* which was presented in Guam and Japan; Odoardo in the Showcase production of *Ariodante*; Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle* at Grace Cathedral; and a recent tour to Japan in *La Bohème*. Guggenheim has also performed with West Bay Opera, Marin Opera, Pocket Opera, Opera San Jose (where he was Artist in Residence), and the Berkeley Symphony.

Tenor **James Caputo**, who made his Company debut this summer in *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Capriccio* and *Daphne*, portrays Tebaldo in *I Vespri Siciliani*, Hortensius in the student matinee production of *La Fille du Régiment*, Parpignol in *La Bohème*, and Sir Bruno Robertson in *I Puritani*. The 1993 Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center began studying voice at age 13 and was accepted into the Manhattan School of Music four years later. Since then, he has sung in concert throughout his native Connecticut and made his professional operatic debut with the Schubert Opera Company as Nemorino in *L'Elisir d'Amore*. He has also appeared with the Philadelphia Opera, and in 1991 was a winner in the Pavarotti Voice Competition. Caputo was a 1992 Merola Opera Program participant who recently traveled to Japan to sing Rodolfo in the Opera Center's production of *Bohème*, and sang in concerts in Guam, Saipan and Pohnpei.

Charles Mackerras, principal guest conductor with San Francisco Opera, is on the podium for *I Vespri Siciliani*, *La Bohème* and *The Makropulos Case*. Born in Schenectady, New York, he was raised in Australia, where he received his musical education and first professional experience as oboist and conductor. After winning a British Council Scholarship, he studied conducting in Prague, an experience from which arose his interest in Czech music, especially that of Janáček. As Principal Conductor for the Hamburg State Opera for three years, he led that company's 1967 performances at the Metropolitan Opera in New York as his U.S. podium debut.* In 1969 he undertook his first conducting assignment for a U.S. opera company, leading performances of *The Magic Flute* and *La Cenerentola* at San Francisco Opera. He has since returned here for productions of *Eugene Onegin* and *Un Ballo in Maschera* in 1971, Handel's *Julius Caesar* (in his own edition) for the 1982 Summer Festival, Handel's *Orlando* (again in his own edition) in 1985, *Jenůfa* in 1986, *Lohengrin* in 1989, and *Der Rosenkavalier* this summer. Music director of the English National Opera from 1970 to 1978, Maestro Mackerras was also, until last year, musical director of the Welsh National Opera, where he is now conductor emeritus.

*Not the English National Opera, as erroneously quoted on page 38, printed earlier.

Other past positions include chief guest conductor of the BBC Symphony and chief conductor of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. He is currently principal guest conductor for both the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and the Royal Philharmonic. In demand at the world's major opera houses and concert halls, Mackerras has produced a lengthy discography — including a complete cycle of Janáček operas — which has earned him a number of prestigious awards. He was honored with the title Commander of the British Empire in 1974, the Janáček Medal from the Czech government in 1979, a knighthood in 1979, and in 1987 was appointed a Fellow of the Royal College of Music.

Christopher Alden, who returns to stage San Francisco Opera's first presentation of *I Vespri Siciliani*, has enjoyed a long association with the Company. He began his directing career with Western Opera Theater's 1975 production of *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, subsequently staging a WOT *Elisir d'Amore* and acclaimed U.S. premieres of Reimann's *Ghost Sonata* for the San Francisco Opera Center and Henze's *Das Verratene Meer* for the main Company. Currently Director of Productions for the Long Beach Opera, he has mounted for that company a series of works ranging from Monteverdi's *The Coronation of Poppea* to Offenbach's *Bluebeard* to Britten's *Death in Venice*. Most recently, he completed his Monteverdi trilogy in Long Beach with *Orfeo*. In addition, Alden has staged productions for the New York City Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Seattle Opera, Wolf Trap, Santa Fe Opera, Washington Opera, Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Dallas Opera, Los Angeles Music Center Opera, Basel Opera, the Opéra-Comique in Paris, New Israeli Opera, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the London Sinfonietta, Michigan Opera Theater, Opera Omaha, Connecticut Grand Opera, Fort Worth Opera, the American Music Theater Festival, New York Shakespeare Festival, Opera Memphis and Opera at the Academy, among others. Future plans include Chabrier's *L'Etoile* with Opera Zuid in Holland, *Turandot* with the Welsh National Opera, *Boris Godunov* with the Long Beach Opera, Stewart Wallace's *Harvey Milk* with Houston Grand Opera and *Idomeneo* with the Geneva Opera.

Paul Steinberg is the designer of the new production of *I Vespri Siciliani*, a Company premiere. His first assignment for San Francisco Opera was the sets and costumes for the U.S. premiere of *Das Verratene Meer* in 1991. He has collaborated with director Christopher Alden on over 30 productions, including *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *The Abduction from the Seraglio* and *The Return of Ulysses* for Long Beach Opera; *The Beggar's Opera* for Santa Fe Opera; *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Pagliacci* for the New Israeli Opera; Weill's *The Seven Deadly Sins* for the London Sinfonietta; *Dr. Miracle*, *Don Procopio* and *Djamileh* at the Opéra-Comique; *Der Fliegende Holländer* for the Dallas Opera; *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* for Washington Opera; *Count Ory* at the New York City Opera; the Mozart/Da Ponte cycle for Daniel Barenboim and the Chicago Symphony; and *Don Giovanni* for Seattle Opera. Future projects include *Turandot* for the Welsh National Opera; Chabrier's *L'Etoile* at Opera Zuid in Holland; *Faust* for Opera Pacific; as well as *Lohengrin* and *Idomeneo* for the Geneva Opera. The New York native is a graduate of the Central School of Art in London, and has received grants from the British Arts Council and the American Academy in Rome.

Thomas J. Munn, Lighting Director and Design Consultant for San Francisco Opera since 1976, designed the lighting for *I Vespri Siciliani*, *La Bohème*, *Turandot*, *The Makropulos Case*, *Die Meistersinger*, *I Puritani*, and *The Queen of Spades*. He has created the lighting and special effects for over 145 productions for the Company, including the highly acclaimed *Ring* cycle. As scenic adviser, he has designed scenery for SFO productions of *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, *Roberto Devereux*, *Pelléas et Mélisande*, *Billy Budd*, *Nabucco*, *Don Giovanni* and *Christophe Colomb*. Munn has designed scenery and lighting for Broadway, Off-Broadway, regional theater, ballet, and films. His television credits include S.F. Opera productions of *La Gioconda* (for which he received an Emmy Award), *Samson et Dalila*, *Aida*, *L'Africaine*, *La Bohème*, *Orlando Furioso*, *Mefistofele*, and the soon-to-be-released *Capriccio*. 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*.



CHARLES MACKERRAS



CHRISTOPHER ALDEN



PAUL STEINBERG



THOMAS J. MUNN

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Paul Newman
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1993 OPERA PREVIEWS

Due to space restrictions, we can publish only a part of the Bay Area opera previews this year. For details on San Francisco Opera Guild Previews and Insights, please consult the Opera Guild 1993 Fall Season Guide, or call (415) 565-6432.

JUNIOR LEAGUE OPERA PREVIEWS

Previews held in Herbst Theatre, Veterans Building, 401 Van Ness Ave., San Francisco, at 12 noon. For further information, please call (415) 923-9056 or (510) 820-6113.

<i>The Makropulos Case</i>	10/13
<i>Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg</i>	10/27
<i>La Clemenza di Tito</i>	11/3
<i>I Puritani</i>	11/10
<i>The Queen of Spades</i>	11/18

ROBERT GOODHUE'S FALL OPERA COURSE

Previews begin at 6:30 p.m. in the Crystal Ballroom, Marines' Memorial Building, 609 Sutter, San Francisco. Individual tickets are \$15 at the door. For further information, please call (415) 291-9126.

<i>La Bohème</i>	9/13
<i>Turandot</i>	10/4
<i>The Makropulos Case</i>	10/11
<i>Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg</i>	10/25
<i>La Clemenza di Tito</i>	11/1
<i>I Puritani</i>	11/8
<i>The Queen of Spades</i>	11/15

SAN FRANCISCO CITY COLLEGE OPERA PREVIEWS

City College of San Francisco offers a music course in Opera Previews for the Fall 1993 semester. The course will concern all the operas being performed in the San Francisco Opera fall season. It is taught by Marvin Tartak on Friday afternoons from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. at the College, 50 Phelan Ave., Creative Arts Building, Room A-135, in San Francisco. For further information, please call (415) 239-3641.

FRIENDS OF THE KENSINGTON LIBRARY

A free lecture on *La Clemenza di Tito* will be given by Michael Barclay on Monday, November 1 at 7 p.m. at the Kensington Library, 61 Arlington Ave., Kensington. For further information, please call (510) 524-3043.

MERRITT COLLEGE OPERA LECTURE SERIES

Merritt College is offering an opera preview class, *Introduction to Opera* (Music 13A), with emphasis on the operas of the 1993 fall season, on Tuesday evenings from 7:00 - 10:00 p.m., beginning August 31 and ending in December. Classes will be held at the College, 12500 Campus Drive (off Redwood Road in the Oakland Hills), Building R, Room 100. For further information, please call (510) 436-2430.

OPERA EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL PREVIEW SERIES

Previews of the operas of the 1993 season will be given by Michael Barclay, director of Opera Education International. Lectures will be presented on the following dates from 7:15 - 9:30 p.m. at OEI, 400 Yale Ave. (at Vassar), in the Kensington section of the Berkeley Hills. Admission to the full series is \$95; individual admission at the door is \$15. For further information, please call (510) 526-5244.

<i>Turandot</i>	9/20
<i>The Makropulos Case</i>	9/27
<i>Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg</i>	10/4
<i>La Clemenza di Tito</i>	10/18
<i>I Puritani</i>	10/25
<i>The Queen of Spades</i>	11/8
<i>The Season in Review</i>	12/13

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DAVID NICASTRO *Acting Associate Principal*
SERGEI RAKITCHENKOV *Assistant Principal*
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JONNA HERVIG
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ROBIN ELLIOTT

CONTRABASSOON

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HORN

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DAVID SPRUNG *Co-Principal*
CARLBERG JONES
BRIAN McCARTY
LAWRENCE RAGENT

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WILLIAM HOLMES*
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DONALD KENNELLY
DAVID RIDGE

BASS TROMBONE

DAVID RIDGE

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the remnants of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, most of whose members were off at war when I was too young to be called up.

"Even though I was always more interested in the whole score than just in the oboe part — I used to infuriate my teacher by playing the second oboe part off a complete orchestral score — at the beginning I didn't quite realize what a conductor did, apart from beating time and correcting wrong notes. I had played under all these second-rate conductors, and all I had learned was that one of them, who had a lot of personality, always got better performances out of us than the others, who knew more but had no personalities.

"Then," Mackerras continues, "Eugene Ormandy came out to conduct us on the lend-lease. Suddenly I saw what a conductor actually did. He led a performance of the Shostakovich Fifth Symphony, which I knew from his recording with the Philadelphia Orchestra, and suddenly he made our second-rate ensemble sound like the Philadelphia. Everything he did was such a revelation. I was very much affected by him."

Upon moving to England, he was similarly influenced by Sir Thomas Beecham, under whom he played, and Sir Adrian Boult, with

whom he studied. But it is Václav Talich he continues to hold in particular reverence. "I went to Prague with my wife on this British Council Scholarship in 1947 expressly to study with Talich," Mackerras relates. "But when I got there I discovered that he was extremely busy and didn't want to bother with students at all. He wrote out a little piece of paper to admit me to his rehearsals, so in the afternoon I went to hear him with the newly formed Czech Chamber Orchestra. In the mornings he would rehearse at the Opera, where he would sometimes conduct in the evenings. The first thing I saw him do was *Katya Kabanová*, and I was completely bowled over by the music. It was like nothing else I had ever heard, and I immediately made it my business to hear as many Janáček operas as I could. In those postwar years, the Czechs were relying very much on their own music — and Mozart, of course; '*Unser Mozart versteht uns*,' ['Our Mozart understands us'] they say — so they were doing Janáček all the time, in all the opera houses.

"In the National Theater, where Talich conducted, they performed *Katya* in Talich's reorchestration. It was a kind of Rimsky-fication, if you will, but that was because Talich was a traditionalist, not because he was perversely willful. He thought that if the music didn't come off, you should change it. It's not that he insisted upon 'improving' on

Janáček. He conducted the world premiere of the *Sinfonietta*, which is as peculiar as anything else in Janáček, and he didn't change anything in it.

"In our day, when we think of the tiniest change to the composer's work as a desecration, we need to remember that those kinds of alterations were common practice then. Mahler constantly changed the orchestration of his symphonies to suit the acoustics of a hall, and he wrote, 'Hail to the conductor who will change my works according to the acoustics.' Janáček heard Kleiber's *Jenůfa* in Berlin, which would have been in Karel Kovařovic's now much-maligned reorchestration. In his letter to Kleiber, all he said was that he thought one passage should go a little faster. When Kovařovic reorchestrated *Jenůfa*, and Talich *Katya*, they thought they were doing the works a favor — and in a sense they were, since they were making them more accessible to the public, and therefore more acceptable to the intendants."

While Mackerras's debt to Talich encompasses the full range of musical concerns — and extends to the Czech conductor's personal courage (Talich worked in great adversity under both the Nazis and the Communist occupiers) — the opera world's debt to Talich centers around Mackerras's introduction to Janáček. "With all due modesty," he continues, "I've got to say that I've managed

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Die Frau ohne Schatten

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Manuel Penella

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Giacomo Puccini

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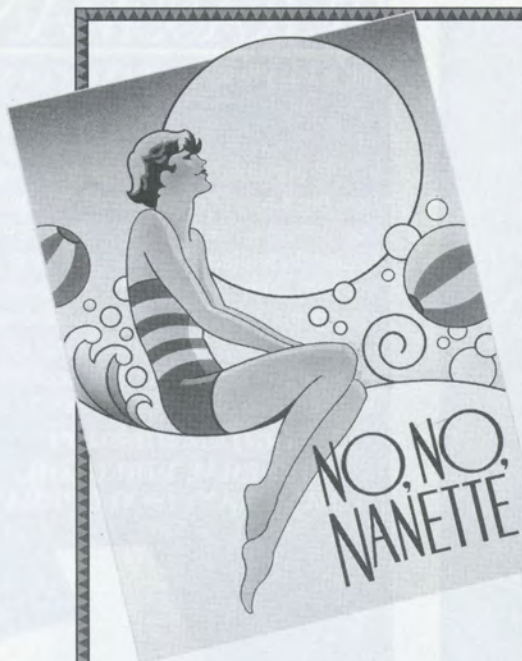
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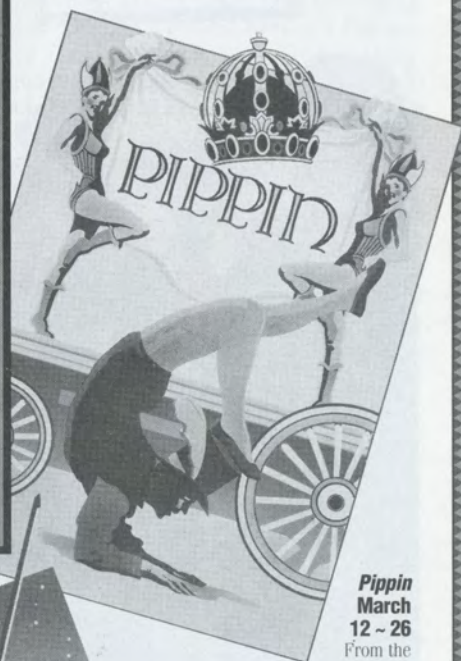
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Charles Mackerras and Leonie Rysanek (Kostelnička) backstage after a rousing 1986 performance of Janáček's *Jenůfa*.

to bring Janáček to a lot of different orchestras that otherwise would not have encountered it. When I was beginning to conduct him, outside Czechoslovakia, there was otherwise just Rafael Kubelík, who managed to escape his homeland pretty quickly. The others who understood Janáček were either terribly elderly, and so didn't want to bother with it any more, or were locked up in Czechoslovakia.

"When I conducted my first rehearsals of *Katya Kabanová* at Sadler's Wells, I was the only person who had ever heard it. And the musicians couldn't play it; they couldn't get the hang of it at all. I've had that experience all over the world. I'll never forget doing the *Glagolitic Mass* with the RAI Orchestra in Rome — a very good orchestra. They played the beginning and just laughed. I've had to help orchestras understand what the music sounds like, and in the case of the Italians I didn't succeed very well, I must admit. But I did lead the first performances in England of *Katya*, *The Makropulos Case*, and *From the House of the Dead* (but not *The Cunning Little Vixen*, which I've conducted many times since; Colin Davis conducted that first). It's all ended up very well, but without my specialist knowledge, the musicians had a terrible lot of trouble with the music."

Making his own Janáček editions has summoned up a special range of musicological and detective skills. "First off, there is simply the matter of reading the composer's

mad calligraphy. Beginning with *The Makropulos Case*, Janáček had this kind of mania for drawing his own staves — freehand. Frequently the lines ran into each other or went too far away from each other. And in the heat of composition, Janáček was anxious not to 'varnish the score with orchestration,' as he put it. What that means is that frequently you can't tell whether a note is on the line or on the space — and it's very important to know whether a note is on the line or on the space.

"This naturally meant that there were a lot of wrong notes in the editions. Heavens, I've looked at the original parts of *Jenůfa*, the ones the Brno orchestra played from. Not only are there hundreds of wrong notes copied into the parts — you can just see that the players simply didn't understand the music at all.

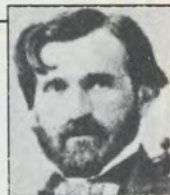
"The other thing is that Janáček was rather impractical in his demands on the orchestra — and refused to answer practical questions. There's a famous story about the terrible passage in the *Sinfonietta* where the flutes are rushing around in C-flat major! One of the flute players asked, 'Dr. Janáček, is that a B-flat or a B-natural?' And he replied, 'Don't ask me questions like that. It's supposed to sound like the whistling of the wind.' This was the man. And the result was that he frequently wrote things that were unplayable."

Mackerras's fascination with *The*

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Makropulos Case, which he will conduct later this season, has to do with "the strangeness of the subject matter, which suited Janáček so well. It appeared at the time he was developing his peculiar, angular style of writing, which fits the subject. There's a lot of tender music too — but by the time it establishes itself, it's gone again. Karel Čapek, who wrote the play on which the opera is based, intended it to be much more of a black comedy. Janáček rather takes the comedy out of it.

"There still is confusion about the title, *Věc Makropulos*," Mackerras continues, "because the Czech word, *věc*, means 'thing.' In this case it refers to the formula Emilia Marty is seeking, the chemical prescription for the elixir that will continue to keep her alive. But, like its German equivalent, *Sache*, *věc* also means a legal case, or the subject of a case. Anyone who doesn't know the story, and sees that it opens in a lawyer's office, must assume *věc* means 'case.' The title is sometimes translated 'The Makropulos Secret,' which is a more meaningful translation, even if not quite so accurate."

Another 20th-century composer with whom Mackerras is closely associated is Benjamin Britten, and the release in England of Mackerras's new recording of Britten's little-known *Gloriana* at the time he was conducting *Der Rosenkavalier* here sparked a compelling sequence of memories, appraisals, and reappraisals. Mackerras was a regular guest at Britten's and Peter Pears's Aldeburgh Festival and worked closely with the composer on productions of *The Turn of the Screw*, *The Rape of Lucretia*, *Albert Herring*, and *Billy Budd*, as well as *Gloriana*. And even though he experienced the unpleasantness of a temporary rift with the composer during the preparation of the premiere of *Noyes Fludde* — accurately reported in Humphrey Carpenter's new Britten biography, he observes — he is unqualifiedly positive in his assessment of Britten the musician.

"I always say that Ben was the greatest musician I ever worked with," Mackerras allows. "I don't say that there aren't other musicians as great, but I didn't happen to have worked with them. He was so versatile, and he had the right knack, no matter what musical thing he was doing, be it composing or playing the piano. Even the way he played harpsichord when we did the Bach Passions at Aldeburgh. Imogen Holst conducted — but, with Ben at the harpsichord, it was he who was really running the thing.

"Funny, that always makes me remember how he hated Brahms — even hated that he was always right next to Brahms in music libraries throughout the world. Once, during a rehearsal of the *St. John Passion*, he asked Imogen Holst to join him at the harpsichord, and they had a whispered conversation. When they were through, she returned to the orchestra and said, 'Boys and girls' — she was terribly old-fashioned, kind of school-marmish, and this was to profession-

al musicians! — 'Boys and girls, Ben says we're making it sound like Brahms. Now stop it this minute.' To this day, when I'm conducting the English Chamber Orchestra, I say to those members of the orchestra old enough to get it, 'You're making it sound like Brahms. Stop it this minute.' They all laugh."

In fact, the issue of making music of earlier periods sound "like Brahms" is a matter of considerable concern to Mackerras, who is as concerned with matters of historical performance-practice as any early-music maniac (if demonstrably more gracious about it than many). He is quick to point out that, with his recording of the "Great" C-Major Symphony with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, he beat even Roger Norrington to period-practice Schubert. He is equally enthusiastic about his ongoing recording contract with New York's Orchestra of St. Luke's. "They play on modern instruments but with a real sensitivity to historical style. In a way, they sound like a period orchestra, only better. The sound is rounder, more beautiful." Mackerras adds that period-style concerns also prevail in his recording projects with the two other orchestras he serves as principal guest conductor: his Mozart opera project with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and, with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, a project he calls "period Elgar, with a lot of sliding strings."

It is fitting that Mackerras has become Principal Guest Conductor here, at the Company with which he made his American opera debut. Not counting an appearance leading Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress* at the Metropolitan Opera House during an English National Opera tour the year of the Montreal Expo, Mackerras made his American-company debut conducting *The Magic Flute* and *La Cenerentola* in San Francisco's 1969 fall season. His other appearances during the tenure of General Director Kurt Herbert Adler were leading the productions of *Eugene Onegin* and *Un Ballo in Maschera* in 1971. His return to the Company, conducting *Julius Caesar* for the 1982 summer season (the first of Adler's successor, Terence McEwen) has led to celebrated return engagements conducting Handel's *Orlando* (1985), *Jenůfa* (1986), and *Lohengrin* (1989). "I've always loved working in San Francisco," Mackerras comments. "My feelings upon becoming Principal Guest are ones of joy. The link is a fruitful one."

It's also laced with more than a dollop of coincidence. Particularly since both he and Company Music Director Donald Runnicles have gone beyond specialization to demonstrate major strength areas throughout the operatic repertoire, he is, as the Celebration of Richard Strauss just past made clear, a particularly strong Company partner to Runnicles. And beyond the comfortable working relationship the two enjoy, there is their auspicious early connection. "Donald tells me that I conducted the first *Ring* he ever heard, in Glasgow," Mackerras beams. "That

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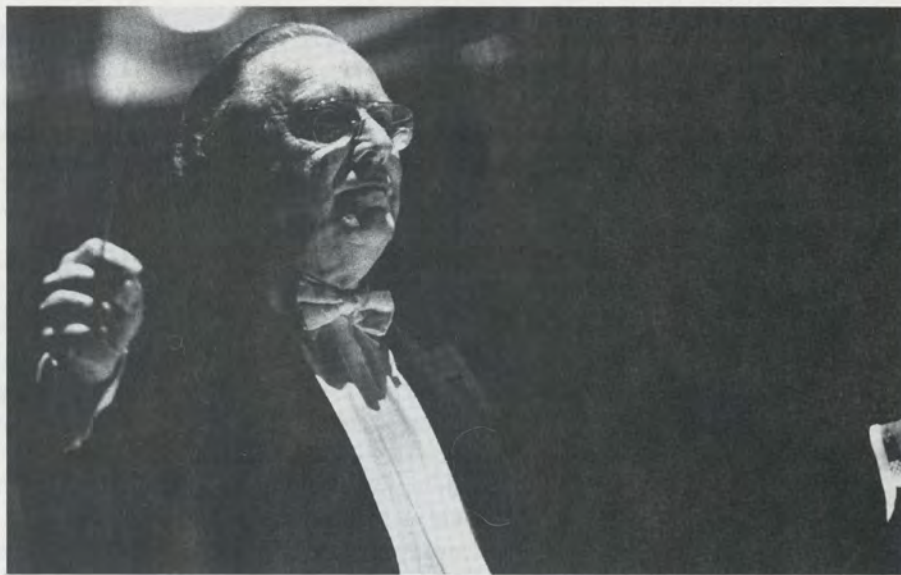
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Ring stands out in my memory for another reason," he continues. "The woman singing the Third Norn came out and sang anti-apartheid slogans to her music instead of Wagner's words. It's a good thing she didn't have to reappear in the opera, or we would have had to do something about it. It wasn't at all funny at the time, but I can laugh about it now."

The specter of his retirement — a phantom at most — poses little threat to

Mackerras's San Francisco future. "Although it might be nice to slow down a bit," he says, "at the moment I work all the time, because I find it difficult to resist the offers to do such nice things. I'll be 70 in 1995 — and in fact I'll be in San Francisco on my 70th birthday. We're planning an interesting evening for that: a concert, a gala concert. In short, I'm looking forward to conducting interesting repertoire here for years to come." □



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In order to increase the enjoyment of opera for hearing-impaired members of the audience, the War Memorial Opera House is equipped with 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:

Sunday, October 3
Tuesday, October 26
Saturday, November 6
Saturday, November 13
Wednesday, November 17
Sunday, November 21
Saturday, November 27
Thursday, December 2

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

IF YOU DRIVE TO THE OPERA . . .

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

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 - 2:00 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.

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.

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

Wheelchair accessible restrooms are located in the lower lounge. Wheelchair accessible public telephones including "TDD" are located in the northeast corner of the lobby.

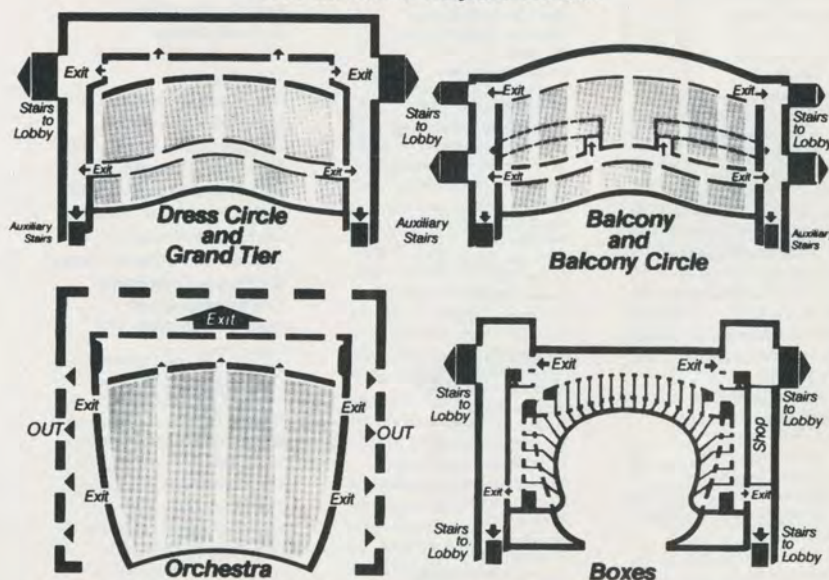
For the safety and comfort of our audience all large parcels, backpacks, luggage, etc., must be checked at the Opera House cloakrooms.

Opera glasses are available in the lobby.

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

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

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



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



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