

Otello
(Rossini)

1994-1995

Tuesday, October 4, 1994 8:00 PM
Sunday, October 9, 1994 2:00 PM
Thursday, October 13, 1994 7:30 PM
Tuesday, October 18, 1994 8:00 PM
Saturday, October 22, 1994 8:00 PM
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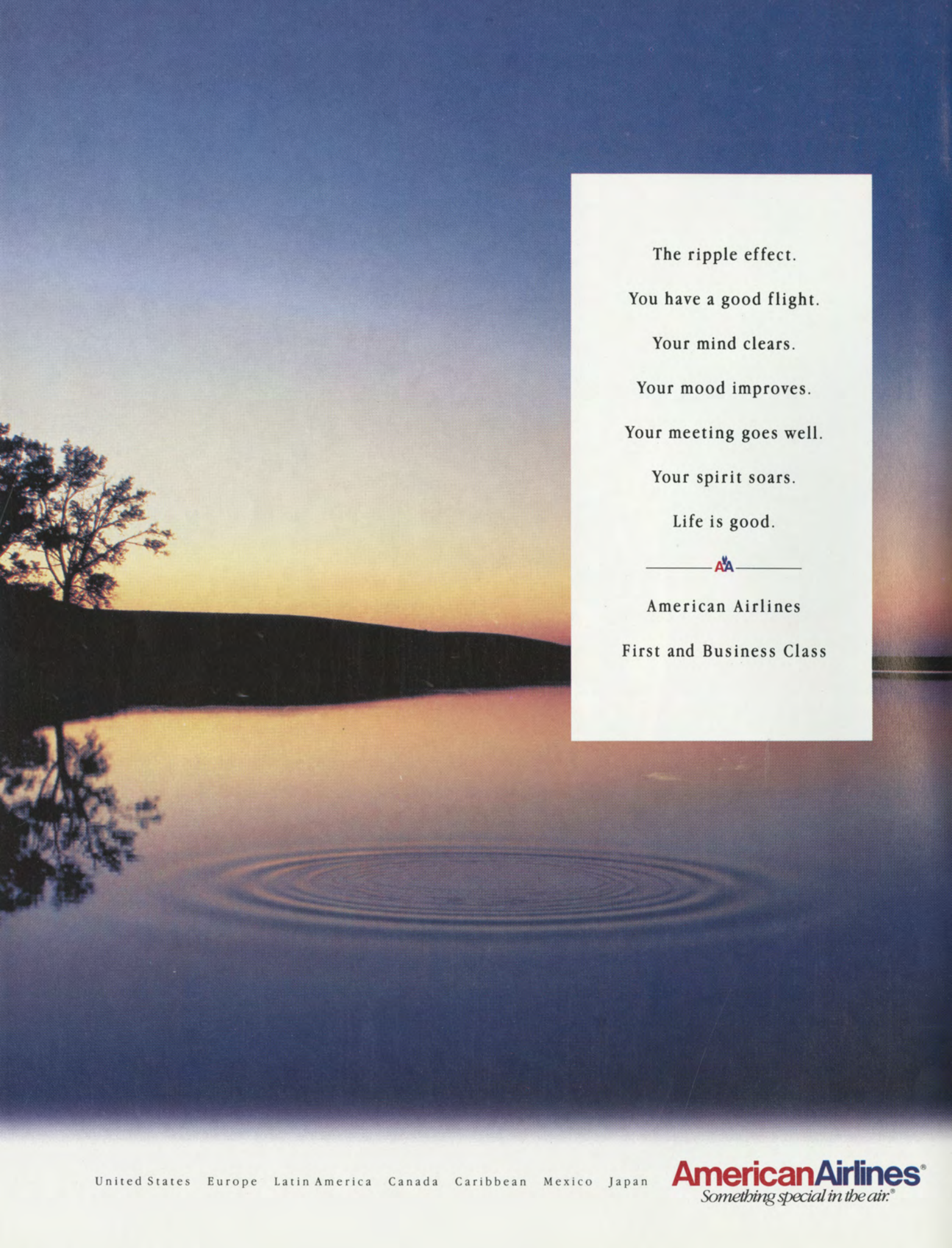
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1994 SEASON

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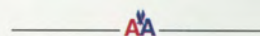
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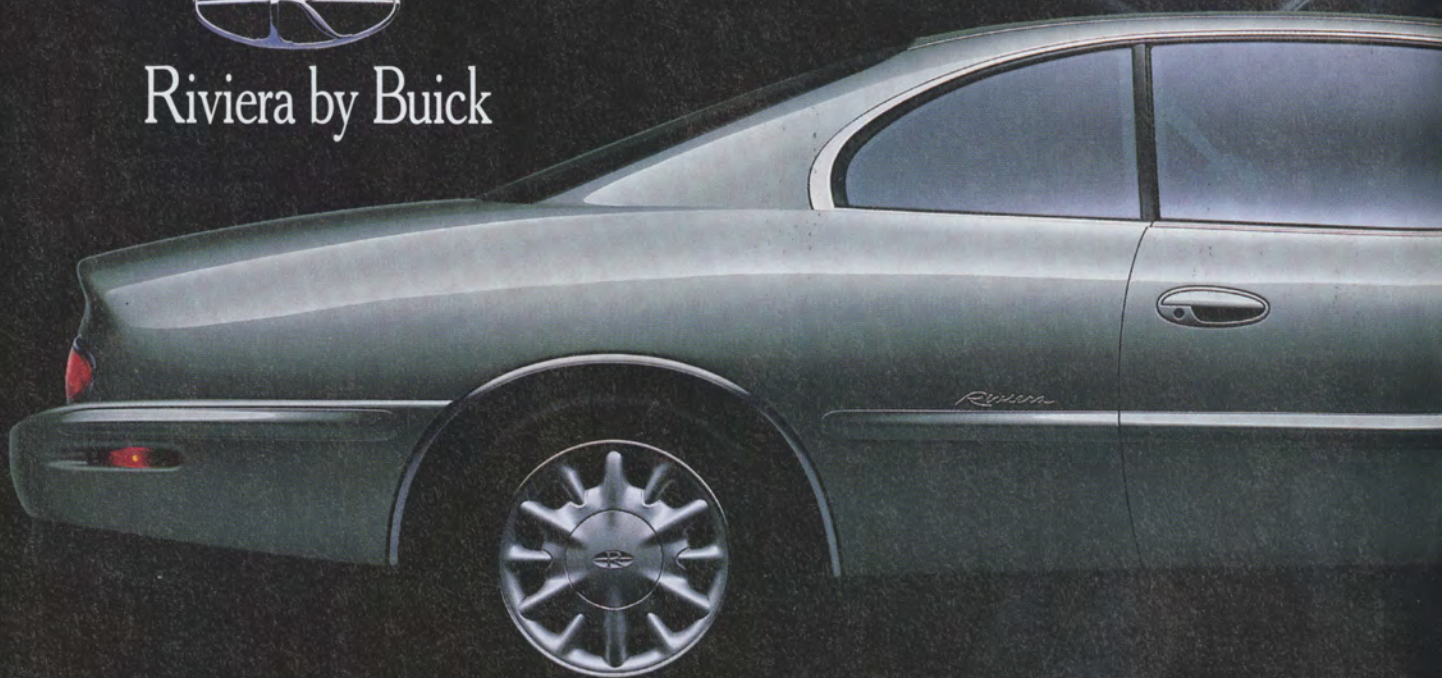
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SAN FRANCISCO OPERA MAGAZINE

Otello

1994 Season
Vol. 72, No. 4

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COVER

Cordier, Charles (1827-1905)
Bust of a Nubian, 1856-57
Silvered bronze, jasper and porphyry
38 1/4 in. high

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FROM THE PRESIDENT AND THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

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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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President

MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL DIRECTOR

LIEBERMAN



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

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

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

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

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

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

Lotfi Mansouri
General Director

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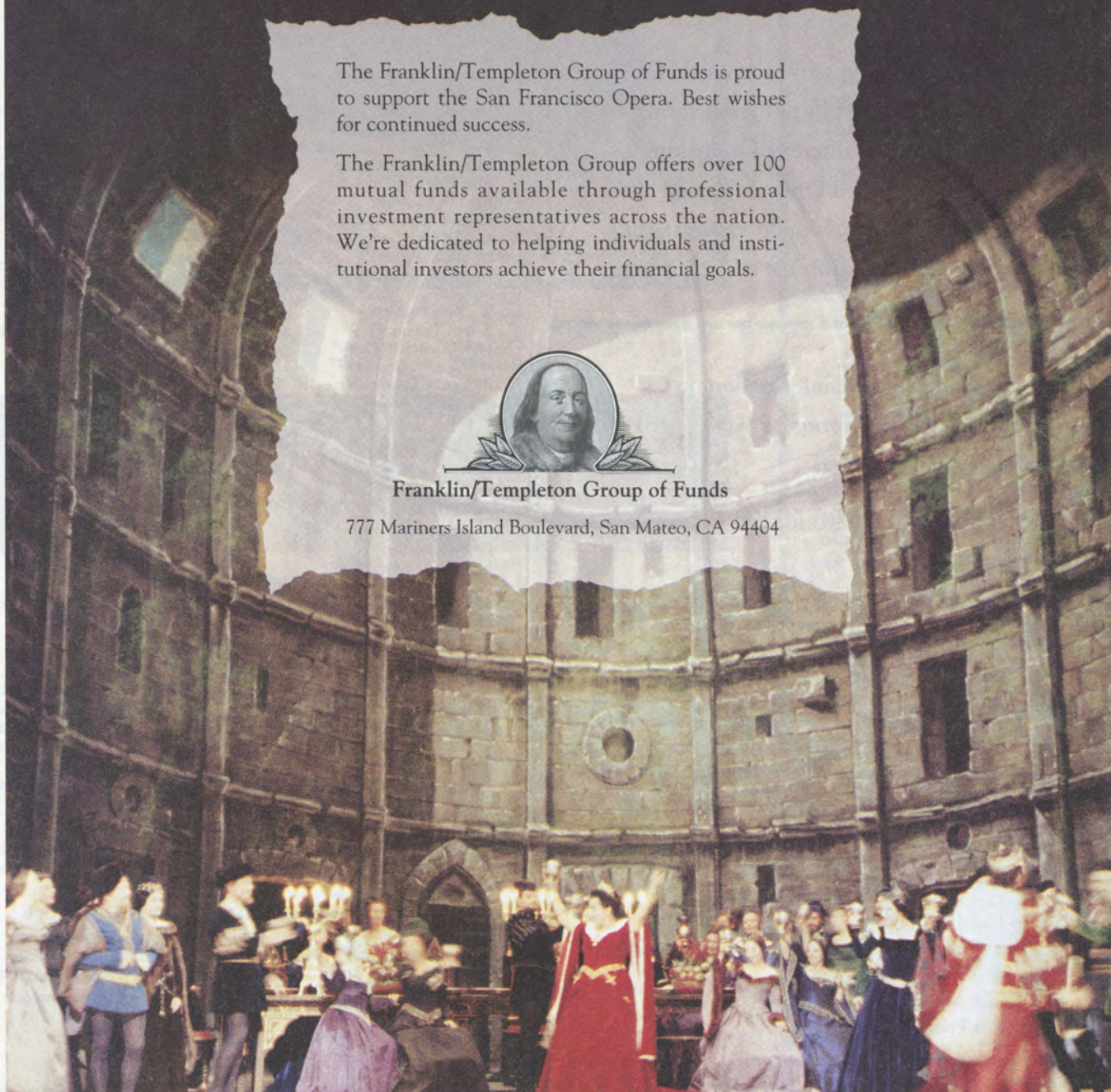
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ROSSINI'S *OTELLO*:



WORDS *vs.* MUSIC

By MICHAEL COLLINS

The historic agreement that brought Rossini to Naples in 1815 represented risk and opportunity for both its signators: Domenico Barbaja, intrepid impresario of the Teatro San Carlo, who had risen from scullion to head of the gaming tables at Teatro alla Scala in 1808 and to his powerful appointment as manager of the royal opera houses of Naples in 1809; and Gioachino Rossini, the young 23-year-old composer who had taken northern Italy by storm in 1813 with *Tancredi* and *L'Italiana in Algeri*. Rossini's conquest of Italy was not complete, however, for Naples, the most important musical center, still remained closed to him. The risk was that the Neapolitan audience was not only notoriously conservative but also downright hostile to "foreigners," which included anyone not of the local school of composition and a few others of great reputation such as Cimarosa and Paisiello. For Barbaja, the opportunity was the capture of the most promising young composer on the operatic horizon; for Rossini, a stable income and residence as well as the increased opportunity to explore the realm of *opera seria*.

Although they may have occasionally questioned their association, it proved overwhelmingly successful, for by the time Rossini left Naples in 1822, Stendhal would proclaim from Paris, "Since the death of Napoleon, there is only one man known from Moscow to Naples, from London to Vienna, from Paris to Calcutta. The fame of this man is limited only by the borders of civilization, and he is only twenty-three years of age." Rossini cannot help but have smarted at the demeaning reference to his arrival in Naples in the *Giornale delle due Sicilie* at the end of an article announcing the fall season of 1815: "... and finally one Signor Rossini, *maestro di cappella*, who is said to have come to give his *Elisabetta*, *Regina d'Inghilterra* at the same Teatro San Carlo that still resounds with the melodious notes of the *Medea* and the *Cora* of the great Signor [Simone] Mayr."

But the writer of this sarcastic piece was soon to eat his words, for, in the words of Rossini's biog-

Michael Collins, the editor of the critical edition of *Otello* used in these performances, is a native Californian who received his Ph.D. in musicology from Stanford University and who currently teaches at the University of North Texas.



(Left) Gioachino Rossini in a painting by Vincenzo Canuccini, made around 1815-1816, the time of the composition of *Otello*; and (above) in a Dupr  1829 lithograph, which shows him in formal attire, with the *Otello* score propped up above his keyboard.



The United States premiere of Rossini's Otello took place at New York's Park Theater on February 7, 1826. The celebrities in the cast included Manuel García in the title role (left) and his daughter Maria Felicità Malibran as Desdemona. The Henri Decaisne painting shows her in the same role.

rapher Giuseppe Radiciotti, the young Careades (i.e., Rossini) would soon push off the stage all the older composers and the younger ones too.

Rossini overcame the Neapolitan xenophobia with *Elisabetta, Regina d'Inghilterra*, an opera including a number of elements cannibalized from earlier, less-successful works, carefully concocted in its showy vocal virtuosity to please the local taste. And the local critic finally had to admit that "Signor Rossini ... is ever more applauded in the theaters that still resound to the melodious notes of the imaginative Cimarosa and the tender and passionate Paisiello." And the enthusiastic Barbaja wrote immediately to the Superintendent of Theaters and Spectacles asking to be allowed to re-engage Rossini for the operas

of the next season.

Now secure in his new position, Rossini set about composing an *opera seria* that would please himself artistically as well as the Neapolitan public. The resulting triumph was *Otello*, based on the libretto of the marquis Francesco Berio, a local literary dilettante, which had its premiere at Teatro del Fondo on December 4, 1816. The enthusiasm with which the new opera was received was to accompany the work for some fifty years. Even a partial list of productions in Italy and abroad comprises around 291 stagings (each with many repetitions) in 87 cities in 26 countries and in eight languages during the period between 1816 and 1890. For example, it was repeated at the Théâtre Italien in Paris every year from 1821 until 1840.

Most of the critical praise, however, was directed toward the third act. Meyerbeer, after having attended a performance of the Venetian production of 1818, wrote, "The third act of *Otello* had established its reputation so solidly that a thousand contrary opinions could not change it. It is truly divinely beautiful." Even in England, the home of Shakespeare, one critic exclaimed, "It would be difficult to cite a more convincing example of the expressive capacity of music than the third act of *Otello*." And more recently, Rossini scholar Philip Gossett has written that, "if one were to choose a single moment as the watershed between the worlds of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Italian opera, it would have to be the third act of *Otello*."

The reason for the praise of this act is not



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(Above top) Giovanni Battista Rubini (1794-1854), the most celebrated tenor of his period, in the role of Otello in the 1830s.

(Above) Giuditta Pasta (1797-1865) in the role of Desdemona in Rossini's *Otello*, one of the parts that brought her fame throughout Europe.

(Opposite) Alessandro Sanquirico (1777-1849), the famed designer responsible for settings of many premiere productions of operas by Donizetti, Mercadante, Pacini, Rossini et al., made this sketch for a "Garden in Otello's House" in 1830.

difficult to discover: it is the only part of the opera to have any discernible relationship to Shakespeare's tragedy. To quote Gossett once more, "Had the principal characters of the opera been named Enrico, Zenobia, and Ricciardo, instead of Otello, Desdemona, and Rodrigo, few spectators would have imagined that the first two acts had anything whatsoever to do with Shakespeare's *Othello*." Yet Berio was not to be forgiven, especially by Stendhal, who wrote, "It required a great deal of know-how on the part of the librettist to render the most passionate tragedy in all theater so utterly insipid." Although admitting that the third act was managed with great artistry, he condemned the librettist as "totally without talent as a poet." But carried away with admiration for Rossini's music, he concludes that "In *Otello*, electrified by the magnificent arias, transported by the incomparable beauty of the subject matter, we fashion the libretto in our own minds."

The problem here is the aesthetic attitude on the continent toward Shakespeare himself. Lord Byron could write after attending the Venetian production of 1818, "They have been crucifying *Othello* into an opera — music good, but lugubrious — but as for the words!... the greatest nonsense...." Yet a Venetian critic could condemn the violence of Shakespeare's tragedies and applaud Berio for having, "with his libretto given means to the composer to write a magnificent opera." A final quotation from Stendhal, dripping with sarcasm, encapsulizes the situation that led to such bifurcation of appreciation for Rossini's opera: "... the author of the libretto was an intellectual too educated to imitate a barbarian such as Shakespeare...."

To understand the implications of this quotation we must retrace our steps to the eighteenth century and the writing of Voltaire, whose every word was invariably listened to with the utmost respect in both France and Italy. After visiting England, Voltaire published his *Lettres Philosophiques* in 1734, in which he wrote that Shakespeare was a genius full of power and fecundity without the least conception of good taste and without the least knowledge of the rules of drama, scenes of stunning beauty being mixed in with monstrous barbarities. Thus in 1785 the Italian Stefano Arteaga could write that a man of taste admires, but does not imitate Shakespeare. And in the first two decades of the nineteenth century only the most avant-garde of writers, such as Stendhal and Madame de Staël, would appreciate the English playwright. Only two years

after the premiere of Rossini's *Otello*, Silvio Pellico, one of the young Italian Romantics, wrote: "If Shakespeare's *Othello* with all its characters and all its violations of the unities of time and place, excites pity and terror, it is a tragedy as true and genuine as if it produced the same effect with three characters and all the most venerated unities strictly observed." Nevertheless, his contemporary, Francesco Benedetti (obviously a Voltairian), writing about the gravediggers scene and five deaths in *Hamlet* and the strangling of Desdemona in *Othello*, countered, "This kind of thing may give pleasure to the English and the Germans and to people altogether Northern, but we who possess a more refined sense of beauty, who love to imitate Nature when she is noble, not when she is uncouth, can have no sympathy with such abuse of imagination, such improbabilities, and, to speak plainly, such indecencies."

Now, in such an atmosphere as this it was considered all-right for a literary-minded person to read Shakespeare and comment upon it, but certainly not to mount Shakespeare on the stage. Audiences would have been outraged by the violence and vulgarity. Not until 1827 did Paris accept an English troupe staging *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Othello* at the Odéon, and even so, much of Shakespeare's vulgar humor and puns had to be omitted. Inspired by these performances and by the writings of Madame de Staël and Stendhal, particularly the latter's call for a Romantic revolution in literature in his *Racine and Shakespeare*, the youthful genius of France received as revelation the Shakespearean performances. Victor Hugo was moved to write the famous preface to his play *Cromwell*, and Hector Berlioz was not only inspired by Shakespeare, but fell in love with Harriet Smithson, a celebrated actress who played the heroines in the plays.

But this was not the world of the Marquis di Berio, in whose time only sanitized adaptations of Shakespeare could ever hope to be presented before the public. And certainly the most famous of the adapters was Jean-François Ducis, whose *Othello, ou Le More de Venise* was published in 1776. In his preface, Ducis describes his modification of the characters of Iago and Othello, creation of a suitor for the hand of Desdemona (Hédelmone in his tragedy), substitution of Desdemona's commonplace handkerchief with a miscarried love letter, and changing of the murder of Desdemona from suffocation to a dagger thrust, all in the name of decorum. Of his dénouement Ducis writes, "The whole audience rose to its feet emitting a cry. Many women fainted. It was as if the dagger with which

Othello came to strike his beloved had entered every heart."

Echoing Ducis, the management of the Teatro La Fenice in Venice warned his audiences in the libretto of *Otello* about the violation of all the theatrical rules and of the atrocities contained in Shakespeare's *Othello*, but continued with high praise of Berio: "Imitating the beauties of Shakespeare, and avoiding as much as possible the monstrosities, the happy talent of the Marquis Berio of Naples has been able to derive the present drama. The libretto aptly proves that the Italian musical theater is not without hope of rising from its present state of total decadence." This certainly is a far cry from Stendhal's condemnation!

It should be clear that those who criticized Berio's libretto were the young avant-garde of Romanticism, flourishing their pens with vitriolic passion against the values of the old guard. This does not invalidate the position of the old guard; it merely announces a change in aesthetic values. This is said not to defend Berio's libretto, which is no better or no worse than most of the time, but only to explain that it was quite necessary for him to modify Shakespeare, if that was indeed his source: his very credentials as a *littérateur* would have required it. A more cogent line of inquiry than comparison with Shakespeare is to seek Berio's actual model.

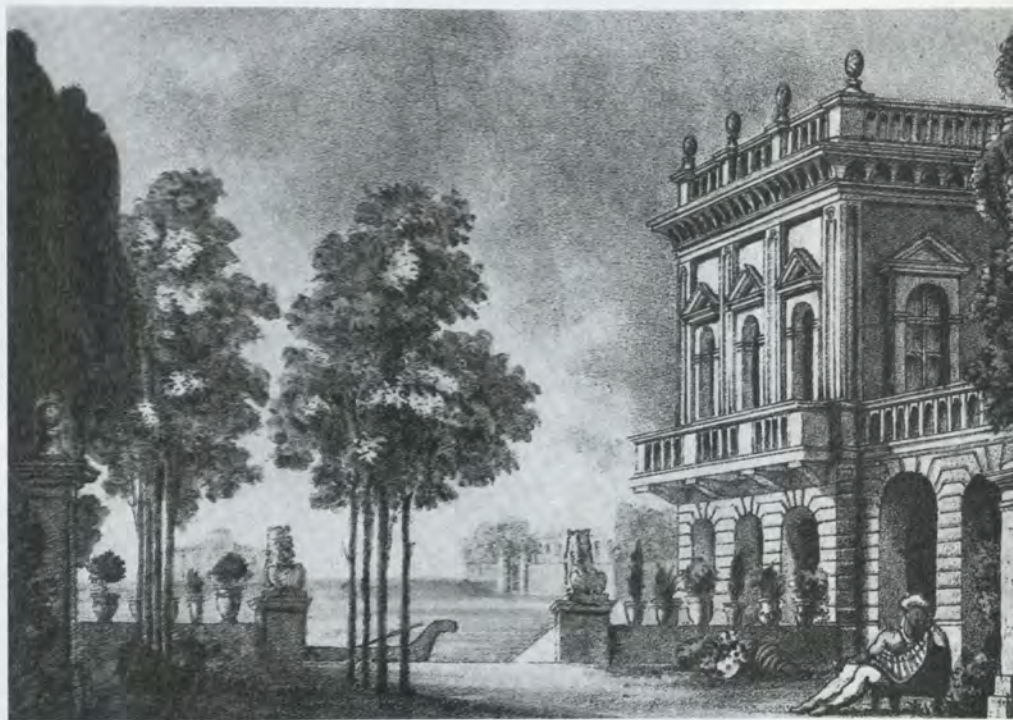
Although Berio was acquainted with Shakespeare in both the original English and the Le Tourneur prose translation in French, his model quite apparently was the Ducis adaptation. The modifications of character, the virulent portrayal of Desdemona's father, the love letter substituting for the handkerchief, the text of the Willow Song itself, the addition of the prayer at its conclusion, the violent storm that accompanies the dénouement, and the method of Desdemona's murder — all derive from Ducis. Berio calls for Desdemona to accompany herself on an instrument while singing the Willow Song, as does Ducis: the Frenchman calls for a guitar, while the Italian calls for a harp, and indeed Rossini writes a cadenza for that instrument before the song begins. It was reported in the 1830s that Pauline Viardot, when singing the role of Desdemona, played the harp accompaniment herself. Another parallel regards the woman mentioned by Desdemona as having sung the Willow Song. In Shakespeare it is Barbara, while in Ducis and Berio it is Isaura.

Returning finally to Rossini's music, we must not allow the greatness of the third act to prejudice our judgement of the considerable qualities of the first two, for they

contain much of Rossini's most beautiful and expressive music. The expression emerges within traditional musical forms standardized by Rossini himself. Acts I and II comprise nine discrete musical numbers:

9) Finale II, an aria-finale for Desdemona, in which she implores her father's forgiveness in the lyrical "L'error d'un infelice."

The third act, No. 10, contains smaller numbers within a continuous musical



1) Introduction, with choral celebration and expository recitative;

2) *Cavatina d'Otello*, a standard aria of two tempos, the second as always a rousing cabaletta;

3) *Duetto* for Rodrigo and Iago, a standard three-tempo form with its central *Larghetto* in thirds;

4) *Scena e Duetto* for Desdemona and Emilia, the recitative being introduced by a lovely prelude for solo French horn, the use of the diminutive for the duet signifying that it is a romance with a single tempo heard twice;

5) Finale I, introduced by a nuptial chorus and followed by three ensembles, including the beautiful quasi-canonic "Incerta l'anima";

6) *Aria di Rodrigo*, which opens Act II with another two-tempo aria, often cut in the nineteenth century because tenors found it too challenging;

7) *Duetto* for Otello and Iago, the third tempo being a driving cabaletta, "L'ira d'avverso fato," that inspired Verdi's "Si, vendetta" in *Rigoletto*;

8) *Terzetto* for Rodrigo, Otello, and Desdemona, a standard three-tempo trio with an exquisite *Andante* in the middle; and

framework. It includes an orchestral prelude, Gondolier's Song (the text being Francesca da Rimini's plaintive verses from Dante's *Divine Comedy*), Willow Song and Prayer, and *Duetto* for Desdemona and Otello. The duet, originally composed in standard three-tempo form, lost its slow middle tempo in which Otello expresses second thoughts, when Rossini tore it from his manuscript in order to insure the inexorable musical drive to the conclusion of the drama. A brief and somewhat anticlimactic *Finaletto* after Desdemona's murder brings about Otello's suicide.

The musical style of Rossini is more florid and less rugged than that to which we are accustomed in the more virile Verdi, but he surpassed all his Italian contemporaries and transfigured the musical firmament with his luscious *bel canto* melody, the organic musical integrity of his phrases, and the finesse of his use of wind instruments (the last equalled only by Mozart). In the opinion of Stendhal, who was as lost in admiration for Rossini as we have become since his bicentennial in 1992, *Otello* and *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* were the two finest masterpieces of the great composer, Gioachino Rossini. ■



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Otello

(in Italian)

CAST (in order of appearance)

<i>Otello</i>	Chris Merritt
<i>The Doge</i>	Gregory Cross
<i>Iago</i>	Craig Estep
<i>Rodrigo</i>	Bruce Ford*
<i>Elmiro</i>	Kevin J. Langan
<i>Emilia</i>	Mika Shigematsu†
<i>Desdemona</i>	Cecilia Gasdia
<i>Gondolier</i>	Hong-Shen Li
<i>Lucio</i>	Alfredo Portillat

The Venetian Court, carnival revelers, Otello's generals

The Commedia by Fratelli Bologna*

<i>Desdemona</i>	William Hall
<i>Otello</i>	John X. Heart
<i>Elmiro</i>	Letitia Bartlett
<i>Rodrigo</i>	Richard Dupell
<i>Iago</i>	Steven Kearin
<i>Emilia</i>	John X. Heart

* San Francisco Opera debut
† 1994 Adler Fellow

TIME AND PLACE: Late 16th-century Venice

ACT I	Scene 1	Piazza di San Marco
	Scene 2	Desdemona's chamber
	Scene 3	Elmiro's palace

INTERMISSION

ACT II	Outside Elmiro's palace
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INTERMISSION

ACT III	Desdemona's bedroom
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The performance will last approximately three and one-half hours.

Otello / Synopsis

ACT I — The Moor Otello, leader of the victorious Venetian forces which have repelled the Turks from Cyprus, is welcomed upon his return by the Doge of Venice. Otello admits that in the midst of all his honors, he yearns for love. Rodrigo, the Doge's son, talks with Elmiro, father of Desdemona whom he loves, wondering why she seems so unhappy. Elmiro leaves to join the celebrations, and Iago joins Rodrigo, who is afraid Elmiro will give Desdemona's hand to the Moor. Iago tells Rodrigo to rely on his friendship and shows him a letter from Desdemona which he believes will help them on their road to revenge.

In Elmiro's house, Emilia, Desdemona's maid and companion, reassures her mistress that the victorious Otello will return to her. She tells her she believes Otello questions her love for him, because a lock of hair and a letter intended for Otello had been intercepted by her father, who thought they were meant for Rodrigo. She had encouraged the delusion and since then, had received no letters from Otello. They see the approaching Iago and leave. Iago, who once wished to marry Desdemona, swears he will have revenge. Elmiro and Rodrigo join him; Elmiro tells Rodrigo that he will grant him Desdemona's hand. Elmiro asks Rodrigo to tell his father, the Doge, that Otello is plotting against him, and he asks Iago to arrange for the wedding ceremony.

Guests are gathering for the wedding ceremony. Desdemona sees Rodrigo and realizes that he, and not Otello, is to be her husband. Otello arrives and stops the proceedings, proclaiming that he already has her love and her oath of eternal faith, a fact which Desdemona confirms. Elmiro angrily leads Desdemona away, while Rodrigo threatens Otello, who, in turn, warns him to beware of his fury.

ACT II — Outside Elmiro's palace, Rodrigo seeks out Desdemona. After Rodrigo offers to do anything she wishes, she asks him to placate her father, and adds she is already Otello's wife.

Otello wonders why he is sacrificing his fame and honor for Desdemona. He is joined by Iago, whom he trusts, and pleads with him to show him evidence of Desdemona's treachery. Iago hands him Desdemona's letter, and then the pledge: the lock of hair. Not realizing that both were intended for him, Otello feels betrayed and his love for Desdemona is submerged in his desire for revenge.

Rodrigo and Otello meet; they are interrupted by Desdemona. Both men accuse her of being unfaithful. Confused by Otello's attitude towards her, she asks what she has done to upset him so. He angrily rebukes her and she faints as the two men leave to fight. Emilia tries to comfort her mistress, but the delirious Desdemona only wishes that if fate should part her from Otello, he should live and she should die. Courtiers arrive with the news that Otello has survived the duel. The enraged Elmiro warns her that her punishment is near.

ACT III — Emilia and Desdemona are alone in Desdemona's bedroom. As Emilia tries to console Desdemona, a gondolier is heard singing in the distance. The song reminds her of her old friend Isaura, who died of a broken heart, and she takes her harp and sings the doleful Willow Song. Left alone, Desdemona prays that Otello will come to her before she dies. Soon, Otello comes in and observes the sleeping Desdemona. Thinking that she is dreaming of Rodrigo, Otello grabs his dagger, but a clap of thunder awakes Desdemona, and she protests her innocence. After Otello tells her that Iago has killed Rodrigo, Desdemona realizes that Iago has been the one to turn the Moor against her. Otello misinterprets her outburst of despair and kills her. Otello tries to compose himself as Lucio, one of his officers, enters with news that Rodrigo is alive and that Iago has disappeared after confessing his intrigues. Otello, who is joined by the Doge, Elmiro and Rodrigo, realizes the enormity of his error and kills himself.

The performance of October 13th is sponsored by Sun Microsystems, Inc.
The performance of October 18th is sponsored by the Microsoft Corporation.
The performance of October 25th is sponsored by Meyer Sound Laboratories, Inc.

Otello Supernumeraries

Dorothy Brown
Regina Bustillos
Brenda Czernysz
Renée DeJarnatt
Diana Kissil
Andrea Kohlruss
Marie McNulty
Susan Mead
Rebecca Metz
Stephanie Salter
Valentina Simi
Kimberly Thompson

Ceci Valente
Carolyn Waugh
John Atkinson
Steve Bauman
Mark Burstein
Clive Butler
Peter Cannon
Joshua Contreras
David Dahlstrand
Pedro Echeandia
Milko N. Encinas
Mark Fons

Dean Johnson
Richard Johnson
T. C. McQueen
Daniel Melia
Ian Mishkin
David Norton
Anthony Nugent
Oliver Pollard
Louis Schilling
Tom Tillman
Ron Wizelman

Otello

Photos taken in rehearsal
by Marty Sohl

Chris Merritt





Chris Merritt



Mika Shigematsu, Cecilia Gasdia



Chris Merritt

Kevin Langan, Bruce Ford





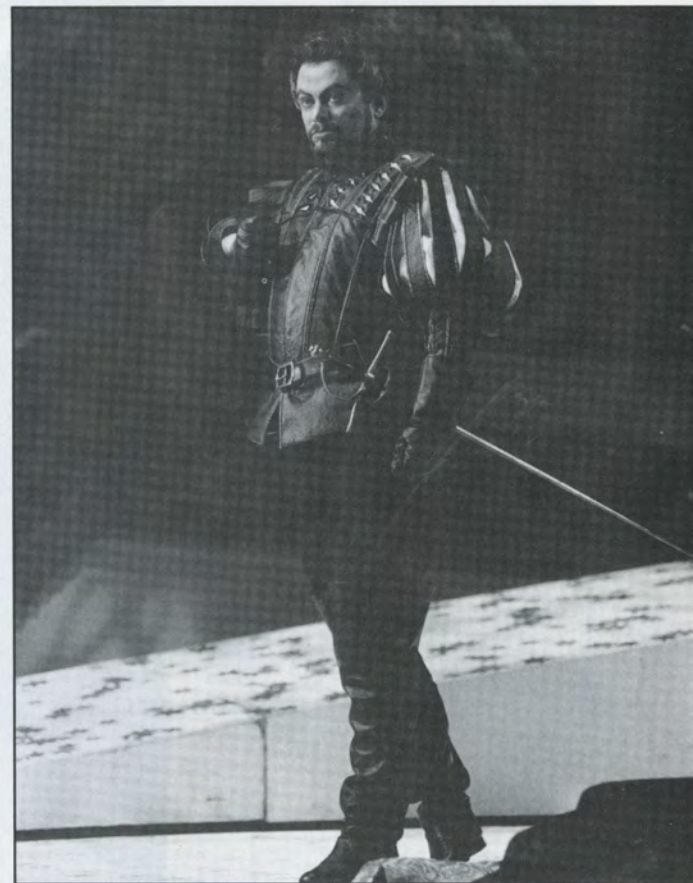
Cecilia Gasdia



Bruce Ford



Chris Merritt



Craig Estep



Chris Merritt, Cecilia Gasdia



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
Villarreal, Silvasti, Tumanyan, Gilfry,
Guzman, Howe, Fitzpatrick

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

ELEKTRA

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

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

DON GIOVANNI

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Foster: Miller, Stone, Israel, Dana, Hickey
Kozłowska, 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
Čako, Desderi (3/18M-29)/
Gallup (4/1M), Fedderly,
Gilfry, Walker

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

OTELLO

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

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

PORGY AND BESS

George Gershwin
DeMain: Clarke, Foy,
Dearing, Billington

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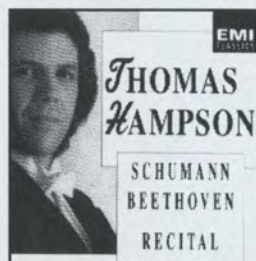
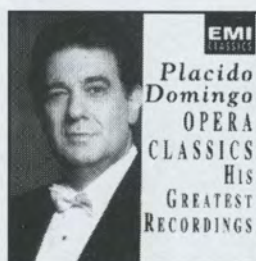
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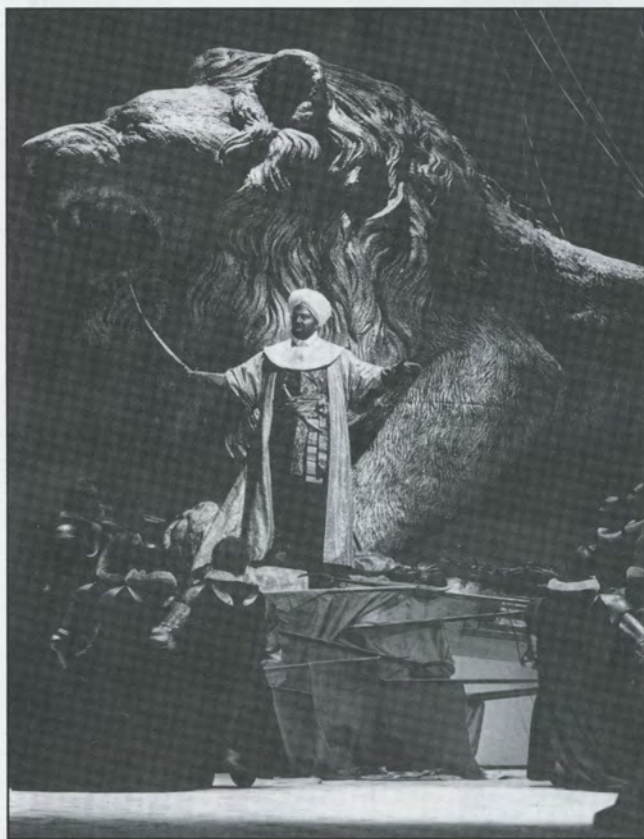


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Gregory Cross



Chris Merritt



Alfredo Portilla

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Lotfi Mansouri, *General Director*
Donald C. Runnicles, *Music Director*

Opening Night New Production

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

World Premiere

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

New Production

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

New Production

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

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

New Production

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



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San Francisco Opera Premiere

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

New Production

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

Mefistofele

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

New Production

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

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

*All performances are in the original language
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Repertoire, casts and dates are subject to
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Thursday, December 8 at 1:00

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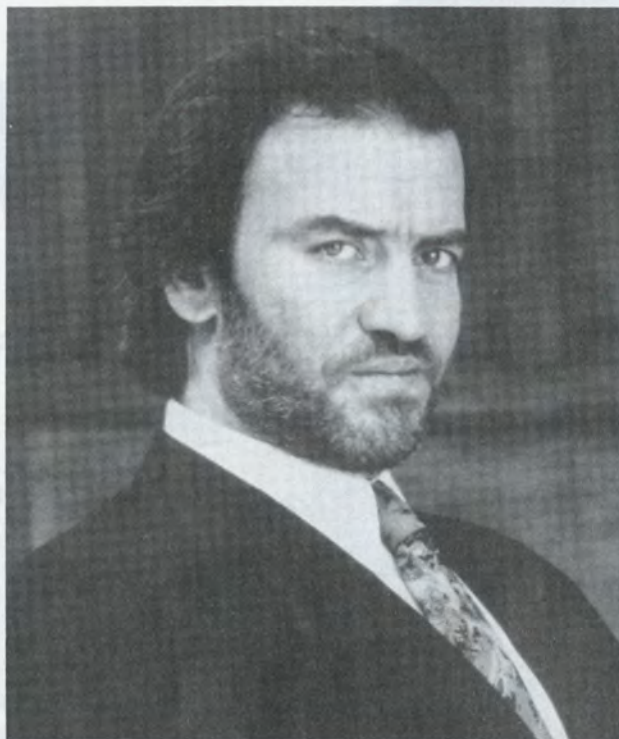
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Performance Highlights

Presented by CHRYSLER ★



Valery Gergiev (above) conducts Prokofiev's *The Fiery Angel* at San Francisco Opera, and the Kirov Orchestra of St. Petersburg at Davies Symphony Hall; *Home*, by David Storey (below) opens at the American Conservatory Theater

Soprano **Deborah Voigt** stars as Elisabeth in **San Francisco Opera's** new production of *Tannhäuser*, which opens on October 12 and has additional performances on October 15, 20, 23, 26, and 29, and November 2. This marks another step in Voigt's journey through the Wagner canon, the latest being a triumphant appearance as Senta in Metropolitan Opera's concert performances of *The Flying Dutchman* in Frankfurt. The singer's current espousal of the German repertoire extends to a solo recital at the Herbst Theatre on October 31, where she also performs some Wagner—the *Wesendonk Lieder*—along with songs by Mascagni, Brahms, Strauss, and Charles Tomlinson Griffes. All proceeds benefit the San Francisco Opera Center, of whose training programs for young singers Voigt was once a member. Meanwhile, the SFO continues its collaboration with the Kirov Opera and the Maryinski Theater of St. Petersburg with a production of Prokofiev's *The Fiery Angel*. Kirov Opera music director Valery Gergiev conducts a cast that includes Galina Gorchakova as Renata and Sergei Leiferkus as Ruprecht. Performances are on October 19, 21, 27, 30, and November 1, 5, 9.

As part of the **San Francisco Symphony's** Great Performer Series, the **Kirov Orchestra of St. Petersburg** comes to Davies Symphony Hall on October 4 for an evening of all-Russian music: Rimsky-Korsakov's Suite from *The Legend of the Invisible City of Kitezh*, Prokofiev's Piano Concerto No. 5 with soloist Alexander Toradze, and Stravinsky's *The Firebird*, performed under the baton of the busy Maestro Gergiev. Additional SFS attractions include the debut of percussionist **Evelyn Glennie**. Mastering a progressive loss of hearing since the age of eight, this astounding musician can be heard at Davies Symphony Hall on October 23.

The **American Conservatory Theater's** production of *Home*, by British playwright David Storey, brings together a quartet of local legends. Ruth Kobart, Joy Carlin, Sydney Walker, and William Paterson, the play's four leads, represent fifteen decades of theater experience among them. All have a history with A.C.T. as well: Carlin is a former associate artistic director; Walker made his acting debut with A.C.T. in 1974; while Paterson and Kobart took their first bows at A.C.T. in 1967. Artistic director Carey Perloff, who will direct, has had *Home* in mind since coming to A.C.T. in 1992 "but the icing on the cake was the thought of Sydney, Bill, Joy and Ruth working together on this moving script." *Home* begins performances at the Stage Door Theater on October 20.

—Robert Simonson

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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. 17 *The Fiery Angel*
Nov. 1 *Hérodiade*

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

Oct. 5 *Tannhäuser*
Oct. 12 *The Fiery Angel*
Oct. 31 *Hérodiade*
Nov. 14 *Lucia di Lammermoor*

SAN FRANCISCO

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

Information: (415) 923-9056

Oct. 5 *Tannhäuser*
Oct. 12 *The Fiery Angel*
Nov. 2 *Hérodiade*
Nov. 17 *Lucia di Lammermoor*

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.

Oct. 4 *Tannhäuser*
Oct. 11 *The Fiery Angel*
Nov. 1 *Hérodiade*
Nov. 15 *Lucia di Lammermoor*

SONOMA COUNTY

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Information: (707) 938-2432

Oct. 10 *The Fiery Angel*
Oct. 31 *Hérodiade*
Nov. 14 *Lucia di Lammermoor*

SOUTH PENINSULA

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

Information: (415) 941-3890

Oct. 4 *Tannhäuser*
Oct. 11 *The Fiery Angel*
Nov. 1 *Hérodiade*
Nov. 15 *Lucia di Lammermoor*

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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

Oct. 17 *The Fiery Angel*
Oct. 24 *Hérodiade*
Nov. 7 *Mefistofele*
Nov. 11 *Lucia di Lammermoor*
Dec. 12, 7p.m. *Season Review*

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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.

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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:

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ARTIST PROFILES



Cecilia Gasdia appears as Desdemona in *Otello*, a role which she sang to considerable acclaim at Pesaro's 1991 Rossini Festival. The soprano made her 1988 San Francisco Opera debut as Mimì in *La Bohème* and returned to portray Giulietta in the 1991 Company premiere of *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*. Born in Verona, she studied classics and piano before winning the RAI Callas Competition and performing Verdi's *Luisa Miller* in a televised performance from Pavia. She made an unexpected (and acclaimed) 1982 debut at Milan's La Scala in the title role of *Anna Bolena*, and went on to win applause as Anne Trulove in Ken Russell's production of *The Rake's Progress* at the Florence May Festival that same year. She has subsequently been featured at most of the world's major opera houses and music festivals. During the 1992-93 season, Miss Gasdia sang her first Desdemona in Verdi's *Otello* at the Teatro San Carlo in Naples and appeared in the title role of a new staging of *Beatrice di Tenda* at La Scala. She also performed her first Salomé in *Hérodiade* in Zurich, and was seen as Micaëla in *Carmen* at the Maggio Musicale in Florence, Nedda in *Pagliacci* in Verona, and Anna in *Maometto II* in Pesaro and at La Scala. She most recently sang the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro* in Ferrara, her first Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* in Genoa, the title role of *Semiramide* at the Rossini Opera Festival, and Mimì in Verona. The artist's growing discography includes Rossini's *Zelmira*, *Maometto II*, *Ermione* and *Armida*, Verdi's *Four Sacred Pieces*, Vivaldi's *Catone in Utica* and *Gloria*; *Faust*, *Turandot*, *La Rondine*, Handel's *Rinaldo*, and the *Stabat Mater* of Boccherini and Rossini.



Mezzo-soprano **Mika Shigematsu**, a 1993-94 Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, sings the role of Emilia in *Otello*, A Nun in *The Fiery Angel* and Alisa in *Lucia di Lammermoor*. A native of Osaka, Japan, she made her San Francisco Opera mainstage debut in *Der Rosenkavalier* during the 1993 Celebration of Strauss and was heard during the 1993 Fall Season as Enrichetta in *I Puritani*. For the recent Boston Lyric Opera production of the Malibran version of that work, she sang the leading role of Elvira, which she will repeat during that company's 1995 tour of Japan. Miss Shigematsu will also return to Boston in 1995 to sing Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*. As a participant in the 1991 and 1992 Merola Opera Programs, she was awarded the Poetz Memorial Award at two consecutive Grand Finals concerts. The mezzo recently made her European recital debut in Geneva, where she performed to a sold-out audience of 1,800, and this past summer, she sang Arsamene in *Xerxes* at the Carmel Bach Festival. Future engagements include a recital at Opéra de Lyon, the title role of *La Cenerentola* at Opera Colorado, and productions of *Così fan tutte* and *Manon Lescaut* at the Paris Opera.

OTELLO



World-renowned tenor **Chris Merritt** performs the title role of *Otello*. He made his debut with San Francisco Opera in 1988 as Erisso in the U.S. premiere of *Maometto II*, returned to portray Arnold in 1992's *Guillaume Tell* and appeared here last fall as Arrigo in *I Vespri Siciliani*, opening the 1993 season. A native of Oklahoma City, he has become one of the most versatile artists in the world of opera, performing with the Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Los Angeles Music Center Opera, Milan's La Scala, Vienna State Opera, Paris Opéra and Bastille Opera, Royal Opera Covent Garden, Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona, Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires, and many others. He is also a prolific recitalist, in addition to appearing in concert with the world's great orchestras. His appearances on television include the 1990 Richard Tucker Gala and the 1992 Rossini Bicentennial Gala, both held in New York's Avery Fisher Hall and presented as part of the "Live from Lincoln Center" and "Great Performances" series, and he was featured in conversation and performance on CBS's "Nightwatch." His highly acclaimed recital at the Johns Hopkins University was broadcast nationwide over NPR in September of 1994. Merritt's numerous recordings and videos have been issued on six different record labels. Recent highlights include the title role of *Il Trovatore* at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, the title role of Rossini's *Otello* in Brussels, his New York recital debut in Carnegie Hall, Enée in *Les Troyens* at the Athens Festival, Pollione in *Norma* at the Verona Arena, and the title role of *La Clemenza di Tito* at the Salzburg Festival.



American tenor **Bruce Ford** has over the past few years established himself firmly in the choice group of Rossini/Mozart specialists of the world. Born in Lubbock, Texas, he moved to Germany while still a student. His career took off at the 1990 Rossini Festival of Pesaro, where he scored a major success in *Ricciardo e Zoraida*. He returned to Pesaro in 1991 for Mozart's *Die Schuldigkeit des Ersten Gebots* and also ended up singing the title role of Rossini's *Otello* on a few hours' notice for an indisposed colleague, while in 1992, he was featured as Count Almaviva in the new production of *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*. During the 1992/93 season, Ford bowed at Milan's La Scala as Uberto in *La Donna del Lago*; his most recent Scala outing was as Erisso in this year's staging of *Maometto II*. His appearances at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden were as Rossini's Count Almaviva, and in the title role of Mozart's *Mitridate*, *Re di Ponto*, both performed during the 1991 and 1993 seasons. The latter was also televised and released on video-cassette. Other Covent Garden roles include Lindoro to Marilyn Horne's *Italiana in Algeri*, Osiride in *Mosé* and the upcoming Ferrando in *Così fan tutte*. Future plans include Oreste in *Ermione* at the Glyndebourne Festival, and Ernesto in *Don Pasquale* with the Lyric Opera of Chicago. Ford's list of recordings includes Rossini's *Armida*, Handel's *Messiah*, Bertoni's *Orfeo*, the first ever recording of Meyerbeer's *Il Crociato in Egitto*, Mayr's *Medea in Corinto* and Auber's *Le Domino Noir*. This autumn, he is also recording Rossini's *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and Donizetti's *Rosmonda d'Inghilterra*.



Craig Estep, Iago in the Company premiere of Rossini's *Otello*, is a familiar figure on the stage of the War Memorial. He has sung numerous roles with San Francisco Opera since his 1989 debut. Among them are Anfimono in *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria*, Noboru in *Das Verratene Meer*, Uldino in *Attila*, Missail in *Boris Godunov*, Pilade in *Ermione*, the Italian Tenor in *Capriccio*, Pong in *Turandot*, as well as leading tenor parts in the student/family presentations of *Die Fledermaus*, *L'Elisir d'Amore* and *La Fille du Régiment*. A former Merola Opera Program participant and 1989-'90 Adler Fellow, Estep's Opera Center credits include *Madame Butterfly* for Western Opera Theater and on tour to Japan with the Center's Pacific Rim Exchange Program; Spoletta in the first production of *Tosca* ever seen in China; Showcase productions of *Giustino* and *La Finta Giardiniera*; and a visit to Japan and Guam with other Company and Opera Center personnel for a collaborative presentation of *Carmen*. Credits with other companies include an acclaimed debut with Miami Opera as Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, the title role of Rossini's pasticcio *Ivanhoe* in Siena, Italy, his Washington Opera bow as Cassio in *Otello* and Ernesto in *Don Pasquale*, the Chevalier in *Dialogues of the Carmelites* for Vancouver Opera, as well as Camille in *The Merry Widow* and Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor* with Calgary Opera. Future plans include *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse* in Cologne, *Il Turco in Italia* in Long Beach, *La Fille du Régiment* with Opera Carolina and Pilade in *Ermione* at Glyndebourne.



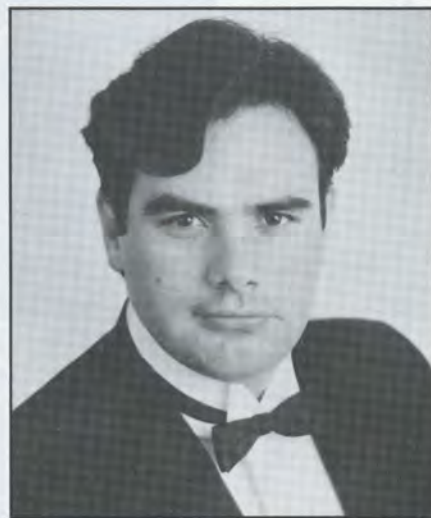
In his fifteenth consecutive season with San Francisco Opera, **Kevin J. Langan** sings the role of Elmiro in the Company's first offering of Rossini's *Otello*. The American bass (a member of the Merola Opera Program in 1979 and '80) celebrates his 250th performance with the S.F. Opera during the *Otello* production. He has appeared in more than 30 different productions here, beginning with the telecast presentation of *Samson et Dalila* in 1980, through performances as Timur in *Turandot* ('82, '93), Colline in *La Bohème* ('83, '86, '88), Ramfis in *Aida* ('84, '89), Henry VIII in *Anna Bolena* ('84), Zoroastro in Handel's *Orlando* ('85), Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte* ('87, '91), Astolfo in *Orlando Furioso* ('89), Sparafucile in *Rigoletto* ('90), and Padre Guardiano in *La Forza del Destino* ('92). A favorite at many other major opera companies, past successes include his Metropolitan Opera debut as Colline, Leporello in *Don Giovanni* with the Los Angeles Music Center Opera, Méphistophélès in *Faust* at Houston Grand Opera, King Philip II in *Don Carlos* with the Canadian Opera Company, Don Basilio in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* with both Seattle and San Diego Operas, Osmin in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, Seneca in *Coronation of Poppea* with Santa Fe Opera, and Dr. Bartolo in *Le Nozze di Figaro* with the Netherlands Opera. His 1994-95 season includes appearances as Seneca with Dallas Opera, Cadmus in Handel's *Semele* with Washington Opera, and Sparafucile with Seattle Opera. Also a noted recitalist, Langan has presented solo programs at London's Wigmore Hall and the Carnegie Recital Hall in New York. In 1987, he was also part of San Francisco Opera Center's Schwabacher Recital Series in Vorpahl Gallery.



Young American tenor **Gregory Cross**, in his San Francisco Opera debut season, will be heard as the Duel Second in *The Dangerous Liaisons*, the Doge in *Otello* and Nereo in *Mefistofele*. His career has already taken him to many important performing arts centers of the world, such as the Festival Baroque de Versailles, where he made his European debut during the 1992-93 season as Renaud in Gluck's *Armide*. Also in 1992, he was heard as Count Almaviva in a telecast performance of *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* at the Nancy Opera in a new production staged by Ruggero Raimondi. At Greater Miami Opera, he performed Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte* last year, while this year, he traveled to London for the role of Iopas in *Les Troyens*, conducted by Sir Colin Davis. A large portion of his career so far has been taken up with oratorio and concert performances, and the Colorado native has performed with many leading orchestras and conductors throughout the U.S. and Canada. His debut recording, made with the Montreal Symphony under Charles Dutoit, features him and baritone Gino Quilico in the duet from Bizet's *Pearl Fishers*.



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.



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

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Patrick Summers, who recently completed a successful five-year tenure as Music Director of San Francisco Opera Center, leads the Company premiere of Rossini's *Otello*. He made his S.F. Opera conducting debut in 1990 with performances of *Die Fledermaus*, and has since led SFO productions of *Così fan tutte*, *La Traviata*, Rossini's *Ermione* (U.S. premiere), *L'Elisir d'Amore*, *Tosca*, as well as *La Bohème* and *La Fille du Régiment* last fall. For the Opera Center's various programs, Maestro Summers has conducted numerous concerts (Grand Finals, Fall Season Previews, Pacific Voices Gala), Showcase presentations (*Rosina*, *The Ghost Sonata*, *Ariodante*), Merola Opera Program productions (*The Bartered Bride*, *Don Pasquale*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Carmen*, *Falstaff*, *Don Giovanni*), and Western Opera Theater's tours of *Pasquale*, *Butterfly* and *Bohème*. He has traveled extensively for the Opera Center, leading performances of *Carmen* in Guam and Japan, *Tosca* in Shanghai, and *La Bohème* in Japan. Additional engagements have included *Lucio Silla* for Long Beach Opera, *Le Nozze di Figaro* with the Warsaw Philharmonic, Verdi's *Otello* at Orlando Opera, and the world premiere of John Thow's *A Water Cycle* with the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players. The young conductor recently added four important "firsts" to his list of accomplishments: debuts at the Rome Opera (a new Gian Carlo Menotti staging of *Manon Lescaut*); Calgary Opera (*Lucia di Lammermoor*); Australian Opera (*La Cenerentola* in Melbourne and Sydney); and the Dallas Opera (a new production of *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*).



Laurie Feldman directs the Company's premiere presentation of Rossini's *Otello*. She made her San Francisco Opera directorial debut in 1990 with *Das Rheingold* and *Götterdämmerung*, and has since staged SFO's *Don Giovanni* (1991) and last fall's student matinee performances of *La Fille du Régiment*. She directed *Falstaff* for last summer's Merola Opera Program and served on the Merola faculty this summer, teaching the recitative class and preparing recitatives for performances of *Don Giovanni* at Villa Montalvo. A member of the Company since 1981, the native of San Francisco has served as Assistant Director for over 25 productions here. She has also staged San Francisco Opera productions of *Fidelio* for the Washington Opera, *The Tales of Hoffmann* for the Canadian Opera Company, *Der Fliegende Holländer* for Calgary Opera, and *La Traviata* for Santa Fe Opera. Additional credits include engagements with the Metropolitan Opera, the Washington Opera, Dallas Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Los Angeles Music Center Opera, as well as the opera companies of Munich and Cologne. She recently acted as co-director, with John Copley, of a new production of *Eugene Onegin* for the Icelandic Opera in Reykjavik.



Zack Brown, who designed the costumes for *Otello*, made his 1979 San Francisco Opera debut with the sets and costumes for *La Gioconda*. That nationally telecast, Emmy-award winning production was repeated on the stage of the War Memorial in 1983 and '88. Additional Company credits have been *Le Nozze di Figaro* ('82, '86, '91) and *La Forza del Destino* ('92). As resident designer for Washington Opera, Brown has created the sets and costumes for 39 productions including *La Bohème*, *Un Ballo in Maschera*, *The Merry Widow* and *Tiefland*. He has also created designs for, among other companies, the Metropolitan Opera (*Rigoletto*), Santa Fe Opera, Hamburg Staatsoper, New York City Opera, and Wolf Trap. On Broadway, Brown designed scenery and costumes for the Tony-award-winning revival of *On Your Toes*. Among his many credits for New York's Circle in the Square Theater, his scenery for Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* and his costumes for *Saint Joan* won nominations for Tony and Drama Desk awards, respectively. His most recent production at Circle was *Salomé* with Al Pacino. Classical dance designs include *Gaîté Parisienne* and *Jardin aux Lilas* for the American Ballet Theatre and Ravel's *Trilogy* for Hamburg Ballet. In addition, his costume designs were seen in a five-part television mini-series of O'Neill's *Mourning Becomes Electra*. His work has also been seen at the Williamstown Theatre Festival, the Guthrie Theatre, and the Arena Stage in Washington, D.C.



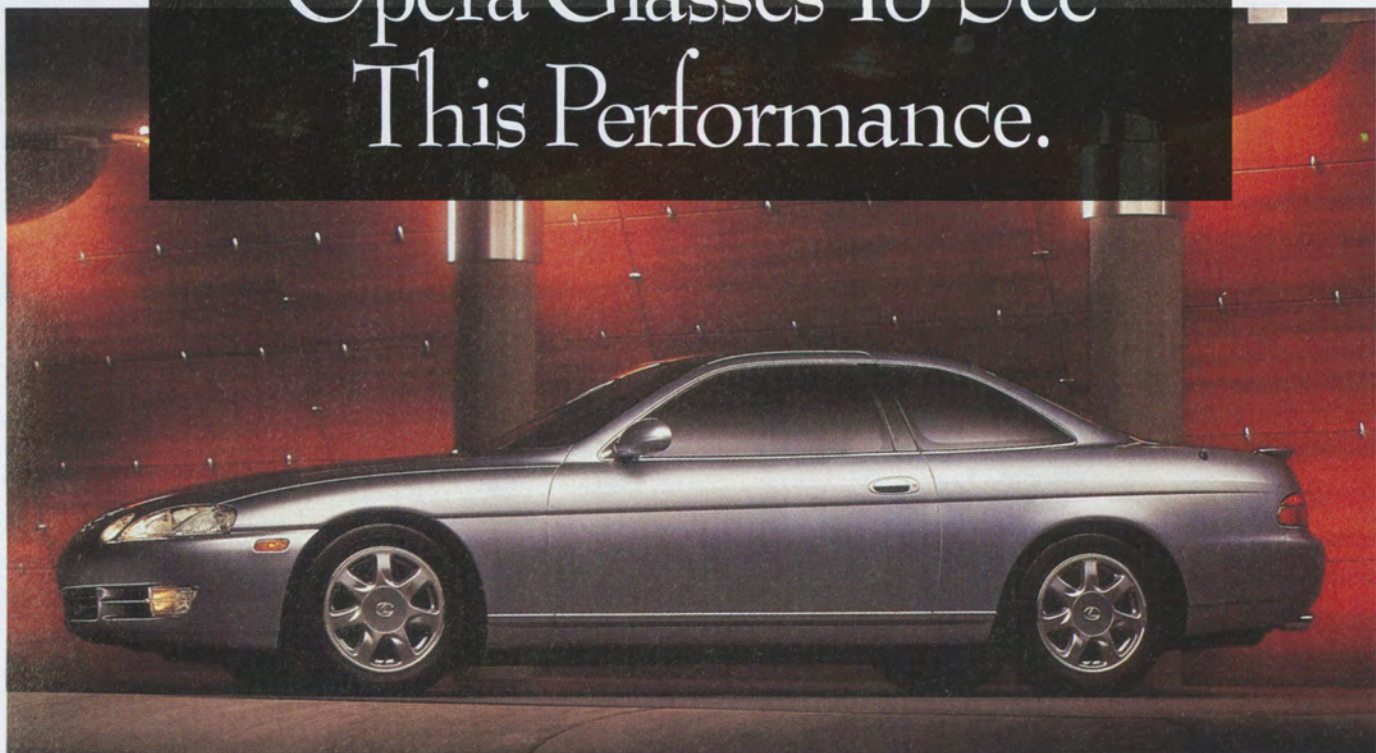
Lighting Director and Design Consultant for San Francisco Opera since 1976, **Thomas J. Munn** created the lighting for *The Dangerous Liaisons*, *Il Trovatore*, *Tannhäuser*, *The Fiery Angel*, *Hérodiade*, *Mefistofele* and *Lucia di Lammermoor*. He has designed the lighting and special effects for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



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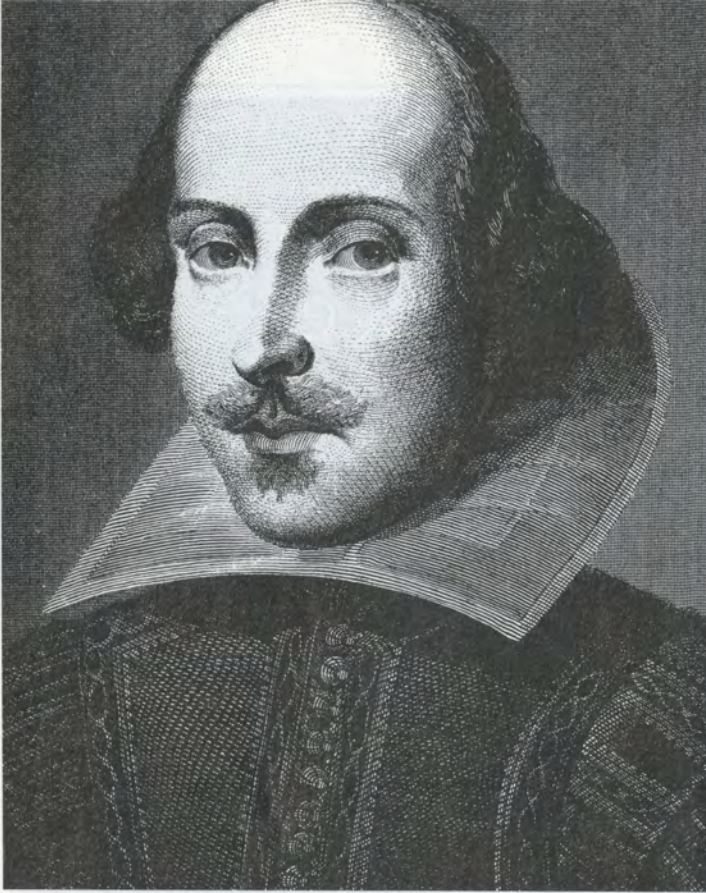
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Othello vs. Otello

By MALCOLM MOSHER, Jr.

On the evening of December 4, 1816, Rossini's *Otello* had its premiere in Naples to considerable acclaim. Several months later, the English poet Lord Byron wrote a letter to a friend expressing his excitement in anticipation of attending a performance the following night:

Tomorrow night I am going to see *Otello*, an opera from our *Othello*—and one of Rossini's best, it is said...It will be curious...to discover what they will make of Shakespeare in music.

Several days later, he expressed the memorable opinion of his experience in a second letter:

They have been crucifying *Othello* into an opera (*Otello* by Rossini). Music good but lugubrious—but as for the words! All the real scenes with Iago cut out—and the greatest nonsense instead: the handkerchief turned into a billet doux...music very good.

Some years later, the French composer Paul Dukas might have been thinking of Rossini's *Otello* and a host of other operas based on Shakespearean text when he remarked:

Only a few of Shakespeare's plays have escaped being mutilated, transformed, perverted, and abused with a view to musical adaptation. Never has a man of genius been so scandalously

Malcolm Mosher, Jr. is an historian, lecturer, writer, and software designer for Tandem Computers, Inc.

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exploited by the official purveyors of opera in our theaters, and no one ever lived upon whose glorious brow has fallen such an avalanche of dull verse united with so many sacrilegious semi-quavers.

In fact, the plot of Rossini's *Otello* is very different from Shakespeare's play, save for parts of the final act and some broader aspects of the earlier acts. More surprising, while the world premiere in Naples had the expected tragic ending, Rossini and his librettist, Francesco Maria Berio, were obliged to provide a non-tragic ending for the premiere in Rome. Today, we live in an age governed by the quest of purist ideals, and the thought of modifying



Shakespeare's text in any manner is intolerable. Should Berio be condemned? Should we let his infidelity to Shakespeare's *Othello* color our opinion of Rossini's opera? In fact, we might ask ourselves a more fundamental question: How could such liberties be taken with Shakespeare? Was Rossini's *Otello* unique in its redirection of the original source? To answer these questions, it is useful to trace the evolution of Shakespearean presentations, not just for the operatic stage, but for the regular non-operatic stage as well, because we can thereby make intriguing observations that may serve to exonerate not only Berio, but many of the other composers to whom Dukas refers.

With one exception, Victor Hugo and Sir Walter Scott have unquestionably contributed more to opera than any other literary personages. Scott's novels have been transformed into over sixty operas, one of which—*The Bride of Lammermoor* (1819)—provided the basis for another opera being presented this fall, Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* (1835). Hugo's novels have been transformed into over seventy operas. The exception mentioned above is William Shakespeare. *The Oxford Dictionary of Opera* lists some 372 operas derived from Shakespearean plays. While Henry Purcell had used Shakespeare for two operas as early as the late 17th century, the real vogue for exploiting Shakespeare came into being in the mid-18th century. Between 1757 and 1816, the year of Rossini's *Otello*, 50 operas had been derived from Shakespearean sources, with another 103 between 1817 and 1899. Even more astonishing is the fact that 84 more were composed between 1900 and 1945, and another 135 between 1946 and 1992. Overall, 30 of the 38 plays have been set for the operatic stage in one form or another. At the last tally, *The Tempest* has clearly been the favorite, with some 52 operas being based on it, while *Romeo and Juliet* is second, providing the drama for 41. Of those not yet set to an operatic score, six come from the nine historical plays. *Titus Andronicus* also remains unset, but given its grotesque violence and today's thirst for the same, it seems only a matter of time

Two views of Ambrose Thomas's *Hamlet*:

(At left) John Brocheler in the title role and Joan Sutherland as Ophelia, her only on-stage interpretation of the role. The 1985 Canadian Opera Company production was staged by Lotfi Mansouri.

(Above) Thomas Hampson in the title role of a modern-dress production, staged in Monte Carlo in 1993.



before someone will set it to music.

Only a handful of these 372 operas have enjoyed continued success, and only a small number have been based exclusively on Shakespeare's actual text. Many contain only shreds of the original Shakespearean words and others contain what could be called preposterous modifications. Many of the latter attained great successes with the public at one time, although voices shouting sacrilege were occasionally heard. After seeing the happy ending in Ambrose Thomas's *Hamlet*, George Bernard Shaw remarked that:

...the title of the work ought to be changed. Since St. Ambrose Thomas has honestly done his very best not to remind us of Shakespeare, why should the subject be dragged in by calling the people in the libretto Ophelia, Hamlet, Laertes, and so on?

Commenting with greater flair on the same opera, Hector Berlioz provided his own version of the famous soliloquy.

To be or not to be, that is the question. Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer wretched operas, ridiculous concerts, mediocre virtuosos, crazed composers...or take arms against a sea of troubles, and by opposing end them? To die, to sleep—no more. And by a sleep to say we end the torture of our ears, the suffering of the heart and mind, and the thousand natural shocks that the exercise of criticism imposes upon our intelligence and common sense. 'Tis a consummation devoutly to be wished. To die, to sleep—to sleep, perchance to have a nightmare—aye, there's the rub. For in that sleep of death what dreams may come when we have shuffled off this mortal coil: what mad theories will we have to entertain, what discordant scores will we have to hear, what imbeciles will we have to praise, what outrages will we see inflicted upon the masterpieces, what absurdities will we hear pronounced, what windmills will we see taken for giants?

After musing further in a similar vein, he wryly concluded his remarks with: "But soft, here comes the young singer Ophelia, carrying a score and feigning a smile".

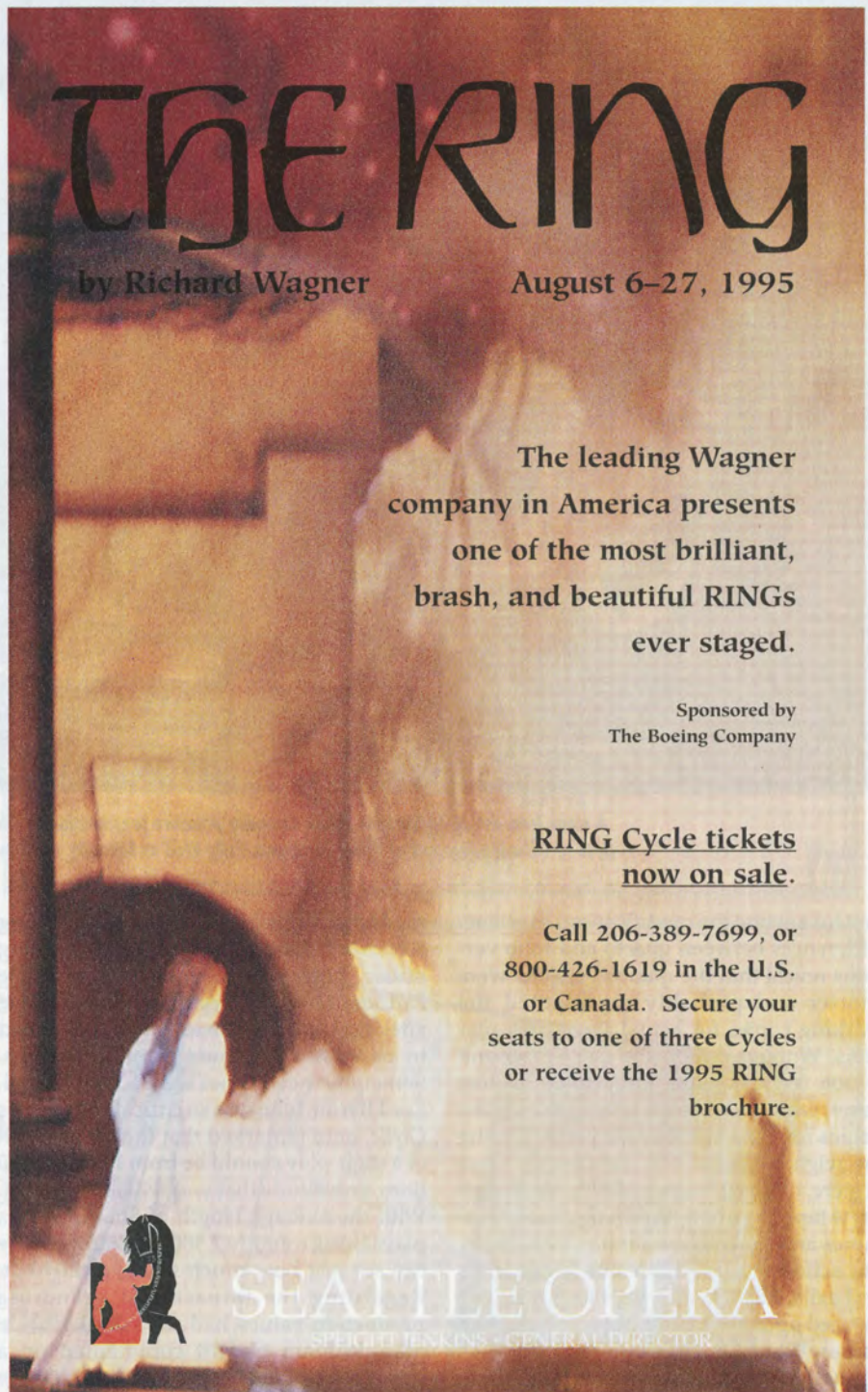
Considering the litany of outrages done to Shakespeare's text by numerous composers of all nationalities, one cannot fault Berio and Rossini alone for revising Shakespeare to suit their own ends. The

practice had been widely used by previous composers for over a century. Purcell's *Fairy Queen* (derived from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*) contains no more than a handful of Shakespeare's lines. How did it start? Has Shakespeare been violated on the operatic stage only? Did not Shakespeare violate the works of others himself?

Shakespeare did raid the works of others to achieve his own ends. Only *A Midsummer Night's Dream* appears to have

been entirely his own creation. All other plays were drawn from the source material of others, and one of his contemporaries, Robert Greene, went so far as to call him "an upstart Crow, beautified with our feathers," an expression that has been widely interpreted as an accusation of plagiarism. Just as he made fair game of others, others in turn made fair game of him by taking liberties with his verse.

Shakespeare may even have been the first to modify his own text, or at least the



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A scene from the 1985 Santa Fe Opera Company premiere presentation of John Eaton's *The Tempest*: (l. to r.) Colenton Freeman as Prince Ferdinand, Sally Wolf as Miranda, and Timothy Noble as Prospero.

first to sanction the modifications of others. Differences between quarto and folio versions reveal that the quarto versions were shorter and probably represented the working copies for actual stage presentations. Without doubt, the most profound reason for major modification of his text came with the evolution of production values for the staging of his plays. During the reign of Elizabeth I, set designs were austere, often consisting of little more than a few tapestries hanging on the walls. Costumes and props were simple. By keeping the action moving with quick entrances and exits, Shakespeare kept his audiences focused upon the dialog, not on production values. When James I mounted the throne of England in 1603, however, he ushered in a new era, in which production values were considered equal in importance to dialog, if not more so.

As set designs, costumes, and props became more elaborate and grandiose during the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries, a considerable amount of time was required to dismantle the set of one scene and put up the next. Musical accompaniments during scene changes were occasionally added, as well as during the drama itself. To allow for the time needed to make scene changes and to keep the overall running times of the plays at reasonable lengths, cuts had to be

made to Shakespeare's text. Trimming scenes and dialog, and occasionally adding music, however, opened up a veritable Pandora's box. To keep the drama cohesive after cuts had been made, new dialog had to be added to smooth out transitions. Sometimes new scenes were added as well. Lord Byron, who was so critical of Rossini's *Otello*, once remarked that the ideal length of a stage play should be from 1,500—1,800 lines, an attitude that was widely accepted. With the average length of Shakespeare's plays being roughly 2,500—2,800 lines, one can see just how much was typically cut. Regarding the impact that grandiose production values had on a Shakespeare play, William Hazlitt commented on a production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in 1816 as follows:

The spirit was evaporated, the genius was fled; but the spectacle was fine: it was that which saved the play...Oh, ye scene-shifters, ye scene painters, ye manufacturers of moon and stars that give no light, ye musical composers, ye men in the orchestra, fiddlers, and trumpeters, and players on the double drums and loud bassoons, rejoice! This triumph is yours!

Once new dialog was required, another

element figured in the revisions—the actor. It is generally acknowledged that the success of a Shakespearean drama hinges upon the bravura acting of its principals, and greatness often requires egotistical excess. What George Bernard Shaw once said of Sarah Bernhardt could apply to many another great Shakespearean actor:

[She has] the art of making you admire her, pity her, champion her, weep with her, laugh at her jokes, follow her fortunes breathlessly, and applaud her wildly when the curtain falls. [But,] she does not enter into the leading character; she substitutes herself for it.

With cuts and new dialog being added to productions of Shakespeare's plays, big-named actors seized the opportunity to press for more lines in order to display their skills.

Two examples of the liberties taken with Shakespeare's text by later playwrights will suffice to illustrate just how far his plays were modified from the original source. In the late 17th century, the actor Colley Cibber revised eighteen of the plays. The most popular of these, from the year 1700, was his adaptation of *Richard III*. Shakespeare's original text amounts to roughly 3,600 lines. Cibber reduced it to



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2,050 lines. Of these, only approximately half preserved Shakespeare's original text. The other half was the creation of Cibber. To please the leading actors of the day, he added seven new soliloquies for the role of Richard. In fact, while the role of Richard comprised roughly 31% of the lines in Shakespeare's original text, Cibber's revision gave the role 40%. In brief, Cibber's Richard has been aptly described as an "egomaniac's delight." It should come as no surprise that Cibber's *Richard III* was the most popular of all of Shakespeare's plays during the 18th and 19th centuries, particularly among actors. It was the universally accepted version, and it held the stage as late as 1930. Sir Laurence Olivier even utilized some of its text for his filmed version of *Richard III* in 1956. Its shortened version was particularly useful for elaborate productions, such as one from the mid-19th century that required 121 actors! Richard's army alone consisted of 58 men, each fully outfitted in authentic armor and weaponry of the 1480s.

The second example involves *King Lear*. This play was revised for the stage in 1681 by Nahum Tate, who stated in its dedication that:

I found the whole [play] a Heap of
Jewels, unstrung and unpolish'd; yet so
dazzling in their Disorder, that I soon
perceiv'd I had seiz'd a Treasure.

He certainly rectified his perceived disorder, because he eliminated the critical role of the Fool, invented a love interest between Edgar and Cordelia, and gave the play a happy ending by sending Lear, Kent, and Gloucester to a place in which they could peacefully reflect on what Cicero called "the vicissitudes of Fortune." He justified his extraordinary conclusion by stating that:

Otherwise I must have encumbered the
Stage with dead Bodies. Neither is it so
Trivial an Undertaking to make a
Tragedy end happily, for 'tis more difficult to Save than 'tis to Kill.

Tate's version was the accepted version for the stage until 1823, at which time the tragic ending was restored. The part of the Fool, however, was not restored until 1838.

Although wholesale violence was being done to Shakespeare's text, purists did exist and they chafed at what was being done to the Bard. One who raised his voice was H.N. Hudson, who stated the fearful curse: "Withered be the hand, palsied be the arm, that ever dares to touch one of

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Shakespeare's plays". Purists with this attitude from the 17th through the mid-19th century, however, were merely voices crying out in the wilderness.

In adapting Shakespeare's plays to opera, one was faced with similar problems to those of the regular stage. Fabulous productions required extensive cuts to the text. Additionally, new considerations required further alterations. First and foremost was the element of music itself. Dialog and soliloquies set to music, by the very nature of the idiom, required more time than simple spoken dialog. To accommodate this and still keep reasonable running times, more cuts were needed. This required further modifications to retain overall dramatic cohesiveness.

Secondly, there were the issues of language and translation. When translating any type of verse from one language to another, the translator is always faced with a dilemma. If he attempts a literal translation, he will usually end up with prose. For the operatic librettist, prose is out of the question. Translating to verse in another language, however, typically requires that the translator use his own words, and creative translators may produce something quite different from the original.

When composer and librettist both aspire to remain as faithful to the original source as possible, the outcome can be extraordinary. Such were the collaborations between Verdi and Arrigo Boito for the operas *Otello* and *Falstaff*. Indeed, one can make the case that the union of Boito's brilliant libretto with Verdi's poignant score in the latter's *Otello* surpasses the original Shakespearean drama. Verdi and Boito, however, produced their works in the late 19th century, when the purist movement had gained momentum. For the 18th and most of the 19th centuries, those advocating purism and fidelity to the original sources were few in number. As we have already seen above, serious liberties with Shakespearean sources had been regularly taken for the non-operatic stage in England, in the English language. Should it be surprising then that greater liberties would be taken when adapting a Shakespearean play from one language to another for an operatic libretto? Consider the case where an Italian librettist might have had to use a French translation of a Shakespearean play!

Another factor that contributed to further modification of Shakespearean text was that grand opera had a number of required elements. To name just two, each opera had to have at least one scene involv-

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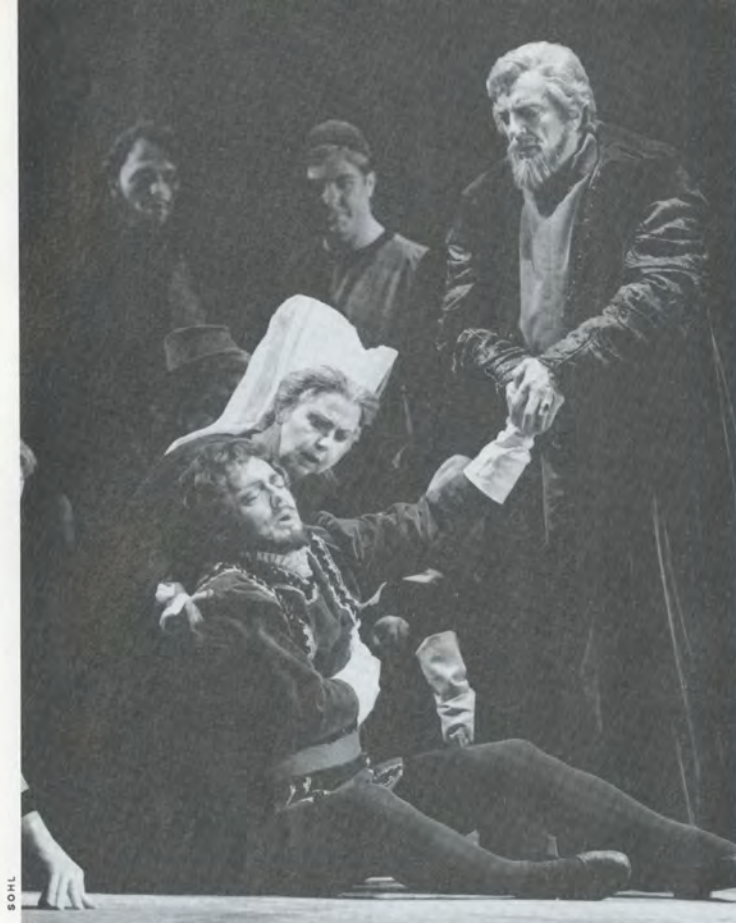
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(Left) Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette* at the San Francisco Opera in 1987: Dennis Petersen as Tybalt, Donna Petersen as Gertrude, and Joseph Rouleau as Capulet.

(Right) Russell Oberlin as Oberon in San Francisco Opera's 1961 U.S. premiere presentation of Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

ing a grand spectacle with a crowd of people. Each opera also had to contain at least one ballet sequence. If the Shakespearean source did not provide for such elements, the plot had to be altered to work these elements in.

The tradition of grand opera required fabulous productions and enormous stages. With trappings even more elaborate than for the regular stage, more cuts and modifications were required. The huge stages were excellent for the large crowd scenes and spectacles, but they were often incongruous in intimate scenes. Shaw, with his typical wit, once remarked that:

There was a time when I did not greatly mind seeing Violetta (Verdi's *La Traviata*) laid up with consumption in a small bed in the middle of an apartment rather larger than Trafalgar Square.

Finally, just as revisions had been made to Shakespeare for the greater glory of the actors during the 18th and 19th centuries on the regular stage, librettists and composers adapted their dramas to extol the virtues of the singers they had at their disposal. Regarding Rossini's *Otello*, the Teatro del Fondo, where the work had its

premiere, boasted three first class tenors under contract. To take advantage of their considerable talents equally, Rossini had the part of Rodrigo greatly expanded so that he could cast these tenors as Otello, Iago, and Rodrigo respectively. Can we fault Berio and Rossini for these liberties when, at the same time in England, Tate's *King Lear* was being presented with a happy ending and Cibber's *Richard III* was being regularly presented with only about 29% of the Shakespeare's original text?

When approaching 18th- and 19th-century Shakespearean operas today, one must go in with an open mind and enjoy these dramas for what they are, not what they should have been from the purist's perspective. Such appreciation can come all that much easier when attending a performance of Rossini's *Otello*, because the revised drama holds up very well in its own right, and the orchestration and vocal parts are exhilarating. In the same sense, one must not judge Thomas's *Hamlet* as harshly as Shaw and Berlioz did, because, much like Tate's *Lear*, it can hold its own if one sets aside one's knowledge of how it ought to be.

Gary Schmidgall, whose insightful monograph *Shakespeare and Opera* has con-

tributed to this essay, could not be more accurate when he states that we should go in with an open ear and an open eye to any opera based on Shakespeare, and that we must not be puritanical in our 20th-century purist views:

I am arguing here rather as the garrulous tippler Toby Belch does when he asks the puritanical steward Malvolio his withering question in *Twelfth Night*: 'Dost thou think that because thou art virtuous there shall be no more cakes and ale?' Every Shakespearean opera, in a sense, represents a collision between virtue (fidelity to the original play) and cakes and ale (the pure pleasure of musical sounds allied with words, with passion). Shakespeare's resolution of the conflict was, as usual for him, a compromise: he leaves the audience in the middle, wishing finally to be neither a Malvolio nor a Belch. Likewise, it is impossible to imagine Shakespeare succeeding as opera solely by virtuous fidelity to his text or by filling up on cakes and ale. Compromise is at the heart of the process. There is virtue in cakes and ale, and vice versa. ■

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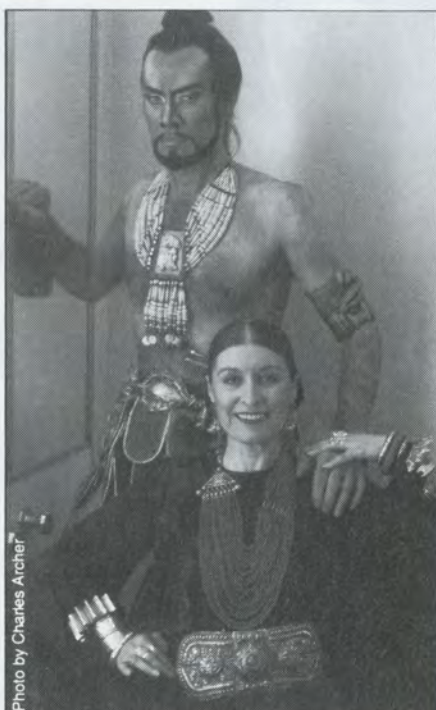


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LEADERSHIP CIRCLE (\$50,000 and above)

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

GOLD CIRCLE (\$25,000 to \$49,999)

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

SILVER CIRCLE (\$10,000 to \$24,999)

- Complimentary tickets to an opera in a priority seating area *
- Opportunity for a private concert featuring acclaimed Opera Center singers for your meeting, party or special event
- Opportunity to participate in patron travel program to opera houses throughout the world
- All privileges and benefits which follow:

CORPORATE BENEFACTOR (\$5,000 to \$9,999)

- Invitation to a special donor event with the General Director and opera artists in an exclusive location
- Recognition in all publicity and advertising prior to your sponsored opera performance or event *
- Your corporate name on recognition signs displayed in the War Memorial Opera House Lobby *
- Your corporate name featured on Program Magazine synopsis page of your sponsored performance (s) *
- Framed Program Magazine cover and program page of your sponsored opera signed by a renowned singer of conductor *
- Free reserved parking at the Performing Arts Center Garage for any opera performance or subscription series
- All privileges and benefits which follow:

CORPORATE FOUNDER (\$2,500 to \$4,999)

- Opportunity to participate in the corporate Employee Subscription and Single Ticket Discount Programs (subject to availability)
- Listing in the corporate Council section of every Program Magazine, reaching more than 284,000 patrons
- Invitation to exclusive special events including the Annual Corporate Awards dinner and two V.I.P. tours of the Opera House Stage, Scenery Shop, Costume Shop or Wig and Make-Up Department for your corporate employees and special guests
- Invitation to several Working Rehearsals, Opera Insights programs and the Company's Annual Meeting
- Preferred seating for all Working Rehearsals
- Opportunity to purchase reserved parking at the Performing Arts Center Garage for any opera performance
- Special assistance in purchasing tickets to upcoming operas through the Corporate council Ticket Service
- Use of the Corporate Council Membership Services private phone line
- Personalized backstage tours for your employees and special guests, upon request
- Subscription to San Francisco Opera News
- Copy of the Season Book, previewing the fall season productions
- Voting membership in San Francisco Opera Association
- Advance notice of special events and ticket availability

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

CORPORATE COUNCIL



San Francisco Opera appreciates the generous support of the following companies that made contributions for performance years 1993 or 1994 (recorded February 1, 1993 through August 10, 1994). Donors of \$2,500 and above are eligible for membership in the Corporate Council. Members receive numerous benefits and privileges, including participation in members-only dress rehearsals, corporate evenings at the Opera, and special behind-the-scenes glimpses into the world of opera. For more information about joining the Corporate Council, please telephone (415) 565-3264.

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San Francisco Opera extends its most sincere appreciation to the following companies that helped maintain the Company's annual needs through gifts of \$1,000 to \$2,499 during performance years 1993 or 1994 (recorded February 1, 1993 through August 10, 1994). Space does not allow us to pay tribute to the hundreds of other companies that help make each season possible.

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Sponsored by the San Francisco Opera Guild, house and backstage tours of the War Memorial Opera House will be conducted every half hour from 10 a.m. to 12 noon on weekdays and on Saturday; and every 15 minutes from 10 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Sundays on the following dates:

Tuesday, October 4
Sunday, October 9
Wednesday, October 19
Sunday, November 6
Saturday, November 19
Friday, November 25
Wednesday, November 30
Sunday, December 4

Tickets for Guild members, \$2; non-members, \$5. Reservations required. Information: (415) 565-6433.

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

PERFORMING ARTS CENTER TOURS

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

Information: (415) 552-8338.

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

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

Emergency Telephone. The telephone number (415) 431-4370 may be used by patrons for emergencies only during performances. Before the performance, patrons anticipating possible emergencies should leave their seat number at the nurse's station in the lower lounge, where the emergency telephone is located.

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

Ticket Information. San Francisco Opera's Ticket and Patron Services Center, 199 Grove at Van Ness, open 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Saturday. Opera House Box Office: open 2 hours before each performance through the first intermission on performance days only. Phone charge: (415) 864-3330, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Saturday (VISA, American Express, MasterCard). Tickets are also available on a limited basis through BASS and STBS outlets.

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

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

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

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

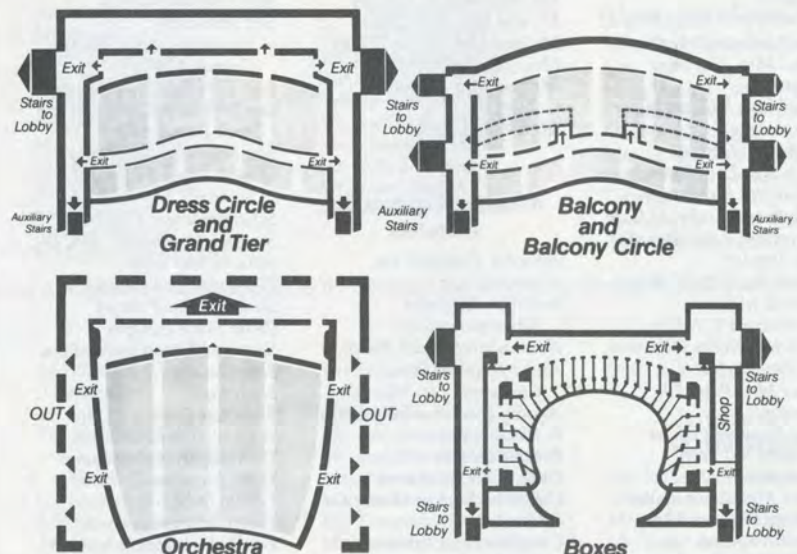
For the safety and comfort of our audience, all large parcels, backpacks, luggage, etc., must be checked at Opera House cloak-rooms.

Opera glasses are available in the lobby.

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

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

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



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

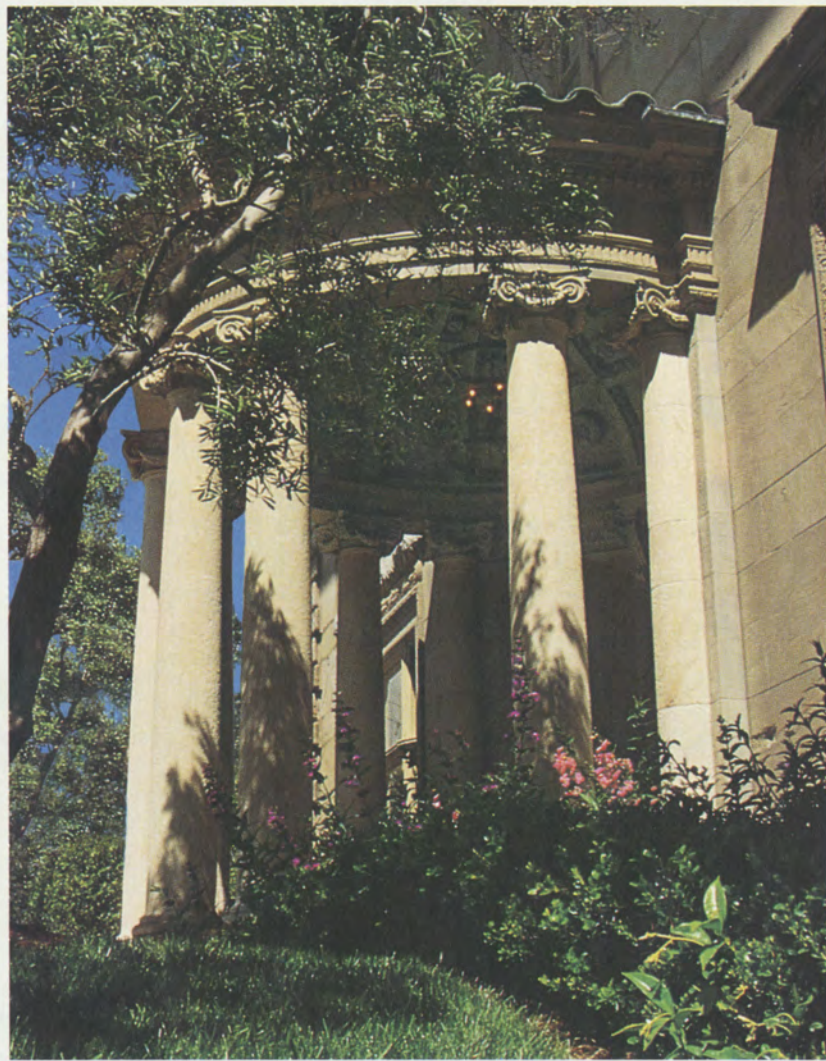


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