

Macbeth

1994-1995

Friday, September 9, 1994 8:00 PM
Tuesday, September 13, 1994 8:00 PM
Friday, September 16, 1994 8:00 PM
Tuesday, September 20, 1994 8:00 PM
Saturday, September 24, 1994 8:00 PM
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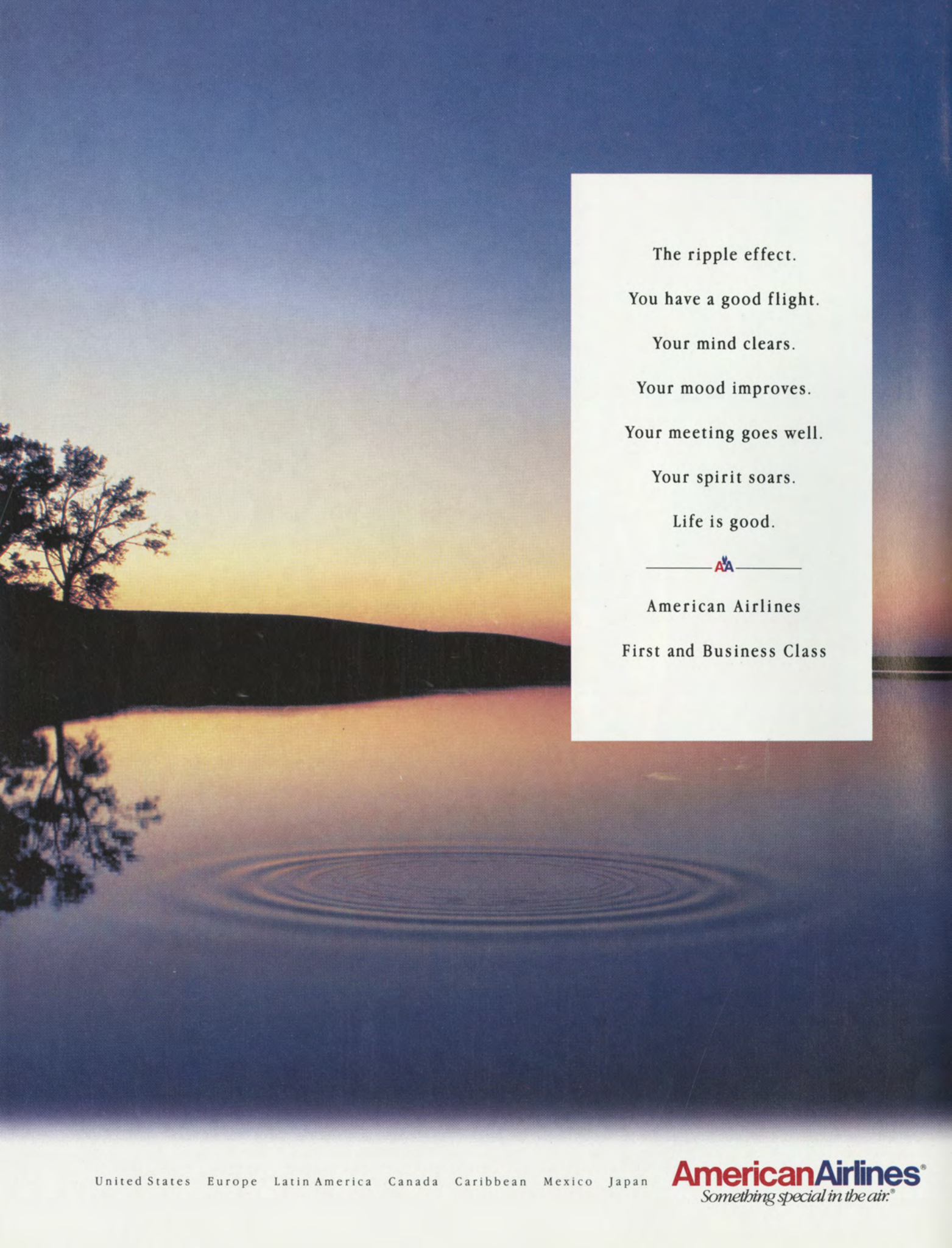
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1994 SEASON

MACBETH



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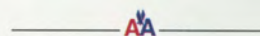
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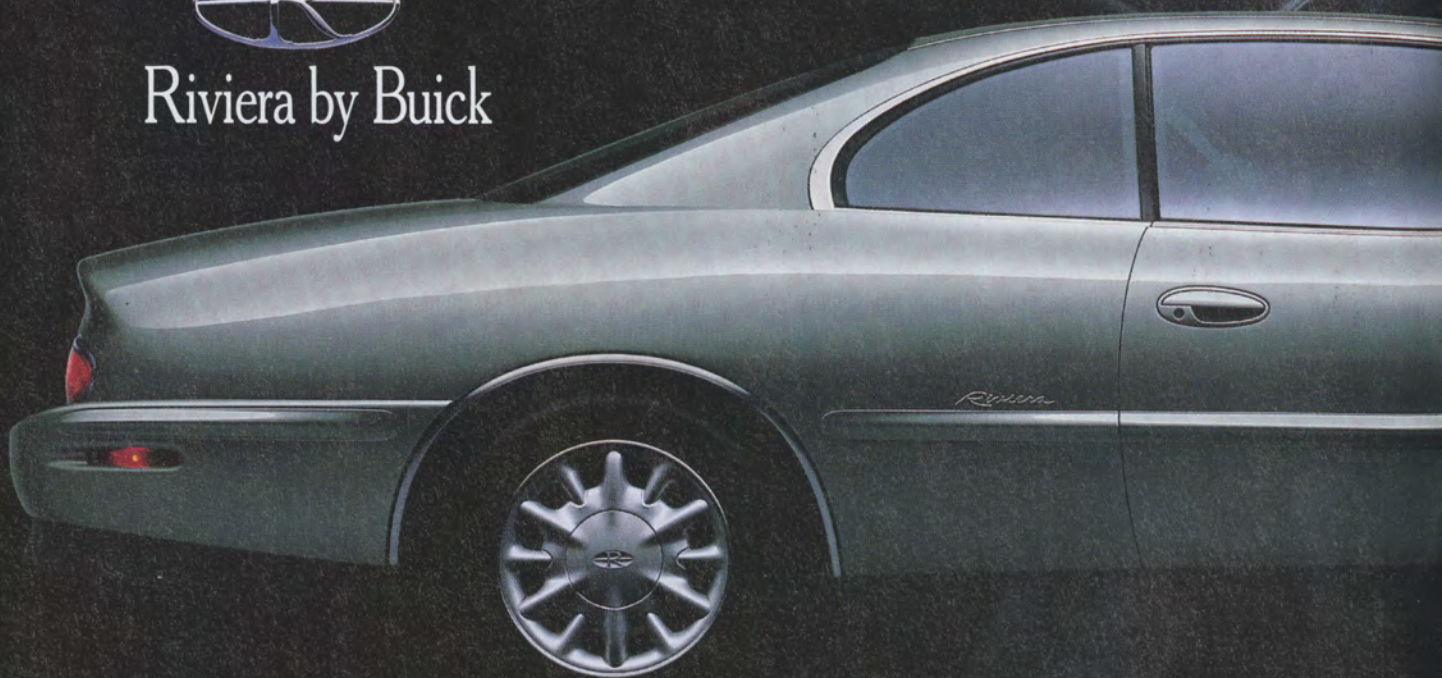
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SAN FRANCISCO OPERA MAGAZINE

Macbeth

1994 Season
Vol. 72, No. 1

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The noted musicologist and Verdi scholar provides a compelling look into one of the Italian master's Shakespeare-inspired operas.
- 48 **Starting Out** by Jake Heggie
Lotfi Mansouri, Donald Runnicles and Gerard Howland give an overview of the 1994 season by looking at season openers, *Macbeth* and *The Dangerous Liaisons*.

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Bone, Henry Pierce (1779-1855)
The Sleepwalking Scene in "Macbeth"
Pencil, brown wash and watercolor on wove paper; 19 7/8 x 13 7/8

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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
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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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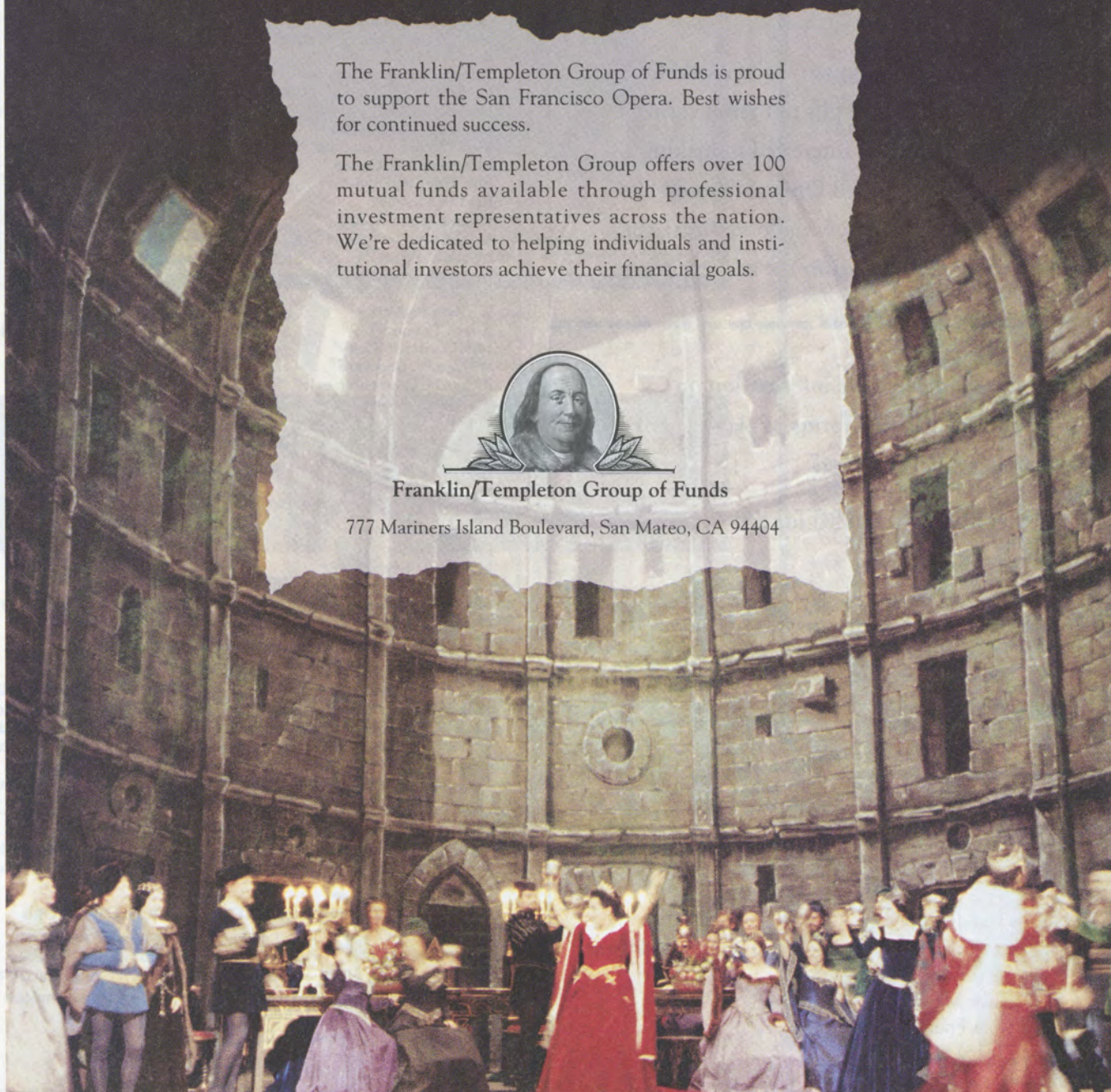
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Verdi's *Macbeth* was first performed at the Teatro della Pergola, Florence, on March 14th, 1847. It was an immediate—and soon a wide-spread—success. Within a year it had been seen in a dozen cities and three countries (Italy, Spain, Hungary); within a decade there had been about 200 productions. It reached New York in 1850 (where it had a spring production in Niblo's Garden and a late-summer production in Castle Clinton) and that year was also seen in Boston. It came to San Francisco in 1862, staged by the Bianchi company in Maguire's Opera House.

Even before the premiere, the music was being engraved by Ricordi. It was published number by number; when the individual numbers had appeared they were assembled as a complete piano-vocal score. On March 27th, Verdi wrote to Antonio Barezzi, the man who had recognized his

youthful genius, encouraged and supported him, and whose daughter Margherita he had married in 1836:

Dearest Father-in-law:

For a long time it has been an intention of mine to dedicate an opera to you who have been to me at once father, benefactor, and friend . . . Here now is this *Macbeth*, which I love above all my other operas, and thus deem more worthy of being presented to you. The heart offers it; may the heart receive it.

Verdi echoes Beethoven's superscription to the *Missa Solemnis*: "Von Herzen—möge es wieder zu Herzen gehn!" ("From the heart—may it go to the heart!"). On the title page of the first edition, Barezzi's name appears in letters larger than the composer's.

Macbeth was his tenth opera. He was to

Compared to its performances of other Verdi operas, San Francisco Opera's *Macbeth* history is very brief: The company presented it in 1955, 1957, 1967, and 1986. The 1955 cast included (above) Robert Weede in the title role and Inge Borkh as Lady Macbeth.

MACBETH:

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By ANDREW PORTER

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write many more. But there is abundant evidence that *Macbeth*—his first Shakespeare opera, and the most adventurous and ambitious of his earlier works—remained especially dear to him. In 1864, he undertook a very careful revision for a Paris production the following year, at the Théâtre-Lyrique. In 1875, when he was in Vienna to conduct the Requiem and *Aida*, he was interviewed by a writer from the *Neue Freie Presse*. Verdi and Wagner were the operatic giants of the day, and naturally the Italian was asked his opinion of his German contemporary. He replied tactfully and truthfully that “Wagner’s great genius had rendered incalculable service to operatic art, because he had had the courage to rid himself of the traditional decadent forms.” And then he added, “I, too, have attempted the fusion of music and drama—in *Macbeth*. But I could not write my own librettos, as Wagner does.”

In fact, as we shall see, the dominant hand in the *Macbeth* libretto, as in so many of Verdi’s operas, is the composer’s own. “The fusion of music and drama”—into music-drama—is, one might say, the aim of every operatic composer. Certainly it was always Verdi’s. When he revised his operas, his concern was ever for tightening the dramatic effect. From the Act IV quartet of *Don Carlos* (the *largo* after Elisabeth has fainted), he wrote in 1883, he intended “to strip everything that is there for purely

musical reasons, keeping only what is strictly necessary for the drama.” For the Paris production of *Otello* he abridged the “static” third-act finale. After the first few performances of *Falstaff* he abridged the second-act finale. And back in 1846, when he began to think about *Macbeth*, his concern was ever for a potent and concise presentation of Shakespeare’s play.

Before *Macbeth*, there had been operas more or less “after Shakespeare,” but *Macbeth* is the first opera that can justly be called “Shakespearean.” Moreover, it was in effect the premiere of Shakespeare’s play in Italy. There had been *Macbeth* ballets.¹ The play had been published in Italian translation, but it had not been performed. That happened only in 1849, a few months after the first Scala presentation of the opera. In fact, Verdi’s successful music-drama led the way to and influenced performances of the drama itself. Giulio Carcano’s Italian verse translation, published in 1849, has many verbal parallels with the Verdi-Piave-Maffei libretto; and when the great actors Adelaide Ristori and Ernesto Rossi took *Macbeth* into their repertoires, in the 1850s, they used a Carcano text that had been brought still closer to the familiar wording of the famous opera.² The first reference to *Macbeth* (though not yet by name) in the Verdi documents is the composer’s letter to the impresario Alessandro Lanari of May 17th, 1846:

Now that we are in perfect agreement on the *genere fantastico* for the opera that I must write for Florence, you must undertake to let me know as soon as you can who the performers will be: because I have two possible subjects in mind, both of them fantastical and very fine, and I’ll choose whichever is better suited to the performers.

Those subjects were Grillparzer’s *Die Ahnfrau* (*The Ancestress*)—an extravagantly romantic drama with a large supernatural element—and *Macbeth*. *Die Ahnfrau* called

¹ Armando Vestris had produced a *Macbeth* ballet at the San Carlo, Naples, in 1808, noting in the preface to his scenario that, “as an initiate in the language of this author, I have been able to draw his ideas from the true source.” Luigi Henry’s *Macbeth: ballo mimico in cinque atti*, music by Cesare Pugni, appeared at La Scala in 1830. Henry had also choreographed an *Otello* (San Carlo, 1808) and a *Hamlet* (Paris, 1816). In passing, I wonder whether Henry’s *Otello* may be the “missing link” between Shakespeare’s play and Rossini’s opera.

² Carcano’s *Lady Macbeth* begins the reading of the letter with “Esse mi rincontrar nel giorno stesso della vittoria.” But Rossi’s *Lady*, just like Verdi’s, said “Nel dì della vittoria io le incontrai.”

Two interpreters of the role of Banquo, both posing backstage between acts of *Macbeth*: (left) Giorgio Tozzi in 1955 and (right) Lorenzo Alvary in 1957.



JEANETTE

for an heroic tenor: if Verdi's favorite tenor, Gaetano Fraschini (the creator of Zamoro in *Alzira*, and later of Arrigo in *Battaglia*, Stiffelio, and Riccardo in *Ballo*), could be engaged, then he would compose that opera. *Macbeth* called for a dramatic baritone: if Felice Varesi (later the creator of Rigoletto and the elder Germont) could be engaged, then *Macbeth* it would be. Some months passed: Fraschini was not available; Varesi made difficulties but was eventually engaged. So *Macbeth* it was. Verdi's scenario of *Die Ahnfrau* remained—and remains—in Sant'Agata. His *Macbeth* scenario was sent to Piave in September:

Here is the draft of *Macbeth*. This tragedy is one of the greatest creations of man! If we can't do something great with it, let us at least try to do something out of the ordinary. The draft is clear: unconventional, simple, and short. I beg you to keep the lines short, too; the fewer there are, the more effect you'll make. Only the first act is a shade long, but it will be up to us to keep the numbers short. In your lines, remember well, there should not be one useless word: everything must say something, and you must adopt a sublime diction, except in the witches' choruses, which must be trivial, yet bizarre and original . . .

Oh, I beg you, do not be negligent with this *Macbeth* of mine; I beg you on my knees, treat it well for me . . . Brevity and sublimity!

Poor Piave! Before the month was out he was told "How wordy you always are! . . . If I had to take out all the words that say nothing and are there only for rhyme or meter, I'd have to strike out a good third of them . . . CONCISE STYLE! FEW WORDS! Got it?" Letter after letter follows in this vein, with detailed instructions, emphatic demands, a line-by-line setting-out of the exiles' scene, the sleepwalking, and the final scene. In November: "Get on with Act III or I'll cut off your balls and you'll sing the Lady."³

Then, in January of 1847, Piave was brusquely dismissed and the poet Andrea Maffei was co-opted to get Acts III and IV into shape and to revise Piave's Acts I and II. Piave protested. On the eve of leaving for Florence, Verdi sent him a few cruel lines: "I'm glad you've understood things for what they are. I assure you that I wouldn't accept your drama for all the gold in the world."⁴

Meanwhile, Verdi had been in correspondence with principals, sending them their music, explaining his intentions, giv-



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ing detailed instructions for their execution, and asking for their suggestions. To Varesi:

Here are a *duettino* [with Banquo], the big duet, and a finale. I'll never stop urging you to study the dramatic situation and the words well; the music will come by itself. In short, I'd prefer you to serve the poet rather than the composer.

To Marianna Barbieri-Nini (the first Lucrezia in *I Due Foscari*, engaged as Lady Macbeth when Sofia Loewe, the first Elvira in *Ernani* and Odabella in *Attila*, and initial choice for the Lady started losing her voice, deciding to retire):

The character of the role is resolute, bold, extremely dramatic. The plot is taken from one of the greatest tragedies the theater boasts, and I have tried to have all the dramatic situations drawn from it faithfully, to have it well versified, and to compose music tied so far as possible to the text and the situations . . . In short, I want the artists to serve the poet rather than the composer . . . Tell me if any passages lie uncomfortably for your voice.

Barbieri-Nini regretted the absence of any Donizettian cavatina. Verdi replied:

Observe well the character of this role and you will see that it could not be supplied without betraying that. Moreover, it would be a profanation to alter a character so great, so energetic, so original as this one created by the great English tragedian . . . The notes [of the sleepwalking scene] are simple and are created with the action in mind. Remember that every word has a meaning, and that it is absolutely essential to express it both with the voice and in the acting . . . As for the letter, we can't take it out, because the drama turns on it, but if you don't want to *speak* it we'll set it to music.

"Shakespeare rules, OK!" is the burden of Verdi's injunctions. To Lanari in Florence he had sent in September a detailed account of the opera's requirements; the piece was clear in his mind although the libretto was still being written: a good

³ This letter turned up at a 1985 Sotheby sale, too late for inclusion in the *Macbeth Sourcebook*.

⁴ The relationship didn't end on that unhappy note, of course. Piave went on to be Verdi's collaborator on *Il Corsaro*, *Stiffelio*, *Rigoletto*, *Traviata*, *Simon Boccanegra*, *Aroldo*, *Forza*, and the revised *Macbeth*.

chorus, especially of witches, a bass in addition to Loewe (still being considered for the role) and Varesi, a tenor "perhaps a little more important than the tenor in *Nabucco*, a second tenor and a second lady, another small part, a small corps de ballet. "Don't stint on the costs of mounting, for, if the music pleases little, there will be enough spectacle to insure a full house every night."⁵ A month later, Verdi sent Lanari the scenario of the opera, urged him again not to spare production costs, and stressed the "utmost importance" of the witches. "Now I must get on with composing."

Those witches call for comment. Verdi did go on about them. In 1865, when the revised *Macbeth* was being prepared in Paris, he wrote to Escudier: "There are three roles in this opera . . . Lady Macbeth, Macbeth, and the chorus of witches. The witches dominate the drama; everything derives from them—coarse and gossipy in the first act, sublime and prophetic in the third. They are truly a character, and a character of the utmost importance." The 1847 critics poured out column after column about the witches. Well, as we have seen, the first allusion to *Macbeth* announced that it would be an essay in the *genere fantastico*. This was something that had fascinated composers and critics since the Italian premieres of Meyerbeer's *Robert le Diable*, in 1840, and Weber's *Der Freischütz*, in 1843. They had both taken place in Florence, where *Macbeth* was to be done. The next Shakespeare opera after *Macbeth* was Antonio Buzzola's *Hamlet* (Venice, 1848); its librettist, Giovanni Peruzzini, declared that he had "taken almost nothing but the name from the great Englishman's *Hamlet*, so as to leave myself free to imagine dramatic situations suited to the somewhat grandiose and fantastical genre of modern music." But Verdi's thoughts about the witches were formed from A.W. Schlegel's influential *Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature*. They were published in Italian translation in 1817; and in any case Carlo Rusconi had appended Schlegel's observations to his prose translation of *Macbeth*, from which Verdi worked. Several Verdi letters and also a preface found in early editions of the libretto paraphrase Schlegel's remarks:

No superstition can be preserved and diffused through many centuries and among diverse people without having a foundation in human nature, and on this the poet builds. He calls up from their hidden abysses that dread of the unknown, that secret presage of a dark side of human nature . . . His picture of the

witches has a certain magical quality; he has created for them a particular language, which, although composed of the usual elements, still seems to be a collection of incantatory formulae . . . With one another, the witches discourse like women of the very lowest class. When they address Macbeth, their predictions have all the obscure brevity, the majestic solemnity, of oracles, such as ever spread terror among mortals.

In other words, Verdi was not simply cashing in on the vogue for the *genere fantastico*. The witches are no mere fashionable flummery or spooky divertissement but have their foundation in that "human nature" which was ever at the heart of Verdi's operas.

Then, there's the famous, familiar Tadolini letter. Verdi wrote it to Cammarano in 1848 when he learned that Eugenia Tadolini was to sing Lady Macbeth in Naples: "Tadolini sings to perfection, and I would like the Lady not to sing. Tadolini has a stupendous voice, clear, limpid, and powerful; I would like the Lady to have a harsh, stifled, and hollow voice," etc., etc. In context, this letter seems to me an argument *ad feminam*. It might be glossed as, "For heaven's sake, don't let Tadolini tackle Lady Macbeth. She'd be no good in the part." Tadolini was reaching the end of her career and had just returned to Naples after a flop in London. Verdi wrapped his objections politely, and even invited Cammarano to show his letter to the lady herself. (Incidentally, Tadolini did sing the role; has anyone looked up her reviews?)

And so to the revision. The Théâtre-Lyrique asked Verdi originally for just a ballet, but (he had already composed *Forza*), on looking through his 18-year-old score he found "numbers that are weak or, still worse, lacking in character," and listed the five changes he would want to effect: a new aria for Lady Macbeth in Act II (the wonderful "La luce langue" replaced the glittering cabaletta "Trionfai!"); changes to the cauldron scene (this was much strengthened); a new aria for Macbeth ("Vada in fiamme" was in fact replaced by the brief duet "Ora di morte"); "retouches" to the first scene of Act IV (in fact, the exiles' chorus was newly composed); and a new finale (Macbeth lost his "Mal per me"; the battle fugue and victory hymn were newly composed). But once he came to work again on the opera, Verdi found that there was much more that he wanted to change. Of the original *Macbeth*, there eventually remained the opening scenes as far as the

march of Duncan's entry; the first-act finale; the scene of Banquo's murder, and the start and close of the banquet scene; the witches' music; the sleepwalking scene; and Macbeth's "Pietà, rispetto, amore." Once again there was long, detailed correspondence with Piave; again the greatest care was taken with getting the precise words Verdi wanted. This was a revision undertaken after a new study of the play, and after having seen it performed in the theater—first by Charles Macready in London, and then in Italian performances that his own opera had inspired.

There were, it seems to me, at least four different—but not mutually exclusive—promptings for the revision: (1) to refine and give more powerful, subtle expression to the 1847 intentions; (2) to replace evidently conventional numbers (such as "Trionfai!"); (3) to replace what had been striking in 1847 but would seem old-fashioned in 1865, especially in Paris (such as the original exiles' chorus, a stirring piece in the vein of the *Nabucco* and *Lombardi* patriotic choruses); (4) to provide some Paris spectacle in the Meyerbeer manner, with a multiple-chorus finale. *Macbeth* had from the first been regarded as an unusually spectacular opera. The "inventor of the chemical smoke" gets a special credit in the 1847 program. Verdi admired a Genoa production where an under-stage Ferris wheel brought the apparitions of the eight kings magically and motionlessly into view. The designs for the Théâtre-Lyrique *Macbeth* survive and reveal a very large, sumptuous, elaborate production. This was the rival show to Meyerbeer's *L'Africaine* at the Opéra. But Shakespeare still ruled.

When a Paris critic accused the composer of not knowing his Shakespeare, he was indignant. "It may be that I have not rendered *Macbeth* well, but that I don't know, don't understand, don't feel Shakespeare—no, by God, no! He is a favorite poet of mine, whom I have had in my hands from earliest youth, whom I read and re-read constantly." Again and again he considered setting *King Lear*. And, Shakespeare inspired three of his greatest operas.

Andrew Porter is co-editor, with David Rosen, of Verdi's *Macbeth: A Sourcebook* (New York, 1984). His translation of *Macbeth* (both the 1847 and the 1865 scores) has been performed widely in America and in Britain. He was for twenty years music critic of *The New Yorker* and is now the critic of the *London Observer*.

⁵ This letter turned up at a 1989 Sotheby sale.

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Jonathan Khuner

Assistant Stage Directors
Laurie Feldman
Paula Suozzi

Stage Manager
Theresa Ganley

Fight Director
Michael Cawelti

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First performance:
Florence, May 14, 1847 (original version)
Paris, April 21, 1865 (revised version)

First San Francisco Opera performance:
September 27, 1955

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 9 AT 8:00
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13 AT 8:00
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 16 AT 8:00
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20 AT 8:00
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 24 AT 8:00
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 29 AT 7:30
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 2 AT 2:00

Macbeth

(in Italian)

CAST

(in order of appearance)

Generals of Duncan's Army	{	Macbeth	James Morris
		Banquo	Robert Lloyd
Lady Macbeth		Gwyneth Jones	
A servant		Eduardo del Campo*†	
Macduff, a Scottish nobleman		Hong-Shen Li	
Malcolm, son of Duncan		Stephen Guggenheim	
Duncan, King of Scotland		Dean Johnson	
Fleance, son of Banquo		Tyler McAfee	
Lady-in-waiting		Claudia Waite*†	
An assassin		William Pickersgill	
First apparition		Valery Portnov	
Second apparition		Brandon Sherman	
Third apparition		Sabrina Adler (9/9, 16, 24, 10/2)	
		Emily Ryan (9/13, 20, 29)	
A doctor		Chester Patton	

*Witches, messengers, Scottish refugees, assassins, Macbeth's soldiers,
English soldiers, apparitions*

* San Francisco Opera debut
† 1994 Adler Fellow

TIME AND PLACE: 11th-century Scotland

ACT I, Scene 1	A barren heath
Scene 2	A hall in Macbeth's castle

INTERMISSION

ACT II, Scene 1	A room in the castle
Scene 2	A park near the castle
Scene 3	The banquet hall

INTERMISSION

ACT III	The witches' cave
ACT IV, Scene 1	The Scottish-English border
Scene 2	Macbeth's castle
Scene 3	A battlefield

Supertitles for *Macbeth* provided by a generous gift from Pacific Gas & Electric.

Supertitles by Joseph de Rugeriis for 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 fifteen minutes.*

Macbeth/ Synopsis

ACT I — Scene 1 — Returning from war after a victorious campaign, Macbeth and Banquo are greeted by a group of witches who prophetically hail Macbeth as Thane of Cawdor and King of Scotland, and acclaim Banquo as father of kings to come. Messengers from King Duncan soon arrive with the news of Macbeth's appointment as Thane of Cawdor.

Scene 2 — Lady Macbeth, reading a letter from her husband, learns of his victory, and of the witches' predictions. Upon his return, she incites his ambition and persuades him to murder the King, who had recently arrived at their castle. That night, Macbeth kills the sleeping King. Discovering the murder, Macduff and Banquo arouse the castle in alarm. Lady Macbeth is triumphant: the first step to the power she seeks is accomplished.

INTERMISSION

ACT II — Scene 1 — Lady Macbeth pleads with her husband to forget the past. With Banquo now suspicious and a threat to Macbeth's throne, she is convinced that he, too, must be murdered.

Scene 2 — Ambushed by Macbeth's paid assassins, Banquo is killed, but his son manages to escape.

Scene 3 — Macbeth, now exercising the rights of the murdered king, hosts a banquet at which the ghost of Banquo appears. The specter, invisible to all the guests, so unnerves him that he resolves to visit the witches once again.

INTERMISSION

ACT III — Macbeth, at the witches' cave in the midst of their revels, demands an explanation of their prophecy. In answer, he is shown a series of visions. The first apparition, a helmeted head, warns Macbeth about Macduff. The second, a bloodied child, is accompanied by the words: "Behold, for none of woman born shall harm Macbeth."

The third apparition is a child with a crown, who holds a small tree. It promises that Macbeth will never be vanquished until "Great Birnam Wood" comes to "High Dunsinane Hill." The last vision is of eight kings, of whom Banquo, holding a mirror in his hand, is the last. The arrival of Lady Macbeth provides him with courage. They ruthlessly vow to destroy anyone who is a threat to them.

ACT IV — Scene 1 — Near Birnam Wood, Scottish exiles lament the tyranny that has seized their country since Macbeth became king. Macduff mourns the death of his wife and child, who have been murdered by order of Macbeth. The exiles join the English forces and prepare to march against Macbeth under the leadership of Duncan's son, Malcolm.

Scene 2 — At night in the castle, Lady Macbeth is possessed by guilt and terror at her part in the murderous schemes she has carried out. As her attendant and doctor look on in horror, she succumbs to madness.

Scene 3 — Macbeth learns of the death of his wife, and is told of the approach of the enemy, each one holding a branch and giving the impression of a moving Birnam forest. He prepares to meet them. The opposing armies meet in battle. During the ensuing fight, Macbeth comes face to face with Macduff, who "was from his mother's womb untimely ripped," and is slain by him. Amid the rejoicing of the liberated Scots, Malcolm is proclaimed King of Scotland.

The performance of September 9th is sponsored by the Royal Bank of Scotland, San Francisco

The performance of September 13th is sponsored by Fireman's Fund

The performance of September 16th is sponsored by Pacific Gas & Electric

The performance of September 20th is sponsored by Pillsbury Madison & Sutro

Macbeth Supernumeraries

Bob Acker
Jean-Charles Bellour
Jim Bowes
Mark Burstein
Joe Castrovinci
Dana Coffin
Joshua Contreras
Nikolaje De Vrsac
Doug Del Paggio
Joe Dial

Mark Fons
Ted Foster
Mark Huelsmann
Todd Jones
Bill Klaproth
Ken Korpi
Greg Lawrance
James Lesko
Oscar Manzanares
Matt Miller

Anthony Nugent
Javier A. Peregrino
Mike Pesavento
Will Sanderson
Jim Shea
Ray Souza
Don Stoddard
Michael Strickland
John Wong

Macbeth

Photos taken in rehearsal
by Marty Sohl

James Morris





Gwyneth Jones

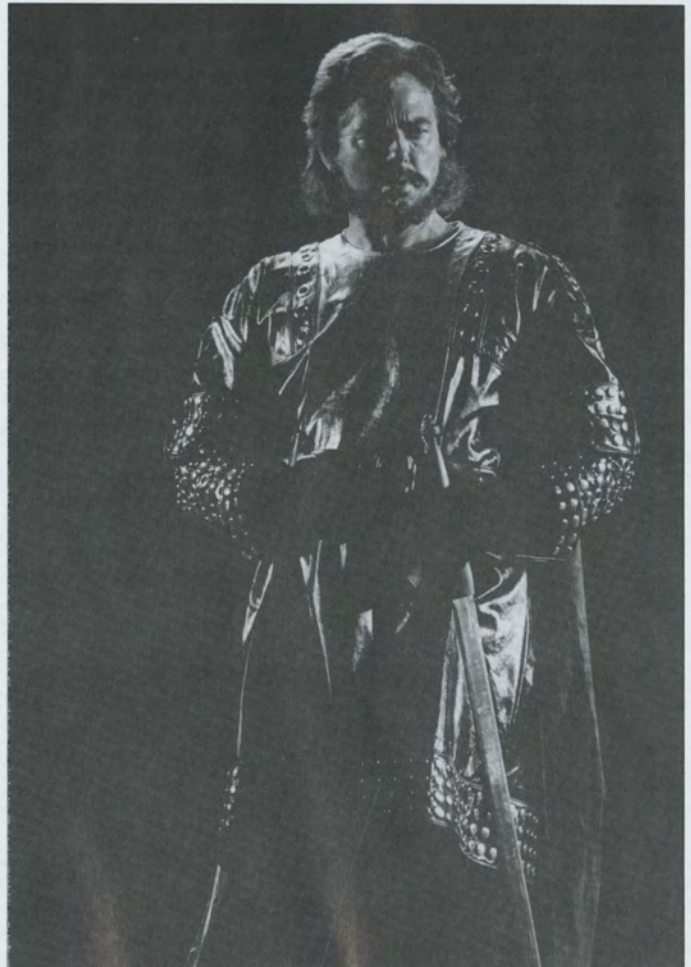


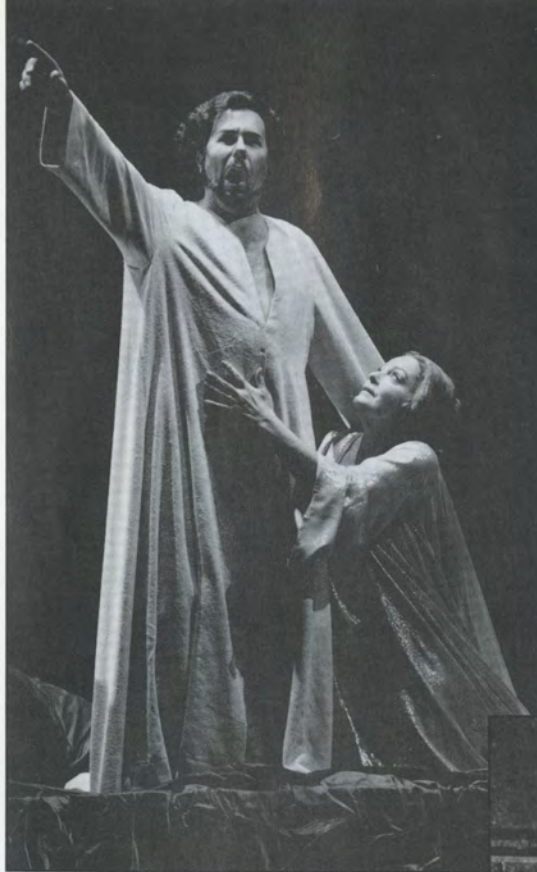
James Morris



Claudia Waite, Chester Patton

Robert Lloyd





James Morris, Gwyneth Jones



Gwyneth Jones



Hong-Shen Li



Gwyneth Jones



Stephen Guggenheim



Eduardo del Campo



Women of the San Francisco Opera Chorus

Final Scene



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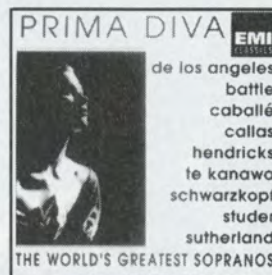
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L.A. OPERA

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, Tumanian, 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,
Curtisinger, 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, Tsypin, 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
Pidó: 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),
Yurisch, Rasmussen,
Fedderly, Lebherz, Ebbers,
Bernstein, Fitzpatrick

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

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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 Susa/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/Varady*, Zajick/Toczyska,
Bishop†; Armiliato*/O'Neill,
Gavanelli/Chernov, Wells/Skinner,
Guggenheim, Sumegit†, Portillat†
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, Portillat†
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

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San Francisco Opera Premiere

The Fiery Angel Prokofiev
Gorchakova*, Diadkova*, Petersen,
Clayton, Filimonova*, Waitet†, Gao,
Bishop†, Dillard, Shigematsu†;
Leiferkus, Hanedanyan, Pluzhnikov*,
Minzhilkiev*, Lord, Wilde, Sumegit†,
Del Campot†, Patriarco†, Condy
Gergiev; 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

New Production

San Francisco Opera Premiere
Hérodiade Massenet
Zajick, Fleming, Clayton†;
Domingo/Keyes*(11/23, 25), Pons,
Cox, Vasquez, Del Campot†, Portillat†
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, Portillat†
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
with English Supertitles.
Repertoire, casts and dates are subject to
change.*

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Performance Highlights

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Having received productions in Los Angeles, London, New York, and Chicago, Tony Kushner's two-part epic *Angels in America* is now returning to heaven—that is, “a city much like San Francisco,” as one of the play's eponymous spirits describes it. Following in the footsteps of David Esbjornson, Oskar Eustis, and George C. Wolfe, Mark Wing-Davey is slated to shape this mammoth work for the **American Conservatory Theater**. Anyone who saw the British director's work with Caryl Churchill's *Mad Forest*, with its interweaving storylines and fantastic aspects (including vampires, talking dogs, and the appearance of St. Stephen, an angel himself), can adjudge Wing-Davey as up to the job. Previews of *Millennium Approaches*, the play's first part, begin on September 27 at the Marines Memorial Theater, with an opening date of October 12, and marathon ticket packages, complete with a break for dinner, will be available once the second half, *Perestroika*, previews on October 5. Performances continue through January 22. Incidentally, the production is something of a homecoming for *Angels*, which had its first performance at the Eureka Theater back in 1991.

“Celebrate the Blomstedt Decade” is the theme of the **San Francisco Symphony's** 1994-95 season, commemorating Herbert Blomstedt's final season as music director. Blomstedt's relationship with the SFS will not end, however, as he assumes the post of Conductor Laureate in the fall of 1995. Meanwhile, there is plenty of Blomstedt to celebrate, as the conductor mans the podium in seven different September concerts. These include a stint with cellist **Yo-Yo Ma** playing Danielpour and Tchaikovsky from September 14-17; Mahler's Symphony No. 8 on September 21, 23, 24, and 25; and Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 5, along with works by Martin and Honegger, on September 29, 30, and October 1. Blomstedt is joined for the Symphony's opening gala on September 7 by pianist Van Cliburn, who performs Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 1. The program is repeated the next evening, and—with **Eduardus Halim** on piano—on September 9 (at Flint) and 10 (at Concord Pavilion) as well. Non-Blomstedt events include the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields performing Berlioz, Mozart, and Dvořák under the baton of Sir Neville Marriner on September 26.

—Robert Simonson

Angelic overtures: Hear works by Tchaikovsky (above) at the San Francisco Symphony; (below) *Angels in America* returns to San Francisco, at the American Conservatory Theater



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ARTIST PROFILES



Internationally acclaimed as one of the greatest artists of our day, **Gwyneth Jones** portrays Lady Macbeth in Verdi's *Macbeth*. The role, one she assayed early in her career, served as the vehicle of her U.S. debut in Dallas in 1966, and she returned to it at the 1975 Florence May Festival (Riccardo Muti conducting) and in the 1992 Tokyo concert performances, which resulted in a recording. Her previous assignments at the War Memorial were (all title roles unless otherwise indicated): *Fidelio* and *Aida* in 1969; *Elisabetta in Don Carlo* in 1973; *Tosca* and *Fidelio* in 1978; *Isolde in Tristan und Isolde* in 1980; *Tosca* in 1982; *Die Walküre* in 1983 and 1985; *Salome* in 1987; *Barak's Wife in Die Frau ohne Schatten* in 1989; *Brünnhilde in the Ring cycle* of 1990; *Elektra* in 1991. Born in Pontnewynydd, Wales, the soprano made her professional debut in Zurich. She is a celebrated guest at the world's foremost opera houses, whose career gradually grew to encompass all the major Wagner and Strauss roles, which brought her worldwide fame. At the same time, Dame Gwyneth (she was given the title by Queen Elizabeth II in 1986) continued performing roles from the Italian repertoire with an eye to maintaining a balance with the heavier German operas. The soprano's artistry also includes appearing in recital, in concert with the most prominent orchestras and conductors of the world, on radio and television, and in a great number of videocassettes and laserdiscs, most notably in the role of Brünnhilde in the Patrice Chéreau Bayreuth staging of Wagner's *Ring cycle*. Her numerous honors include two titles of *Kammersängerin*: from Bavaria (Munich Opera) and Austria. In addition, she is Vienna State Opera's "Honorary Member" and holds two high orders: Germany's Cross of Merit, and France's *Commandeur des Arts et des Lettres*.



A 1994 Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, soprano **Claudia Waite** is in her debut season with the parent company, appearing in *Macbeth* and *The Fiery Angel*. She recently completed an Opera Center tour of the Pacific islands of Guam, Saipan and Pohnpei, while this summer, she portrayed Hecuba in the North American premiere of Tippet's *King Priam*, presented as part of the Center's Showcase series. A native of San Francisco, she received her education at Angelo State University in Texas, supplementing it at Florida State University. During that time, she made a number of concert appearances with several regional symphony orchestras and opera groups and became a winner of the Metropolitan Opera Auditions in the Florida District. Miss Waite's activities with the San Francisco Opera Center include participation in the 1993 Merola Opera Program, which featured her as Rosalinda in the critically acclaimed performance of *Die Fledermaus*. She also performed the same role on Western Opera Theater's 1993 national tour, while at last year's Merola Opera Program Grand Finals, she was presented with the prestigious Poetz Memorial Award.

MACBETH



Master of a remarkable repertoire that spans the opera stage, concert and recital halls, American bass **James Morris** returns to San Francisco Opera in the title role of Verdi's *Macbeth*. Since his 1981 San Francisco Opera debut as Assur in *Semiramide*, he has appeared here as Wotan in the 1985 *Ring Festival* (singing the *Rheingold* Wotan for the first time anywhere), Scarpia in *Tosca* (another career first), and Claggart in *Billy Budd* (1985), the four villains in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* in 1987, the *Ring cycle* again in 1990, the title role of *Boris Godunov* in 1992 (singing the part in Russian for the first time), and *Procidia in I Vespri Siciliani* last fall. Born and educated in Baltimore, Morris became the youngest male singer on the Metropolitan Opera roster at the age of 23 and at 27 was on the Met stage as Don Giovanni, a role he has sung in numerous seasons there and in other opera centers of the world. Up to now, his Metropolitan Opera record consists of an amazing 47 roles, sung since his debut there in 1971. Today, the artist is internationally in constant demand for his opera roles, which range from Mozart to Wagner to Britten, as well as for concert appearances and recitals. His discography includes two complete *Ring cycles*, *Maria Stuarda*, *Le Roi de Lahore*, *I Vespri Siciliani*, *Così fan tutte*, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, *Aida*, *Parsifal*, *Salome*, Berlioz's *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Beggar's Opera*, Haydn's *The Creation*, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, the Requiems by Mozart and Fauré, as well as a recording of arias by Wagner and Verdi.



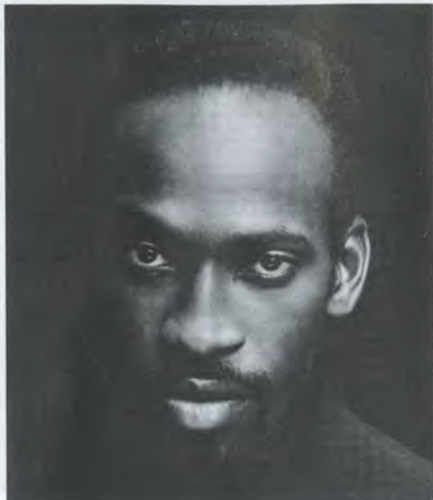
Bass **Robert Lloyd**, born in Essex and educated at Oxford, began his life as an academic historian, turning to a singing career at the age of 28. In 1972, he was appointed principal bass at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, where he proceeded to portray roles from an enormous range of repertoire, while developing a freelance operatic and concert career which has brought him to most major performing centers of the world. His U.S. debut took place in 1975 with the San Francisco Opera (Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte*), and he has since returned as Méphistophélès in *Faust* (1986) and King Philip in *Don Carlos* (1986) and *Don Carlo* (1992). Lloyd was the first British bass to sing the title role of *Boris Godunov* at Covent Garden (1983), in the celebrated Tarkovsky production (seen at the War Memorial in 1992) which then traveled to the Kirov Opera in Leningrad (1990) with the same protagonist. Following the international telecast of the same, he returned to the production at the Vienna State Opera in 1991, under the direction of Claudio Abbado. The bass has made some 70 recordings, ranging from Monteverdi and Mozart to Elgar and Wagner. A frequent guest on radio and television, he was the subject of a BBC special on the bass voice, titled *Six Foot Cinderella*. Lloyd is President of British Youth Opera and member of the Executive Committee of the Musicians' Benevolent Fund. His awards include the title of Commander of the British Empire (CBE), bestowed upon him by Queen Elizabeth in 1991.



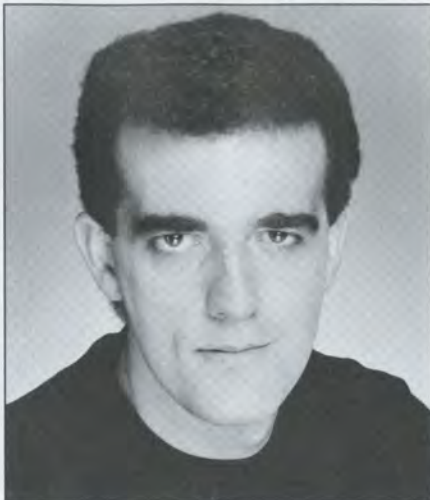
A 1989 and 1990 Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, tenor **Hong-Shen Li** returns to the Company's main stage, following last summer's appearances as the Italian Singer in *Der Rosenkavalier* and Leukippos in *Daphne*. This season's assignments consist of Macduff in *Macbeth*, and A Gondolier in *Otello*. A native of the People's Republic of China, he received his initial training at the Central Conservatory of Beijing. After studies at the Juilliard School, Li became a member of the 1987 Merola Opera Program, and proceeded relatively quickly to the main stage, first as Goro in *Madama Butterfly* (1989), then as the Duke in *Rigoletto* (1990), Alfredo in student performances of *La Traviata* (1990), Tebaldo in *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* (1991), and Pirro in *Ermione* (1992). Last year, he made several important debuts both in the U.S. and abroad, including Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni* in Pittsburgh, and Rodolfo in *La Bohème* at Edmonton. Some of the tenor's recent engagements include his Metropolitan Opera debut in *Der Fliegende Holländer* and a return as Iopas in *Les Troyens*; also Count Almaviva in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* in Amsterdam and at the Bergen International Festival in Norway. This April, he was Nadir in *Les Pêcheurs de Perles* in his Seattle Opera debut. Li's concert appearances include this summer's Verdi Requiem at the Eugene Bach Festival in Oregon, and a concert version of *The Savage Land* by Chinese composer Jing Xiang, performed in Taipei. Future plans include a debut with Manitoba Opera as the Duke in *Rigoletto* and Rossini's *Stabat Mater* with the Orchestre National de Lyon.



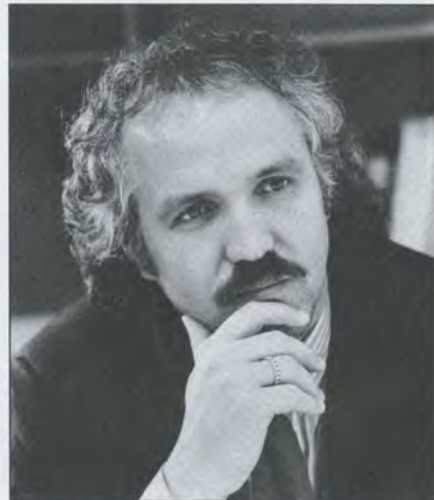
Tenor **Stephen Guggenheim** portrays four roles during San Francisco Opera's 1994 season: Malcolm in *Macbeth*, Ruiz in *Il Trovatore*, Walther von der Vogelweide in *Tannhäuser*, and Edgardo in student matinee performances of *Lucia di Lammermoor*. Born in Saratoga, California, he is a graduate of San Jose State University and the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. After taking part in the 1991 Merola Opera Program, he spent the next two years as an Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center. His initial appearance with the San Francisco Opera was as an officer in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, which was followed by several roles in *Boris Godunov*, *Fidelio*, *Don Carlo*, *Christophe Colomb* (1992), also *Salome*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Capriccio*, *I Vespri Siciliani*, *Die Meistersinger* and *The Queen of Spades* (1993). The high point of his 1993 season was appearing with the Company in the title role of *La Clemenza di Tito*. Formerly Artist in Residence with Opera San Jose, Guggenheim has appeared with that company in a number of roles, while his Opera Center activities included touring Japan as Rodolfo in *La Bohème* and Guam as Don José in *Carmen*. This July, he was also featured in the role of Achilles in the North American premiere of Tippet's *King Priam*, presented as part of San Francisco Opera Center's Showcase season. Future plans include the title role in the world premiere of Thea Musgrave's *Simón Bolívar* (Virginia Opera) and the Duke in *Rigoletto* with Minnesota Opera.



An Opera Center Adler Fellow since 1993, bass-baritone **Chester D. Patton** made his San Francisco Opera debut in *Salome* during the 1993 Strauss Festival, returning in the fall for the Mandarin in *Turandot* (televised on PBS) and Lord Walton in *I Puritani*. This season, he portrays the Doctor in *Macbeth* and will also appear in *The Fiery Angel* and as Raimondo in the student matinee performances of *Lucia di Lammermoor*. This past summer, he was heard in the title role of Opera Center's North American premiere of Tippet's *King Priam*. A native of Columbia, Mississippi, Patton earned his master of music degree at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. His numerous prizes and awards include the first prize in the 1993 Leontyne Price Vocal Artists Competition and one of the top prizes in the 1994 Loren Zachary vocal competition. While enrolled in the Merola Opera Program, he sang Colline in *La Bohème*, a role he repeated on Western Opera Theater's 1992 national tour. Patton recently completed a tour of the Pacific islands of Guam, Saipan and Pohnpei as part of San Francisco Opera Center's Pacific Rim Cultural Exchange Program. Future plans include several roles with Hawaii Opera, including Colline in *La Bohème* and Ferrando in *Il Trovatore*.



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.



San Francisco Operas music director since 1992, **Donald Runnicles** is widely considered one of the finest opera conductors active today, with a distinguished series of international triumphs to his credit. Born in Edinburgh, the Scottish musician started his professional career in Germany, where he rose from répétiteur in Mannheim in 1980 to General Music Director of Städtische Bühnen in Freiburg in 1989. During this period, he assisted at the Bayreuth Wagner Festival, and started conducting in guest appearances across Europe. His European credits also include highly praised engagements with the Vienna State Opera, where he has led productions of Wagner's *Ring*, *Manon Lescaut* and *Tosca*; Zurich Opera, Royal Opera at Copenhagen, Netherlands Opera and the Vienna Volksoper. In Great Britain, his opera debut took place at the Glyndebourne Festival in 1991 (*Don Giovanni*), while in 1992 he made his native city debut with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra at the prestigious Edinburgh Festival, where he returned to lead the opening concert this summer. His North American debut was in 1988, when he led the Metropolitan Opera's *Lulu* on five hours' notice, while his San Francisco Opera debut occurred in 1990 with highly acclaimed performances of two cycles of Wagner's *Ring*. Recent highlights include the opening performance of the Bayreuth Festival (new production of *Tannhäuser*), debut with the Munich Opera (*Don Giovanni*) and symphonic debuts with the London Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre de Paris, Israel Philharmonic, Rotterdam Philharmonic, Seattle Symphony, Pittsburgh Symphony and Chicago Symphony. His list of credits with San Francisco Opera includes *Guillaume Tell*, *Boris Godunov*, *Fidelio*, *Don Carlo*, *Salome*, *Capriccio*, *Turandot*, *Die Meistersinger* and *La Clemenza di Tito*. In July of this year, he led the North American premiere of Tippet's *King Priam*, and this fall he will be on the podium for *Macbeth*, *Tannhäuser* and the world premiere of Conrad Susa/Philip Littell's *The Dangerous Liaisons*.



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 Theatre, 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.



Internationally renowned director and designer **Pier Luigi Pizzi** is featured this season as costume designer for Verdi's *Macbeth*. His first San Francisco Opera design assignment was the 1971 production of *Maria Stuarda*, while his 1974 staging of *Simon Boccanegra* for the Lyric Opera of Chicago was seen here in 1975 and 1980. By now, Pizzi's set and costume designs have been seen in most of the world's major operatic capitals. Initially strictly a designer, in 1977 he also started a directing career, with a Turin production of *Don Giovanni*. His first directing assignment for San Francisco Opera was in recreating his production of *Semiramide*, which then opened the Company's 1981 season. He returned in 1986 for a much-discussed production of *Macbeth*. Among the designer/director's recent highlights was the new production of *Aida*, which inaugurated Houston Grand Opera's new Brown Theater, and last year's staging of Traetta's *Buovo d'Antona*, staged in commemoration of the 200th anniversary of the birth of Carlo Goldoni. Pizzi's productions and designs are a regular feature of the prestigious Rossini Festival at Pesaro.



In his third assignment for San Francisco Opera, **Michael Whitfield** creates the lighting for the new production of *Macbeth*. His previous Company assignments were the 1989 production of *Lulu* and the 1990 *Wozzeck*. The Canadian-born artist received his training at the University of Victoria in British Columbia, and continued at Villanova University in Pennsylvania, where he earned his master's degree. Associated with the Stratford Shakespearean Festival since 1974, he has been resident lighting designer there since 1978. At the Canadian Opera Company of Toronto, he has designed lighting for over 50 productions, including several Canadian premieres, working with an impressive list of stage directors such as John Copley, Jonathan Eaton, Nikolaus Lehnhoff, Brian Macdonald, Lotfi Mansouri, Elijah Moshinski, etc. Other opera assignments include those at Houston Grand Opera (*Boris Godunov*, 1986), Los Angeles Music Center Opera (*Macbeth*, 1987), Netherlands Opera, Amsterdam (*La Belle Helène*, 1984), New Orleans Opera (*Don Carlo*, 1992), and Welsh National Opera (*Tornrak*, 1990). Whitfield is also active in the areas of Canadian regional theater, ballet, television production and teaching.



On November 24, 1993, San Francisco Opera lost a beloved and prominent member of its family. Walter M. Baird, most often known as "Wally," served as President of the San Francisco Opera Board of Directors from 1974 to 1985, and remained an active member of the Board until his death.

The September 13th performance of *Macbeth* is dedicated to his memory.

1994 Opera Previews

The following list of lectures and previews includes those that are currently available to the public.

PRE-OPERA TALKS

Our popular Pre-Opera talks have been expanded and will take place on most performance days. Free with your performance ticket, lectures start in the Orchestra section one hour before curtain time. Watch for talk dates in S.F. Opera newspaper advertisements.

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD — INSIGHTS

Renowned artists and personalities from the world of opera in informal interviews. Held from 6 to 7 p.m. in Herbst Theatre, 401 Van Ness, in San Francisco. Complimentary to Guild members; \$5 at the door.

Information: (415) 565-6432.

Oct. 3	<i>Otello</i>
Oct. 17	<i>The Fiery Angel</i>
Nov. 1	<i>Hérodiade</i>

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD — PREVIEWS

Speakers: *Otello*: Dr. Marvin Tartak; *Tannhäuser*: Perry Lorenzo; *The Fiery Angel*: Prof. Richard Taruskin; *Hérodiade*: Dr. James Keolker; *Lucia di Lammermoor*: Prof. William Ashbrook

MARIN

Held at 8 p.m. at Mt. Tamalpais United Methodist Church, 410 Sycamore Avenue, Mill Valley.

Information: (415) 388-6789

Sept. 26	<i>Otello</i>
Oct. 5	<i>Tannhäuser</i>
Oct. 12	<i>The Fiery Angel</i>
Oct. 31	<i>Hérodiade</i>
Nov. 14	<i>Lucia di Lammermoor</i>

SAN FRANCISCO

Presented by the Junior League of San Francisco. Held at 12 noon, Herbst Theatre, 401 Van Ness Ave.

Information: (415) 923-9056

Sept. 28	<i>Otello</i>
Oct. 5	<i>Tannhäuser</i>
Oct. 12	<i>The Fiery Angel</i>
Nov. 2	<i>Hérodiade</i>
Nov. 17	<i>Lucia di Lammermoor</i>

SAN JOSE

Presented by the San Jose Opera Guild. Held at 10 a.m. at the Los Gatos History Club, 123 Los Gatos Blvd.

Information: (408) 354-7525.

Sept. 27	<i>Otello</i>
Oct. 4	<i>Tannhäuser</i>
Oct. 11	<i>The Fiery Angel</i>
Nov. 1	<i>Hérodiade</i>
Nov. 15	<i>Lucia di Lammermoor</i>

SONOMA COUNTY

Held at various times and locations.

Information: (707) 938-2432

Sept. 26	<i>Otello</i>
Oct. 3	<i>Tannhäuser</i>
Oct. 10	<i>The Fiery Angel</i>
Oct. 31	<i>Hérodiade</i>
Nov. 14	<i>Lucia di Lammermoor</i>

SOUTH PENINSULA

Held at 8 p.m. at the Palo Alto Senior Center, 450 Bryant, Palo Alto.

Information: (415) 941-3890

Sept. 27	<i>Otello</i>
Oct. 4	<i>Tannhäuser</i>
Oct. 11	<i>The Fiery Angel</i>
Nov. 1	<i>Hérodiade</i>
Nov. 15	<i>Lucia di Lammermoor</i>

SAN FRANCISCO CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC EXTENSION DIVISION

Sept. 19, 8 p.m. Hellman Hall
The Dangerous Liaisons: The Opera—Panel discussion with composer Conrad Susa, singers Frederica von Stade and David Hobson, with S.F. Opera Musical Administrator Clifford Cranna.

Sept. 26-Oct. 17, 7:30-9:30 p.m., Room 114
 Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and *Othello* in Italian Opera.
 Series of four Monday classes, held by Paul Thomason.

Information: (415) 759-3446

MERRITT COLLEGE OPERA LECTURE SERIES

Held on Tuesday evenings in Building R, Room 100, 7 to 10 p.m., *Introduction to Opera* (Music 13A) is based on operas of the 1994 fall season. The College is at 12500 Campus Drive (off Redwood Road in the Oakland hills).

Information: (510) 436-2430

OPERA EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL PREVIEW SERIES

Given by Michael Barclay, director of OEI. Lectures start at 7:15 p.m. at 400 Yale Ave. (at Vassar) in the Kensington part of Berkeley hills. Series began on September 1; lectures are \$15 at the door.

Information: (510) 526-5244

Sept. 12	<i>Il Trovatore</i>
Sept. 26	<i>Otello</i>
Oct. 3	<i>Tannhäuser</i>
Oct. 17	<i>The Fiery Angel</i>
Oct. 24	<i>Hérodiade</i>
Nov. 7	<i>Mefistofele</i>
Nov. 11	<i>Lucia di Lammermoor</i>
Dec. 12, 7p.m.	<i>Season Review</i>

FRIENDS OF THE KENSINGTON LIBRARY

A free lecture on Goethe, *Faust*, and Boito's *Mefistofele*, given by Michael Barclay on November 10, at 7:30 p.m. at the Kensington Library, at 61 Arlington Avenue, Kensington.

Information: (510) 524-3043

SAN FRANCISCO CITY COLLEGE PREVIEWS

A music course in opera previews will deal with all operas in the 1994 fall season. Taught by Marvin Tartak on Wednesday afternoons from 3 to 6 p.m. it takes place at the College, 50 Phelan Ave., Creative Arts Building, Room A-135 in San Francisco. Classes begin August 24 and continue for 16 weeks.

Information: (415) 239-3641

ROBERT GOODHUE'S FALL OPERA COURSE

Held at the Galleria Park Hotel, 191 Sutter, San Francisco, Monday evenings, 6:15 - 8:30 p.m. Remaining dates: Sept. 12, Oct. 3, 10, 17, 31; Nov. 7 and 14

Information: (415) 956-1271

S.F. PALM (SAN FRANCISCO PERFORMING ARTS LIBRARY AND MUSEUM) NEWS:

OPERA LECTURES:

Wednesday, October 5, 6 p.m.

George Martin, Verdi scholar and author of *Verdi at the Golden Gate* — "Verdi: The Man and His Music"

Thursday, November 3, 6 p.m.

John Dizikes, author of *Opera in America* — Lecture drawn from his book, dealing with America's love affair with opera

Monday, September 26 — October 24

Bruce Lamott, popular lecturer on music, in a four-lecture series on choral music:

Gregorian Chant & music of the Renaissance

Choral works of Bach, Handel, Vivaldi
Classical styles of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven

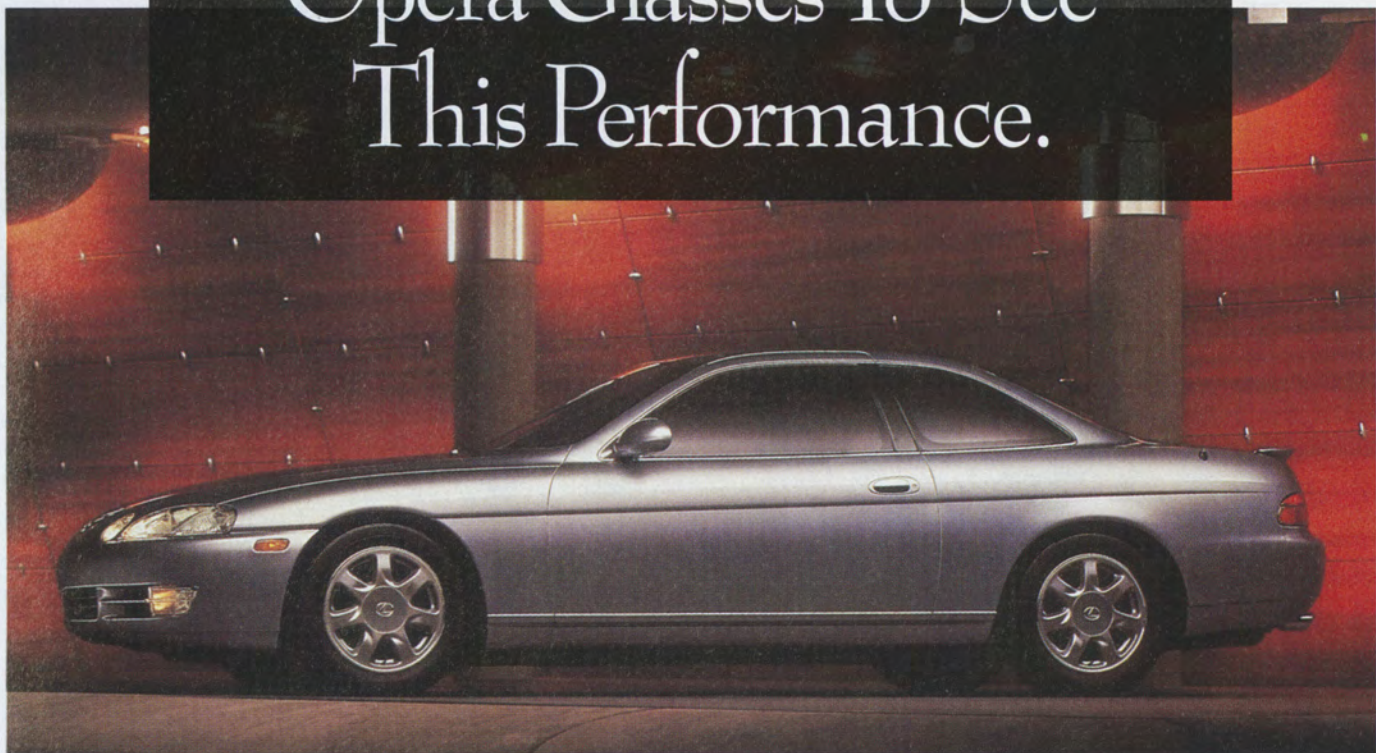
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NEW VISIONS

By JAKE HEGGIE

"I wouldn't have dared to program this repertoire in another city, but I took a chance," San Francisco Opera General Director Lotfi Mansouri said of the Company's 1994 Fall Season. "Our audience demands a season that is vital, creative and unique—it is an incredibly knowledgeable and sophisticated crowd, which challenges us all the time. Of course, putting together so many new productions and operas can be nerve-wracking. You work to bring all these elements together—and still, it's a roll of the dice right to the end."

The countdown is on. Minute to minute, the already frenetic level of activity in the Opera House seems to accelerate. Massive sets have been loaded in. Lighting plots are checked and double-checked. Costume fittings, technical rehearsals, soloist, orchestra and chorus rehearsals—all involving countless skills and personalities—are well under way.

Business as usual at the Opera?

Ask that of anyone involved and you'll probably see an expression that asks "What does *that* mean?" as the individual flies down the hall. Nothing about this business is ever usual—for the matter at hand is opera. And this, the 72nd season of San Francisco Opera may very well be the Company's most dramatically diverse and exciting to date.

Back-to-back, there will be two vastly different productions on stage for the opening weekend: *Macbeth*, a well-known Verdi classic, and *The Dangerous Liaisons*, a world premiere commissioned by San Francisco Opera—excellent barometers for the climate and contrasts of the entire Fall Season. These two operas represent the stimulating balance of known and unknown works, fresh and unique perspectives, powerhouse music and drama that are the season's defining elements.

New visions are key to this season which, in addition to the world premiere, features three Company premieres and the astonishing debut of no fewer than seven new productions. But for all of the excitement, the audible buzz that has been coursing through the War Memorial Opera House for months is charged with nervous enthusiasm.

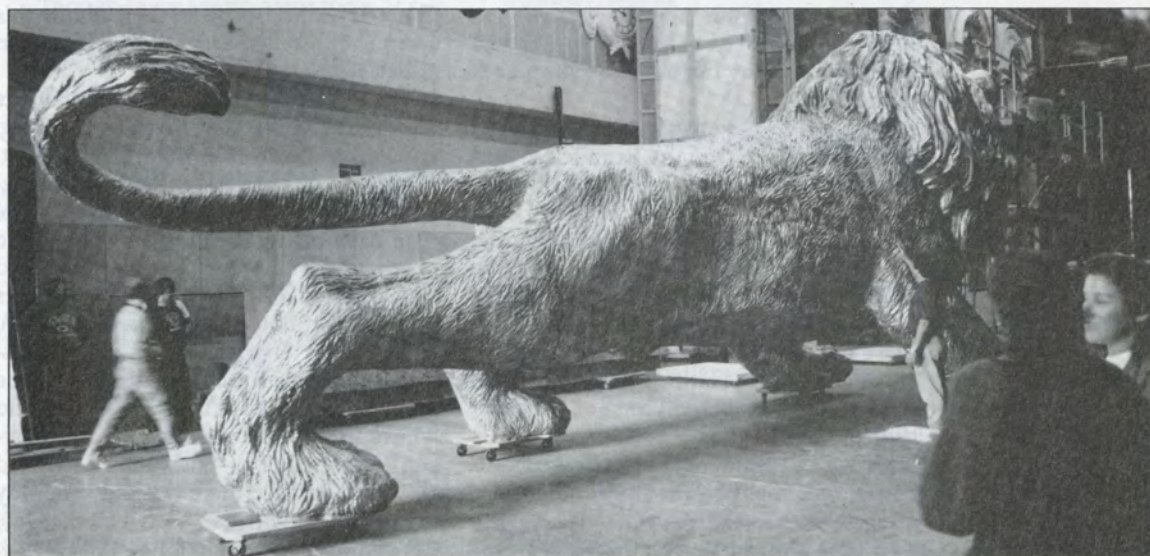
The season arrives after a year of jumping financial hurdles, downsizing and budget cuts—serious factors that have confronted large and small arts organizations all across the nation over the past few years. In the face of such challenges, one might expect a smaller, if not compromised season.

Quite the opposite.

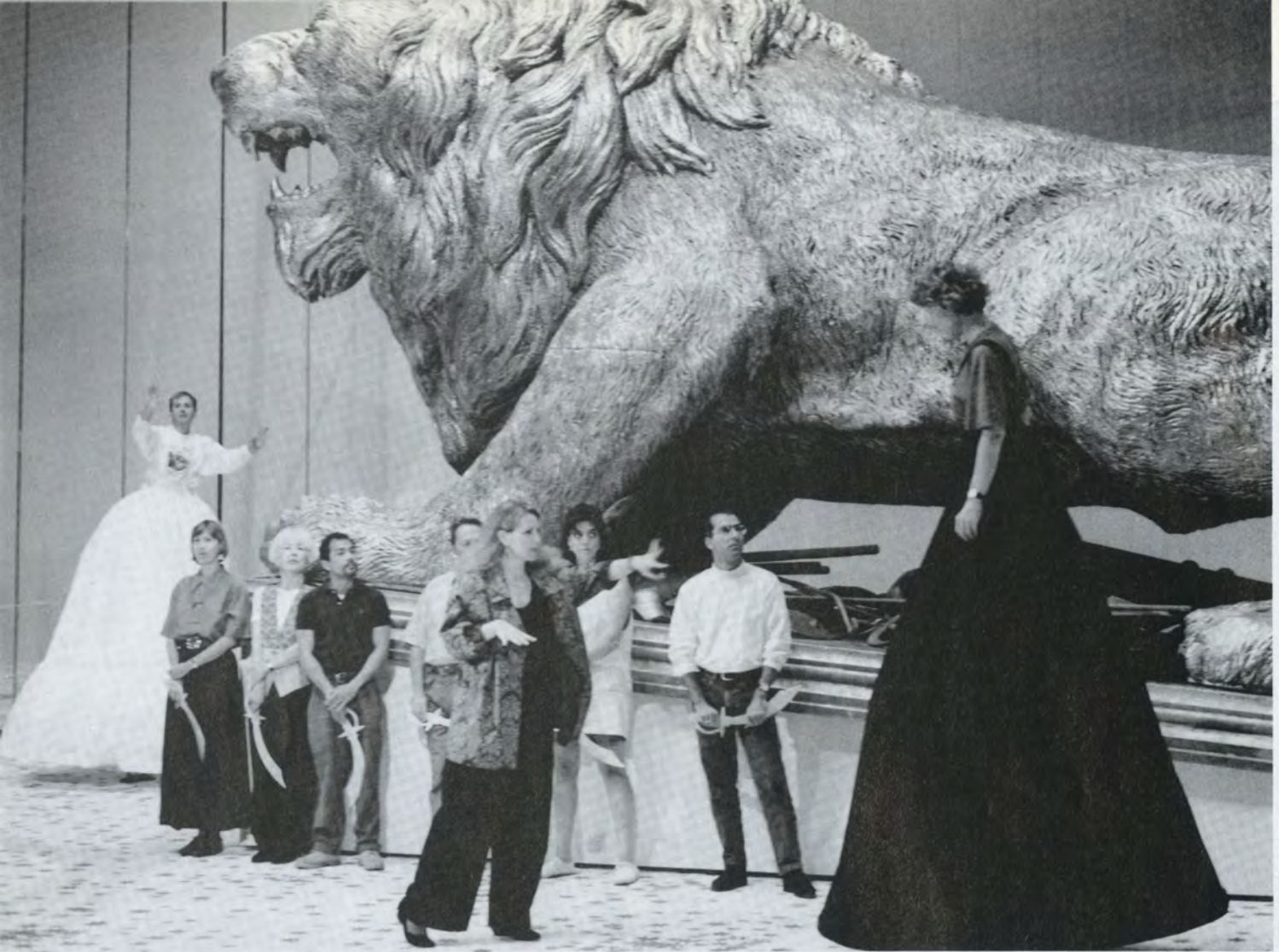


MERLE

MERLE



In preparation for the 1994 season, the *Otello* golden lion makes his way from the San Francisco Opera Scenic Studios, where he was built, past the Bay Bridge, to the Opera House, where he was unceremoniously hoisted and pointed toward the loading dock. From there, he proceeded into the backstage area, seemingly on his own cat's feet.



MARTY BOHL

Stage director Laurie Feldman, during an early staging rehearsal for Rossini's *Otello*, sets the scene for a group of supernumeraries and commedia dell'arte stilt-walkers of Fratelli Bologna fame. Dressed in a white skirt is William Hall, who will mime Desdemona; the dark skirt is a rehearsal costume for Letitia Bartlett, who will portray Elmiro.

General Director Lotfi Mansouri and his team resolved early on that there was no point to producing a season that would not measure up to the Company's high artistic standard. Effectively, they defied these obstacles and used them to produce a season rife with innovations and bold precedents. Instead of being confined by financial constraints, the Company is experiencing a flurry of invention that will likely affect many major opera companies in the world.

Recent interviews with Mansouri, Music Director Donald Runnicles, and Resident Designer Gerard Howland revealed fascinating insights into this unusual season. "There's a fresh wind in the Opera House," Mansouri enthused. "We're dealing with new creations, new ideas, new energies—and it will all be clear with these first two productions. This season is especially invigorating after last year, which was undoubtedly one of the most difficult in my career.

"It was debilitating, because we had to create excitement on the stage under very adverse circumstances—the deficit, the recession and all that. It felt like I was

paying for something that I must have done in my early days . . . only I can't imagine what I could have done that would have been that bad. But now, we've embarked on some new and very daring pathways, which is exhilarating because it keeps you from falling into a routine—and that, of course, is death in this business. There is much to be excited about this season . . . excited and scared," Mansouri added with a raised eyebrow.

By any standard, the season exhibits remarkable diversity in programming: works by Boito, Donizetti, Massenet, Prokofiev, Rossini, Susa, Verdi, and Wagner. It also features the daring move of commissioning a single designer to produce seven new productions—and save money in the process. With arts budgets shrinking everywhere you turn, any number of speculations and discussions have been brought up about the seeming razor's edge between success and failure this project represents. Controversial? Perhaps. But both Mansouri and Howland decided there was only one way to find out—to do it, and do it all the way.

"I think it will be a white-knuckle ex-

perience right up to the opening of *Lucia di Lammermoor* [the final production of the season], and this is emblazoned on my psyche," Howland stated with a grin. "It was brave of Lotfi to turn a situation where we needed to save money into the creation of seven new productions. That gives our audience a tremendous palette of things to think about and discuss.

"I wouldn't want to predict that this is going to be the future of this or any other company," the designer continued, "but I do believe that all companies are going to have to examine the way they go about finding solutions to expenses regarding scenery. Because the days of four independent sets for a four-act opera are limited or gone. Our solution is a new one, and while it does save a tremendous amount of money, I don't think anyone is going to feel shortchanged. We had to boil down to the essences of these pieces and we've worked very hard to create a signature, or handwriting, for each piece that will not be repeated with the next show.

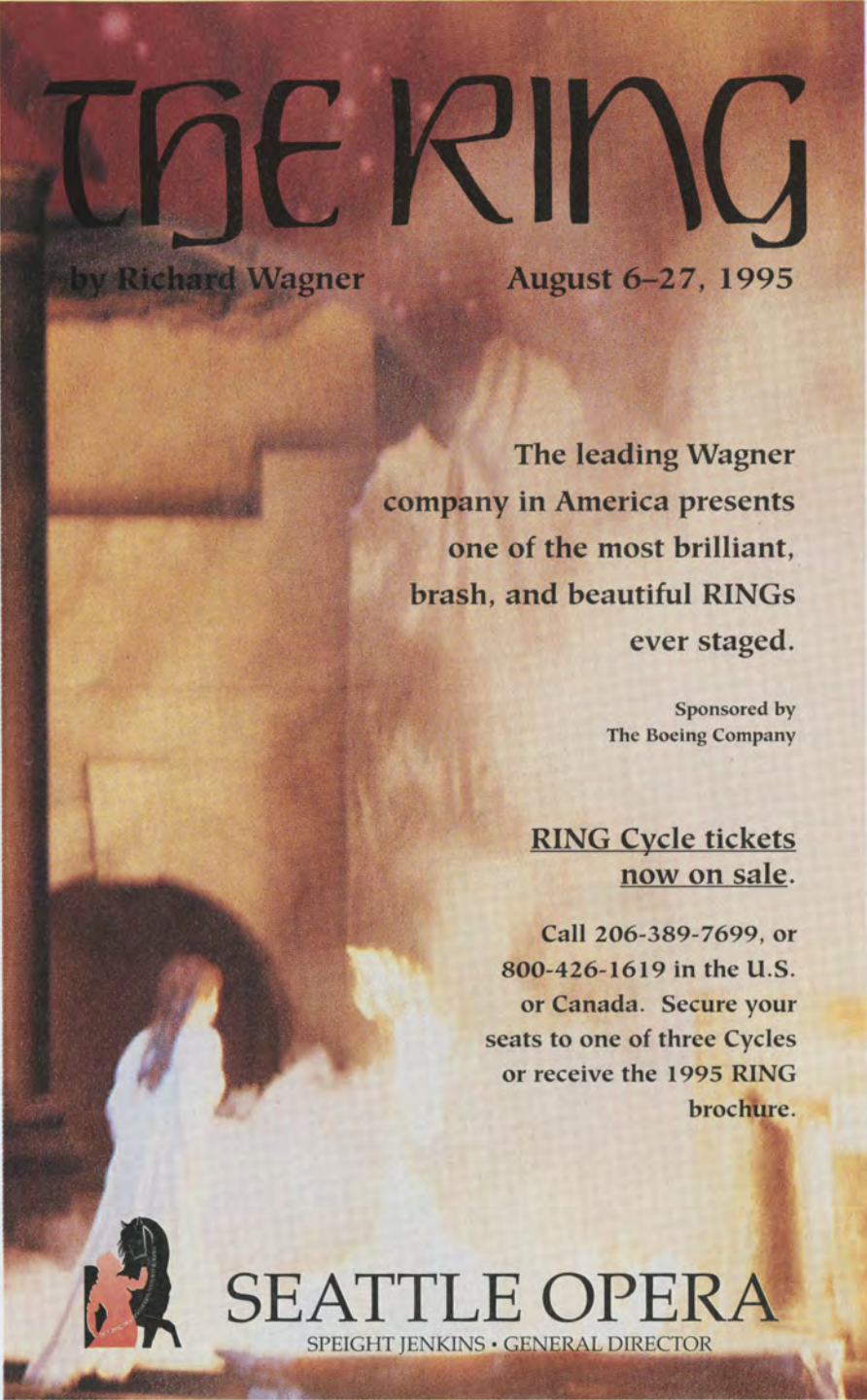
"But bear in mind, too, that this season is not built around a couple of big Puccini operas—Lotfi's been very adventurous and has provided subscribers with real food for thought."

"I think people who know me and my work will look at this repertoire and say, 'Ah, that's Lotfi,'" Mansouri mused. "My style is a combination of familiar and unfamiliar. I want to entice the audience and say, 'Let me be your tour guide. Come with me and we'll have a wonderful adventure.'

"And of course, nothing's guaranteed—that's part of the adventure, too," he added. "We all try to do everything to assure success. I certainly don't sit down and wonder, 'Now who can I get that can't sing that part?'" he laughed.

Though there are no assurances of success, both Howland and Mansouri confirmed that one thing is certain—positive or negative: nobody, but absolutely nobody, will be ambivalent about the results.

"So you take chances and run the risk, but when it comes out wonderfully—WOW! It's that sense of adventure and discovery that is absolutely essential. It's what brought us *War and Peace* in 1991, one of our biggest successes. And in that light, it's what opened up the exchange we have with the Kirov Opera that will bring us *The Fiery Angel* this year and *Ruslan and Lyudmila* next year [Mansouri recently directed the new production of the latter at the Kirov Opera in St. Petersburg]. It's well and good to do *Butterfly* and *Bohème*—and one *should* do them—but there is so much



THE RING

by Richard Wagner

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more to taste on this fabulous menu."

"It's about as diverse as one could imagine any season being," Runnicles remarked. "Not only can the people of this city be proud to have a company with such a season, but San Francisco Opera can be incredibly proud to have a public that is interested and challenged by a season of this scope. Now that's a rarity."

Runnicles is in his third season as music director of the Opera, and will conduct three operas this fall: *Macbeth*, *The Dangerous Liaisons*, and *Tannhäuser*.

"People will see opera at its most chal-

lenging, disturbing, and entertaining—but beyond that, they will see it as an ongoing process, just as relevant to our lives in 1994 as it was in 1894. Verdi wrote *Macbeth* in 1847, Susa and Littell completed *The Dangerous Liaisons*—set in 18th-century France—this year, yet both works have incredible meaning to our lives today. They stem from fairly old literary sources that have withstood the test of time because of the profound universality of the material," Runnicles added. "Opera is as wonderful as it was a hundred years ago, even more so, because the standards and people's per-



Fratelli Bologna's Letitia Bartlett and Richard Dupell with San Francisco Opera's Jerry Sherk, the stage manager, kneeling on the left.

ceptions of quality have been elevated."

Mansouri continued, "It's an important line of thought. We know that recent reports on the arts have shown that opera has a faster-growing audience than just about any art form. Why? I don't profess to know the complete answer, but I can tell you that we work very hard to invigorate the repertoire constantly with new operas, and new visions of older operas—pieces that deal with matters of importance in our lives today—those humanistic themes and statements that speak to any generation of any period. It's why, back in 1992, we started Pacific Visions, our program to both commission new operas and to showcase rarely performed pieces. It's why we presented John Adams's *The Death of Klinghoffer* that year and why were doing *The Dangerous Liaisons* this season. It's why we've co-commissioned *Harvey Milk* [by composer Stewart Wallace and librettist Michael Korie] for our 1996 Fall Season, and *Gethsemane* [a collaboration between composer Bobby McFerrin and writer Ishmael Reed] for 1997.

"Plus, remember that with the constant search for new sources of funding, new technology, education and so on, even more people are brought into the whole creative process. We are not without our

champions, and that, too, is critical to sharing the powerful magic of opera."

Howland inserted, "More so with opera than anything else, it is the coming together of so many elements that is so completely seductive. It is unique. There is a constant potential for magic, and that's what makes it all worthwhile."

"Nowadays, most things in life can be created and re-created by pressing a button," Runnicles remarked. "But in the Opera House, when the lights go down and that hush falls over the audience, absolutely nothing is guaranteed. You start from scratch. And everything that happens from that moment on is because of the devotion and professionalism of literally hundreds of people. You've rehearsed it, but when the curtain goes up it's like one glorious improvisation. Nothing can compare with the fact that this magic is created in this moment *only*, for us, in the house, that night—and for nobody else. That's something that has to be in the back of everybody's mind."

The two opening productions for the Fall Season somehow embody the many elements discussed during these interviews. And through questions about how the operas will be realized on the stage, some interesting revelations about *Macbeth*

and *The Dangerous Liaisons* emerged.

Howland commented, "There are great structural similarities between the pieces. Arguably, you could say that both are about wanton manipulation—dealing with the darkest side of human nature. It manifests itself visually in *Macbeth* in a more apparent way—whereas in *The Dangerous Liaisons*, the veneer is beautiful in all that it should be. Through the piece, you learn that the veneer is masking the very ugliest side of human nature: avarice, manipulation and flagrant disrespect for the human spirit."

"The darkness of *Macbeth* is the darkness of a Scottish moor," Runnicles, a native of that country, remarked. "Whereas in *The Dangerous Liaisons*, it's the darkness of a deceptive soul—the darkness within, which is somehow even more terrifying. And all hidden in this lovely, bright sunny world in which they pretend to live. It's clearly in the score and libretto."

Asked how this will be translated to the stage, Howland responded: "As Donald indicated, *Macbeth* takes place at a very bleak time in Scotland's history. So it is manifest in a visual style that is graphic and heady with mood. The difficulty of staging this piece is that there is so much that must be dealt with psychologically—

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the witches and the apparitions, for example. They are visions within Macbeth's black imagination. Nobody else really sees them.

"I have taken an atmospheric and graphic approach, and I based it on Japanese Noh theater and the films of Akira Kurosawa. The images are uncompromising, heavy and stylized in terms of the play. I mean, how do you set witches within a naturalistic environment? Where is that environment? Where and when does it take place? I don't think it's important—what is important is the exchange between Macbeth and his psychological disorder."

On the subject of the witches, Howland continued, "We're trying some new things. Namely, to have half of the women's chorus as 'birdlike apparitions' which are flown and moving as they sing. It's an ambitious solution to the piece. We still don't know if it will work, but nothing ventured..."

Mansouri added that the production will be "Shakespearean, but a bit more cinematic. All of the scene changes are open and will flow one into the other. No stopping. No curtains coming down. It's critical to keep the dynamic impulse going without interruption so that one can concentrate on the individual dramas."

"Wagner always spoke of his 'Gesamtkunstwerk,' or 'complete art work,'" added Runnicles. "He built his own theater with the orchestra invisible and the house darkened in order to focus the attention on the total theatrical experience. I mention him because I think that Verdi, already in *Macbeth*, was moving toward nothing being predominant. Not the singing or the orchestral playing, but the *experience*. An ultimate homage to Shakespeare."

"In a similar way," the conductor continued, "I think Conrad [Susa] is so enamored of Philip's [Littell] work that he's also written for a total theatrical experience. In both works, the composers have made it their priority that everything be understood. I think the Littell libretto is a fantastic literary achievement. And Conrad's respect for that text is quite evident."

"Of course, in terms of musical style, there's very little to compare. We're not talking about early Susa, but we are talking about fairly early Verdi. In *Macbeth*, the orchestra is coming into its own. He was less concerned with the formal 'corset' of Italian opera in those days and he got a lot of flak from singers because of the hushed, even whispered singing he wanted. He was also exploring the darker sounds of the

orchestra. Conrad, of course, is an extremely facile composer. There are lovely orchestrations throughout, but it's a very different world from Verdi's."

Howland commented on the Susa/Littell opera: "*The Dangerous Liaisons* has an 18th-century feel that we've characterized by using paintings of the period—in no way shortchanging the audience in its understanding of the opulence of that period. But, it was very important not to interfere with the level of concentration the audience will need. The unraveling of the story and the dramatic interactions are what will be engaging, and beyond that I don't think we need any distractions."

For this production, Howland has also designed the costumes. "Where we've taken slight license in this piece is that we've characterized roles in terms of color. If you've seen the film [1988's *Dangerous Liaisons*, starring Glenn Close, John Malkovich, and Michelle Pfeiffer], it's like watching a costume parade. Of course, we can't do that, and really wouldn't want to. So what we've done, for example, is to think of the Marquise de Merteuil as a fox, so she will always be in shades of rusty brown. Valmont is the hunter and will wear shades of hunter green. And so on. It's a rationalization and simplification to avoid what I call the BBC 'costume drama,' where you come away 'humming the costumes.' That would be very dangerous."

The genesis of the Susa/Littell piece is one that delights Mansouri. For once, he was a kid in a candy store and named his dream cast even before a composer had been found.

"When I saw the play years ago, I thought, 'What an opera this would make!,'" Mansouri exclaimed. "I've always called it the dark side of *Così fan tutte*, because it is so much about human relationships. What's so wonderful about the piece is that it has this fabulous façade and sheen of sophistication—but underneath is a seething mass of worms. The argument of the piece is wonderful: the redemptive power of love. It would be as if Don Giovanni—who I maintain is a brother to Valmont—fell in love with one of his conquests at the end and suddenly realized that he had led an empty life.

"I was thinking about all of that when I decided on the cast I would want: Thomas Hampson, who portrays such a marvelous Giovanni, would have to be Valmont; Flicka [Frederica] von Stade as the Marquise; and Renée [Fleming] as Madame de Tourvel—beautiful Renée who can be so vulnerable on stage, and must be in this part, because the destruction of Tourvel is

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Before a rehearsal for the world premiere of Conrad Susa/Philip Littell's *The Dangerous Liaisons*, Thomas Hampson (Valmont) discusses a point with Frederica von Stade (Merteuil). David Hobson (Chevalier de Danceny) is in the back.

the core tragedy of the piece."

It was after his dream cast was assembled that Mansouri approached composer Conrad Susa to write the score. Susa's operatic music is familiar to the San Francisco Opera from two productions: *Transformations*, with a libretto by Anne Sexton, was performed at the Palace of Fine Arts during the Company's 1980 Spring Opera Theater, and *The Love of Don Perlimplín* was produced by San Francisco Opera Center in 1985.

"I called up Conrad and told him the cast and asked him if he'd like to do it," Mansouri recalled. "It didn't take long to hear the response I hoped for. Then we added Colin Graham as the director, and we were set. Colin is an incredible man for new work—he was instrumental in the success of *The Ghosts of Versailles* at the Met, so I was thrilled at his enthusiasm to be part of this project."

In addition to being general director of San Francisco Opera, Mansouri is serving as director for *Macbeth*, and further into the

season, for *Tannhäuser* and *Hérodiade*. When asked how he manages to juggle all these duties at once, Mansouri responded: "There's an old joke—do you know the difference between the director of an opera company and the director of an insane asylum? Well, the director of the asylum is sane," he laughed. "That's how I do it—you really do have to be a little crazy."

"As for directing, it also turns out to be a more practical solution. I usually only like to do one production in a season, but since we had Gerard here and we were working so closely together, it just made more sense to have someone in the house do it."

Howland added, "Lotfi and I had only done one production together in the past [*Guillaume Tell* from the 1992 Celebration of Rossini]. The wonderful thing about working with him is that he's such a fount of experience and information. He has almost a childlike enthusiasm for new approaches, which I find rare for someone

who's done as much as he has. He's always open to a fresh, new idea, and will always respond to it."

That kind of enthusiasm is what keeps things going at a lively pace in the Opera House this season, when the Company will explore deep and uncharted waters. The countdown for a production won't stop with the opening curtain, but will continue through the season, with every angle of each performance under close observation.

Mansouri concluded: "It's like you've got your life on the line and you have to roll the dice. You hold your breath and wonder, 'My God, what's it going to be?' Believe me, we're all eager to know—and we'll all be there to see."

Jake Heggie is a writer and public relations associate at San Francisco Opera. He received his B.A. and M.A. degrees in piano/composition at UCLA and performs in concerts nationally. He is also the author and illustrator of several children's books which will be published later this year.

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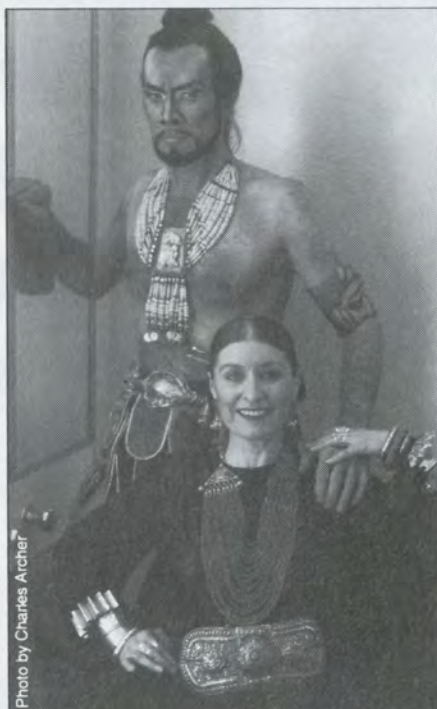


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Information: (415) 552-8338.

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

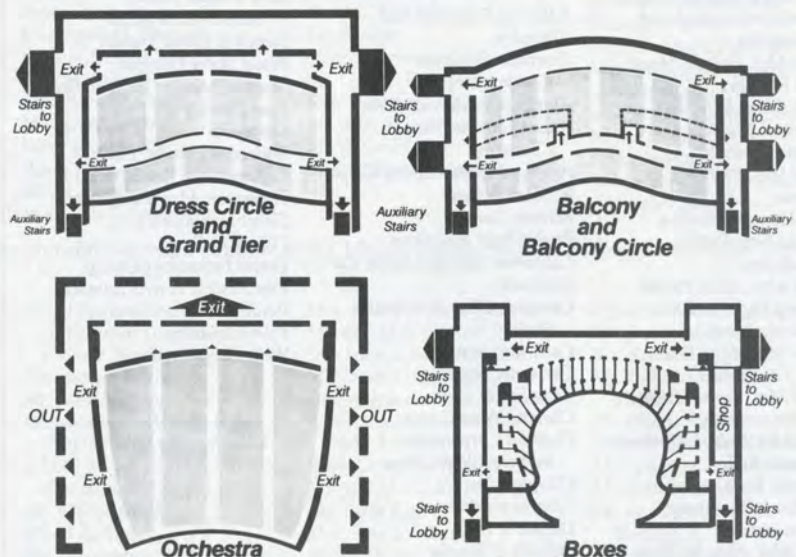
For the safety and comfort of our audience, all large parcels, backpacks, luggage, etc., must be checked at Opera House cloak-rooms.

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.

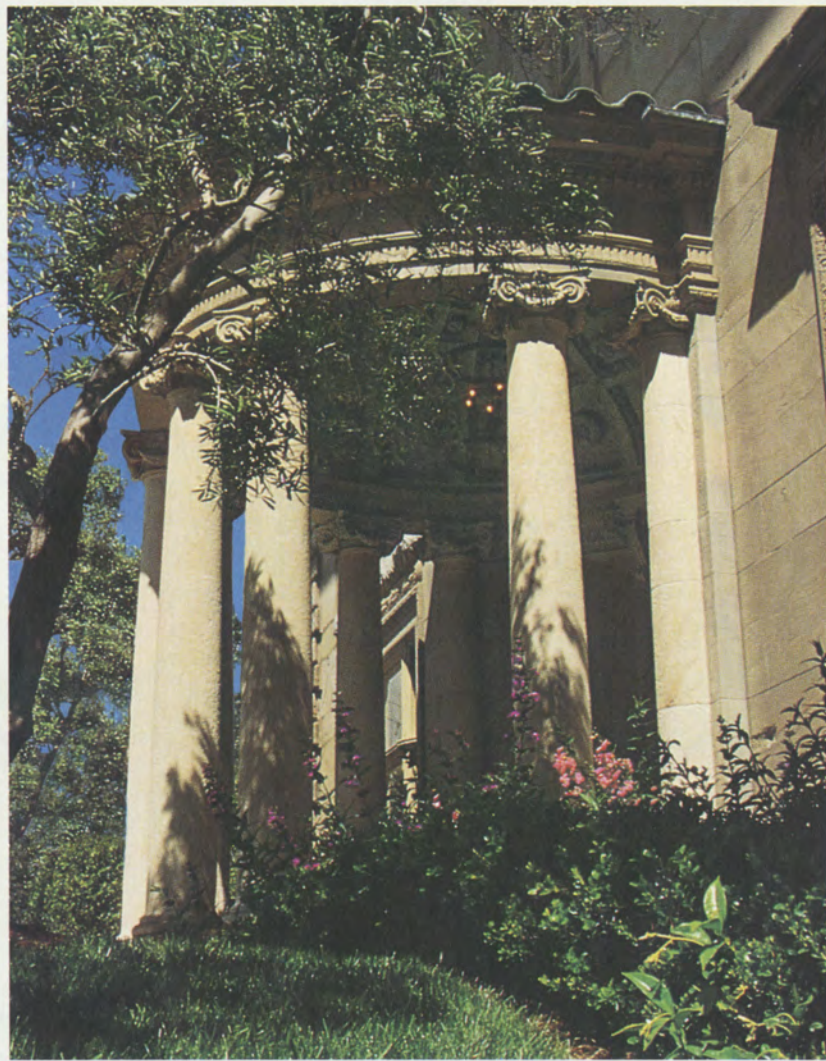


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