

Hérodiade
(Herodiade)

1994-1995

Tuesday, November 8, 1994 8:00 PM
Saturday, November 12, 1994 8:00 PM
Tuesday, November 15, 1994 7:30 PM
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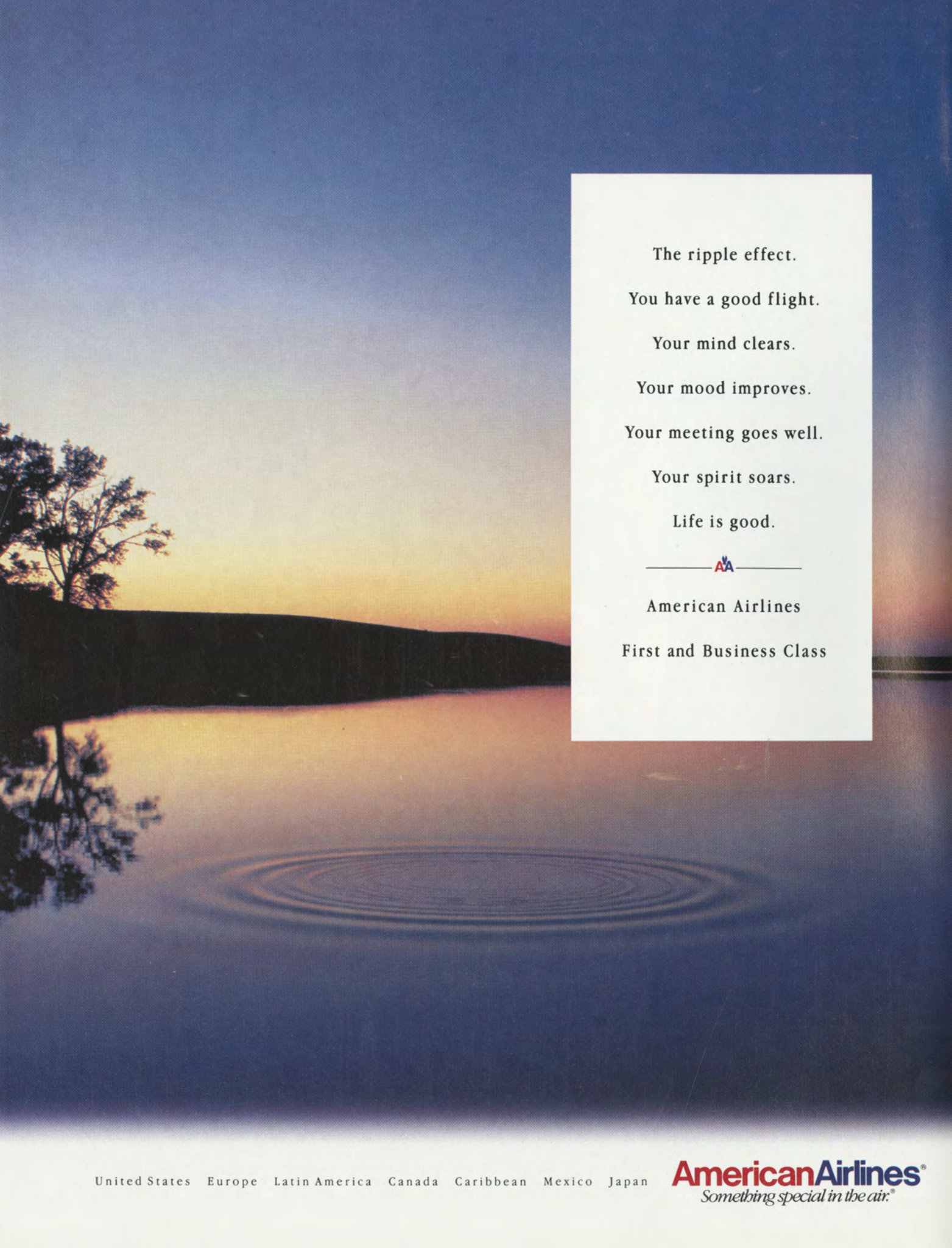
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1994 SEASON

HÉRODIADE



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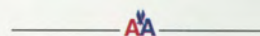
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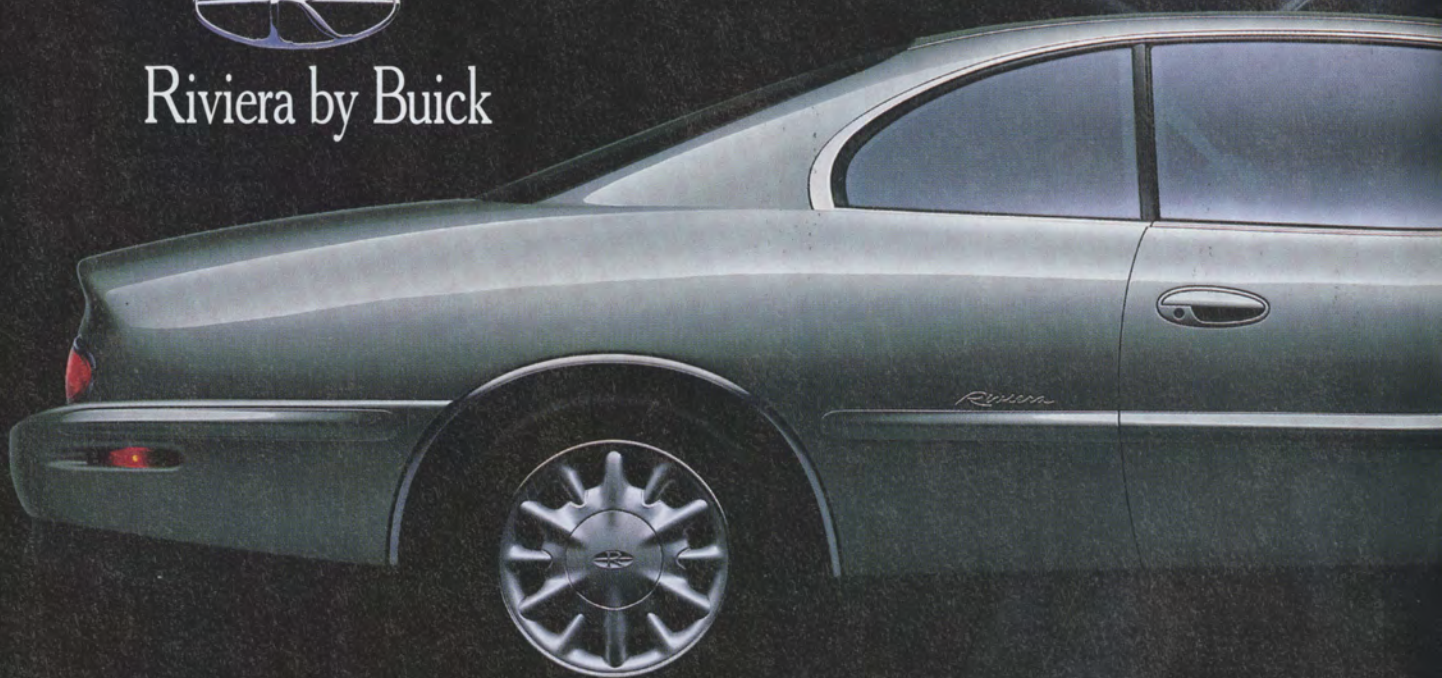
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SAN FRANCISCO OPERA MAGAZINE

Hérodiade

1994 Season
Vol. 72, No. 7

FEATURES

- 18 Hérodiade** by Jeremy Commons
The author examines a truly different treatment of the biblical story of Salome, her mother Herodias and John the Baptist, along with a chronicle of all the turbulence that led to the Brussels premiere of Massenet's opera.
- 50 Silver Anniversary**
Plácido Domingo made his San Francisco Opera debut 25 years ago. This brief chronicle illustrates his remarkable record at the War Memorial Opera House.

DEPARTMENTS

- 8 Administration
12 San Francisco Opera Association
14 San Francisco Opera Orchestra
16 Artist Roster
25 Cast
26 Synopsis
34 Repertoire, 1994 Season
41 Extended Company List
43 Artist Profiles
60 Bel Canto Society
61 Medallion Society
64 Series A Box Holders
65 Supporting San Francisco Opera
68 Corporate Council
70 San Francisco Opera Center Supporters
72 Services

COVER

Del Cairo, Francesco (1598-1674)
Herodias with the Head of St. John the Baptist
Oil on canvas, 40 x 37 3/8 in.

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On behalf of the Board of Directors, welcome to San Francisco Opera's exciting 1994 Fall Season—one that is particularly noteworthy for the Company both artistically (as you will read in our General Director's letter) and financially. Due to a remarkable team effort—highlighted by the success of a special Board campaign led by Finance Chairman William W. Godward, the reduction of expenses and increased income delivered by the Company's administrative staff, and a strong increase in individual giving—the Opera ended the 1993 performance year with a surplus of \$1.3 million. Still, there is much to do to eliminate the remaining deficit in the Opera's general fund. Our '93 success bodes well for the Company's future.

Positive news like this is due in great part to the generosity of the Opera's many benefactors, and it is a tremendous pleasure to acknowledge and thank them for their part in underwriting productions for the Fall Season. We must extend a special thank you to Lexus for its ongoing support, and particularly for sponsoring the 1994 *Lexus Summer Concerts*, which took San Francisco Opera to several Bay Area stages. And we gratefully acknowledge the invaluable contributions made by San Francisco Opera Guild, as well as the efforts of BRAVO! CLUB.

This year, our gifted resident designer, Gerard Howland, has created spectacular new sets for seven productions—significantly reducing our on-stage production costs without compromising the Company's high artistic standards. Support for the Resident Designer project affects the new productions of *Macbeth*, *The Dangerous Liaisons*, *Il Trovatore*, *Otello*, *Tannhäuser*, *Hérodiade* and *Lucia di Lammermoor*, and has been provided by the Columbia Foundation, Mrs. Sheldon G. Cooper, Mr. and Mrs. Reid W. Dennis, The L.J. and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation, and Mr. and Mrs. Marshall I. Wais.

The 1994 Fall Season opens with *Macbeth*, a production made possible by gifts from San Francisco Opera Guild and anonymous friends of San Francisco Opera. The world premiere of *The Dangerous Liaisons* has been made possible by gifts from the California Arts Council, the estate of Gilbert L. Gasch, the National Endowment for the Arts, Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Opera for a New America, and Mrs. Paul L. Wattis. The new production of *Il Trovatore* has been underwritten by gifts from the Franklin/Templeton Group of Funds and Mr. and Mrs. John R. Hamilton. The Company premiere of Rossini's *Otello* has been made possible by Sun Microsystems, Inc. Our *Tannhäuser* has been made possible by a gift from Mr. and Mrs. Evert B. Person. The Company's first production of *The Fiery Angel* has been made possible by a gift from The Edward Meade Smith Trust. *Mefistofele* has been made possible by The Bernard Osher Foundation. And the new *Lucia di Lammermoor* has been made possible by gifts from The Herman J. Miller and Edward J. Clarke Foundation, and from an anonymous friend in honor of William W. Godward.

We are always delighted to see new names appear on our roster of production sponsors, and look forward to enlarging that list with the names of more individuals, corporations and foundations who wish to enjoy the benefits and tremendous satisfaction of joining this special group.

Additionally, we gratefully acknowledge government funding from the National Endowment for the Arts, the California Arts Council, and the Grants for the Arts program of the San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund. Our sincere gratitude also goes out to Mayor Frank Jordan and Chief Administrative Officer Rudolf Nothenberg for their invaluable support; and to the War Memorial Board of Trustees, for their ongoing support and assistance.

Reid W. Dennis
Chairman

David Chamberlain
President

MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL DIRECTOR

LIEBERMAN



Welcome to the 1994 Fall Season at San Francisco Opera—our Company's 72nd consecutive season, and one that continues a rich operatic tradition that is recognized internationally. Nowhere in this country will you find a comparable treasury of great operas and new productions within a single season—and I am proud to say that this has become one of our hallmarks. Think of it, within the three-month period from September 9 to December 11, San Francisco Opera will present 67 performances of nine operas, including the world premiere of a major American opera, three Company premieres, and seven spectacular, new productions.

Our roster of singers features many of today's most exciting stars—including the much anticipated return of Plácido Domingo, who will sing his first Jean (John the Baptist) in the Company premiere of *Hérodiade*. Several artists will appear in important national and local debuts, and seven fine conductors will take the podium, headed by Donald Runnicles, now in his third season as the Opera's music director.

This past summer, audiences throughout the Bay Area had the unusual opportunity of hearing our marvelous Opera Orchestra, Chorus and guest soloists in several concerts at regional outdoor theaters—these were the acclaimed *Lexus Summer Concerts*. Under the baton of Maestro Runnicles, the ensembles also performed with the immensely gifted Adler Fellows from the San Francisco Opera Center in the exciting North American premiere of Michael Tippett's *King Priam* in four sold-out performances. Popular and critical praise for these summer productions was phenomenal, and confirms the reputation our orchestra, chorus and Opera Center have earned for being among the world's finest.

In 1992, San Francisco Opera commissioned *The Dangerous Liaisons*—with music by Conrad Susa, libretto by Philip Littell, and direction by Colin Graham—as part of our Pacific Visions program. This season's world premiere of the opera is a real "dream come true" for this Company. We recognize that the introduction of new and unusual operas to the repertoire is vital to this great art form, and we are proud to be pro-active in our commitment to bringing new work to the stage.

In that same light, the 1994 Fall Season also features an astounding first for this or any other company—seven new productions with sets designed by one artist. The difficult economic trials we experienced here and throughout California over the past several years created this innovative approach to producing opera. And through the very capable hands and imagination of Resident Designer Gerard Howland, you will see a new vision of grand opera—one that serves each individual production brilliantly.

From Verdi and Wagner to Prokofiev and Susa, this season will be a fantastic journey through the full range of human emotions and dramas—all presented with the high standards of excellence that have made San Francisco Opera one of the world's most respected opera companies. On behalf of our wonderful team at the Opera, I want to express special thanks to you—our loyal audience—for your ongoing and invaluable support in making all of this possible. Enjoy the season.

Lotfi Mansouri
General Director

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(Continued on page 10)

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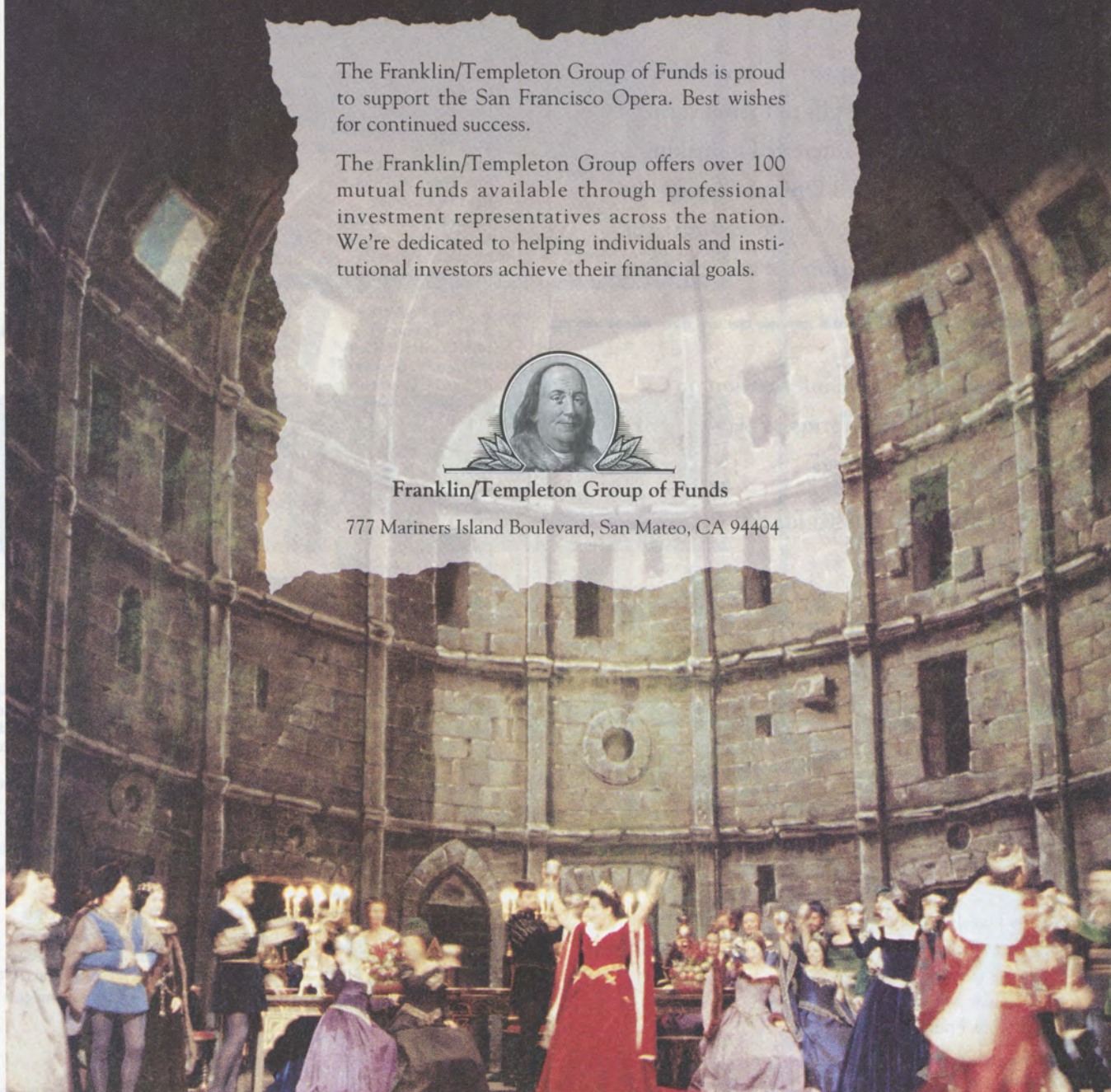
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HÉRODIADE

By **Jeremy Commons**



Poster designed by Charles Lévy for the 1881 premiere of *Hérodias*.
All illustrations: Courtesy, Jeremy Commons

For anyone coming to Massenet's *Hérodias* for the first time, there is no greater obstacle to overcome, no greater shock to assimilate—than the story itself. We are all so familiar with the biblical account of Salome, and the portrait of her elaborated by Oscar Wilde and Richard Strauss, that we can not imagine her as anything other than a precocious adolescent nymphet who performs her “Dance of the Seven Veils” before a drooling lecherous Herod, and then, prompted by her starkly antipathetic and vengeful mother, Herodias, asks for the head of John the Baptist as her reward. When Massenet and his principal librettist, Paul Milliet, show us a very different Salomé (to give her her French spelling), an innocent Salomé who follows John the Baptist (Jean le Prophète, Jean le Précurseur) in his wanderings, drawn to him by a mixture of religious mysticism and childish adoration—our initial reaction could not be anything other than scornful incredulity.

Let us start, then, by trying to come to terms with the plot of the opera, and the changes that have taken place in these well-known characters. *Hérodias*, in this version of the story, has abandoned her infant daughter Salomé and her home in Siloé in order to marry Hérode, the brother of her previous husband; the consanguinity of her two spouses arousing, as in the Bible, the wrath of Jean the Prophet. Salomé, meanwhile, has grown up as a child of the desert, unfamiliar with the ways of the world, and entirely ignorant of her true identity. She

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has heard the preachings of Jean and, mesmerized by his manner and his word, has fallen under his spell. Her love can scarcely yet be described in terms of sexual awareness—it is the gauche puppy-love of a lonely adolescent—but it is strong enough to have brought her to Jerusalem, following in his footsteps. In this version of the story, Salomé has two driving motives: her love for Jean the Prophet and her wish to discover her long-lost and unknown mother.

The character of Jean, we find, has also undergone some changes. He is no longer the fixated religious fanatic, rude of appearance and manner, but a gentler, milder, and more vulnerable man. He may still fulminate against the moral delinquency of Hérodiade but, faced with the self-declaration of a naive Salomé, he finds himself far from deaf to the voice of youthful female beauty: he must struggle to resist, or at least to sublimate, this unexpected temptation that arises in his path. Those who are familiar with Massenet's other operas will find that there is more than a passing similarity between this Jean the Prophet and Athanaël, the tormented monk of *Thaïs*.

Given these changes in the characters, it is impossible for the story to reach its biblical conclusion. This Salomé cannot possibly demand Jean's head: rather, she begs to share his fate, whether it be life or death. Her tragedy is that her appeal to Hérode and Hérodiade comes too late. At the very moment that Hérodiade is about to yield—i.e. abandon her wish for vengeance and add her plea to Salomé's that Jean be spared—the executioner appears, blood-stained sword in hand. Salomé, realizing that Jean is dead, draws a dagger to stab Hérodiade, but the terrified queen, who has guarded her secret until this moment, seeks to save herself by crying "I am your mother!" Cursing her, Salomé turns the dagger upon herself.

If these changes strike us as pointless modifications that make nonsense of the story, we may console ourselves with the knowledge that Massenet's contemporaries thought so, too. Indeed, their objections went a good deal further, for many of them found the libretto an effrontery to both morality and religion. Following the 1881 Brussels premiere, it was proposed to mount *Hérodiade* in London in 1892, but the production did not take place. London did not see the opera until 1904: an irate correspondent wrote to *The Times*, describing the libretto as "a flagrant outrage to good literary, historical and religious taste." In Geneva, the City Council refused to vote on a subsidy to help mount a production—which took place all the same! And when

the opera reached Lyon in 1885, the Cardinal Archbishop of that city declared that it offended orthodoxy and pronounced "minor excommunication" upon Massenet and Milliet.

And who, we may wonder, was responsible for these changes? Librettist or composer? Most of the critics who attended the first performance laid the blame at Milliet's door. He was, after all, a young man who had published only a slender quantity of verse and one or two literary essays. He had, as yet, no standing in the literary world, and since he and a certain "Henri Grémont" (the pseudonym of Massenet's publisher, Georges Hartmann) had put their names to the text, it was they who had to be held accountable for its contents.

The truth of the matter, however, went further than this. Another Massenet librettist, Louis Gallet, in a most interesting review published on January 1st, 1882 in *La Nouvelle Revue*, wrote in such a way as to leave no doubt that it was the composer, quite as much as his librettists, who was responsible. Gallet, in common with other critics, pointed out that, just as Jean shared his traits of mildness and gentleness with Christ, so this new Salomé was "a development, an amplification, of the type of Mary Magdalen." Both women—this new Salomé and Mary Magdalen—were drawn with a mystical fervor towards God, and both found that their paths to this goal led through devotion to a preacher: Mary Magdalen to Christ, Salomé to Jean. In each case, religious ecstasy rose above sensual human love, yet it was from sensual love that it took its departure. For Mary Magdalen was the redeemed prostitute, and this operatic Salomé, right from the onset of her first duet with Jean, eagerly and naively declared her love for him.

We should add that Gallet was able to write all this with a peculiarly privileged insight, for eight years earlier, in 1873, he himself had supplied the text for Massenet's



Jules Massenet, 1842–1912, in a drawing made in 1893 by Rudolf Lehmann.

oratorio *Marie-Magdeleine*. He was, therefore, intimately placed and advantaged to recognize that Massenet, always a composer who was fascinated by women and drawn to probe the psychological complexities and contradictions of his heroines, was in this opera carrying a step further an investigation which had begun in their own collaboration.

Massenet had met Paul Milliet some years earlier, in 1878. He had already read the young man's poems, and asked him if he would try his hand at writing a love poem in which significantly, "all that is mystical in the Christian religion should be applied to sensual passion, and vice versa." Pleased with the result, he showed it to his publisher Hartmann who, sensing that a collaboration between the two could prove fruitful, suggested that they should write an opera together on the subject of *Hérodiade*, one of the *Trois Contes* of Gustave Flaubert. (This



From the 1881 Brussels world premiere of *Hérodiade*: Act I, Scene I—Marthe Duvivier (Salomé) meets Edmond Vergnet (Jean) in the courtyard outside Hérode's palace.

would seem to have been the extent of Hartmann's collaboration in the libretto: he was, at most, a passive participant who simply kept a fatherly eye on the project. The finished libretto, we may add, also carried a third name, that of A. Zanardini, but the role of this well-known Italian librettist was, again, hardly a formative one. His inclusion came about because Massenet and Hartmann, in collaboration with the Italian publisher Giulio Ricordi, initially hoped to secure simultaneous premieres at the Paris Opéra and at La Scala in Milan, and it was Zanardini who prepared the official Italian translation.)

Milliet duly wrote his libretto, and Massenet immersed himself for two and a half years in setting it to music. The work was orchestrated at Pourville, a coastal resort near Dieppe on the English Channel, in 1879 and 1880. As the composer himself

related in his autobiography, *Mes Souvenirs* (1912):

My publisher Hartmann and my collaborator Paul Milliet would come to spend Sundays with me. When I say "with me," I am misusing the words and must excuse myself, for I scarcely gave these excellent friends my company. I was accustomed to working between fifteen and sixteen hours a day; six hours I devoted to sleep; my meals and *toilette* took up the rest of the time. It must be recorded that it is only thus, in the obstinacy of work tirelessly pursued over several years, that one can bring to fruition works of far-reaching scope.

With the completion of the score, the time had come to approach the management of the Opéra. Massenet had already

enjoyed great success there with his previous work, *Le Roi de Lahore* (1877), and even though there had since been a change of management, it does not seem to have occurred to him that the current director, Vaucourbeil, would accord the new score anything other than a warm welcome. The outcome, to his chagrin, proved very different.

There are two versions of what was actually said. According to Massenet himself, Vaucourbeil asked who was his librettist. "Paul Milliet," he replied, "a man of much talent whom I love dearly." "I, too, love him dearly," said Vaucourbeil, "but . . . with him you need . . . (searching for the word) . . . un *carcassier* (or, as we might say, a "carcasser")." "And what," Massenet asked, "is a *carcassier*?" "A *carcassier*," came the reply, "is one who has a solid knowledge of how to construct the carcass, the plan, of a piece



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Another image from the *Hérodiade* world premiere: Slaves and Babylonian dancers in Hérode's apartments.

... Let me add that you yourself are not sufficiently a *carcassier*, in the exact meaning of the word. Bring me another work and the doors of the Opéra will be open to you."

According to other accounts, the refusal was not quite so brusque and barbed, but the composer was nevertheless given to understand that his work was "incendiary" and, even if accepted, would have to await its turn well down on a list of operas scheduled for production.

Either way, he went away dejected—until, soon afterwards, he was hailed in the street by a man he recognized as M. Calabresi, one of the two directors of the Théâtre de la Monnaie in Brussels:

"I hear you have finished a large work: *Hérodiade*. If you will let me have it, I shall mount it immediately at the Théâtre de la Monnaie."

And so it came about that *Hérodiade* received its premiere in Brussels rather than in Paris. Securing such an opera was a major scoop for Calabresi and his colleague, Stoumon: it was, or so it was said, the first time that a work by a prominent French composer had received its premiere in Brussels. The fact that it had been refused, or considered only grudgingly, by the Opéra, was no drawback: it could only invest it with a certain notoriety and enhance its appeal in terms of publicity.

The publicity surrounding the production was, in fact, immense. All the world read about Massenet's frequent commuting between Paris and Brussels . . . of his stopping so often at the frontier that he was soon on terms of jovial familiarity with the customs men . . . of his even sending them tickets to see the opera.

Everyone knew, too, that on the day of the first performance the size of the train from Paris had to be "doubled and even trebled." People queued up on the preceding evening in hopes of securing the last unreserved seats. A place in the orchestra cost

the then-princely sum of 500 Francs. Belgian journalists made some mileage out of complaints that the theater was so packed with Parisians that many local theatergoers could not gain admission.

On that first night, December 19th, 1881, even as the public was being admitted to the auditorium, the two directors were still in their shirtsleeves, paint brushes in hand, putting the finishing touches to a staircase that had been overlooked. But last-minute panic had no adverse effect on the evening. It proved to be a triumph: a brilliant occasion in itself, and a milestone in Massenet's career.

Brussels had never seen such a glittering gathering of notables. The Queen of Belgium attended, along with many members of the court, the diplomatic corps, the government and the armed forces. Among the musical personalities present were the composers Saint-Saëns, Reyer, Joncières, Gevaert, Guiraud, Godard, Duvernoy, Audran and Serpette; the conductor Albert Wolff; the baritone Henri Lasalle (who had created the part of Scindia in *Le Roi de Lahore*); and the veteran mezzo-soprano Pauline Viardot. Journalists were there in force, not only from Belgium and Paris, but from as far afield as England, Italy, Germany and Russia.

Nor were they disappointed. A success from the moment Salomé sang her first air, "Il est doux, il est bon," the evening became a sustained crescendo of excitement. Louis Schneider, Massenet's biographer, was later to write:

Encores, recalls, acclamations, ovations, nothing was lacking for the authors. Massenet was fêted as no one in the memory of the Bruxellois had ever been fêted.

Two days later the composer was invited to dine at court, and the press announced that he had been created a Chevalier of the Order of Leopold.

Praise was also lavished on the principal singers, all but one of them French. Marthe Duvivier (Salomé), a pupil of Pauline Viardot and the reigning diva of the Monnaie, was described as "blonde, large and strong," her robust figure ascribable to her taste for Brussels beer. Blanche Deschamps (*Hérodiade*), a pupil of the Brussels Conservatoire who later became the wife of the conductor Léon Jehin, was no less admired, for she was "very young, très sympathique." Later, when she sang in London in 1891, the *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News* wrote that "merely to listen to so beautiful a voice would be a source of delight, but when combined with perfect command of expression and pathos it held every listener spell-bound." Both the "strong" tenor Edmond Vergnet (Jean) and the "tasteful" baritone and "distinguished actor" Manoury (*Hérode*) were singers who were already well known and prized in Paris; but Gresse (Phanuel) enjoyed something of a *revanche*, for though he too had sung in the French capital, he had to go to Covent Garden and the Monnaie to gain recognition.

So great was the success that 55 consecutive performances were given in that one season alone, and the opera was launched upon a career that was to see it produced not only all over Europe, but as far afield as Rio de Janeiro (1889), New Orleans (1892), Cairo (1894), Algiers (1896), Buenos Aires (1907), New York (1909) and Casablanca (1934).

The score that was heard in these subsequent productions was not quite the same as in Brussels. There, Vaucourbeil's reservations were in one respect justified, since *Hérodiade*'s final cry, "Je suis ta mère!" was the audience's first, totally unprepared, indication that she was aware of her relationship to Salomé. For the first performance in Paris, in 1884, a new scene was added at the beginning of Act III—the scene for Phanuel and *Hérodiade*—the main purpose of which was to show Phanuel actually pointing out Salomé, and identifying her to *Hérodiade* as her daughter.

Hérodiade is a grand opera, a spectacle opera in the tradition of Meyerbeer, and we may at once recognize and admire Massenet's ability to handle vast crowd scenes and the conflicting and changing motivation of opposed factions. Two scenes particularly stand out: Act II, Scene 2, where *Hérode*'s incitement of the people to rebellion against Rome is interrupted by the arrival of the Romans themselves, and where the fickle swing of popular allegiance from *Hérode* to Vitellius is in its turn interrupted by the

entry of Jean and his following of Canaanite women; and Act III, Scene 2, the climactic scene of Jean's interrogation in the Temple, where Hérode, realizing that it is Jean whom Salomé loves, suddenly switches from trying to save him and manipulate him to political ends, and instead condemns both him and Salomé to death.

There is, however, much more to this opera than this. *Hérodiade* owes much to Positivism, that philosophical approach to religion which, associated in France with the names of Auguste Comte (1798-1857) and Ernest Renan (1823-1892), sought to eschew the divine and the miraculous in religion, and to emphasize the human instead. Here we are invited to see Jean not so much as a symbol, an icon, as the ascetic prophet who paved the way for Christ, but rather as a warm and sentient man, drawn to Salomé just as she is drawn to him.

A similar search for the human can be seen in *Hérodiade*. In her Act I duet with Hérode, when she seeks his aid to wreak her revenge on Jean, she tries, before resorting to threats and vituperation, to reawaken their earlier love, to recall their first "timid kisses." Irrespective of whether her feelings are genuine or assumed—and there is nothing in Massenet's music at this point to suggest that she is insincere—we are shown a

human side of her character which we would scarcely have expected or believed possible.

For much of the opera Massenet gives his singers exactly the kind of elevated impassioned declamation that we associate with grand opera. But again, this is not the whole story. Coupled with his positivist approach to characterization, he is often to be seen developing the peculiarly elastic and expressive vocal line for which he was to become so famous. Through using a whole arsenal of rhythmic devices—triplets or triple rhythms, syncopations, shifting accents, frequently changing tempi—he is able to approximate the subtle inflections and varied rhythms of the spoken word, creating a flexibility undreamed of by earlier composers. The prime example is Salomé's Act I air, "Il est doux, il est bon," but there are many others as well: we may cite the passage, already mentioned, in which Hérodiade recalls the days of her happiness with Hérode; and Hérode's "Vision fugitive."

There is also the interest of an extremely colorful setting. In the writings of Ernest Renan, Milliet and Massenet found vivid and gorgeous descriptions of the Holy Lands: of the confluence of races and tribes which made up the blending of color and custom that was Jerusalem. Such opulence

was fully compatible with grand opera, and in his music, Massenet seeks to reproduce and match these descriptions. The very first scene is notable, with its caravans of merchants from different countries; with its pictures of slaves unrolling the contents—the perfumes and luxurious materials—of their various bundles; with its incipient quarrel between Pharisees and Samaritans. Or we may look at the opening of Act II, with its Babylonian dances and song of a young Babylonian slave as she offers Hérode a goblet of "vin rosé d'Engaddi." And so we could go on, drawing attention to the exoticism of the ballet music, or the use of a genuine Jewish melody, "Schemah Israel," in the temple scene of Act III. Everywhere, there is local color—multi-tinted orchestral and vocal color—in this most lush and inventive score.

In this opera, Massenet's young imagination—young despite the fact that he was almost forty—brims over with ideas. It is a warm score, exuberant and voluptuous. And yet, at the same time, it is the work of a Frenchman with an innate sense of grace and elegance. To listen to *Hérodiade* is consequently a delicious self-indulgence. On one hand, it is a return to opera on the extravagantly grand scale; on the other, it is an adventure in exquisitely refined hedonism. ■



Three performers who took part in the 1881 Brussels premiere of *Hérodiade*, all three photographed in their respective roles: (L. to r.) Manouri as Hérode; Marthe Duvivier as Salomé; Edmond Vergnet as Jean.



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Theresa Ganley

Fight Coordinator
Larry Henderson

Scenery constructed in
San Francisco Opera Scenic Studios

Costumes created for a co-production
of Théâtre de l'Opéra de Nice and
Chorégies d'Orange

First performance:
Brussels, December 19, 1881

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8 AT 8:00
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 12 AT 8:00
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 15 AT 7:30
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 18 AT 8:00
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 20 AT 2:00
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 23 AT 7:30
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 25 AT 8:00

CAST (in order of appearance)

Phanuel, a Chaldean	Kenneth Cox
Salomé	Renée Fleming
Hérode (Herod), King of Galilee	Juan Pons
Hérodiade (Herodias), wife of Hérode	Dolora Zajick
Jean (John the Baptist)	Plácido Domingo
	John Keyes* (Nov. 23, 25)
A Young Babylonian	Kristin Clayton†
Vitellius, Roman Proconsul	Hector Vásquez
A Voice in the Temple	Alfredo Portilla†
High Priest	Eduardo del Campot

Merchants, Slaves, Palace Guards, Roman Soldiers, Priests, People of Jerusalem

**U.S. debut

*San Francisco Opera debut

†1994 Adler Fellow

TIME AND PLACE: Jerusalem, 30 A.D.

ACT I Hérode's palace

INTERMISSION

ACT II	Scene 1	Hérode's chambers
	Scene 2	The grand square in Jerusalem

INTERMISSION

ACT III	Scene 1	Phanuel's rooms
	Scene 2	Palace courtyard
	Scene 3	The temple
ACT IV	Scene 1	Prison
	Scene 2	Great hall of the palace

Supertitles for *Hérodiade* provided by a generous gift from
the Langendorf Foundation

Supertitles by Clifford Cranna, San Francisco Opera

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

Hérodiade / Synopsis

ACT I — Merchants of various tribes arrive to Jerusalem, some of them bearing gifts for King Herod (Hérode). They quarrel, hurl insults and threaten to fight. The Chaldean Phanuel calms the situation, admonishes them and assures them of a better future. Salome (Salomé) comes out of the palace. Phanuel, the only who knows she is actually the daughter of Herodias (Hérodiade), is surprised and alarmed at finding her in Jerusalem. She tells him that all her life she was vainly searching for the mother whom she never knew, but then she heard the preaching of John (Jean) the Prophet, who inspired her, and she decided to follow in his footsteps to Jerusalem. In the meantime, she also fell in love with the Prophet. Herod comes out of the palace, looking for Salome among the dancers. Failing to find her, he reflects on his love for her. Herodias joins him and calls on him to avenge her for an insult she received in public from a man who called her "Jezebel" and scared her with his threats. Upon Herod's prompting, she tells him the man is John the Prophet, and she demands his head. Herod refuses. She is about to leave, promising vengeance on John, when the Prophet appears. His denunciations make Herod and Herodias leave in disgust and terror. Salome joins John and declares her love for him, but is told that if she must love him, her love must be on a spiritual level, and he further suggests that she should turn to the new faith and thus achieve immortality.

ACT II — Herod, unable to sleep, reflects on his longing for Salome, and asks his slaves to dance for him. One of them offers him a love potion, adding it will make him see the face of the one he loves. He drinks and becomes delirious, imagining Salome was with him. The king begs Phanuel to cure him of his love, but Phanuel reproaches him for thinking only of a woman when his kingdom is in danger. The defiant Herod assures Phanuel that with the help of all the tribes he can overcome the Romans.

In the great square at Jerusalem, Herod receives messengers from the different tribes: all promise assistance; all swear to gain independence from Rome or die. Announced by Herodias, the Roman Proconsul Vitellius arrives with his guard and asks the people what they desire. Some of their demands are granted (Jewish priests ask for the return of their Temple), and all hail the Proconsul and Caesar. Salome and the Canaanite women arrive, surrounding and praising John, who predicts the downfall of the Roman Empire. Vitellius has him arrested.

ACT III — Herodias visits Phanuel, who is also an astrologer and is busy contemplating the stars. The jealous Herodias asks to see the future of the woman who has stolen Herod's love. After a lengthy exchange, Phanuel tells her that her rival, Salome, is her own abandoned daughter.

In the courtyard, Salome hears voices singing praises of Herod and the Queen from inside the palace, and she laments over John's fate. He has been thrown into prison, and she prays to God to save him. When Herod finds her there, he tells her of his love and begs her to follow him. She repulses him and tells him of her love for John, at which the angry Herod declares he will put them both to death.

Worshippers enter the Temple, followed by Herodias, Vitellius and the Court. The priests ask that John be put to death. He is brought in and questioned by Herod, who announces that John is a madman, and as such can not be condemned. In an aside, Herod promises John to save him if he will assist him in his plans, which John refuses. The Court and the people are divided in their reaction to the enfolding events; Salome asks to share John's fate; Herod denounces both of them and sentences them to death.

ACT IV — In prison, John prepares for death, and prays for help in his attraction to Salome. He interprets her arrival as a sign that God permits their love, declares his love for her and they embrace, vowing to meet again in eternity. High priests and slaves take John to execution.

In the great hall of the palace, Romans are celebrating the glories of their Empire. During the revels, John is brought in and jeered, before being taken away for execution. Salome asks for mercy for John, adding that he was her only consolation ever since she was abandoned by her mother. Herodias, moved by Salome's appeal, and on the point of recognizing her as her daughter, remains silent. The executioner appears with John head, causing a cry of "The Prophet is dead!" Salome denounces Herodias as John's murderess and attacks her, while Herodias breaks down and confesses to being Salome's mother. Salome, saying she can take back her blood and her life, stabs herself and dies.

The performance of November 18th is sponsored by Charles Schwab & Company.

The performance of November 20th is designated in honor of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Wetzel's membership in the Triple Gold Circle.

The performance of November 23rd is sponsored by the Hendrickson family in honor of the Supernumeraries and in memory of Joseph Scott Hendrickson.

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Supernumeraries

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Katherine Brazaitis
Lilly Chiang
Caper Davis
Sabine Dolan
Mary Freeman
Kristin Graham
Naomi Hartley-Dawson
Kristina Kling
Susan Kodimer-Okada
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Hérodiade

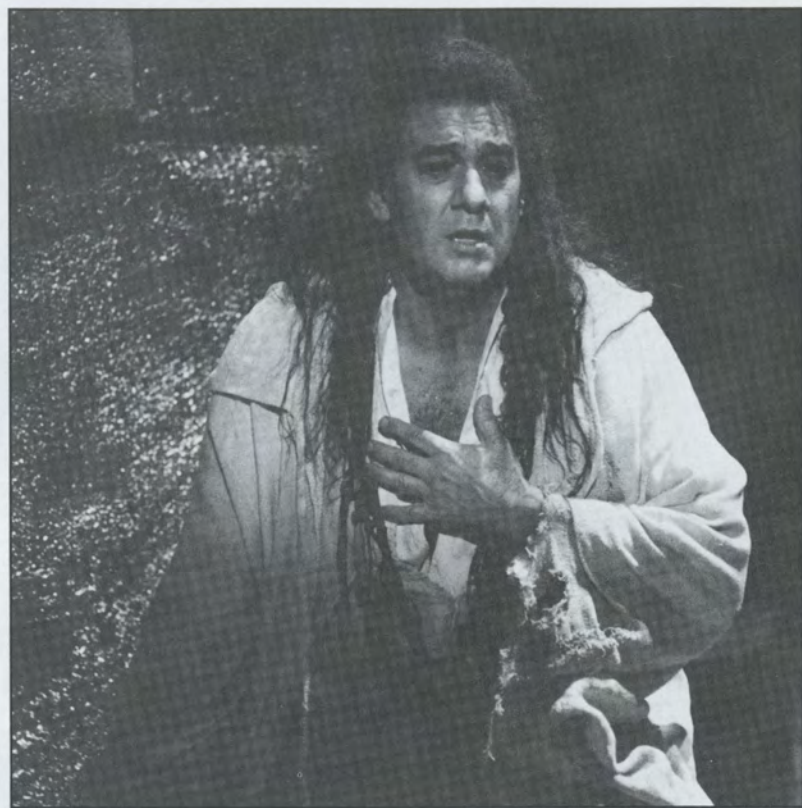
Photos taken in rehearsal
by Marty Sohl

Plácido Domingo
Renée Fleming





Dolora Zajick, Juan Pons



Plácido Domingo

Juan Pons, Eduardo del Campo, Men of the San Francisco Opera Chorus



Hector Vásquez



Renée Fleming



Kenneth Cox

Principals, San Francisco Opera Chorus and Supernumeraries





Plácido Domingo, Renée Fleming



Dolora Zajick

Plácido Domingo, Members of the San Francisco Opera Corps de Ballet



L.A. OPERA

1994-95 SEASON



SEPT. 9, 11, 16, 18M, 21, 24, 28, 1994

FAUST

Charles Gounod
New Production
Foster: Corsaro, Colavecchia,
Brown, Dana, Hickey
Villaruel, Silvasti, Tumanyan, Gilfry,
Guzman, Howe, Fitzpatrick

SEPTEMBER 10, 13, 17M, 20, 23, 1994

ELEKTRA

Richard Strauss
Behr: Pountney, West, Bury, Dana
Zschau, Voss, Rysanek, Mack,
Bernstein, Lebherz, Gallup, Ebbers,
Leighton, Howe, Nikkel, Guzman,
Roderer, Burzynski, Rashkovsky, Tash,
Curtsinger, Wallace

SEPT. 27, 30, OCT. 2, 5, 8M, 11, 14, 1994

DON GIOVANNI

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Foster: Miller, Stone, Israel, Dana, Hickey
Kozlowska, Rasmussen, Allen (9/27,
30; 10/2, 5, 8m) / Gilfry (10/11, 14),
Randle, Plishka, Atkins, Lebherz

PHOTO: JUNE ANDERSON

OCT. 29, NOV. 2, 5M, 8, 12, 1994

XERXES

George Frideric Handel
Brydon: Wadsworth, Lynch,
Pakledinaz, Kaczorowski
Hunt, Bradley, Waters, Rasmussen,
Asawa, Atkins, Opalach

FEBRUARY 4, 7, 10, 12, 1995

PELLÉAS ET MÉLISANDE

Claude Debussy
Salonen: Sellars, Tspyn, Ramicova, Ingalls
Groop, Le Roux, White, Cox, Wallis,
Le Roi, Atkins, Fitzpatrick
In association with the Los Angeles
Philharmonic

MARCH 18M, 21, 23, 26, 29, APRIL 1M, 1995

DON PASQUALE

Gaetano Donizetti
Pidò: Lawless, Ponnelle, Pyant
Çako, Desderi (3/18m-29)/
Gallup (4/1m), Fedderly,
Gilfry, Walker

MAY 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, 20M, 23, 1995

OTELLO

Giuseppe Verdi
Behr: Friedrich, Harlan,
Schneider-Siemssen, Skalicki
Anderson, Domingo
(5/6, 9, 12, 15, 18)/
Bogachov (5/20m, 23),
Yurisich, Rasmussen,
Fedderly, Lebherz, Ebbers,
Bernstein, Fitzpatrick

JUNE 7, 8, 9, 10M, 10E, 11, 13,
14, 15, 16, 17M, 17E, 18M, 1995

PORGY AND BESS

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DeMain: Clarke, Foy,
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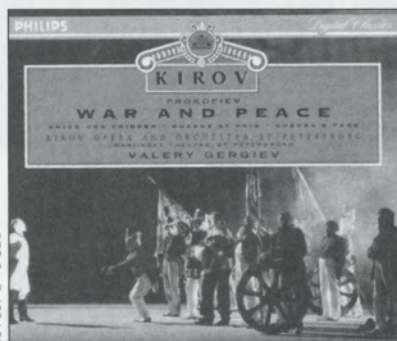
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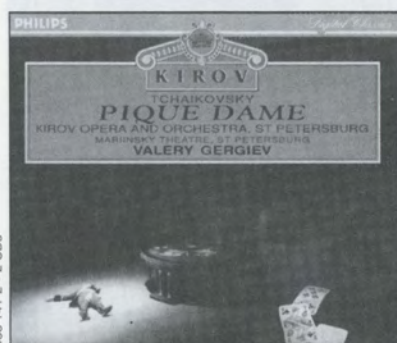
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Lotfi Mansouri, *General Director*
Donald C. Runnicles, *Music Director*

Opening Night New Production

Macbeth Verdi
Jones, Waite*†; Morris, Lloyd, Li,
Guggenheim, Del Campo*†, Wilde,
Patton†
Runnicles; Mansouri/Howland/
Pizzi/Whitfield
*This production is made possible by generous
gifts from San Francisco Opera Guild and
anonymous friends of San Francisco Opera.*
Sept. 9, 13, 16, 20, 24, 29, Oct. 2

World Premiere

The Dangerous Liaisons Sosa/Littell
Von Stade, Fleming, Mills, Meier*,
Forst, Claycomb, Bishop*†, Clayton*†,
Dillard*, Gao, Shigematsu†;
Hampson, Hobson**, Vasquez, Sikon*,
Lord*, Cross*, Portilla*†, Patriarco†
Runnicles; Graham*/Howland/Munn
*This production is made possible by generous
gifts from the California Arts Council, the
estate of Gilbert L. Gasch, the National
Endowment for the Arts, the Lila Wallace -
Reader's Digest Opera for a New America,
and Mrs. Paul L. Wattis.*
Sept. 10, 15, 18, 21, 23, 27

New Production

Il Trovatore Verdi
Millo/TBA, Zajick/Toczyska,
Bishop†; Armiliato*/O'Neill,
Gavanelli/Chernov, Wells/Skinner,
Guggenheim, Sumegit, Portilla†
Oren/Robertson; Copley/Howland/Munn
*This production is made possible by generous
gifts from the Franklin/ Templeton Group of
Funds and Mr. and Mrs. John R. Hamilton.*
Sept. 17, 22, 25, 28, Oct. 1, 6, 11
Dec. 1, 4, 7, 10

New Production

San Francisco Opera Premiere
Otello Rossini
Gasdia, Shigematsu†; Merritt, Estep,
Ford*, Langan, Cross, Li, Portilla†
Summers; Feldman/Howland/Brown/
Munn
*This production is made possible by a generous
gift from Sun Microsystems, Inc.*
Oct. 4, 9, 13, 18, 22, 25, 28

*Support for the Resident Designer project
has been provided by the Columbia
Foundation, Mrs. Sheldon G. Cooper, Mr.
and Mrs. Reid W. Dennis, The L.J. and
Mary C. Skaggs Foundation, and Mr. and
Mrs. Marshall I. Wais.*

New Production

Tannhäuser Wagner
Voigt, Keen, Dillard; Schmidt*,
Hynninen, von Halem*, Sumegit,
Guggenheim, Rideout, Wilde
Runnicles; Mansouri/Smuin/Howland/
Mahoney/Munn
*This production is made possible by a generous
gift from Mr. and Mrs. Evert B. Person.*
Oct. 12, 15, 20, 23, 26, 29, Nov. 2

New Production

San Francisco Opera Premiere
Hérodiade Massenet
Zajick, Fleming, Clayton†;
Domingo/Keyes*(11/23, 25), Pons,
Cox, Vasquez, Del Campo†, Portilla†
Gergiev/Ethuin* (11/23, 25);
Mansouri/Howland/Walek/Munn
Nov. 8, 12, 15, 18, 20, 23, 25

Mefistofele

Boito

Millo/Racette, Neblett, Christin,
Bishop†; Ramey, Margison, Frank,
Cross
Pappano; Carsen/McClintock/
Morgan/Levine/Munn
Co-production with the Grand Théâtre
de Genève. Co-owned with the Lyric
Opera of Chicago.
*This production is made possible by a generous
gift from The Bernard Osher Foundation.*
Nov. 13, 16, 21, 27, 30, Dec. 3, 6, 9

New Production

Lucia di Lammermoor Donizetti
Swenson, Shigematsu†; Giordani,
Servile**, Miles, Lord, Portilla†
Santi; Bernhard/Howland/Toms/Munn
*This production is made possible by generous
gifts from The Herman J. Miller and Edward J.
Clarke Foundation and from an anonymous
friend in honor of William W. Godward.*
Nov. 19, 22, 26, 29, Dec. 2, 8, 11

* San Francisco Opera debut
** U.S. opera debut
† 1994 Adler Fellow

*All performances are in the original language
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Repertoire, casts and dates are subject to
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Clayton, Filimonova*, Waite†, Gao,
Bishop†, Dillard, Shigematsu†;
Leiferkus, Hanedanyan, Pluzhnikov*,
Minzhilkiev*, Lord, Wilde, Sumegit,
Del Campo†, Patriarco†, Condy
Gergiev/Polianichko** (10/21);
Freeman*/Roger*/Munn
Produced in association with the Royal
Opera House, Covent Garden, London,
and the Kirov Opera, St. Petersburg.
*Production is made possible, in part, by
contributions from The Friends of Covent
Garden and the British Council.*
*The San Francisco Opera production is made
possible by a generous gift from The Edward
Meade Smith Trust.*
Oct. 19, 21, 27, 30, Nov. 1, 5, 9

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD

presents
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Lucia di Lammermoor
Gaetano Donizetti/in Italian
Friday, December 2 at 1:00
Thursday, December 8 at 1:00

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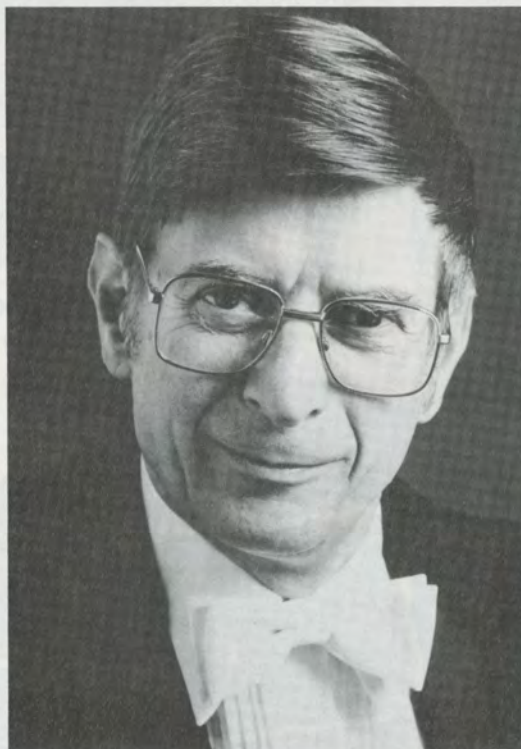


Performance Highlights

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Anybody in the market for a distinctive mode of transportation might want to stop at the Hyatt Regency on November 4 for **Opera Festiva**, the **San Francisco Opera** Guild's annual gala dinner and auction. Items on the block include a 1995 BMW convertible, a two-year old Arabian stallion, and lunch aboard an aircraft carrier with the world famous Blue Angels. For those who prefer the comforts of home, fine wines, antiques, and art are also in the offering. All proceeds from the event go to fund the Guild's numerous education programs. Another gala, in honor of tenor **Plácido Domingo** and to benefit the Opera itself, is held on November 20, following an afternoon performance of *Hérodiade*, featuring Domingo as John the Baptist in Massenet's seldom-heard version of the Herodias-Salome-St. John story. The gala begins at 6 p.m. with a cocktail reception in the lobby, and moves on to a lavish Roman banquet held on the stage, where guests can get a close look at Gerald Howland's elaborate set, built for the new production.



The "Blomstedt Decade" celebration, honoring Herbert Blomstedt's final season as music director of the **San Francisco Symphony**, continues at Davies Symphony Hall. During November, Blomstedt conducts the work of Richard Strauss, one of the maestro's fortés. Blomstedt has led the Orchestra in several acclaimed Strauss recordings, including the *Alpine Symphony*, *Don Juan*, and *Ein Heldenleben*. On November 9, 10, 11, and 12, Blomstedt and the Orchestra perform the German composer's *Death and Transfiguration*, in a concert that also includes Sibelius' Third and Beethoven's Eighth symphonies. Strauss also plays a role in a second concert this month, one by the **San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra**, the much-lauded ensemble whose members range from age 12 to 20. The Youth Orchestra performs *Don Juan*, along with Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony, and, as an ear-opening prelude, "Double Music," a 1941 work by John Cage and Lou Harrison written for twin percussion quartets.

So much to celebrate:
San Francisco Opera honors
tenor Plácido Domingo (above);
San Francisco Symphony pays
homage to Herbert Blomstedt
(below) in his final season as
music director.

—Robert Simonson

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1994 San Francisco Opera Company (Continued)

Although our program magazines regularly list members of the Administration and Company (please see pages 8 and 10), we know that those lists are by necessity incomplete. In order to give recognition to the many skilled professionals whose work has contributed so greatly to the quality of San Francisco Opera productions, we provide, once a year, a list of everyone involved with our season. In this issue, department heads and regular staff are listed in front of the magazine, as usual; the many others, upon whom so much depends, are listed below.

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA COSTUME SHOP

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Kirsten Tucker

Laundress

Eula Robertson

Building Maintenance

Leo Borja

WARDROBE DEPARTMENT/

Women

Kathleen Phillips, *Wardrobe Assistant*

Dressers

Pam Calvert
Mary Ann Flippin
Carolyn Graham
Claudia Holaday
Sandy McNamee
Joan Morrison
Kathy Rosen
Janice Stephenson
Kay Verdier
Donna Whitfield

WARDROBE DEPARTMENT/

Men

Jose Tellez Ponce, *Wardrobe Assistant*
Kelly Hill, *Wardrobe Assistant*

Dressers

David Barnard
David Besser
Thomas Carter
Douglas Couture
Burton Covell
David Croker
Ernest Dale
George Elvin
Michael Gagarine
Joseph Harris
Charles Hoffman
Larry Hunnicutt
Andrew Lambert
Alfred Lorente
Leland Moffatt
Clive V. Phillips

WIG AND MAKEUP DEPARTMENT

Rex Rogers, *Foreman*

Journeyman

Terrell Balie
Richard Battle
Debra Coleman
Judith Disbrow
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ARTIST PROFILES



American dramatic mezzo-soprano **Dolora Zajick** returns to the site of her 1986 triumph as Azucena in *Il Trovatore* (then a career "first") to reprise the part as well as to portray the title role of *Hérodiade* for the first time in her career. A former Merola Opera Program participant and Adler Fellow, she made her Company debut as the High Priestess in *Aida* in 1984, continuing in several leading roles here, including Amneris in *Aida* (1989), and her first Marfa in *Khovanshchina* (1990). In a short amount of time, her career has taken her to most major opera houses and music festivals of the world, and her repertoire by now includes the title role of *Joan of Arc*, the Princess in *Adriana Lecouvreur*, Ježibaba in *Rusalka*, Eboli in *Don Carlo*, with Adalgisa in *Norma*, Dalila in *Samson et Dalila* and Fidès in *Le Prophète* coming up in the near future. She has also successfully appeared in concert with many of the world's foremost conductors, among them Levine, Muti, Maazel, Mehta, Rostropovich and Tilson Thomas. Among her recordings are *Il Trovatore*, *Aida*, *Don Carlo*, *La Forza del Destino*, *Alexander Nevsky* and the Verdi Requiem. Her television appearances include "Live from the Met" productions of *Aida* and *Il Trovatore*, Verdi's Requiem, and several opera galas. Born in Oregon, she studied with Ted Puffer, founder of Opera Nevada, and graduated from the University of Nevada with a Master of Music degree, later continuing her studies at the Manhattan School of Music in New York. Her awards include a Bronze Medal at Moscow's 1982 International Tchaikovsky Competition, and the 1986 Richard Tucker Award, the first mezzo-soprano so honored. On her future schedule are *Aida* at the Chicago Lyric Opera, Berlin State Opera (debut) and Orange Festival, as well as *Hérodiade* and *Don Carlo* in Vienna.



Soprano **Renée Fleming** returns to San Francisco Opera as Madame de Tourvel in the world premiere of *The Dangerous Liaisons* and as Salomé in Massenet's *Hérodiade*. San Francisco Opera audiences last saw her in 1991 when she made her Company debut as the Countess Almaviva in Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro*, a role in which she just opened Glyndebourne Festival's new theater. A young soprano with an ever-increasing number of invitations from the great opera houses of the world, Miss Fleming has performed on the stages of the Metropolitan Opera, La Scala, the Vienna State Opera, the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, the Bastille Opera in Paris, Houston Grand Opera, and the Chicago Lyric Opera. Brought up in Rochester, N.Y., Miss Fleming was a winner of the 1988 Metropolitan Opera National Auditions. Following her 1991 Metropolitan Opera debut as the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, she appeared there as Rosina in the world premiere of John Corigliano's *The Ghosts of Versailles*, and most recently in her first performances as Desdemona in *Otello*. She also recently performed and recorded the Alban Berg *Lulu* and *Wozzeck* Suites with the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra and James Levine, and appeared in a European tour of *Così fan tutte* under the baton of Sir Georg Solti, an endeavor which likewise yielded a recording. The soprano has sung frequently with the Chicago and Houston Symphonies in such works as the Requiem Masses by Fauré, Mozart and Brahms, and the Beethoven *Missa Solennis*. Miss Fleming made her New York recital debut in 1993 in Alice Tully Hall as part of Lincoln Center's "Great Performers" series. Other recent highlights include Floyd's *Susannah* at Lyric Opera of Chicago, subject of a recent nationwide broadcast, and Rossini's *Armida* at the Pesaro Rossini Festival, subject of a soon-to-be-released recording.

HÉRODIADE



Lyric soprano **Kristin Clayton**, a 1994 Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, makes her mainstage debut in *The Dangerous Liaisons* and will also appear in productions of *The Fiery Angel* and *Hérodiade*. This past summer, she received accolades for her performance as Andromache in Opera Center's Showcase '94 production of Tippet's *King Priam*. In March of this year, the soprano completed a tour of Guam, Saipan and Pohnpei as part of Opera Center's Pacific Rim Cultural Exchange Program. As a participant in the 1993 Merola Opera Program, she sang the role of Rosalinda in *Die Fledermaus* — the part she also portrayed on Western Opera Theater's 1993 national tour — and was awarded the Jean Donnell Memorial Award at the 1993 Merola Opera Grand Finals concert. Miss Clayton has also performed with Wolf Trap Opera, singing Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* and the First Lady in *Die Zauberflöte*. A native of Atlanta, she received her master of music degree from the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, where she performed in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Carmen*, *Die Fledermaus* and *Zaïde*. In February of 1995, she will make her debut with the Marin Symphony Orchestra as Mimì in a concert version of *La Bohème*.



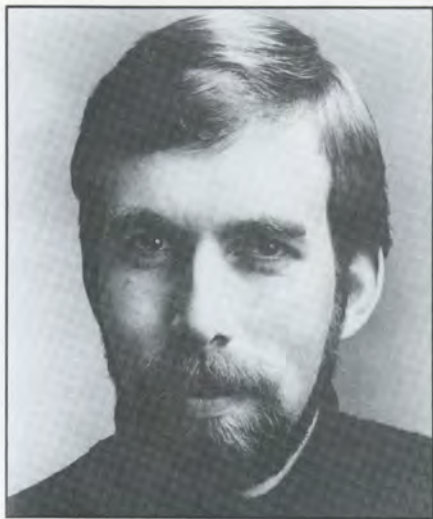
One of the most widely acclaimed artists in the world of music, **Plácido Domingo** returns to the Company for a career first, the role of Jean in *Hérodiade*. The internationally celebrated tenor is currently commemorating the 25th anniversary of his 1969 San Francisco Opera debut, when he made an unforgettable appearance as Rodolfo in *La Bohème*. [For a record of the artist's history with the Company, please see page 50.] A star at virtually every major opera house in the world, Domingo has sung over 100 different tenor roles (John the Baptist in *Hérodiade* brings the number to 109) and made over 100 recordings, of which 89 are full-length operas (often recording the same work two or three times), and for which he has won six Grammy awards. The latest addition to his discography will be his San Francisco appearance in *Hérodiade*. He has made several movies: *Otello* and *La Traviata*, both directed by Franco Zeffirelli, and *Carmen*, directed by Francesco Rosi, while more than 30 of his roles have been preserved on video. He has also won acclaim as an opera conductor, and has led several major European orchestras in symphonic selections as well. As an administrator, Domingo is Artistic Adviser to the Los Angeles Music Center Opera and was recently appointed Artistic Director of Washington Opera, effective in 1996. Dedicated to furthering the careers of young singers, he inaugurated a worldwide singing competition, the finals of which were recently televised from Mexico City. The Spanish-born singer who grew up in Mexico has raised considerable funds through benefit concerts to aid the 1985 Mexican earthquake victims and is one of the most decorated entertainers before the public today.



American tenor **John Keyes** makes his San Francisco Opera debut as John the Baptist in the November 23 and 25 performances of *Hérodiade*. Following his acclaimed European debut as Siegmund in Scottish Opera's 1991 production of *Die Walküre*, he received immediate engagements in several major theaters. In the fall of 1992, he performed Siegmund at the Hamburg Staatsoper as well as the title role in the Hamburg/Houston Opera coproduction of *Parsifal*. Next came his first Erik in *Der Fliegende Holländer* for Opera Toulouse, his Amsterdam and Antwerp debut as Parsifal, Radames for Michigan Opera's *Aida*, as well as Siegmund in Nantes and at Opera Pacific in Costa Mesa. The 1994/95 season includes his Metropolitan Opera debut as the High Priest in *Idomeneo*, and the title role in the new production of *Parsifal* at the Bavarian State Opera in Munich. Born and raised in the Midwest, Keyes trained in the studios of the Lyric Opera of Chicago and Houston Grand Opera. He was the winner of the 1990 San Antonio Competition and the recipient of the 1990 Ruth Richards Grant, traditionally earmarked for the most promising tenor in the Richard Tucker Competition. This past summer, he made his Ravinia Festival debut in Bruckner's *Te Deum* and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.



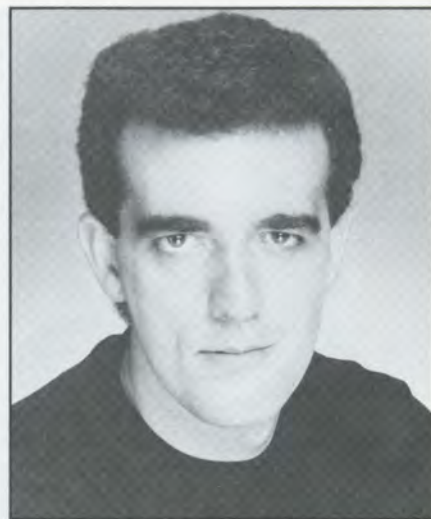
Juan Pons, who portrays Hérode in *Hérodiade*, made his 1979 Company debut as Nottingham in *Roberto Devereux*. He has subsequently appeared here as Amonasro in *Aida* (1984), Giorgio Germont in *La Traviata* (1987), in the title role of *Rigoletto* (1990), and as Scarpia in *Tosca* (1987, '92). Since his 1978 operatic debut as the elder Germont in Barcelona's Gran Teatre del Liceu, the Spanish baritone has performed to great acclaim with major international companies and on prestigious recording labels. His debut at Milan's La Scala during the 1980-81 season in the title role of *Falstaff* brought him international recognition. He also bowed that same season at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden and the Vienna State Opera in *Tosca*, *Cavalleria Rusticana*, *Aida* and *Don Carlo*. Pons made his Metropolitan Opera debut in 1983 as the Count di Luna, and made his Paris Opera debut the following year in the title role of *Falstaff*. Recent highlights include the opening of the Met's 1994-95 season in *Il Tabarro* and *Pagliacci*; *Aida*, *Tosca* and *La Traviata* at the Vienna State Opera; *Falstaff* in Zurich, Lisbon and at La Scala; *Tosca* in Genoa, Zurich and Las Palmas; *Un Ballo in Maschera* in Madrid; and *Aida* at the Arena di Verona. One of the high points in the baritone's career was an appearance as special guest in the opening ceremonies of the 1992 Barcelona Olympic Games, televised internationally to an audience of over one billion people. The artist's discography includes complete recordings of *Falstaff*, *Aroldo*, *La Traviata*, *Madama Butterfly*, *La Forza del Destino*, *Cavalleria Rusticana*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Il Tabarro*, *Tosca*, *Pagliacci* (twice), *Iris*, *El Gato Montés* and *La Fanciulla del West*.



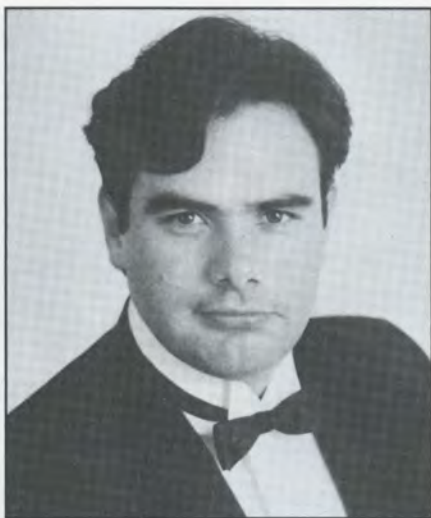
Kenneth Cox sings the role of Phanuel in the Company premiere of *Hérodiade*. After making his 1989 San Francisco Opera debut as the Voice of the Oracle in *Idomeneo*, he has appeared here as Antinoo and Il Tempo in *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria* (1990) and as the Night Watchman in *Die Meistersinger* and Publius in *La Clemenza di Tito* (1993). The American bass has garnered international recognition in recent seasons with several major debuts: With the Lyric Opera of Chicago as Orbazzano in *Tancredi*, with Scottish Opera as Osmin in a new staging of *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, and with the Netherlands Opera as the Commendatore in *Don Giovanni*. Additional highlights include Melisso in Handel's *Alcina*, Narbal in *Les Troyens* and Orbazzano with the Los Angeles Music Center Opera; Raimondo in *Lucia di Lammermoor* for Dallas Opera; Falstaff in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* with Washington Opera; as well as his highly regarded portrayals of Colline in *La Bohème* and Sarastro in *The Magic Flute* with numerous North American companies. The artist (who is also in demand on the concert stage) has a string of recent successes which include his first Prince Gremin in *Eugene Onegin* at the Opera Company of Philadelphia, King Marke in *Tristan und Isolde* at Scottish Opera, Osmin at the Netherlands Opera, Baron Ochs in *Der Rosenkavalier* at the Teatro San Carlo in Naples, and Arkel in new stagings of *Pelléas et Mélisande* at the Welsh National Opera, the Paris Châtelet, and Seattle Opera. Cox can be heard as soloist in a recording of Mahler's Eighth Symphony with Robert Shaw and the Atlanta Symphony.



American baritone **Hector Vásquez** sings the role of Azolan in *The Dangerous Liaisons* and Vitellius in *Hérodiade*. A native of California, he was San Francisco Opera Center's Adler Fellow in 1991-92 and made his San Francisco Opera debut in the 1991 production of *War and Peace*. He has returned numerous times to sing in Company productions of *Tosca*, *L'Elisir d'Amore*, *Andrea Chénier*, *I Vespri Siciliani* (substituting in one performance for an ailing colleague in the leading role of Monforte), *Capriccio*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and, most recently, in the 1993 production of *Die Meistersinger*. During the past year, he performed on the Schwabacher Debut Recital series, sang the title role in the Opera San Jose production of *Rigoletto* and appeared as Brander in *The Damnation of Faust* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic under Simon Rattle. As a member of the 1989 and 1990 Merola Opera Programs, he sang in productions of *Carmen* and *Lucia di Lammermoor* and performed on Western Opera Theater tours of these productions. Vásquez has just completed performing the title role of *Don Giovanni* at the San Luis Obispo Mozart Festival and the Mendocino Music Festival and will make his Metropolitan Opera debut next season as Beaumarchais in *The Ghosts of Versailles*.



Born in Luzern, Switzerland, and raised in Valladolid, Spain, baritone **Eduardo del Campo** is a 1994 Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center. In his War Memorial Opera House debut season, he will appear in *Macbeth*, *The Fiery Angel*, *Hérodiade* and as Enrico in student performances of *Lucia di Lammermoor*. While participating in the 1993 Merola Opera Program, he portrayed Ford in *Falstaff* and Frank in *Die Fledermaus*, and was awarded the first place Schwabacher Family Award at the Grand Finals concert. The baritone recently completed his third year as a Young Artist with the Juilliard Opera Center, after receiving an advanced certificate from Juilliard in 1991. He also holds a bachelor's degree in piano, voice and musicology from the Music Conservatory and University of Valladolid, as well as a doctor's degree in medicine and surgery. Among the vocal competitions he won are the International Singing Competition of Bilbao and the Gayarré/Carreras International Singing Competition. He was also a finalist in the Met's 1992 National Auditions, and a winner in the 1993 Opera Index and Puccini Foundation competitions. Following appearances with the Virginia and Grand Rapids opera companies, he made his New York City Opera debut as the Count in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, and has been invited to return in 1995. Earlier this year, he was featured in the role of Patroclus in San Francisco Opera Center's Showcase production of Tippet's *King Priam*. Future engagements include the role of Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly* with Austin Opera.



A 1994 Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, tenor **Alfredo Portilla** hails from Mexico City, where he began performing at age 11 in an experimental film of *Oliver Twist*. Since 1990, he has been a member of the Bellas Artes opera company, where his roles included the Duke of Mantua in *Rigoletto*, Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Alfredo in *La Traviata*, Nemorino in *L'Elisir d'Amore* and several others. He has also appeared with a large number of Mexican symphony orchestras, and at most important festivals there. In 1992, Portilla was selected by the San Francisco Opera Center from auditions around the Asia/Pacific region to participate in the first-ever *Pacific Voices* program. As participant in the 1993 Merola Opera Program, he sang the role of Alfred in *Die Fledermaus*, repeating the portrayal on Western Opera Theater's 1993 national tour. At MOP's Grand Finals, he was awarded the prestigious Florence Bruce Award. This year's activities include the role of Paris in Opera Center's Showcase production of Tippet's *King Priam*, and the part of Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor* with New Jersey Opera. In his debut season with San Francisco Opera, he will be heard in five roles, including those of Lucio in *Otello* and Arturo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*.



Artistic Director of the Kirov Opera of St. Petersburg, **Valery Gergiev** returns to the San Francisco Opera to conduct *The Fiery Angel* and *Hérodiade*. His previous conducting assignment here was the highly praised 1991 presentation of Prokofiev's *War and Peace*. Born in Moscow, he studied conducting at the Leningrad Conservatory with the noted teacher Ilya Musin. Now, as one of the world's busiest and most sought-after conductors, he is applauded at the podiums of the Royal Opera House at Covent Garden, Metropolitan Opera (this year's *Otello*, heard on the Saturday radio broadcast), most major European opera houses, as well as the world's top orchestras. At St. Petersburg, Gergiev has, since his 1988 appointment as artistic director and principal conductor, raised the standards of the company to unprecedented heights, so that it now ranks as the top opera company of Russia. So far, he has organized three festivals devoted to a single composer (Mussorgsky in 1989, Prokofiev in 1992, and Rimsky-Korsakov in 1994), launched the Mikkeli Festival in Finland, initiated cooperative productions with the San Francisco Opera and Covent Garden, and made a large number of audio and video recordings for Philips Classics. These include *Khovanshchina*, *War and Peace*, *The Queen of Spades*, several orchestral albums and recitals, complete ballets *Romeo and Juliet* and *Sleeping Beauty*, and the soon-to-be-released *Prince Igor*, *Fiery Angel*, *Sadko* and *The Gambler*. In May, he conducted Kirov Opera's new production of Glinka's *Ruslan and Lyudmila*, a co-production with San Francisco Opera, directed by Lotfi Mansouri, and scheduled for performances here during the 1995 season.



In his first engagement in the United States, **Paul Ethuin** is on the podium for the final two performances of *Hérodiade*. The French-born conductor studied at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique in Paris before beginning his career at the Grand Théâtre de Reims. After serving as principal conductor in the opera houses of Toulouse and Avignon for many seasons, he was named musical director, and subsequently general director, of the Théâtre des Arts in Rouen. A permanent conductor for several years at the Paris Opera, he has led performances throughout France in the major houses of Bordeaux, Marseilles, Strasbourg, Nancy, Nantes and Nice, and has conducted at the summer festivals of Vichy, Enghien and Orange. Maestro Ethuin has also been praised for his successes at the Vienna State Opera, Frankfurt Opera, Barcelona's Liceu, the Teatro San Carlo in Naples, Teatro Massimo Bellini in Catania, as well as in Belgium, Switzerland, Turkey, Venezuela and Japan.



With productions seen at opera houses throughout the world, **Lotfi Mansouri** is at the forefront of international opera directors and administrators. San Francisco Opera's fourth general director (appointed in 1988) since its founding, his professional association with the Company dates back to 1963, when he directed six productions. At the conclusion of the 1993 Fall Season, the number of Mansouri productions at San Francisco Opera reached 52—and this fall, that number grows to 55 when he directs three new productions: *Macbeth*, *Tannhäuser* and *Hérodiade*. Born in Iran, Mansouri attended college at UCLA and received U.S. citizenship before serving as resident stage director at Zurich Opera from 1960 to 1966. In 1965, he started working simultaneously at the Geneva Opera, where he became head stage director in 1966 and stayed until 1976. During this period, he began fulfilling engagements as guest director at various houses throughout Italy and North America, including Chicago, Houston, Santa Fe, Philadelphia, Tulsa, San Diego, Dallas and both the Metropolitan and New York City Opera companies. In 1976, he was named general director of the Canadian Opera Company in Toronto, where he directed 30 new productions, 12 of them Canadian premieres, including *Wozzeck*, *Lulu*, *Death in Venice*, *Die Meistersinger* and Thomas's *Hamlet* (featuring the only Ophelia ever sung on stage by Joan Sutherland). During his tenure at San Francisco Opera, numerous international artists have made their U.S. operatic debuts, and four productions have been taped for telecast and videocassette (*Mefistofele*, *Orlando Furioso*, *Capriccio* and *Turandot*). Mansouri's 1979 production of *La Gioconda* was the Company's first to receive a live international telecast. He has also worked to establish the highly successful exchange with the Kirov Opera that has resulted in productions of *War and Peace*, *Boris Godunov*, *The Fiery Angel* and, next season, *Ruslan and Lyudmila*—which Mansouri directed in St. Petersburg in April of 1994.



Set designer for all seven new productions of San Francisco Opera's 1994 season, **Gerard Howland** was introduced to our audiences with sets for the 1992 production of Rossini's *Guillaume Tell*, an occasion that marked his U.S. opera debut. The artist studied at the English National Opera Design School and then served as Associate Designer for the Royal Academy and the Royal Shakespeare Company. Among his theater designs are *Tom Jones* and *The Way of the World* for the Royal Academy, *Henry IV* (Parts I and II), *The Winter's Tale*, *Hyde Park*, *Divine Gossip* and *Scenes from a Marriage* for the Royal Shakespeare Company, and *Major Barbara* for the Chichester Festival. He has also designed several plays and musicals for London's West End, as well as for television and film throughout Europe. In Germany, Howland created sets for *L'Elisir d'Amore*, *Madama Butterfly*, *La Bohème*, *Jenůfa*, *The Makropulos Case*, *Die Zauberflöte*, *Gianni Schicchi*, *La Traviata*, *Cardillac* and *Mahagonny*; also *Uncle Vanya*, *The Father*, *Andorra*, and *Accidental Death of an Anarchist*. His operatic assignments in England include *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Pagliacci* for the English National Opera, *Ruddigore* and *The Gondoliers* for Sadler's Wells Opera, *Tosca* for Opera North, and *Ariodante* for the Buxton Festival. Since moving to the Bay Area in 1989, the native of England has designed several productions for the American Conservatory Theater, the South Coast Repertory Theatre, Disney Studios and *La Bohème* for the Los Angeles Opera. Howland has won a number of awards, including the most recent one, the Drama Desk Award.



Austrian costume designer **Maria-Luise Walek** made her San Francisco Opera debut in 1977 with Janáček's *Katya Kabanova*. Born in Vienna, she studied there at the Academy of Arts, later becoming a frequent collaborator with set designer Günther Schneider-Siemssen. Her work with him and other designers took her to Salzburg, Berlin, Munich, Karlsruhe, Düsseldorf, Vienna (Staatsoper, Volksoper and Burgtheater), Stuttgart, Stockholm, Barcelona, Nice, Nancy, Lyons, Strasbourg, Welsh National Opera and New York's Metropolitan, where she made her American debut with *Jenůfa* in Günther Rennert's 1975 production. Since 1985, Miss Walek has designed regularly for the Opéra de Nice, where her work included costumes for *Fidelio*, *Die Zauberflöte*, *Carmen* and others, and included Lotfi Mansouri's production of Massenet's *Hérodiade* in 1987. The most recent projects include the Vienna Staatsoper (*Lulu*, among others), Bregenz Festival (*Maria Stuarda*), and the Deutsche Oper Berlin (*Samson et Dalila*).



Victoria Morgan, who staged the dance sequences for *Hérodiade* and *Mefistofele*, is in her seventh year as Ballet Mistress for San Francisco Opera. She has previously served as the Company's choreographer for *Don Quichotte* and *Un Ballo in Maschera* (1990), *War and Peace* (1991), *Andrea Chénier* (1992), and has rendered movement assistance for numerous productions. She has been the choreographer and assistant director for several new productions for the Opera Theatre of St. Louis. These include *Black River*, *Midnight Angel* and, most recently, *Candide*, directed by Colin Graham. In 1995, she will be re-staging the work for Boston Lyric Opera. Miss Morgan has also choreographed *Die Fledermaus* for the Geneva Opera, as well as works for the San Francisco Ballet, Utah Ballet, Pennsylvania Ballet, Nashville Ballet, Ruth Langridge Company, Mountain Play Theater, and S.F. Dance Theater. She was a principal dancer with San Francisco Ballet and Ballet West who performed lead roles in ballets by George Balanchine, Michael Smuin and Lew Christensen, and created new roles in works by Bruce Marks, James Kudelka and William Forsythe. She has numerous television credits, and was the featured choreographer and dancer in the documentary *The Creation of O.M.O.* She graduated magna cum laude from the University of Utah with an M.F.A. (receiving the university's Young Alumni award in 1986), and has been awarded grants for her choreography from the National Endowment for the Arts, Carlisle Residency Program, and the Djerassi Foundation.



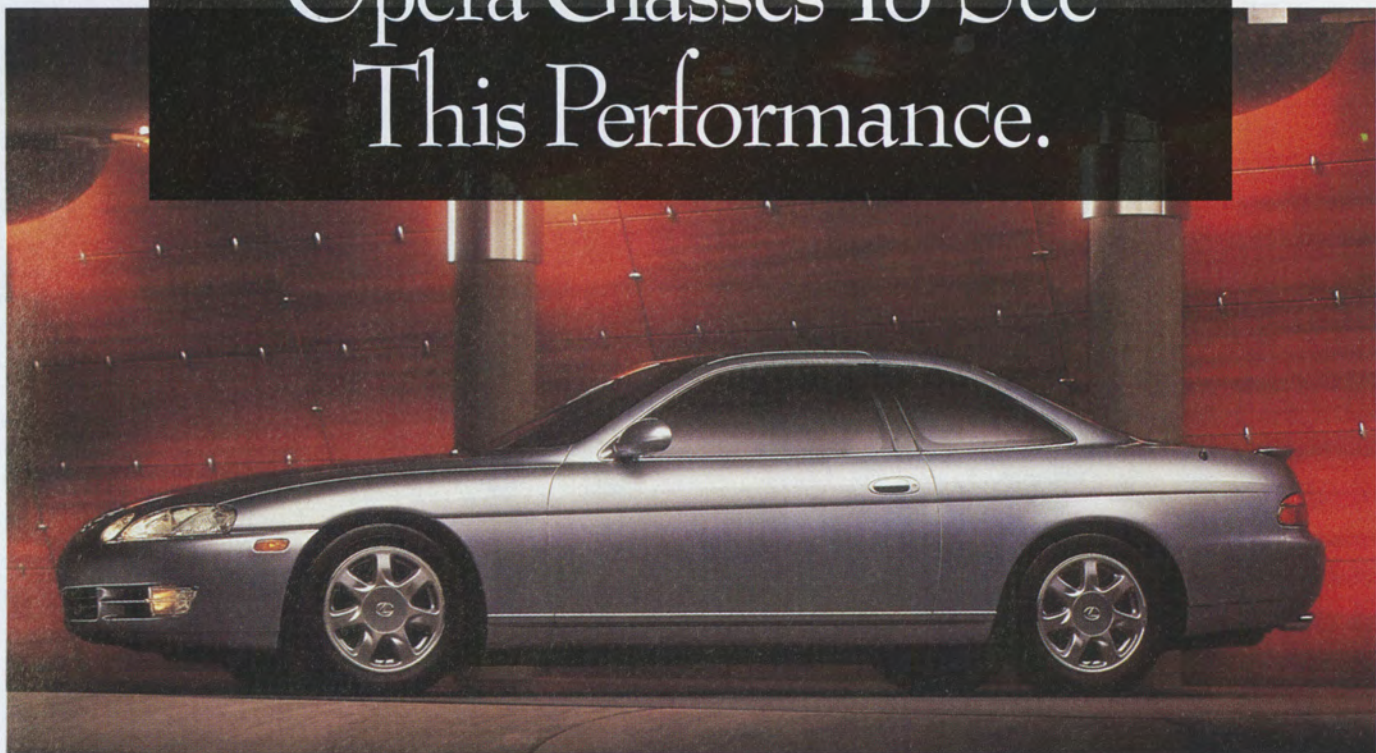
Lighting Director and Design Consultant for San Francisco Opera since 1976, **Thomas J. Munn** created the lighting for *The Dangerous Liaisons*, *Il Trovatore*, *Tannhäuser*, *The Fiery Angel*, *Hérodiade*, *Mefistofele* and *Lucia di Lammermoor*. He has designed the lighting and special effects for over 153 productions for the Company, including the highly acclaimed presentations of Wagner's 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*. In addition to his work for the San Francisco Opera, Munn has designed scenery and lighting for Broadway, Off-Broadway, regional theater, ballet, industrials and films. His television and video credits include San Francisco Opera productions of *La Gioconda* (for which he received an Emmy Award), *Samson et Dalila*, *Aida*, *L'Africaine*, *La Bohème*, *Orlando Furioso*, *Mefistofele*, *Capriccio* and *Turandot*. Credits for other companies include work for the Houston Grand Opera, Washington Opera, Chicago Lyric Opera and the Netherlands Opera, scenery and lighting for Hartford Ballet's *Nutcracker* and Ballet Arizona's production of *Coppélia*. He is currently working on a new *Nutcracker* for the Atlanta Ballet.



On October 20th, San Francisco Opera lost a most prominent and special member of the opera family, Mrs. Elizabeth Folger Cooper. For fifty of her ninety-six years, between 1921 and 1970, she was known as Mrs. Robert Watt Miller, sharing in her husband's duties as President of the San Francisco Opera Association (1937-1944 and 1952-1968). Mr. Miller also served as Chairman of the Board in 1969, until he passed away in 1970. In 1982, Mrs. Miller became Mrs. Sheldon Cooper, always retaining the unofficial title bestowed upon her, that of the "grande dame of the San Francisco Opera." Her support of the Company continued throughout her long life, most recently in helping to sponsor our 1994 Resident Designer project.

Her impeccable style and warmth will be missed by all Company members who knew her.

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A SILVER ANNIVERSARY

Following a November 15, 1969 San Francisco Opera performance of *La Bohème*, there was some interesting reading in the newspapers. *San Francisco Chronicle*: "History repeated itself Saturday evening in the Opera House when the stupendous Mexican tenor Plácido Domingo made his San Francisco Opera debut on a fluke. Just as with his Metropolitan Opera debut (September 28, 1968) Domingo stepped in to replace an ailing colleague, and just as with his Met debut, created a sensation."

"A splendid musician, a gracious figure on stage for all his height (six-two), subtle in vocal details and stage deportment, Domingo sang a heroic yet affable Rodolfo with secure pitch and the timbre of 20 platinum trumpets. Even amid a season particularly rich in fine tenors, Domingo was very special."

And the *San Francisco Examiner*: "... How fortuitous, then, that Domingo was available. ... He has ... the ideal voice for the part and he is, one can truthfully say, the most appealing and musicianly of the current crop (not a very big one) of lyric tenors with a Gigli-weight voice."

"There are no rough edges, no gear changes, no deviations from taste in Domingo's singing. His tone flows out with an easy ring, and his phrasing is lively, graceful and dramatically pointed."

"Rarely does a Rodolfo sound so desperate in the fourth act when Musetta runs in to announce that Mimi is failing. And rarely, too, is a tenor so psychologically secure he can abandon the high C at the end

44 *San Francisco Chronicle* R ★ Mon., Nov. 17, 1969

Sensational Debut in La Bohème

History repeated itself Saturday evening in the Opera House when the stupendous Mexican tenor Plácido Domingo made his San Francisco Opera debut on a fluke. Just as with his Metropolitan Opera debut (September 28, 1968) Domingo stepped in to replace an ailing colleague, and just as with his Met debut, created a sensation.

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As an inadvertent contribution to Moritum Day, it is worth noting that the San Francisco Opera presented the debut of an important young artist whose first name in English means "Peaceful."

Nor was Domingo's the only debut. There was the Mimi of Lucine Amara, which on any night would do any house credit. Vocally astute, with a beautiful, noble sound, she received and deserved the ovations she received. If there was a flaw, it might be that her Mimi was too womanly, too elegant to be a very convincing reproduction of Puccini's little seamstress.

With all the fine tenors this year, it does seem odd that we have not yet had an adequate Musetta. Margot Moser has, let it be noted, improved — but not enough. Nor has baritone James Far-



PLACIDO DOMINGO
Platinum trumpets

rar, whose Marcello was noticeably weak compared to his stage roommates.

Allan Monk's Schenard, Ara Berberian's Colline and Ezequiel Esparragoza's marvelously funny landlord were all pillars of strength for the evening, as was the tactful, sensitive leadership of conductor Jean Perissin.

Still, it was Domingo's performance which made the evening so memorable. It was his debut, his opera, his night. One hopes he will return often, and the sooner the better.

—H. T.



A yellowed 1969 newspaper clipping covers Plácido Domingo's San Francisco Opera debut; the photo shows him in 1987 as the titular hero of *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*.

¹ The accent over the "a" in Plácido did not start appearing until some years later.

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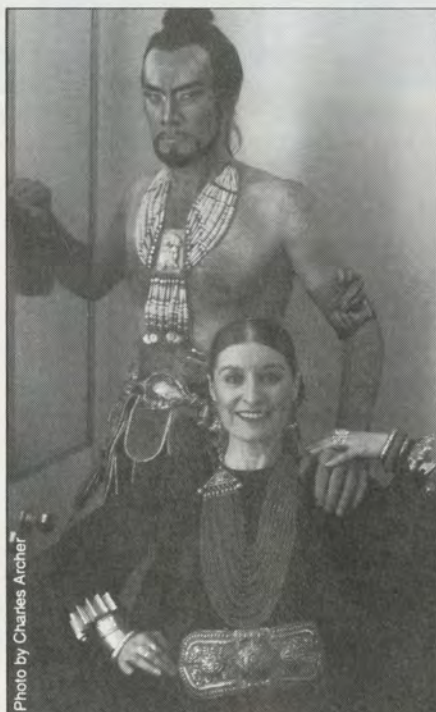


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HERB CAEN, SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

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★★★ JIM WOOD, SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER

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Left: Meyerbeer's *L'Africaine* brought Plácido Domingo to the San Francisco Opera twice: in 1972 and 1988. The photo shows him during "Oh paradis" in 1988. Above: Domingo in the title role of the 1975 *Andrea Chénier* at the War Memorial Opera House.

of the first act which is always sung, although it isn't in Puccini's score!"

The *Chronicle* review concluded with: "... it was Domingo's performance which made the evening so memorable. It was his debut, his opera, his night. One hopes he will return often, and the sooner the better."

That he did.

For his 1969 debut here, Domingo flew in as a last-minute replacement for an ailing colleague. Most of his subsequent engagements were scheduled in advance, with two notable exceptions. The next year, 1970, saw him as Don José in a special Thanksgiving performance of *Carmen*, and as Cavaradossi in two late-season performances of *Tosca*.

The first of the two exceptions mentioned above occurred in 1971. In the morning of October 26, the tenor who was to sing *Il Trovatore*'s Manrico that evening developed a throat ailment. Then General Director Kurt Herbert Adler knew Plácido Domingo was not too far away (he was in Fort Worth, Texas, as a matter of fact), so he was flown in for the performance, which, incidentally, boasted Leontyne Price's Leonora.

Chronicle: "His virile, robust tenor has the drive of a steam locomotive. In sheer volume, Domingo takes a back seat to no

man. But the voice is also flexible, expertly controlled and capable of infinite varieties of emotion. His famous "Di quella pira" ... brought down the house, almost posing a threat as to whether the show might go on. With his commanding presence and a voice that spins between nuance and dramatic fire without effort, Domingo. . . ." You get the picture.

Examiner: "Great singers have often sung with the San Francisco Opera in the past.

Never did they produce a more fabulous evening than did Leontyne Price and Plácido Domingo, with a first-rate performance all around them, last night. . . .

"... Domingo's unexpected entry into the cast was sensational. . . . He is Mexican, in his early 30's and last night he sang absolutely like a young Caruso. . . . His singing pours out naturally with musical grace, fire and sympathy. It is a supple, broad-ranged voice. In duets he and Miss

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by Richard Wagner

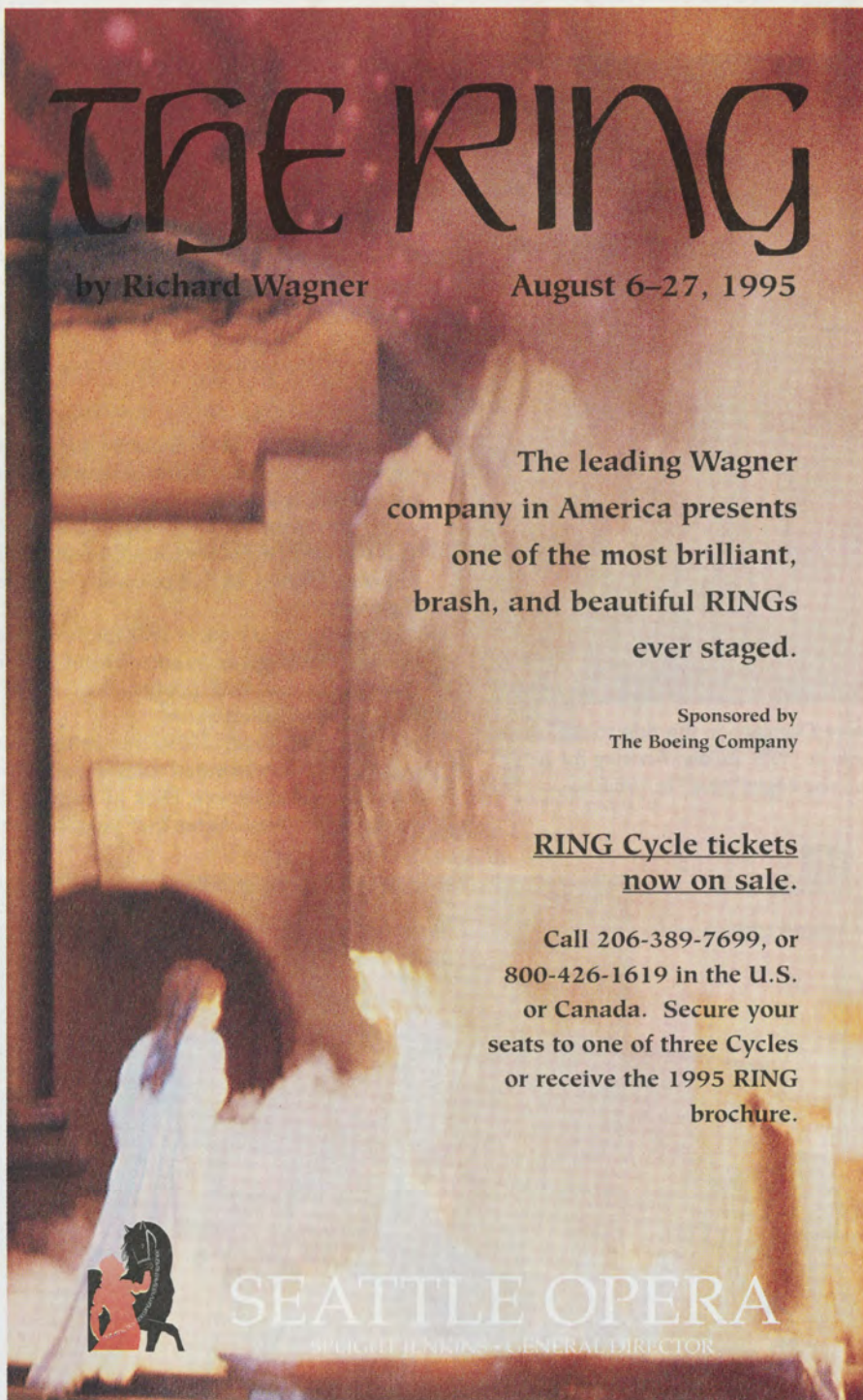
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Above: Domingo in the title role of Verdi's *Otello* in 1978. Below: Arriving for his Opening Night "save" in 1983.

Price matched tones like two rare diamonds in a perfect ring."

The tenor returned in 1972 as Mario Cavaradossi in *Tosca*, in a new Jean-Pierre Ponnelle production given in commemoration of the 40th anniversary of the opening of the War Memorial Opera House. That same year, he also introduced his Vasco Da Gama to our audiences, partnered by Shirley Verrett's Selika. The duo was to return in the same roles in 1988, in a production that resulted in a telecast and videocassette.

The title role of *Andrea Chénier* was Domingo's 1975 San Francisco Opera vehicle, while 1976 brought him back in the double bill of *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Pagliacci*, with the tenor singing both *Cavalleria*'s Turiddu and *Pagliacci*'s Canio, a feat that is not encountered all that often anywhere in the world.

Domingo was back in 1978 for the season opener: *Otello*, given in six sold-out performances, in his first portrayal of Verdi's Moor in the United States.

The next year, 1979, he introduced another of his celebrated roles to San Francisco Opera audiences: Dick Johnson in *La Fanciulla del West*. Later that year, he took

part in the Company's first foreign venture: *Tosca* in Manila, the Philippines, in which he again portrayed Cavaradossi.

Opening night beckoned again in 1980. The vehicle was that of Samson in Camille Saint-Saëns's *Samson et Dalila*. Once again, his partner was Shirley Verrett; once again, he was singing the role for the first time in the United States, and once again, the production was the subject of a telecast and a (later) videocassette.

The next year, Kurt Herbert Adler's last season as General Director of the Company, he returned as Don José in *Carmen*, conducted by Maestro Adler, in emotional late-season performances that marked the end of the Adler era at San Francisco Opera.

Over the next few years, several attempts were made to include Domingo appearances in the Company repertoire, but schedule conflicts were overwhelming, and he was not to return for a regularly planned run of performances until 1987.

However . . .

There was Opening Night, 1983. *Otello*. In the morning of the opening date, September 9, the scheduled tenor woke up voiceless. He got the message to then Gen-





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eral Director Terence A. McEwen. The Company, after an initial paralysis resulting from the fact that tenors who sing *Otello* are a rare breed, sprang into action. Telephones were grabbed and soon, McEwen was talking to New York and Plácido Domingo, who was there, having arrived the previous night from Barcelona. Would he consider flying in for our Opening Night *Otello*? Yes, today. Same production as last time; we have the costumes and everything. And yes, we'll wait. Domingo asked for 20 minutes to think about it, tried to telephone his wife Marta, who was back in Spain, and after some deliberations, agreed, and hopped onto a helicopter to New Jersey and then on a private airplane bound for the West Coast. Word was sent out via radio and television that the performance would start three hours later than scheduled.

The Opening Night audience arrived early, not wanting to miss any of the excitement. Bulletins were aired on most radio stations, reporting on the airplane's progress ("They are refueling in Nebraska!"; "They've got him on radar!"), on headwinds, on the scheduled time of arrival, etc. Meanwhile, in the Opera House, patrons waited—and celebrated. So much so that all bars ran out of glasses, and one could only get a second drink if you brought your own glass with you. "They are driving with him from the airport with a police escort. . . ." When the entourage reached the Opera



San Francisco Opera

House stage door, there was a cheering throng awaiting the tenor outside. The relaxed Domingo made his way through the corridors, while being applauded all along the way, eventually reaching his dressing room and the waiting dresser and wig and makeup crew. At 10:25, 3 hours and 25 minutes after the scheduled 7 p.m. starting time, the performance began. It ended around 2 a.m., with everyone—singers, musicians, staff, audience—totally exhausted. Everyone except Plácido Domingo, that is. Showered and refreshed, he agreed to give an impromptu press conference in his dressing room, then went on to dinner at a nearby restaurant. At 4:30 a.m., he said it might be time to break it up because the staff seemed to be tired. Later that day, he flew back to New York, where he was to sing in a park concert the next day, leaving behind a very large, very excited (and very grateful) group of San Franciscans.

He also left behind an amazing volume of favorable newspaper reviews and headlines with phrases such as "Domingo to the Rescue," "Flying Tenor Saves San Francisco Opera," "Tenor Jets Into Opera History," "A Night To Remember," "Tardy Tenor Wins Kudos," "Have Voice, Will Travel," and "Plácido Pinch-Hits."

The tenor's 1987 return appearance was tame by comparison, but it was in one of his most felicitous roles: the titular hero of *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* in Lotfi Mansouri's staging, which was given in eight sold-out performances. Another Mansouri production and another Opening Night brought him

The 1987 *Contes d'Hoffmann* brought Domingo back in one of his most congenial roles, that of E.T.A. Hoffmann, shown (left) while in the throes of a writer's inspiration and (below) with one of the hero's amorous interests, the doll Olympia, portrayed by Tracy Dahl.



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back in 1988, for the acclaimed reprise of Meyerbeer's *L'Africaine*.

Having worked with Domingo a great number of times, Lotfi Mansouri had this to say about him: "He is a great credit to our profession. His unique combination of talent, intelligence and personality makes him the ideal interpreter of a wide range of opera repertoire—French, Italian, German and Spanish. I would personally rather have one day of rehearsals with Plácido than a month with many other singers. He is an artist who makes a stage director look good."

Hérodiade, with Plácido Domingo in the role of John the Baptist was in the Company's plans for several years, but it moved around because of scheduling difficulties and conflicts—on both sides. At last, it is a reality, a Domingo "first," and the 109th new role in the tenor's repertoire.

This chronicle wouldn't be complete without the Domingo concerts. These took place in 1984 and 1990. In 1984, he shared the Opera House stage with soprano Pilar Lorengar in an evening of romances and duets from Spanish zarzuelas; the San Francisco Opera Orchestra was under the direction of García Navarro. His partner in 1990 was Ann Panagulis in a mixed, mostly operatic program. That particular concert took place in Civic Auditorium; the San Francisco Opera Orchestra was conducted by Eugene Kohn.

All in all, a marvelous record, with enough high points to make up two or three remarkable careers. But then, Plácido Domingo is no ordinary singer—he is, to borrow again from a 1983 headline—"Super Plácido."

—K.L.



The Opening Night opera of our 1980 season was *Samson et Dalila*, with Plácido Domingo and Shirley Verrett in the leading roles. Greg Moawad was the boy in the final scene.

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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. Headphones and induction devices (adaptable to hearing aids) are available in the coat checkroom 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, house and backstage tours of the War Memorial Opera House will be conducted every half hour from 10 a.m. to 12 noon on weekdays and on Saturday; and every 15 minutes from 10 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Sundays on the following dates:

Tuesday, October 4
Sunday, October 9
Wednesday, October 19
Sunday, November 6
Saturday, November 19
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Tickets for Guild members, \$2; non-members, \$5. Reservations required. Information: (415) 565-6433.

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Tours of the San Francisco Performing Arts Center include the Opera House, Davies Symphony Hall and Herbst Theatre and take place as follows: Mondays, every half-hour between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. Special tours of Davies Hall only may be scheduled on Wednesdays and Saturdays by request. All tours leave from the Grove Street entrance of Davies Symphony Hall. There are no tours on holidays. General \$3; Seniors and students, \$2.

Information: (415) 552-8338.

Special service for San Francisco Opera 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 Opera House lower lounge is open one and one-half hours prior to curtain time for hot buffet service. Patrons arriving before the front doors open will be admitted at the carriage entrance. Refreshments are served in the box tier on the mezzanine floor, the grand tier and dress circle levels during all performances.

Emergency Telephone. The telephone number (415) 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's Ticket and Patron Services Center, 199 Grove at Van Ness, open 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Saturday. Opera House Box Office: open 2 hours before each performance through the first intermission on performance days only. Phone charge: (415) 864-3330, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Saturday (VISA, American Express, MasterCard). 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 S.F. Opera and to other patrons who may be unable to obtain tickets to sold-out performances. If you are unable to use your tickets or exchange them for another performance of the same opera, you may make a full-value, tax-deductible contribution of your tickets. To make a donation, simply return your tickets to the 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 10 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 last intermission.

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

Wheelchair accessible restrooms are located in the lower lounge and on the dress circle level (north). Wheelchair accessible public telephones including "TDD" are located in the northeast corner of the lobby. Accessible drinking fountains are on orchestra and dress circle levels.

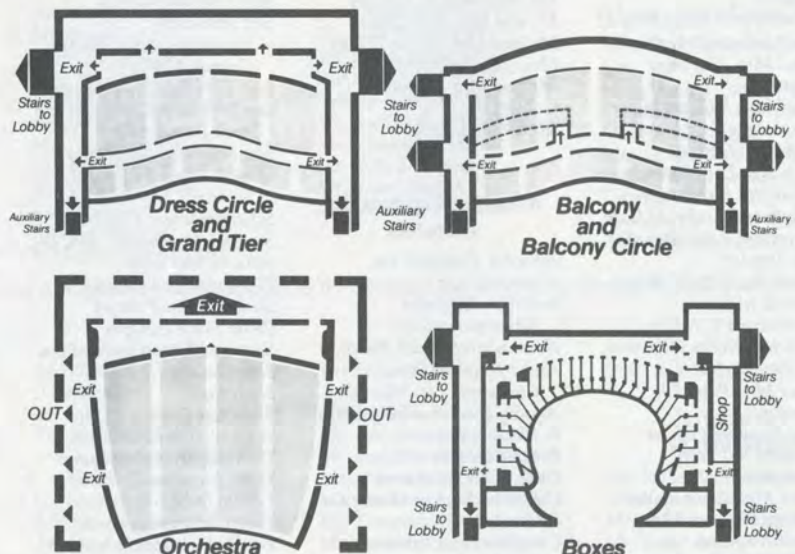
For the safety and comfort of our audience, all large parcels, backpacks, luggage, etc., must be checked at Opera House cloak-rooms.

Opera glasses are available in the lobby.

No cameras, tape recorders or cellular phones 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. (Refer to Diagrams.) In case of fire please do not run—walk through that exit.

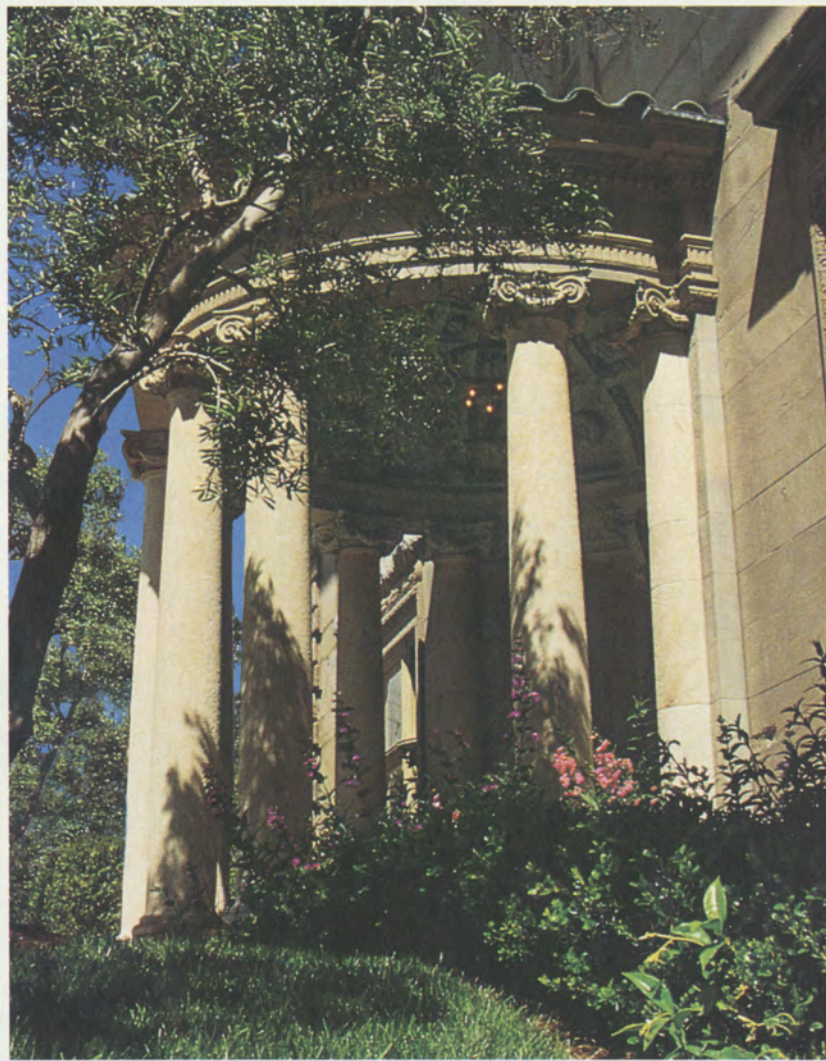


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