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1994

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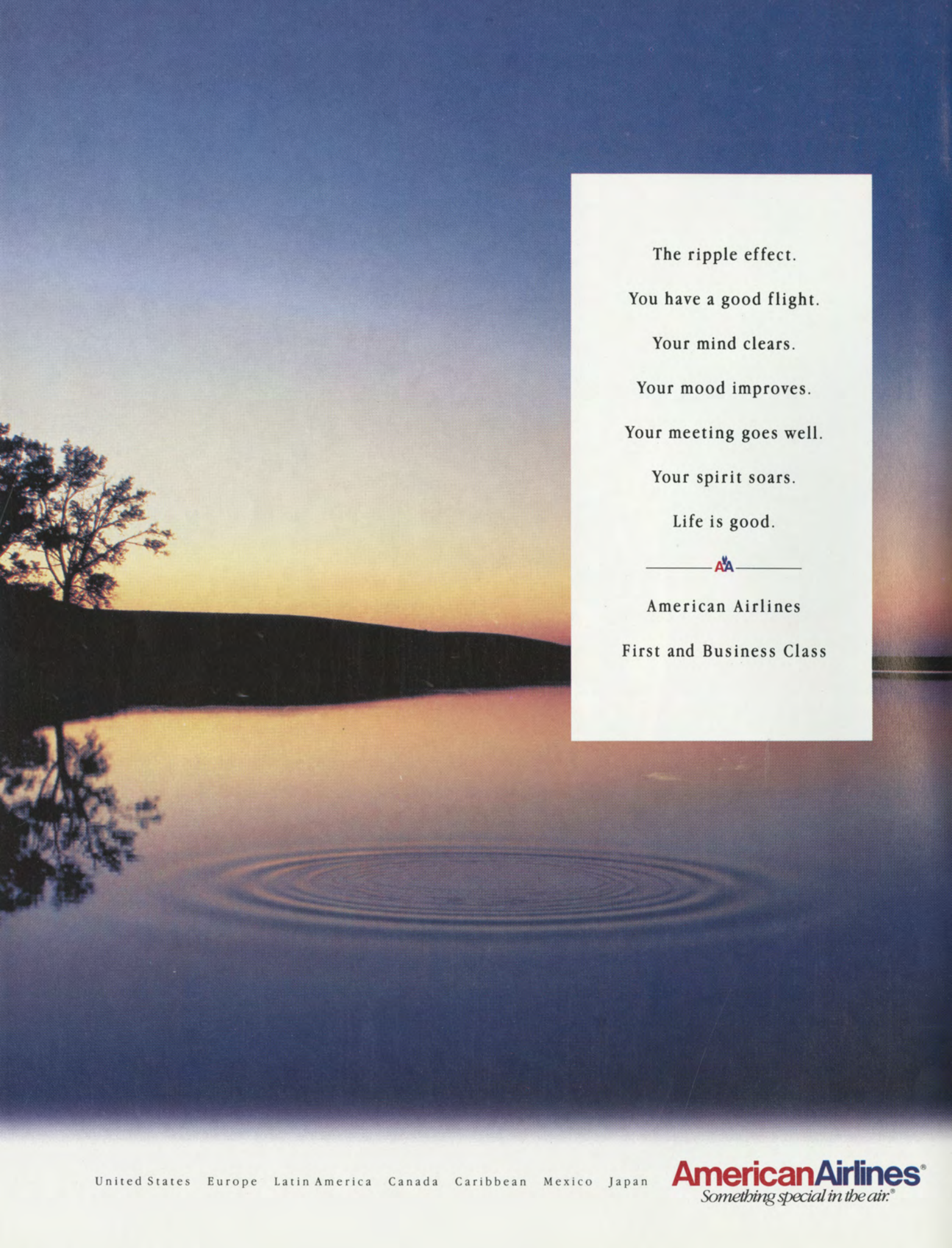
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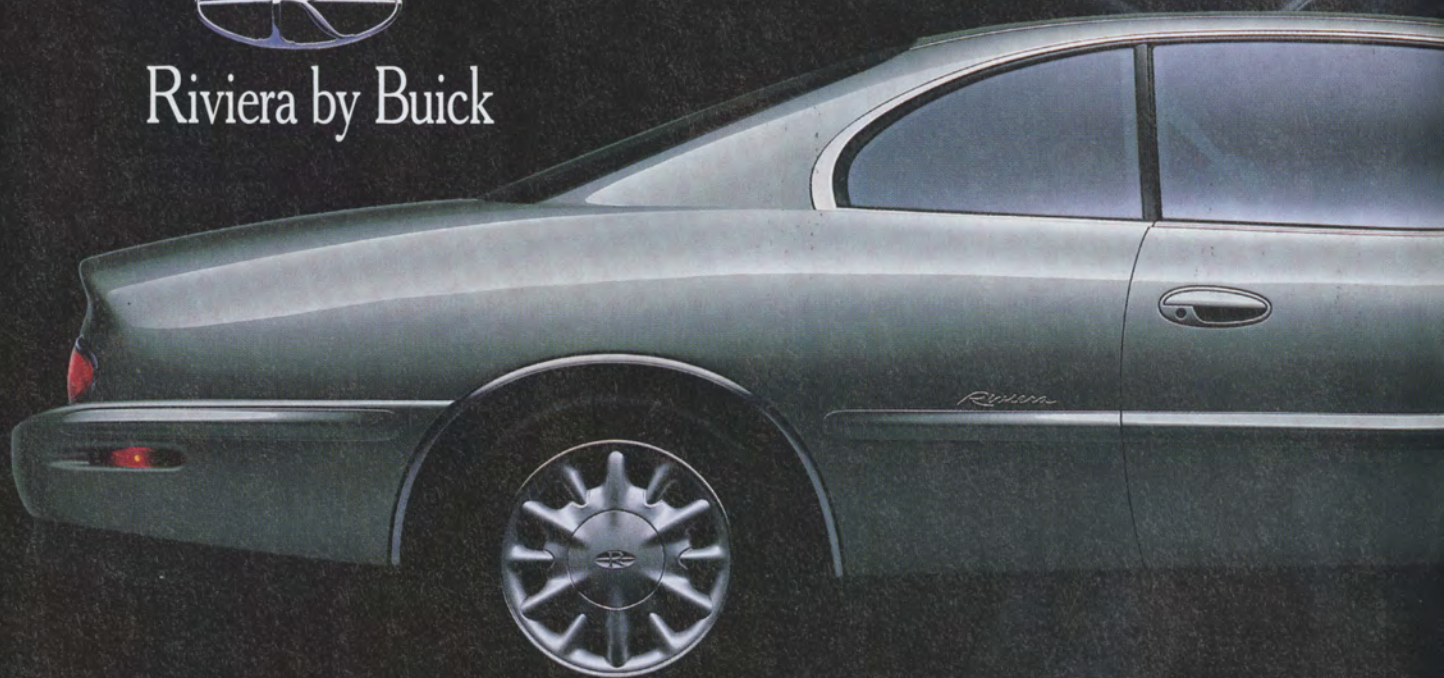
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SAN FRANCISCO OPERA MAGAZINE

Tannhäuser

1994 Season
Vol. 72, No. 5

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Chassériau, Théodore (1819-1856)
Apollon et Daphné, 1844
Oil on canvas, 20 3/4 x 13 3/4 in.

Réunion des Musées Nationaux
Musée du Louvre, Paris
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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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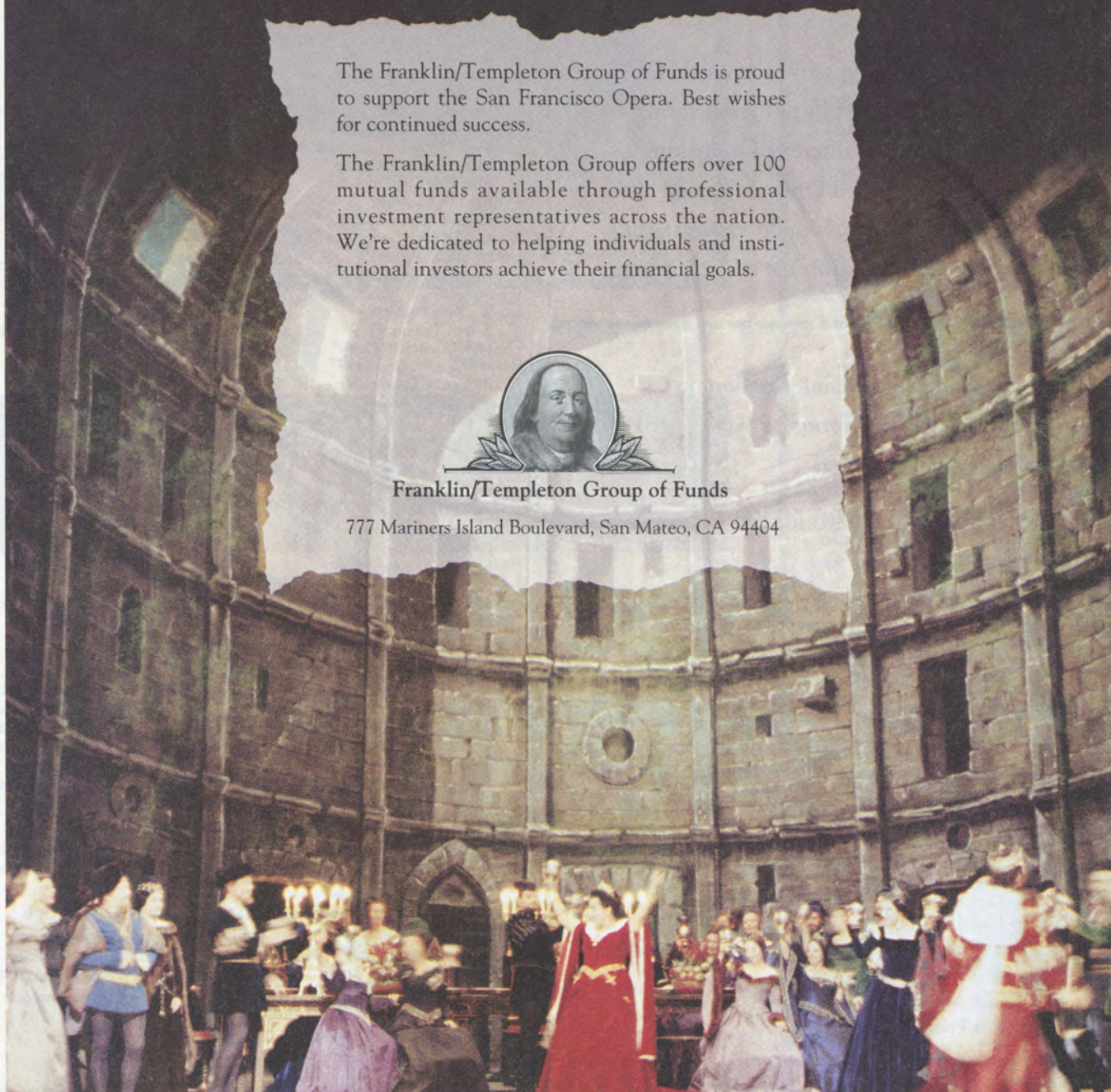
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WAGNER'S UNFINISHED

By MICHAEL STEINBERG

"I owe the world a *Tannhäuser*"

—RICHARD WAGNER TO COSIMA WAGNER, 23 JANUARY 1883

The debt was not paid. Just seventeen days after making that remark—it had been prompted by playing through the Overture and the Shepherd's Song after dinner—Wagner was dead, felled by one of the heart attacks that had assaulted him more and more frequently in the last two years. Had he lived, what might he have done about *Tannhäuser*? Why did he think he owed something?

Some composers have wonderfully tidy work habits: they begin a piece, finish it, and go on to the next one. The really considerate ones don't leave too many unfinished projects behind either. Others are basically orderly in this fashion, but sometimes go back and revise a work, either because they have thought of a way to improve it, or just for practical reasons. (In the case of opera, it is most often practical reasons such as the pluses or minuses of a new cast or the demands of the operatic culture in another country that motivate revisions.)

With Wagner, nothing is ever simple, least of all questions of chronology. His work pattern was to be seized by an idea, which he would then put in storage until the time was right. The genesis of *Der Ring des Nibelungen* is the most famous—or notorious—in-

stance. He first thought of making this saga into an opera in October 1848, but it took another three years before he began to draft the libretto, and two more before he wrote a note of music. By the time he drew the double bar at the end of the full score of *Götterdämmerung* it was November of 1874. During the 21 years that the *Ring* was a work-in-progress, he composed *Tristan und Isolde*, considerably revised *Tannhäuser*, wrote *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, and accomplished the first stages of the libretto for *Parsifal*. Writing *Tristan* and *Meistersinger* was suddenly so important that he had even interrupted *Siegfried* in mid-course in order to do it.

If the *Ring* had the longest gestation of any work of Wagner's, *Tannhäuser* has the most complicated one. He worked on the text between June 1842 and April 1843, composed the music between the summer of 1843 and April 1845, and on October 19th, 1845, conducted the first performance at Dresden, where he had been Royal Saxon Court Conductor since 1843. That much is simple; it is also far from the whole story.

But before we go on with the history of *Tannhäuser*, let us pause to see what else was on Wagner's mind around this time. About seven months before beginning *Tannhäuser* he had completed *Der Fliegende Holländer*. In July of 1845, between the completion of *Tannhäuser* and its first performance, he wrote a detailed prose draft of *Die Meistersinger*. That same month he read the *Parzival* of Wolfram von Eschenbach, whom he had put on stage as one

Lauritz Melchior, San Francisco Opera's 1934 *Tannhäuser*, is seen in closeup (left) and in action in Act II (opposite). The photo, taken from the wings, also shows members of the San Francisco Opera Chorus, and, seated on top of the steps, Ezio Pinza as the Landgrave and Elisabeth Rethberg as Elisabeth.



Michael Steinberg is San Francisco Symphony's program annotator.



Elisabeth Rethberg with retinue in Act II and III (above) of our 1934 *Tannhäuser*.



of the minnesingers in *Tannhäuser*. A few weeks later, he started the libretto of *Lohengrin*, whose music he completed in April of 1848. In 1847 he read Gottfried von Straßburg's *Tristan und Isolde* in a new translation by Hermann Kurz, who remarked in his introduction that the story contained every element needed for a tremendous dramatic tragedy. Soon after finishing *Lohengrin*, Wagner formulated his first plan for the *Ring*. This means that, taking the May 1840 prose draft of *Der Fliegende Holländer* as a starting point, Wagner conceived or planned or actually executed the entire life work of his maturity within a single span of eight and a half years.

To come back to *Tannhäuser*—in 1847, Wagner revived it in Dresden. Among the things he changed at that time were the English horn solo in the song of the Shepherd Boy, the Prelude to Act 3, and the ending of the opera. He undertook bigger and much more significant alterations when, by command of Napoleon III, *Tannhäuser* was staged at the Paris Opéra in March of 1861. He revised the score again for Munich in August of 1867 and made still more changes for a production in Vienna in November 1875, the last that he himself supervised.

Even after that, *Tannhäuser* continued to

burn in his mind. Cosima Wagner's diaries record that in his last years he several times expressed a wish to stage it again and also that he wanted it to be the next work, after the *Ring* and *Parsifal*, to be added to the repertory at his Bayreuth Festival. On October 6th, 1882, Cosima Wagner writes that at breakfast "[R.] says he would like to stage *Tannhäuser*, which he regards as a consummate drama, but then again not, since he feels that musically some things are insufficiently expressed." *Tannhäuser* was, and remained, unfinished business.

Wagner's successive revisions of it both solved problems and created new ones. The most radical recension was the one that he undertook in 1860-61 for Paris. This was one of the unhappiest episodes in his life. Having tried and failed to conquer Paris at the beginning of the 1840s, Wagner launched a second attack toward the end of 1859, right after the completion of *Tristan*, and began by giving three successful concerts at the Théâtre Italien in January and February of 1860. (The one piece that completely confounded the audiences was the *Tristan* Prelude, played with Wagner's own wonderful concert ending.)

This time around, Wagner had found a determined ally in Princess Pauline Metternich, the wife of the Austrian ambassador, a

woman less intelligent and discriminating than enthusiastic and energetic, and the Number One Wagnerian in the French capital. She had the Emperor's ear and she persuaded him, first to offer Wagner a fourth concert, which he did not accept, and then to command the production of *Tannhäuser*, which had not yet been seen in France. As an Austrian, the Princess was politically suspect in the aftermath of the recent war between Austria and France; her personal style — she smoked, she drank, she told *risqué* stories, she dressed bizarrely — made her unpopular in Paris society. In sum, while her sponsorship made the *Tannhäuser* production possible in the first place, it also laid the foundation for its failure.

It was understood that the work would have to be given in French, and the task of translating it was handed over to a young lawyer by name of Charles Truinet who wrote under the name of Nuitter. (He knew no German, but, he explained consolingly, his father did.) The French text obliged Wagner to alter the contours of some of his musical phrases; later, when he kept the compositional emendations he had made for Paris, he had to change his original German text to make it fit the musical lines he had devised for Nuitter's French.

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The more famous problem concerned the ballet. Parisian audiences expected a ballet in every opera, and they expected it in Act 2 because the ballerina-oglers were still in the bar in Act 1. (By Act 3, they would have gone to supper with their favorite dancers.) Wagner chose to dig in his heels over this issue. The opening scene, in which we see Tannhäuser depressed and desperate at the court of Venus, had provided an opportunity for some sexy dancing—bathing naiads, lounging sirens, and the like—even in the original Dresden version. In the course of expanding this scene for Paris, and expanding it gloriously, Wagner put even more bodies on view and for much longer. It was just the thing for the members of the Jockey Club, but it came at the wrong time, immediately after the Overture! By the time they got into the theater for Act 2 there wasn't a damn thing to be seen except a lot of stout men and women in floor-length gowns.

The Paris premiere was repeatedly postponed for various reasons; when it finally occurred, the Opéra had devoted 163 rehearsals to *Tannhäuser*. But sheer quantity of rehearsal does not help when you have a tenor so deeply involved with his own importance and so little with the essence of the work as the famous Albert Niemann seems to have been. Still more of a hazard was the conductor, Pierre Louis Philippe Dietsch, described by Hans von Bülow as a "shabby blockhead, a dotard with no intelligence, no memory, no capacity for learning, and no ear." (The Opéra had a rule that composers were not allowed to conduct their own works.)¹

As it turned out, these problems hardly mattered in the light of the fact that *Tannhäuser* became drowned in the noise of organized protest. Program notes most often connect this with the *scandale* over the placement of the ballet. That played a part, but the crucial issues were the political ones of hostility to the Emperor and Empress and Princess Metternich. Disturbance was intermittent on the first night, March 13th, 1861. Whistling and catcalls began with the English horn solo in the Shepherd's Song, but von Bülow reported that the Overture, the Act 1 Septet, Elisabeth's Prayer, Wolfram's "Evening Star" song, and the Pilgrims' Chorus were "enthusiastically applauded without any opposition." At the performances on the 18th

and 25th things were much worse; the latter, which Wagner did not attend, was repeatedly interrupted for a quarter of an hour at a time. Wagner's supporters were always a majority in the house, but human voices and applauding hands cannot prevail against little silver whistles. Advance sales were good, and both the Opéra management and Wagner's friends were convinced that *Tannhäuser* had more staying power than the demonstrators; nonetheless, Wagner withdrew his work after the third performance. It did not return to the Opéra until 1895, but then it took only five years to achieve 100 performances there. Wagner's hatred of Paris and the French stayed alive to the end.²

Of Wagner's post-Paris revisions, the most important was his joining the *bacchanale* *chez* Venus to the Overture without a break. This inspired change was introduced in Vienna with Hans Richter conducting on November 21, 1875. We tend to talk as though there were two versions of *Tannhäuser*, the Dresden and the Paris. In fact there are four, and even this is to streamline the situation a bit—the first Dresden of 1843-45, the second Dresden of 1845-47, the Paris of 1860-61, and the Vienna of 1875. What is most often called the Paris *Tannhäuser* the one you are seeing today—is in fact the "final" Vienna version. The quotation marks are in honor of Wagner's words at the head of this essay.

Charles Gounod had, along with Auber, Berlioz, and Meyerbeer, been one of the composers in the audience at Wagner's Paris concerts. They had excited him, and now he was sure that while *Tannhäuser* had been a momentary disaster it was bound to be a long-term triumph. As he put it, "God grant me a failure like that!" Wagner himself came to think of it as one of the major markers in his artistic life: earlier, I quoted his assessment of *Tannhäuser* as a "consummate drama" even while expressing reservations about some of its musical insufficiencies.

Basic to Wagner's early dissatisfaction with *Tannhäuser* was the feeling that he had not done justice to the part of Venus and that he wanted to promote her from her original, just beyond walk-on status. It was untidy dramaturgy to have such an imbalance between the minimally sketched Venus and the vividly present Elisabeth, who is so fascinating by virtue of the tension between her piety

and virginity on one side and her urgent sexuality on the other. Unclear dramaturgy is not a fault of which Wagner is guilty elsewhere.³

The center of the *Tannhäuser* drama is in the Tannhäuser-Venus-Elisabeth triangle, in the story of the knight and artist torn by the conflicting claims of profane and sacred love. From the outset, in Dresden, Wagner was bedeviled by the way the triangle refused to balance. The part of Venus was too slight, too mechanical, too one-dimensional; moreover, he was bitterly disappointed that the once great Wilhelmine Schröder-Devrient proved temperamentally and vocally unequal to it. (It was the experience of seeing her Leonore in *Fidelio* when he was sixteen that made it clear to him that he had to be a composer.) The prospect of the Paris production provided the occasion to strengthen the role of Venus and thus equalize its force in the triangle.⁴

In the first scene, Wagner puts on stage the always painful spectacle of a man trying to extricate himself from a connection with a woman. (Both the German "peinlich" and the French "pénible" carry a sense that is missing from the English "painful," one of something embarrassing to the witness.) In the Paris version, this is more complex than in the original and to that extent more interesting.

To begin with, the text makes it so. The confrontation of Venus and Tannhäuser in the Dresden version is direct, efficient, and, with a strong Venus, it can be effective. In the revision, Wagner portrays a Venus who is in the grip of a far greater range of emotions—rage, of course, but also tenderness, bewilderment, and finally panic at the unprecedented experience of seeing her sexual charms fail. In her confusion of spirit, she also becomes less and less able to keep the issues in focus, and to figure out how to address her runaway lover most persuasively. In response to Venus's barrage of blandishment and abuse, Tannhäuser's frustration at his inability to make clear to her why he must return to a world of bird song and church bells, of green meadows and starry skies, sends him deeper and deeper into anguished muddle as well. Second only to Tristan, Tannhäuser, particularly the Tannhäuser of the later versions, is psychologically by far the most challenging of Wagner's tenor heroes.

But this is opera, and in opera it is the

¹ On the plus side, Marie Sax as Elisabeth won the praise of, among others, Wagner, Baudelaire, and von Bülow, as did the Italian baritone Morelli for his Wolfram. Adolphe Sax, father of Marie and inventor of the saxophone, helped out by supplying extra instruments for the hunting music and conducting the off-stage brass. The choreographer for the Venusburg revels, drolly listed on the playbill as a *divertissement*, was Marius Petipa, the future creator of *Swan Lake* and *Sleeping Beauty*.

² He made an exception for Judith Gautier, daughter of the poet Théophile Gautier, a brilliant woman and the first to be elected to the Académie Goncourt, and married for a time to the poet and novelist Catulle Mendès. As a girl of fifteen, she had stood up to Berlioz when she thought him disrespectful of Wagner and a bad colleague. Wagner had a romantically and sexually tinged friendship with her in the two years following the first Bayreuth Festival in 1876.

³ Wagner's dramaturgic skill becomes most evident when you can actually experience his work in the theater rather than on recordings and broadcasts. How powerful, for example, are his silent figures—Parsifal in much of Act I of the opera named for him, Kundry in Act 3, and Melot in *Tristan*.

⁴ Fortunata Tedesco, the Venus in the Paris production, also turned out less than ideal; moreover, she was costumed in what one observer described as a bundle of white rags.



From San Francisco Opera's *Tannhäuser*s of yesteryear: Friedrich Schorr as Wolfram in 1931; Nelson Eddy as Wolfram in 1934; Jerome Hines as Biterolf in 1941.

music that matters most, that defines character and atmosphere.⁵ Because a decade and a half had gone by since Dresden, a period in which Wagner had composed *Lohengrin*, *Das Rheingold*, *Die Walküre*, most of *Siegfried*, and, most crucially, *Tristan und Isolde*, he now commanded resources undreamed of in Dresden. He could "place" Venus with a newly potent certainty and incredible vividness. When she causes a grotto to appear so as to remind Tannhäuser of the sensual delights that await him if he stays with her—"Geliebter! Komm"—Wagner's new music, with the gleam of its nine-part violin texture and its winged and trilling flutes, is dizzying in its evocation of *luxé* and *volupté*. The passage just before that, broken by silences, harmonies adrift, astoundingly and unforgettably suggests Venus's longing, her lust, her confusion of mind and spirit. No doubt Wagner understood those states of mind in 1845, but he could not yet compose them. That knowledge came only with the experience of showing us *Tristan* and *Isolde* in their agonized ship-

board dance. Likewise, it was only after he had found the musical language for Isolde's rage and scorn that Wagner could make us sense the force of Venus's anger.

Because this is opera and because it is the music that must, in the end, deliver meaning, the Paris depiction of what happens inside the Venusberg—quite as bad as sober above-ground citizens imagined with their mix of fear and secretly watering mouths—that music, with its gloriously depraved harmonies and sonorities makes us understand perfectly how Tannhäuser is both magnetized by and desperate to escape this hell disguised as paradise. The philosopher Ernst Bloch described the new Venusberg scene as "a masterpiece of lust and nothing but, an abyss of satyriasis, demonized into the gutter by means of *Tristan* sounds—and from the non-existent boundaries we hear the song of the nymphs, bordello glamour of the highest order, a roseate hell."

Tannhäuser had special immediacy for Wagner because it was part of his love letter

to the Middle Ages, an address composed through many works and across many decades. The Italian humanists of the Renaissance had forged an image of those richly diverse centuries as a barbaric era of superstition and ignorance. (Stop a moment to reflect how tendentious are the labels of "Middle Ages" and "Renaissance" that we still use.) As the American historian Norman F. Cantor writes in his captivating study *Inventing the Middle Ages*, "We owe to the historians, poets, and artists of the Romantic era of the early nineteenth century the alteration of [this traditional] image of a 'Middle Age'....[They] replaced this negative view...with the shining image of a Gothic sculpture steeped in idealism, spirituality, heroism, and the adoration of women."

Wagner was very much part of this intellectual and "sentimental" current. Except for *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, all his mature work for the theater is a celebration of the Middle Ages. Growing up in what Cantor calls "the first great age of retro-

⁵ In its final version Wagner called *Tannhäuser* a "Handlung," an "action," the same designation he had used for *Tristan*; originally, though, it was a "große romantische Oper."

continued on page 58



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CAST (in order of appearance)

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<i>Tannhäuser</i>	Wolfgang Schmidt*
<i>Shepherd</i>	James Locke
<i>Landgraf Hermann</i>	Victor von Halem*
<i>Walther von der Vogelweide</i>	Stephen Guggenheim
<i>Biterolf</i>	Daniel Sumegit
<i>Heinrich der Schreiber</i>	Gary Rideout
<i>Reinmar von Zweter</i>	Scott Wilde
<i>Wolfram von Eschenbach</i>	Jorma Hynninen
<i>Elisabeth</i>	Deborah Voigt
<i>Pages</i>	Pamela Dillard, Dallas Lane, Sue Ellen Scheppke, Shelley Seitz

* San Francisco Opera debut

† 1994 Adler Fellow

Ballet soloists:

Evelyn Cisneros (Courtesy of San Francisco Ballet)

Mario Alonzo, Charles Torres

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TIME AND PLACE

ACT I	Scene 1	Venusberg
	Scene 2	A mountain valley in spring

INTERMISSION

ACT II	The Hall of Song
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ACT III	A mountain valley in autumn
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Supertitles by Christopher Bergen, San Francisco Opera.
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The performance will last approximately four hours.

Tannhäuser / Synopsis

ACT I — At Venusberg, the abode of Venus, goddess of love, sirens and bacchantes are in the midst of revels around her and Tannhäuser, a Franconian knight and former minstrel, who has been living with Venus during the past year. She asks him to sing about sensual love and he obliges, but soon continues by saying he is longing for the reality and pain of the real world, and he asks the goddess to let him leave. She alternately curses him and tries to seduce him, and finally realizes that he really wants to leave, and tells him not to turn to her again when the world rejects him. But then she changes her mind and tells him not to deprive her of the pleasure of taking him back when in search of salvation. He exclaims that his salvation lies with Virgin Mary. At the mention of her name, all of Venusberg crumbles and disappears.

Tannhäuser is transported to a valley in the springtime, where a young shepherd sings while watching his flock. A group of pilgrims passes through and Tannhäuser falls to his knees. The Landgraf ("land-count") Hermann arrives with his hunting party, made up of Tannhäuser's former minstrel friends. They are astounded to recognize Heinrich Tannhäuser in the praying figure, and in view of their former disagreements with him, ask him whether he is returning as a friend or foe. Wolfram von Eschenbach, formerly Tannhäuser's close friend, comes to his defense. They all ask him to stay with them, but he hesitates until Wolfram tells him about the love the Landgraf's niece Elisabeth has for him. The rest of the hunting party joins the group and they all depart for the Wartburg.

ACT II — Elisabeth enters Wartburg's Hall of Song, the site of the minstrels' song contests, and joyously greets it as the place where Tannhäuser triumphed in the past and to which he is now returning after a long absence. Wolfram brings Tannhäuser in and encourages him to talk to Elisabeth. Soon, the young couple declares mutual love, while Wolfram, who has long idolized Elisabeth from afar, realizes that his hopes are shattered. The Landgraf, glad of his niece's return to the Great Hall, understands the source of her happiness, asks her to keep it secret for a while and announces that she is to preside over that day's song contest, to which all the nobility of the land had been invited.

When all guests arrive, the Landgraf proposes a subject for the contestants: He who best describes the true nature of love

will be the winner, to whom Elisabeth will present the prize of the winner's choice. Wolfram competes first and sings of pure, holy love, winning everyone's approval, except for Tannhäuser, who — spurred by the memories of Venus — sings in praise of sensual passion, finally revealing his stay at the Venusberg. All are shocked, all ladies but Elisabeth leave, the knights draw their swords and threaten Tannhäuser, but Elisabeth protects him, adding that they have no right to deprive him of his chance of redemption. Finally, the Landgraf proposes a solution: A group of pilgrims is about to leave for Rome. Tannhäuser should join them and obtain the Pope's pardon for his sins; failing that, he should never return. Tannhäuser joins the passing pilgrims with a cry, "To Rome!"

ACT III — In the same valley where Tannhäuser heard the young shepherd, Elisabeth is praying at the shrine of the Virgin, and is joined by Wolfram, who expresses hope that her wishes for Tannhäuser's return would come true. Returning pilgrims come by, but without Tannhäuser. Elisabeth returns to prayer and begs the Virgin to take her life away, so she could plead for Tannhäuser from heaven. She slowly leaves, and Wolfram sings of Elisabeth's longing for death, asking the evening star to greet her soul on her way to heaven.

When the dishevelled Tannhäuser wanders by, Wolfram at first does not recognize him, but Tannhäuser greets him and is in turn asked about the pilgrimage to Rome. He recounts how the Pope pardoned thousands of pilgrims, but after hearing about Tannhäuser's stay in Venusberg, told him that it would be just as impossible for Tannhäuser to receive pardon as it would be for the papal staff to sprout green leaves. Tired of the sound of other men's rejoicing, Tannhäuser is searching for the way back to Venusberg. Wolfram tries to dissuade him, but soon, in answer to Tannhäuser's cries, Venus appears in a vision, calling to him in a welcome. Tannhäuser is oblivious to Wolfram's calls for salvation until he mentions the name of Elisabeth, which makes the vision of Venus disappear. A procession bearing Elisabeth's body appears; Wolfram leads Tannhäuser to the bier, where the penitent sinks to his knees and falls dead over Elisabeth's body. A song is heard: Pilgrims arrive, triumphantly carrying the Pope's staff, which has sprouted bright green leaves.

The performance of October 15th is designated in memory of Francesca Deering Howe to recognize her generous bequest to the San Francisco Opera Association Endowment Fund.

The performance of October 20th is sponsored by Lufthansa German Airlines.

The performance of October 26th is designated in honor of
Mr. and Mrs. Steven Read's membership in the Triple Gold Circle.

The performance of October 29th is sponsored by Meyer Sound Laboratories, Inc.

Tannhäuser Corps de Ballet

Carolyn Houser Carvajal
Jill Cassimatis
Nora Heiber
Marina Hotchkiss
Summer Lee Rhatigan
Debra Rose

David Bier
Ney Fonseca
Danny Furlong
Jon Konetski
Antonio Lopez
Eric Thomé

Tannhäuser

Photos taken in rehearsal
by Marty Sohl

Wolfgang
Schmidt





Members of the San Francisco Corps de Ballet in the Venusberg scene



Charles Torres, Mario Alonzo, Evelyn Cisneros



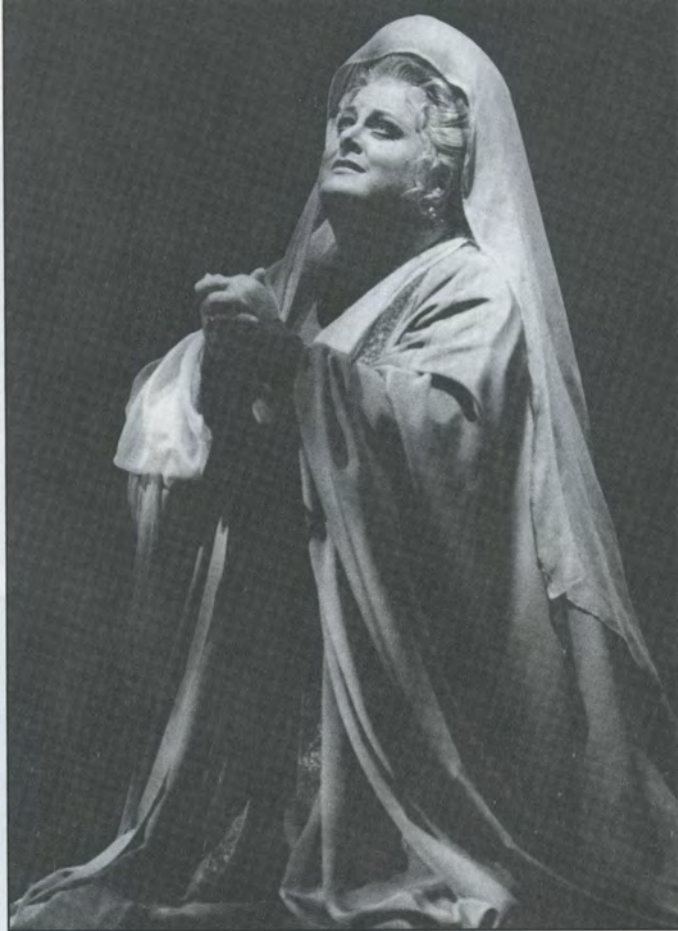
Wolfgang Schmidt

Catherine Keen





Jorma Hynninen



Deborah Voigt



Victor von Halem

Soloists and San Francisco Opera Chorus in Act II





James Locke

Stephen Guggenheim



Daniel Sumegi

Gary Rideout



Wolfgang Schmidt



Scott Wilde



*(l. to r.) Dallas Lane, Shelley Seitz,
Pamela Dillard, Sue-Ellen Scheppke*



Jorma Hynninen



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),
Yurisch, Rasmussen,
Fedderly, Lebherz, Ebberts,
Bernstein, Fitzpatrick

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

PORGY AND BESS

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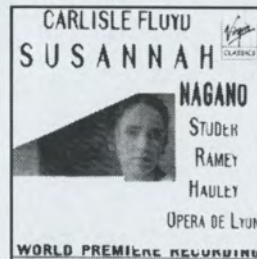
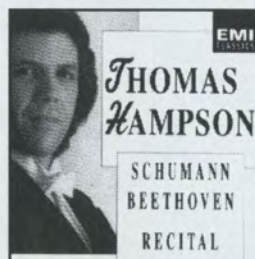
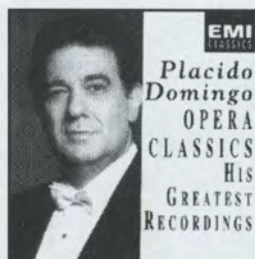
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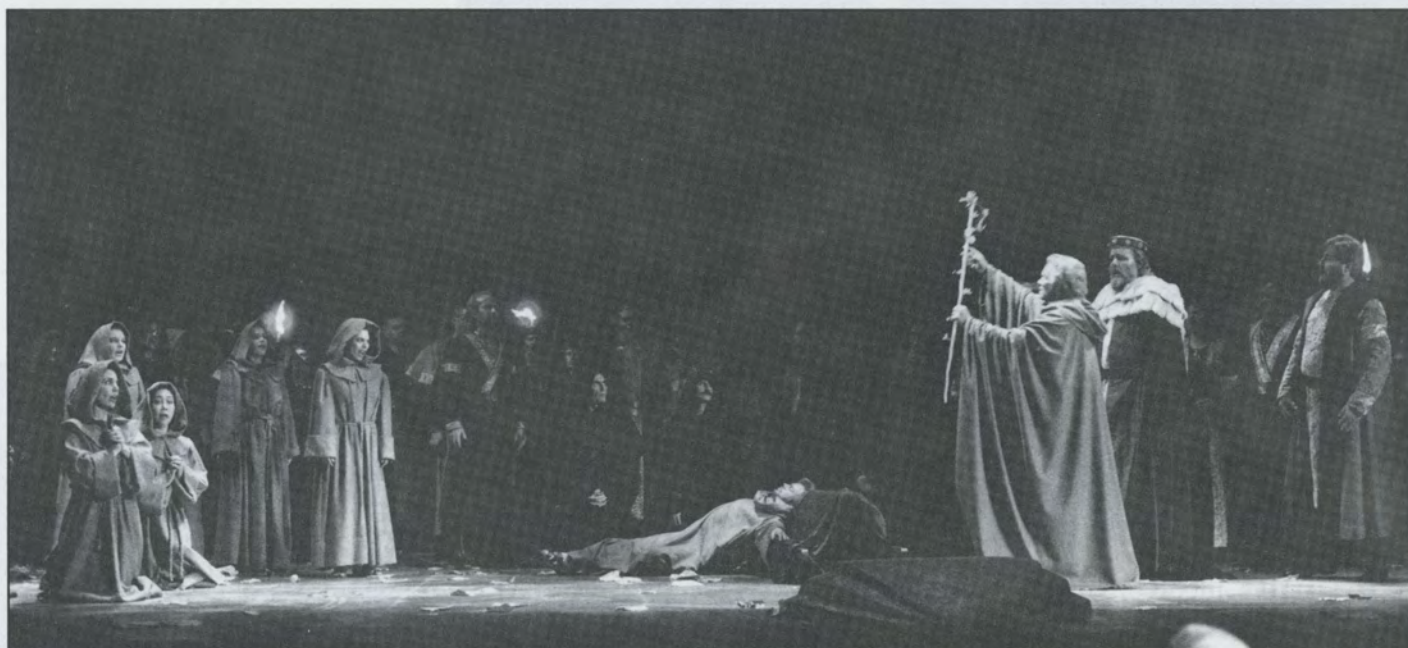
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Final Scene

Tannhäuser Supernumeraries

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Kristin Graham
Marie McNulty
Susan Mead
Lynn Meinhardt
Jennifer A. Minore
Wendy Oaks
Crimson Rose
Kimberly Thompson
Mimi Timberlake
Laurel Winzler

Mel Abrams
Peter Beckers
David Clover
Al Cummings
Jim Diederich
Nicholas Doxey
Robert Dunn
Steve Elerding
Martin Freeman
Joseph Kinyon
Bill Klaproth
DanKyte

Armando Luna
Ian Mishkin
Thomas F. Newman
Lucas Rebston
Will Sanderson
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Don Stoddard
Michael Strickland
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Armin Van Damme
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REPERTOIRE • 1994 SEASON

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

Opening Night New Production

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

World Premiere

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

New Production

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

New Production

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

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

New Production

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

New Production

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

Mefistofele

Boito

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

New Production

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

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

*All performances are in the original language
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San Francisco Opera Premiere

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Clayton, Filimonova*, Waite†, Gao,
Bishop†, Dillard, Shigematsu†;
Leiferkus, Hanedanyan, Pluzhnikov*,
Minzhilkiev*, Lord, Wilde, Sumegit,
Del Campo†, Patriarco†, Condy
Gergiev/Polianichko** (10/21);
Freeman*/Roger*/Munn
Produced in association with the Royal
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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

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Thursday, December 8 at 1:00

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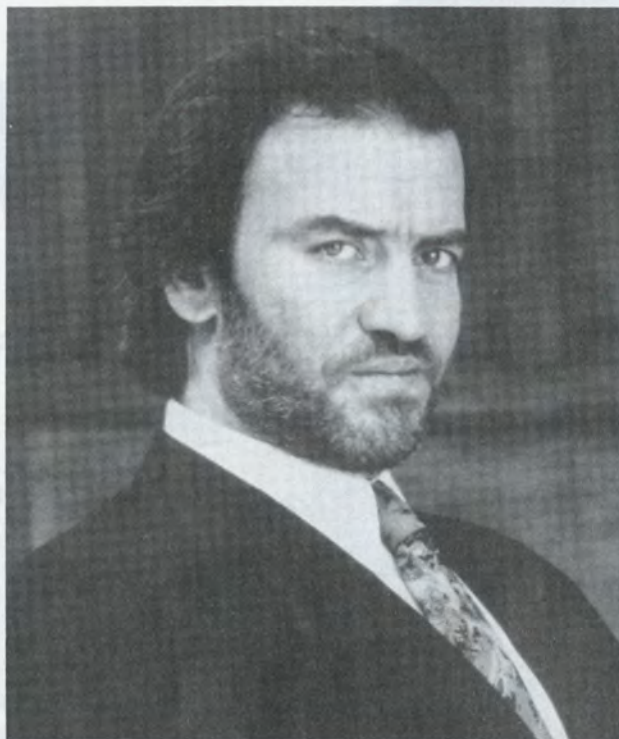
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Performance Highlights

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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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.

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

FRIENDS OF THE KENSINGTON LIBRARY

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

Information: (510) 524-3043

SAN FRANCISCO CITY COLLEGE PREVIEWS

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

Information: (415) 239-3641

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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

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ARTIST PROFILES



Deborah Voigt, who has recently established herself as one of the world's most accomplished dramatic sopranos, portrays her first Elisabeth in *Tannhäuser*. Since her 1986 San Francisco Opera debut in *Don Carlos*, the former Adler Fellow and Merola Opera Program participant has appeared here in *Jenůfa*, *Macbeth* and *The Magic Flute*, and most recently as Amelia in the 1990 performances of *Un Ballo in Maschera*. A featured artist at the Metropolitan Opera (where she recently triumphed in the title role of *Ariadne auf Naxos*, as Chrysothemis in the nationally televised production of *Elektra*, and as Senta in the Met's concert performances of *Der Fliegende Holländer* in Frankfurt), she is also in demand as a recitalist and concert soloist with the leading conductors and orchestras of the world. Recent operatic highlights include her debut at Milan's La Scala as Rezia in Weber's *Oberon*, Ballo's Amelia at the Lyric Opera of Chicago and at the Met, Senta in *Der Fliegende Holländer* in Spain and at the Florence Opera, *Il Trovatore*'s Leonora at the Metropolitan, Elsa in *Lohengrin* in Amsterdam, and the title role of *Aida* at the Arena di Verona. Her recording achievements include *Oberon* (Conlon), Mahler's Eighth Symphony (Shaw), *Der Fliegende Holländer* (Levine), and the role of Cassandre in *Les Troyens* (Dutoit). A native of Illinois, Miss Voigt has won many prestigious awards including first prize in Italy's Verdi Competition and the gold medal in Moscow's prestigious Tchaikovsky Competition. Future plans include her Covent Garden debut (*Ballo's* Amelia, opposite Luciano Pavarotti's Riccardo), Verdi's *Lady Macbeth* in Bologna, her debut at the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires (Chrysothemis) and recordings of *Fidelio* (Colin Davis) and Zemlin-sky's *Lyrische Symphonie* (Sinopoli).



Mezzo-soprano **Catherine Keen**, Venus in *Tannhäuser*, was a 1989-90 Adler Fellow with the S. F. Opera Center and a 1987-88 Merola Opera Program participant, who has sung numerous roles here since her 1989 Company debut in *Satyagraha*. They include Mistress Quickly in the family performance of *Falstaff*, Schwertleite in *Die Walküre*, Maddalena in *Rigoletto*, Prince Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus*, the Third Lady in *The Magic Flute*, Sonya in *War and Peace*, Zulma in *L'Italiana in Algeri*, Hermia in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and Magdalene in *Die Meistersinger*. Opera Center credits include a Schwabacher Debut Recital and Leocasta in Handel's *Giustino*. Miss Keen made her European debut in 1989 with the Deutsche Oper Berlin as Dalila in *Samson et Dalila* and appeared for the first time with the Netherlands Opera in 1991 as the Duchess in *Luisa Miller*. Additional recent performances include *La Traviata* at the Orange Festival, *Samson et Dalila* in Amsterdam, *Luisa Miller* in Geneva, Falla's *The Three-Cornered Hat* with the Atlanta Symphony, Mahler's Eighth Symphony with the Orchestre de Lyon, and a recording of *La Vida Breve* with the Cincinnati Symphony. Miss Keen has appeared in recital throughout North America, and as soloist with several prominent orchestras. The artist is the recipient of a George London/William Sullivan Study Grant, a Puccini Foundation Award, and a grant from the Wagner Society of Northern California. Most recently, she sang in Mahler's *Lied von der Erde* in Paris and in Mahler's Eighth Symphony in Edinburgh, Donald Runnicles conducting. Future plans include a Cherubini Mass in Lyon, Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass* with the San Francisco Symphony, and Venus in *Tannhäuser* in Copenhagen.

TANNHÄUSER



Celebrated in most European opera houses as one of today's leading exponents of heroic German tenor roles, **Wolfgang Schmidt** makes his San Francisco Opera debut in the title role of *Tannhäuser*. Born in Kassel, he studied in Frankfurt and, while still a student, started appearing in opera in concert throughout Germany, as well as in Poland, Romania, Mexico and Venezuela. By now, his career has accumulated a number of high points, including the opening of the 1992 Bayreuth Festival in the title role of their new production of *Tannhäuser* (conducted by Donald Runnicles), his 1993 Metropolitan Opera debut as Siegfried in *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung* and the same two roles in this year's new Bayreuth *Ring* production, conducted by James Levine. Member of the Deutsche Oper am Rhein in Düsseldorf since 1988, he has also been regularly featured at the Vienna Staatsoper since 1991. That same year, he also bowed at the Salzburg Festival in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*. Through his young career, Schmidt has been heard as Max and Hüon in *Oberon* (Eutin Summer Festival), the title role of *Otello* (Dortmund), Florestan in *Fidelio* (Düsseldorf, Cologne, Stuttgart, Berlin, Munich and at London's Covent Garden), Erik in *Der Fliegende Holländer* (Dresden, Bregenz Festival), the title role of *Lohengrin* (Karlsruhe, Hannover, Berlin, Hamburg), the Emperor in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* (Vienna, 1991), as well as Siegmund and Siegfried in Wagner's *Ring of the Nibelung* (Cologne/Düsseldorf, Vienna). Plans in the artist's near future include Tristan in a new Dresden production of *Tristan und Isolde*, scheduled for the spring of 1995.



Finnish baritone **Jorma Hynninen** returns to the San Francisco Opera for the first time since his appearance as Amfortas in our 1988 production of *Parsifal*. Since the beginning of his career with the Finnish National Opera in Helsinki, he has been a leading soloist there, and from 1984 to 1990 also artistic director of the company. In 1992, he became artistic director of the prestigious Savonlinna Opera Festival and last summer appeared there in the title role of Verdi's *Macbeth*. In addition to his commitments in Finland, Hynninen is also pursuing a very active international career, which includes appearances in virtually all major European opera centers and music festivals. His Metropolitan Opera debut took place in 1984 in the role of Rodrigo in *Don Carlo*. He has subsequently returned to the Met as Count Almaviva in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Wolfram in *Tannhäuser*, and in the title role of *Eugene Onegin*. Following his S.F. Opera debut, he also bowed at the Chicago Lyric Opera in *Don Carlo*. The artist has been closely involved with the emergence of Finnish contemporary opera, singing in world premieres of Aulis Sallinen's *The Red Line*, *The King Goes Forth to France* and *Kullervo* (given at Los Angeles Opera), and Rautavaara's *Thomas and Vincent*. In addition to opera, he is very active in the concert hall, both in recital and with prominent orchestras and conductors, and in the recording studio. His recordings include complete operas, Schubert's song cycles of *Winterreise* and *Die Schöne Müllerin*, Schumann's *Dichterliebe*, Mahler's Eighth Symphony, the Brahms Requiem, and numerous recordings of works by Finnish composers.



Basso **Victor von Halem**, Landgraf in *Tannhäuser*, was born in Berlin and raised in Italy and Portugal. He started his career in 1966 when Herbert von Karajan engaged him for the Deutsche Oper in Berlin, chose him for many recordings and invited him many times to the Salzburg Festival. He also appeared in concert and opera all over the world with other prominent conductors (Böhm, Abbado, Ozawa, Sinopoli, Prêtre, Stein), and at the most important music festivals (Edinburgh, Orange, Tanglewood, Athens). The artist's repertoire includes more than 90 roles (from Sarastro to Philip II to Rocco to Gurnemanz, Hagen and many others), some of which are featured on a long list of recordings, the most recent being that of La Roche in Strauss's *Capriccio*, recorded with the Vienna Philharmonic. He received a Grammy Award for his recording of *Parsifal* (Karajan) and in 1992 received the Pegasus Award for his first Hans Sachs in *Die Meistersinger* at the Spoleto Festival. The past season saw him as Daland in *Der Fliegende Holländer* in Montreal, the Grand Inquisitor in Catania's *Don Carlo*, Seneca in *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* in Marseilles, and in *Salome* at the Florence May Festival with Zubin Mehta. One of the biggest successes of his career occurred recently in Dallas, when he received a standing ovation after his first performance of the title role of *Der Fliegende Holländer*. The singer's plans for the near future include the role of Hunding in this year's opening night *Die Walküre* at Milan's La Scala, the Dutchman with Opera Colorado, and Ramfis in *Aida* at next summer's festival at the Verona Arena.



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



In his fourth season with the Company, Canadian tenor **Gary Rideout** portrays Heinrich in *Tannhäuser*. His debut took place in 1989 in Berg's *Lulu*, and last season, he was here for Count Hauk-Šendorf in *The Makropulos Case* and Balthasar Zorn in *Die Meistersinger*. Formerly a Resident Artist with the Canadian Opera Company of Toronto, he has appeared with that company in numerous productions. Elsewhere, he has sung the roles of Rodolfo in *La Bohème* and Bacchus in *Ariadne auf Naxos* for Opera East, and Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* for Calgary Opera. His concert engagements throughout Canada include performances with the Toronto Symphony, Victoria Symphony, Symphony Nova Scotia, and the Ukrainian Millennium Choir. The versatile artist, who received degrees from Michigan State University, York University in Toronto, and the University of Toronto, also performs in musicals, cabaret, film, and legitimate theater.



Australian bass **Daniel Sumegi** (who recently portrayed the title part of S.F. Opera Center's North American premiere production of Tippet's *King Priam*) sings three roles: A Gypsy (*Il Trovatore*), Biterolf (*Tannhäuser*), and Faust (*The Fiery Angel*). A 1993-94 Adler Fellow, he made his Company debut in 1992 as Mathieu in *Andrea Chénier* and Snug in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, subsequently appearing here in *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Capriccio*, *Die Meistersinger*, *The Queen of Spades* and *La Bohème*. A Merola Opera Program participant in 1991 (United States debut in *La Traviata*), he toured Japan and the U.S. last year in Western Opera Theater's production of *Bohème*. The young artist has also performed at the Lyric Opera of Queensland, State Opera of South Australia, Victoria State Opera, Australian Opera, London Opera Festival, Barcelona's Olympic Games Arts Festival, and Vienna's Konzerthaus. A finalist in the 1992 Luciano Pavarotti/Philadelphia Opera Company International Voice Competition, Sumegi is the recipient of numerous scholarships and awards, including this year's Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. Next season's assignments take him to Turin (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), Australian Opera, Sydney (*Aida*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*), Victoria State Opera (Prince Gremin in *Eugene Onegin*) and De National Reisopera of the Netherlands (Méphistophélès in *Faust*).



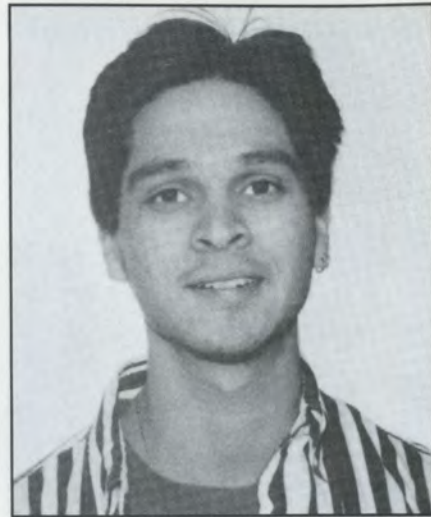
Bass **Scott Wilde**, in his third consecutive San Francisco Opera season, portrays Reinmar in *Tannhäuser* and a Worker in *The Fiery Angel*. In his 1992 debut season with the Company, he sang roles in *Boris Godunov*, *La Forza del Destino*, *Andrea Chénier* and *Christophe Colomb*. Last fall, he was also featured as Roberto in *I Vespri Siciliani*. A native of Wisconsin and a graduate of the Manhattan School of Music, he continued his studies as a member of the Juilliard Opera Center and several other prominent young artists' programs. Some of his recent engagements include Crespel and Luther in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* and Silvano in *Un Ballo in Maschera* with Washington Opera; Commendatore in *Don Giovanni* and Theseus in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at St. Louis Opera; Leporello in *Don Giovanni* and Don Basilio in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* with Madison Opera; Don Alfonso in *Così fan tutte* with Virginia Opera; Loderico in *Otello* with Orlando Opera; and the First Nazarene in *Salome* with the Washington and Baltimore opera companies. Wilde was also featured in several roles with the New York City Opera. Future engagements include Ferrando in *Il Trovatore* with Opera Southwest in New Mexico, and Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte* with Madison Opera.



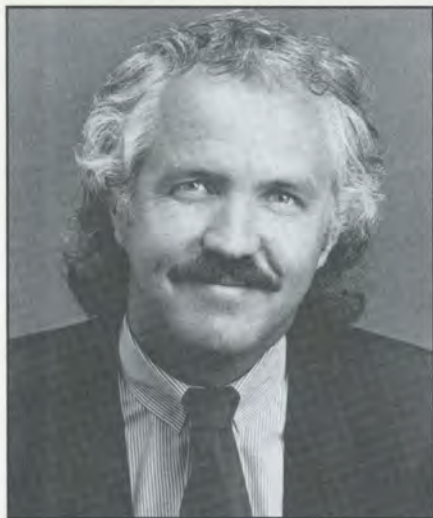
Principal Dancer of the San Francisco Ballet, **Evelyn Cisneros** returns to San Francisco Opera for her third season. She first appeared with the Company in the 1983 *Traviata*, and returned in 1990 as a solo dancer in *Die Fledermaus*. A native of Long Beach, she joined the S.F. Ballet in 1977 and was named Principal Dancer in 1980. She has performed in a long list of featured roles with the company, including Princess Aurora in *The Sleeping Beauty*, Odette/Odile in *Swan Lake*, as well as principal roles in *Confidencias* and *Valses Poeticos* — all ballets created especially for her by S.F. Ballet's Artistic Director Helgi Tomasson. Miss Cisneros was trained at the School of American Ballet and at the San Francisco Ballet School. By now, she has received a great number of honors and awards, including last year's Outstanding Artist of the Year by the City of Huntington Beach; the 1989 Isadora Duncan Performer's Award; the 1989 La Raza Lawyers' Association Award for Outstanding Achievement in the field of the performing arts; and many others. Miss Cisneros has appeared as guest artist with the Royal New Zealand Ballet, Toledo Ballet, Ballet Detroit, Kansas City Ballet, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, the Los Angeles Philharmonic at Hollywood Bowl, and (twice) the International Ballet Festival hosted by Alicia Alonso in Havana, Cuba. Among her television appearances are several national telecasts as well as a live broadcast from the White House.



Principal Dancer with the Oakland Ballet Company, **Mario Alonzo** has been featured in a number of leading roles with that company, among them: *La Boutique Fantasque*, *Death and the Maiden*, *Gaité Parisienne*, *Giselle*, *Grand Tarantella*, *Hansel and Gretel*, *Les Noces*, *Nothin' Doin' Bar*, *Nutcracker*, *Pavlova Dances*, *Peter and the Wolf*, *Petrushka*, *The Rite of Spring*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Seasons*, *Sibelius*, and *The Walk to the Paradise Garden*. In addition to an extensive dancing schedule, he has also designed costumes for the Oakland Ballet for the past seven years. A native of Costa Rica, Alonzo grew up in the Bay Area. In 1990, he made his debut as a choreographer with *Epiphany*. His latest work, *The Unraveling*, is scheduled for an October 13 premiere at Oakland's Paramount Theatre.



Charles D. Torres, ballet soloist in *Tannhäuser*, began his training in his native Arizona, continuing, on full scholarships, with the San Francisco Ballet, Cleveland Ballet and at the Royal Danish Ballet School workshops, as well as the School of American Ballet and the Arizona State University. He is currently in his seventh season with the Sacramento Ballet, where he is a Principal Dancer and Ballet Master. His roles range from contemporary works to full-length classics and include work with esteemed choreographers and coaches such as Choo San Goh, Bruce Marks, Arthur Mitchell, André Prokovsky, Domy Reiter-Soffer, Violette Verdy, John Clifford and Mikhail Lavrovsky. Torres has also danced with Ballet West Arizona, Ballet Austin, the Carlisle Project, Chautauqua Ballet under the direction of Jean-Pierre Bonnefous, and several companies in the Los Angeles area.



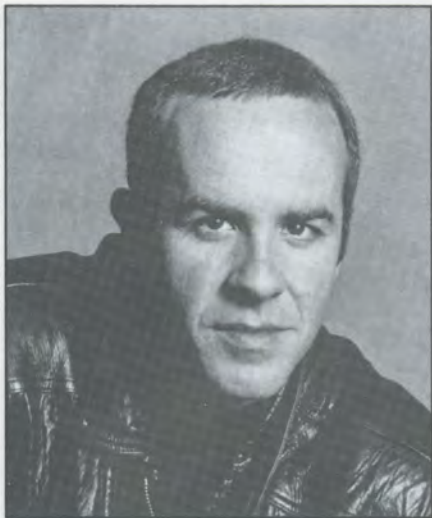
San Francisco Opera's music director since 1992, **Donald Runnicles** is widely considered one of the finest opera conductors active today, with a distinguished series of international triumphs to his credit. Born in Edinburgh, the Scottish musician started his professional career in Germany, where he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



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



Multi-talented **Michael Smuin**, who created the dances for *Tannhäuser*, is an Emmy and Tony award-winning choreographer and director for stage, screen and television. Early in his career he was principal dancer and resident choreographer for both the American Ballet Theatre and San Francisco Ballet, and subsequently served as artistic director of San Francisco Ballet from 1973-85. In addition to local directing credits for the stage (*St. Joan* and *Faustus in Hell* for the American Conservatory Theater, as well as the recent production of *Fred Astaire in Rehearsal*), Smuin has received numerous accolades for his work on Broadway: *Anything Goes*, *Shōgun*, *Sophisticated Ladies* and *Canciones de mi Padre*. Emmy award-winning television credits include the ballets *A Song for Dead Warriors*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Tempest*, in addition to the critically acclaimed *Voice/Dance* featuring Bobby McFerrin and *Canciones de mi Padre* with Linda Ronstadt. He has also served as choreographer for the films *The Joy Luck Club*, *Dracula*, *Golden Gate*, *Cotton Club*, *Rumble Fish* and the soon-to-be-released *A Walk in the Clouds*. Born in Montana and currently based in San Francisco, Smuin made his Company debut in 1972 with the dances for *Aida*.



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

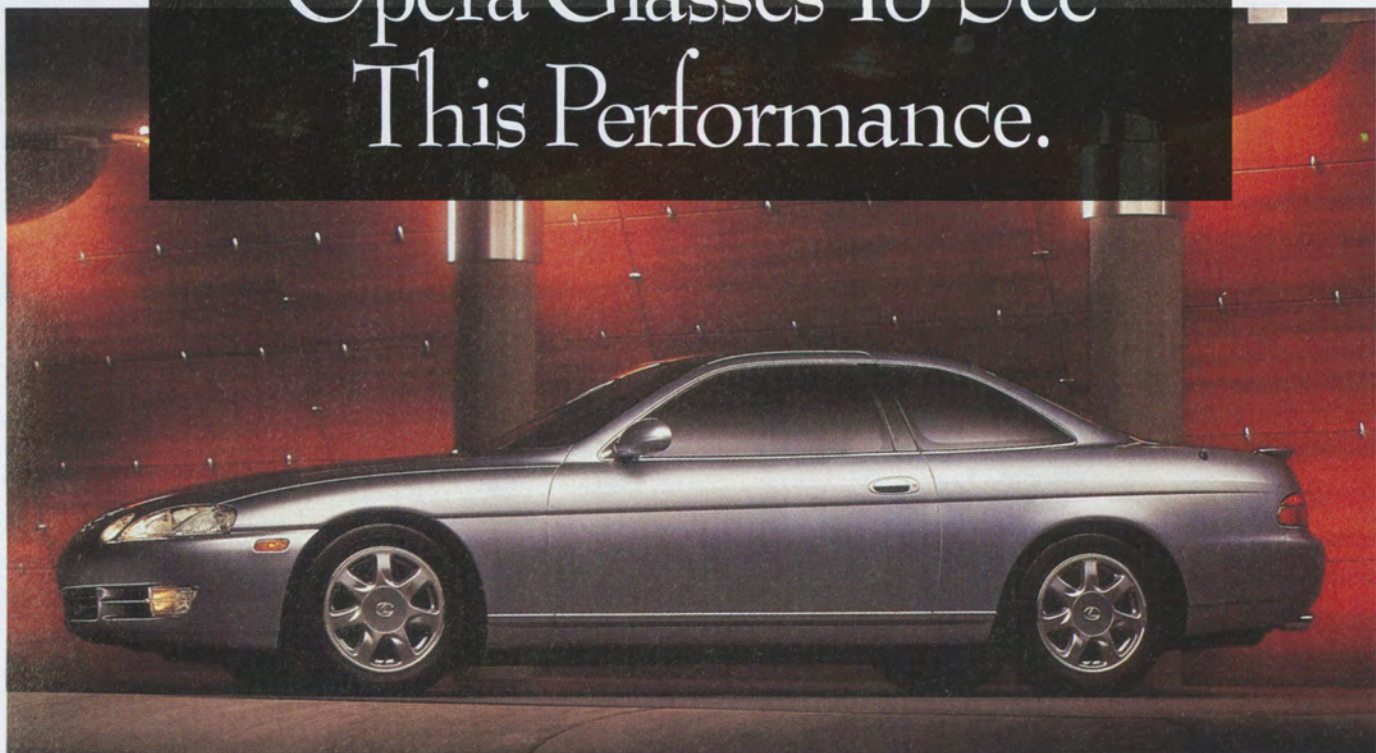


Walter Mahoney designed the costumes for the new production of *Tannhäuser*. Resident Costume Shop Manager for San Francisco Opera, (and celebrating his fifth decade with the Company), his designs were seen here last fall in *La Bohème* and *Die Meistersinger*. Additional SFO design credits have been *L'Elisir d'Amore* (1992); *Manon Lescaut* (1988), the same year he interpreted the late Nicola Benois's costume designs for *Maometto II*; the costumes for Ruth Ann Swenson in *Roméo et Juliette* and for Hoffmann's three loves (Olympia, Antonia and Giulietta) in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* (1987); as well as the designs for Mirella Freni in *Manon Lescaut* (fall 1983) and for Frederica von Stade in *La Sonnambula* (fall 1984). He also designed the original costumes for Marilyn Horne in *Samson et Dalila* (fall 1983); Katia Ricciarelli in *La Traviata* (fall 1984); Renata Scotto and Cheryl Parrish in *Werther* (fall 1985); and Gheňa Dimitrova in *Il Trovatore* (summer 1986). The native San Franciscan began his local association in 1943 in the Wardrobe Department, and worked with Goldstein & Company, the then-supplier of costumes for San Francisco Opera, until 1971. Since then, he has concentrated most of his efforts on the San Francisco Opera Costume Shop.



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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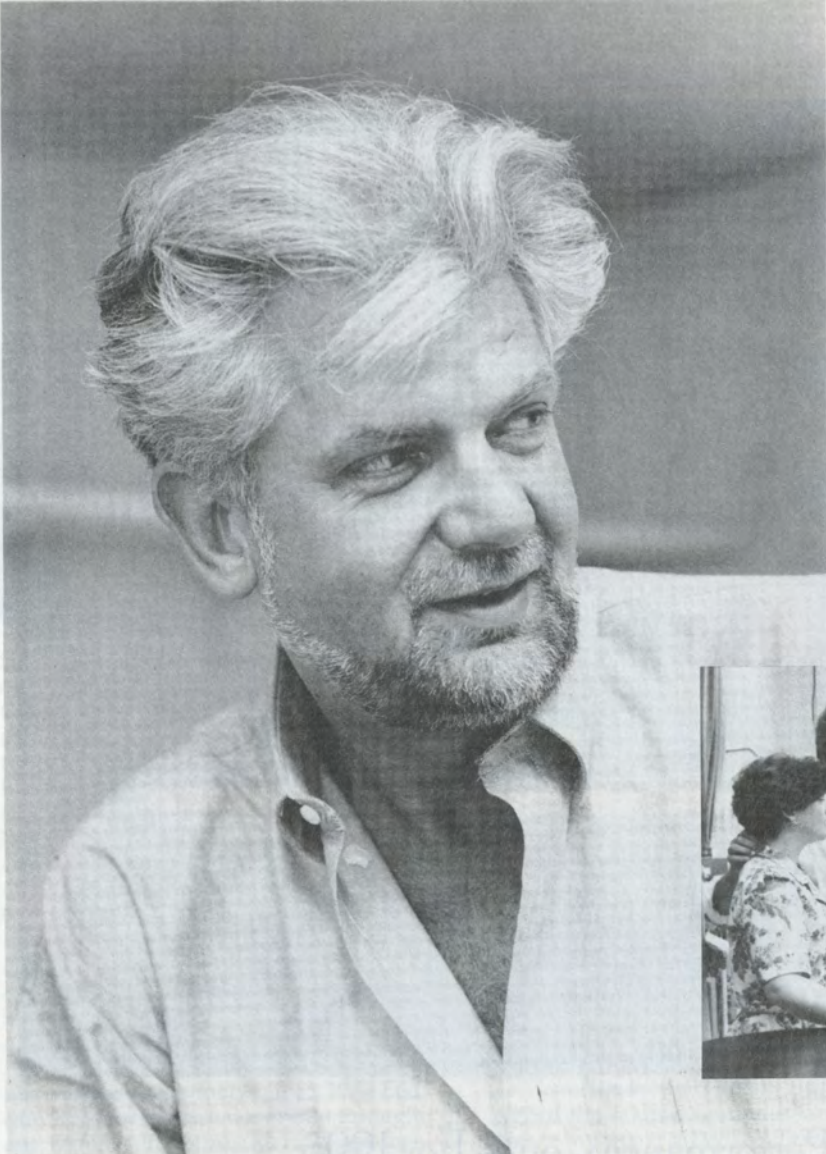
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New Man at the Center: **MIKAEL ELIASSEN**

By ELIZABETH BARLOW

It's Thursday afternoon, three weeks before the opening of Opera's Fall Season, and the atmosphere on the third floor of the Opera House is electric—the Merola Opera Program singers are in full voice in the Ballet Studio, while from behind the closed doors of the rehearsal rooms come the muffled sounds of sopranos in love, tenors in despair and baritones up to no good. There is a quiver of excitement in the air and just a faint touch of nerves. ►

Mikael Eliassen, San Francisco Opera Center's new music director, is also shown at work with Svetlana Sech during a 1994 Merola Opera Program public master class.

Elizabeth Barlow is Associate Director of Marketing at San Francisco Opera. She is a writer and artist with publication credits in national and international magazines.

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In room 304, soprano and 1994 Adler Fellow Claudia Waite is singing her heart out as Leonora, Verdi's lovelorn heroine in *Il Trovatore*. (She is covering the role in the fall production.) Her rich soprano swells in the aria "Tacea la notte placida," she hits the high B flat with ease, takes a huge breath, and—the piano stops. Her coach, Mikael Eliassen, sits quietly for a moment, gazing at the keyboard. Then, fingering a corner of the score, he asks nonchalantly, "What exactly is Leonora singing about here?" Claudia thinks seriously about this and then replies that she is singing about her feelings of attraction and love for the mysterious troubadour who is wooing her. Eliassen's face breaks into a slow grin and he says, "Ah, so that's it! I would have thought she was singing about the pound of butter she was going to buy at the store. I think you are singing too much like a Protestant. Let's try it again."

His back ramrod straight, Eliassen begins to play and Claudia sings the aria again; this time she leans and sways into the music as Leonora evokes the first bloom of love. Eliassen looks up from the piano at Claudia constantly, watching her face, and when the last note fades away, he claps his hands once and booms, "That's a girl! Terrific! Terrific!" Claudia giggles, Eliassen laughs and the coaching session proceeds with a newly present tone of mischief and gaiety.

An impish spirit of fun pervades all encounters with Mikael Eliassen, San Francisco Opera Center's new music director. His conversations are laced with huge, rolling guffaws of laughter and his irreverent brand of humor is legendary. But, say many of Eliassen's students, he is a demanding and rigorous teacher, who insists upon nothing less than total commitment from young artists. Says Claudia Waite, "I would hate to come into one of Mikael's coaching sessions unprepared—I wouldn't be able to keep up with his energy. He plays like a demon, he has a great sense of humor, and he is very demanding. But a funny thing always happens. I discover that what Mikael wants me to do is exactly what I've wanted to do all along, but just

didn't know it."

A frequent guest coach with the Merola Opera Program and renowned accompanist for artists all over the world, Eliassen took up his new post in August. Says Opera Center Director Christopher Hahn, "His acceptance of the position of Music Director pleases me tremendously—we have already discovered an uncanny rapport, and we are both passionate about the same things,

THE RING

by Richard Wagner

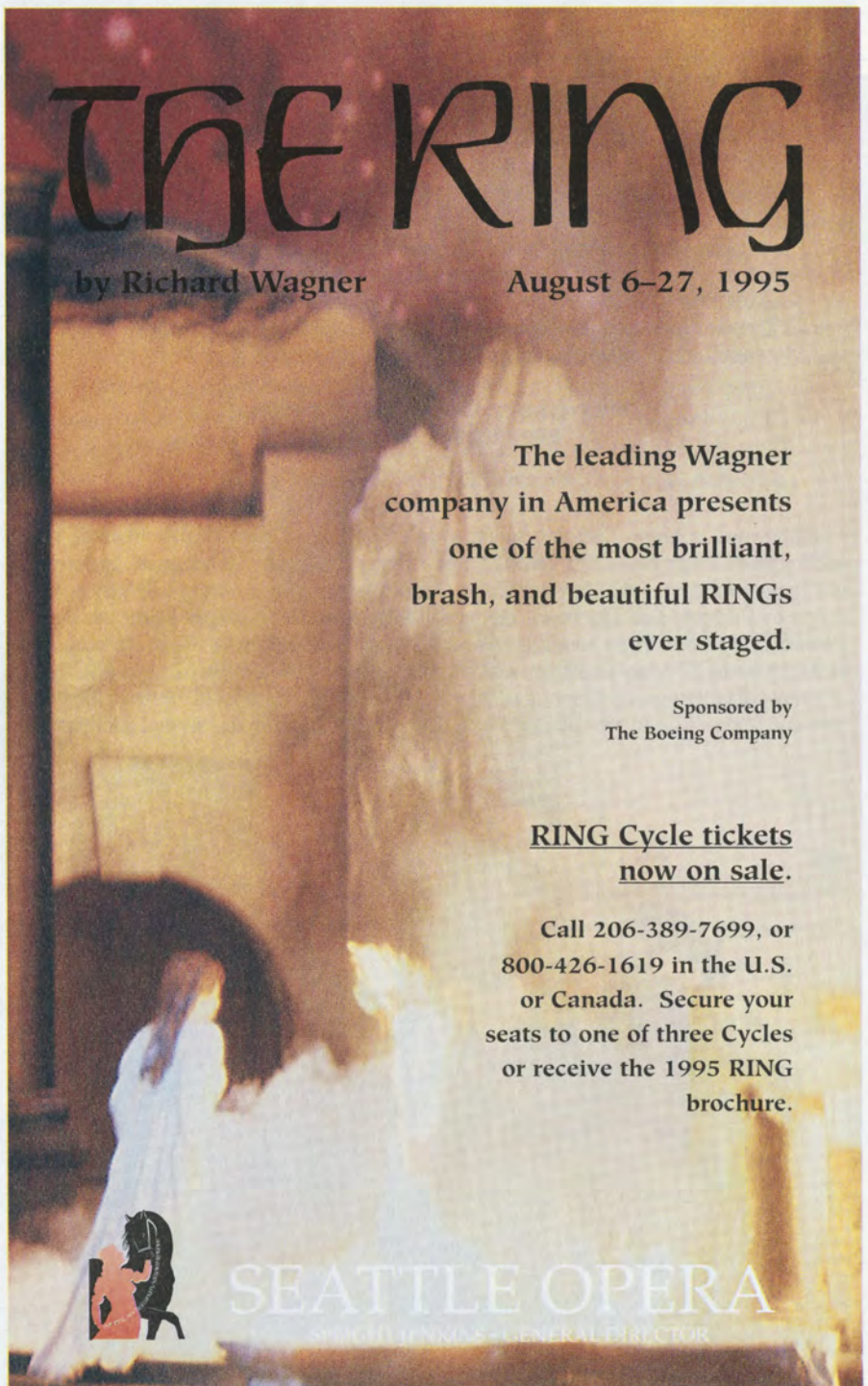
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Opposite:
Mikael Eliassen and Claudia Waite
during the coaching session
described in this article.

OPERA CENTER EVENTS

The San Francisco Opera Center offers promising young operatic talents the opportunity to grow through a continuing sequence of performance and career development programs. The Opera Center's programs include the Merola Opera Program, Western Opera Theater, the Adler Fellowships, the Showcase Series, Brown Bag Opera, the Schwabacher Debut Recitals, Pacific Rim Cultural Exchange Program, Pacific Voices and education programs which in 1994 included Interactive Opera!, *The Party and the Pack* and *Opera Inside Out*.

Deborah Voigt in Recital Herbst Theatre

October 31, 1994 at 8 pm

Renowned soprano Deborah Voigt, a San Francisco Opera Center alumna, and accompanist Peter Grunberg, head of San Francisco Opera's music staff, perform in this benefit recital for the San Francisco Opera Center. The program will feature four songs by Brahms: *Das Mädchen*, *Verzagen*, *Salome* and *Von ewiger Liebe*; Wagner's *Wesendonk Lieder*; three songs by Pietro Mascagni: *La tua stella*, *Pena d'amore* and *Rosa*; three by Charles Tomlinson Griffes: *Cleopatra to the Asp*, *Pierrot* and *The Rose of the Night*; and a group of songs by Richard Strauss: *Muttertändelei*, *Befreit*, *Ich liebe dich* and *Kling!* Tickets are \$30 and \$22. Call (415) 864-3330 for tickets and information.



Western Opera Theater 1994 Tour

Mozart's *Don Giovanni*

September 13 — October 30, 1994

Western Opera Theater's 28th national tour will feature a new production of *Don Giovanni* based upon the original open-air staging by acclaimed British director John Copley. The production will travel to 29 cities in 16 states, including performances in Kansas, Wisconsin, Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Columbus, Vermont, Maine, Connecticut, New Jersey and New York. For further information call (415) 565-6491.

Western Opera Theater's 1994 *Don Giovanni* touring cast (pictured above) will include Tamara Hardesty as Zerlina and David Okerlund's Don Giovanni.

especially the nurturing of young operatic talent. His ability to communicate his joy in music-making is infectious and liberating, and if the corridors echo with laughter and energy, I know that Mikael is not far off."

Eliassen's abundant energy is matched by his passion for the discovery and development of young artists and an unflagging delight in music. While coaching artists for Merola Opera Program's August production of *Don Giovanni*, Eliassen revealed that he has seen hundreds of performances of the opera in his lifetime. So how does he maintain his obvious sense of anticipation and joy for performance number 784? "I was very fortunate to work with teachers early in my career who were always saying, 'Isn't this wonderful? Isn't this fun?' " says Eliassen. "We are here to engage in joy. This is a celebration. I feel that the fact that we can give joy through music is the most important thing that we do."

Eliassen began his own celebration of music in his native Denmark, in a musical family. When the family emigrated to Canada, he studied piano at the University of Montreal for three years and then went to Vienna, where he studied with the renowned piano teacher Dieter Weber for four years. It was during those lean student years in Vienna that Eliassen got his first real taste of opera and the course of his life was changed. "My background in opera began," says Eliassen, "in standing room at the Vienna State Opera. There was a group of us who went to the opera five nights a week, and, being too poor to purchase seats, we stood. I probably saw 4,000 performances in five years. I was very fortunate because that was an era of great productions and the end of an era of great singers. And that was really my opera education."

During that time, he began playing piano for voice teachers, and was soon accompanying singers in concerts and recitals throughout Europe. "I was very lucky," he recalls, "to be only a student myself, yet was being given these tremendous opportunities by great teachers and singers." ➤

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With those experiences behind him, Eliassen immigrated to New York City and set about establishing himself as a coach and accompanist. He recalls, "I didn't know anyone; I hadn't gone to school there. But in the end, that was a very fortunate thing, because I wasn't beholden to anyone in the industry, and I was able to make my mistakes, to be weird, and a little strange, without having to conform to the mainstream mold. I suppose I had a certain mixture of innocence and naiveté, and I was often saying, 'Oh, is *that* how people get ahead?' I've always thought of myself as an outsider, so it's very curious now to be working two jobs (SF Opera Center and the Curtis Institute, where he is head of the Opera and Voice departments) that are definitely not outsider jobs. I like to think that I am here because I didn't play the game in the normal way."

The importance of individuality, of personal artistic expression, is a major component of Eliassen's teaching style. "We live in an era in which the individual part of singing is talked about and everyone says 'Oh yes, that's very important,' but in fact, it is not acceptable," he says. "We greatly encourage the person who will *go to that point over there*, but not the person who will really take a risk and *GO ALL THE WAY OVER THERE!* When you attend an audition, there will be 20, 30, 40 singers there. And unless someone stands out with an extraordinary talent, the judges will pick those singers who everyone can agree upon. But every now and then, a singer will come out and perhaps not do everything correctly, but I will respond with this incredible emotion, because he or she has something to say. And I want to hear it said in that singer's own way. That is what I hope we can teach our students at the Opera Center—an awareness of what it means to be an artist."

For Eliassen, the joy of teaching comes in those moments when a young singer's artistry first stirs to life. Because opera singers often begin studying later in life than other performers, they may not even think of themselves as artists. "Many students come to us," says

San Francisco Opera

Eliassen, "because their high school chorus teacher told them they had a wonderful instrument. I find it tremendously moving and touching when I watch a student discover that she (or he) has a generosity of soul that she never knew she had. I want to provide the environment in which that discovery can be made."

Zheng Cao, a 1994 Merola Opera Program participant, has studied with Eliassen for three years at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia and she describes working with him as a fabulous adventure. She says, "He makes singing fun. You may be tired when you go into a coaching session with him, but as soon as he touches the keyboard, you feel his passion for the music. He's very tough and he always gets right to the point, but his passion is just unbelievable. It's just a joy to work with him."

Back in Room 304, Claudia Waite is singing "Marietta's Lied" from Korngold's *Die Tote Stadt*. She doesn't know the piece well, but Eliassen is urging her to work on it, because "you have a divine voice and it is perfect for you." She forgets the words, and he recites them with her, helping her with the pronunciation. It is near the end of the coaching session, and Claudia's face is flushed with the exertion of singing passionately for nearly an hour while trying to remember words she hasn't memorized, and she lifts the hair off the back of her neck to cool off. Eliassen, still sitting up perfectly straight at the piano bench, says, "O.K., let's try it." Claudia sighs and says, "I'll do my best." Eliassen looks at her seriously for a moment, and then says, "Oh, I know you will. I know you will." He strikes the first notes, Claudia begins to sing and the room vibrates with sound. A beautiful sound. She soars through the high A's and B's, hits the final note and, for the first time in the aria, looks over at Eliassen. His arms are crossed and he stares back at her, expressionless. Then all at once his face comes alive and he bursts out, "Ha-ha! Terrific! Terrific! See how beautiful it sounds when you remember the words?" ■

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medievalism," he was phenomenally well read on this subject; indeed, it is hard to think of another composer as insatiably curious across the board and as well read as Wagner. He read in order to possess, and so with a sovereign sense of ownership he conflates—here in *Tannhäuser*, in *The Ring*, in *Tristan*, and in *Parsifal*—different literary sources, to the occasional outrage of some of the historians of his time. Similarly, most of the characters in *Tannhäuser* are amalgams of historical and fictional models from diverse sources.⁶

In discussing the full title of *Tannhäuser and the Song Contest at the Wartburg*, Wagner wrote in the manifesto he titled *A Communication to my Friends* that "to the name of my hero, Tannhäuser, I have added the title of the legend that I combined with the Tannhäuser story, although originally they had nothing to do with one another." It is altogether characteristic of Wagner to have said nothing about combining these two strands with a third one entirely

the usual song of praise of a woman. Instead, he wants them to speculate, to philosophize. "Könnt ihr der Liebe Wesen mir ergründen?" he asks. "Can you plumb the nature of love for me?" ("Ergründen" comes from "Grund" and thus carries connotations of ground, of deepest subsoil, basic principles, of truly getting to the bottom of a subject.)

Nearly all operas contain a love interest or at least a good show of sexual magnetism, but very few address the Landgrave's challenge: *Lohengrin* does, and *Tristan*, and *Lulu*. But this was a question that occupied Wagner all his life; it is not too much to say that it held him spellbound. This question is at the core of the drama of Elisabeth's fight for Tannhäuser, a fight fueled by desire and devotion alike. In order to give Elisabeth's situation the most sharply defined profile possible, Wagner's strengthening of the Venus story was essential.

Wagner attained this aim, but at a price. The gap in musical and dramatic power between some of the original *Tannhäuser* and his post-1847 emendations is immense. I stress "some" because the Dresden score has its share of beauties—the Shepherd Boy's song, Elisabeth's ardent greeting to the Hall of Song, her Prayer, and Tannhäuser's account of his pilgrimage to Rome, to name some obviously persuasive and distinctively "Wagnerian" examples. Others, in a more conventional musical idiom, are the Pilgrims' Chorus, the Tannhäuser-Elisabeth duet in Act 1, the buoyant Entry of the Guests into the Wartburg, and Wolfram's song of the Evening Star. Wagner also invents countless beautiful orchestral touches, such as the poignant oboe writing at the beginning and again at the end of Act 2, the sensitive distinction between stabbing oboe and shy flute when Elisabeth confesses how much Tannhäuser's departure from the Landgrave's court had grieved her, the divided violas and cellos (from *Fidelio*) that accompany the beginning of the Landgrave's colloquy with Elisabeth, the soft brass with harp and the shimmering strings in the introduction to Wolfram's "Evening Star."

But there are also those inescapable insufficiencies of which Wagner himself was so aware. Since he himself deplored them, we need not feel guilty if, when we hear Tannhäuser belt out the three stanzas of his hymn to Venus, we find ourselves wishing that the goddess in her sophisticated 1860-61 incarnation had found time to give her lover some music lessons along with instruction in the Joy of Sex. When we think of the differences between the original and the later editions of *Tannhäuser*, we tend to focus first on the intoxicating sensuous-sensual lushness of the

latter, but no less remarkable is what Wagner had discovered by 1860 about flexibility in text declamation and that naturalness of speech that he always demanded from his singers.

Holding forth at home on October 19, 1881, Wagner, we learn from his wife's diary, declared that "as far as *Lohengrin* is concerned, [he] is completely satisfied...but in *Tannhäuser* he would criticize some traces of operatic tradition that still remain...."

"He also still seems to feel a certain discrepancy between the new [Venusberg] scene and the work as a whole." One would have to be deaf not "to feel a certain discrepancy"; the question is, how do you react to it? How do you evaluate it? Many conductors, directors, and listeners (lay and professional) choke on it and, no matter how intensely they admire or enjoy Wagner's emendations, they prefer the Dresden *Tannhäuser* for its stylistic unity. That is a legitimate and understandable choice. I happen not to agree with it. I want to hear the Paris-Munich-Vienna Venusberg scene and, for example, the expanded curtain music at the end of Act 2 (expanded so slightly but so powerfully). I am even willing to be told that my unconcern for the stylistic rupture—what the Germans call a "Stilbruch," which makes it sound much worse—in the "Paris" version is simply evidence of frivolous gourmandise.

And so we come back to my initial questions. Why did Wagner still think in 1883 that he owed the world a *Tannhäuser* and what, had he lived, might he have done about it? I imagine that, concerned as he was with the importance and urgency of the story, he would have liked to give the world a *Tannhäuser* composed with all the expressive, intellectual, and technical resources, not just of 1861, but of 1883. The Prelude to Act 3 represents Tannhäuser's pilgrimage to Rome. Just imagine this task undertaken by the composer of the Prelude to Act 3 of *Parsifal*!

All right, we do not have an 1883 *Tannhäuser*. But we might ponder Wagner's breakfast-table remark in October of 1882 that "*Tannhäuser*, *Tristan*, and *Parsifal* belong together" and consider the idea that *Tannhäuser*, if in some sense never completed, was continued in *Tristan*, with its investigation of "der Liebe Wesen," the nature of love, and in *Parsifal*, the story of pilgrimage and spiritual quest. We could also come back once more to Professor Cantor's book, in which he remarks apropos the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine in New York, that "unfinished [is an] appropriately medieval quality." Its unfinishedness is surely part of *Tannhäuser*'s unending fascination.

©1994 by Michael Steinberg



Leonie Rysanek as Elisabeth and Jess Thomas in the title role of San Francisco Opera's 1973 *Tannhäuser*.

of his own invention, namely, the mutual and anything other than simply romantic love of Tannhäuser and Elisabeth. This turns out to be the most crucial and the single most powerful element in the psychological and dramatic momentum that drives this "action."

For Wagner, *Tannhäuser* was charged with urgency in yet another way, one that is directly expressed in the song contest. When the singers are assembled and the Landgrave assigns them their topic, he veers away from custom by commanding something other than

⁶ *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* has sneaked into this essay several times. It is perhaps worth pointing out that one way of reading that great work is as a comic afterthought to *Tannhäuser*. Elisabeth and Eva, *mutatis mutandis*, are cousins beneath the skin, and although neither is named in the title, each is the key to "her" opera.

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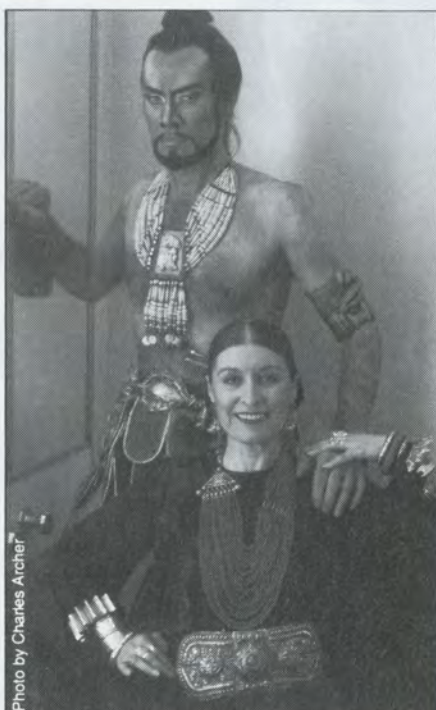


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In order to increase the enjoyment of opera for hearing-impaired members of the audience, the War Memorial Opera House is equipped with a Sennheiser Listening System. Headphones and induction devices (adaptable to hearing aids) are available in the coat checkroom at the south end of the main lobby. There is no charge, but an ID deposit, such as a driver's license or major credit card, is required.

OPERA HOUSE TOURS

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

Tuesday, October 4
Sunday, October 9
Wednesday, October 19
Sunday, November 6
Saturday, November 19
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.

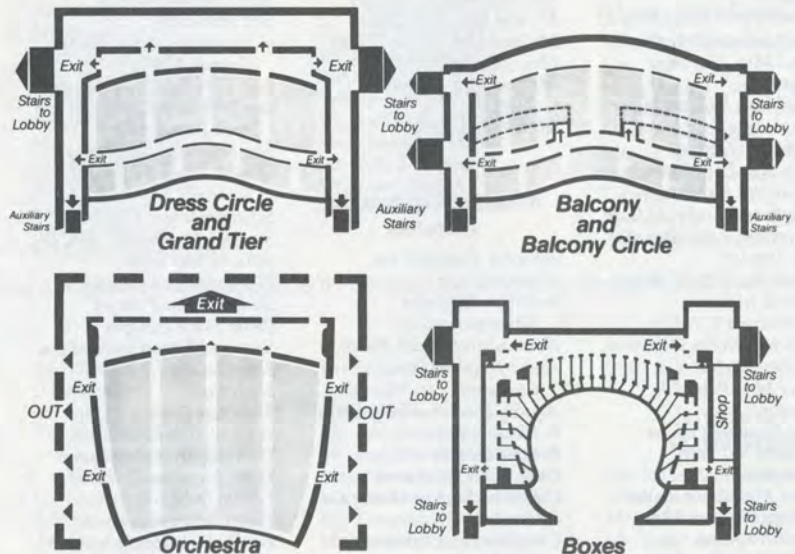
For the safety and comfort of our audience, all large parcels, backpacks, luggage, etc., must be checked at Opera House cloak-rooms.

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.

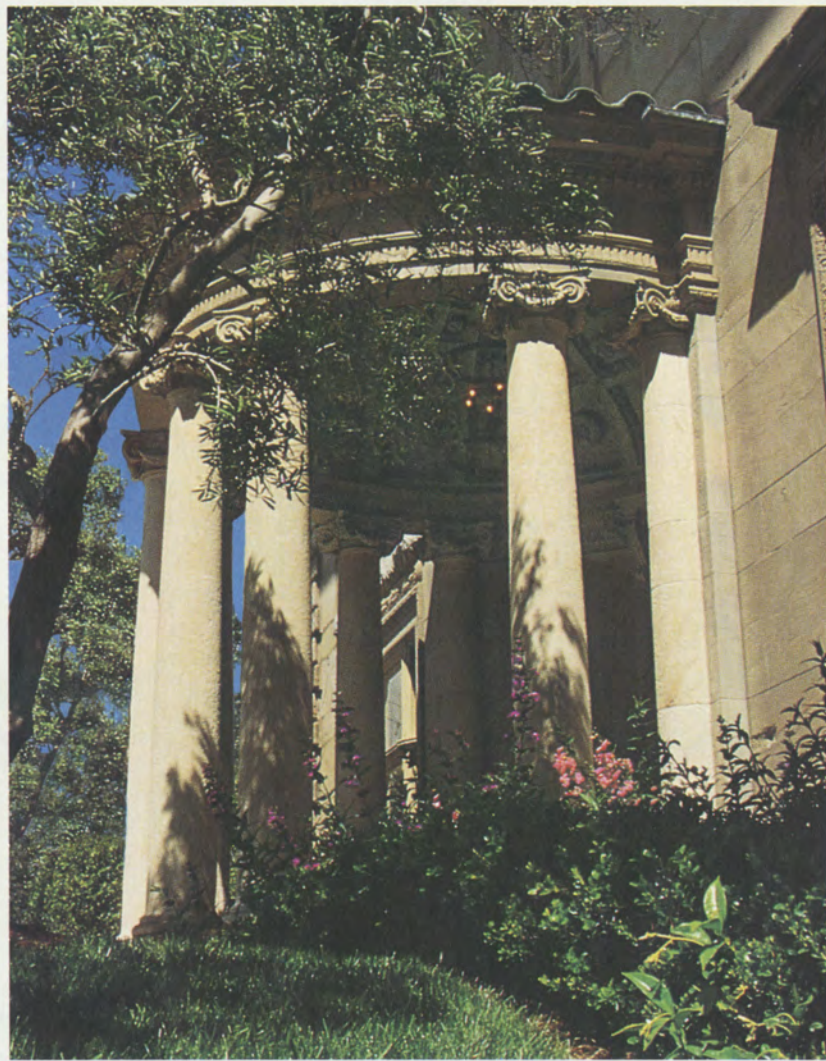


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