

La Cenerentola
(Cinderella)

1995-1996

Friday, October 13, 1995 8:00 PM
Sunday, October 15, 1995 2:00 PM
Wednesday, October 18, 1995 7:30 PM
Saturday, October 21, 1995 8:00 PM
Wednesday, October 25, 1995 8:00 PM
Saturday, October 28, 1995 8:00 PM
Thursday, November 2, 1995 7:30 PM

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1995 SEASON

LA CENERENTOLA



Stagebill



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S. Volcov

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SAN FRANCISCO OPERA MAGAZINE

La Cenerentola

1995 Season
Vol. 73, No. 7

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Or, how Rossini's *La Cenerentola* overcame its initially lukewarm reception and became, through the years, one of his most popular works.

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COVER

Pascin, Jules, (French, 1885-1930)

Cinderella (ca. 1925-26)

Oil on canvas, 36½ x 29 in.

The Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo, Ohio
Purchased with funds from the Libbey Endowment
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Performance HIGHLIGHTS

Fluff up your finery and don your party hats—on November 17 the **San Francisco Opera** puts *Die Walküre*, and *Don Giovanni* on the back burner for a night to cook up a special birthday bash. For the seventieth birthday of **Sir Charles Mackerras**, SFO's principal guest conductor, stars from the Opera's 1995 fall season join

the S.F. Opera Orchestra and Chorus in a menu degustation of works by Dvořák, Handel, Janáček, Purcell, Strauss, Verdi, Wagner, and others, led by Sir Charles himself. Afterwards, artists and guests join the knight for a birthday supper and tribute to the Maestro's career. Spicing up the festivities: sopranos Anne Evans, Renée Fleming, and Stephanie Sundine, mezzo-soprano Susan Quittmeyer, and the 1995 Opera Center Adler Fellows.

* * * * *

American Conservatory Theater's fall offering is a soulful serenade in blue—the West Coast premiere of August Wilson's *Seven Guitars*, November 9 through December 23. The Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright's latest segment in his multiplay saga of 20th-century African-American life is a righteous rhythm and blues riff, strumming the lives of seven characters to compose its commanding chords. *Newsweek's* Jack Kroll says Wilson "creates a gritty, lyrical polyphony of voices that evokes the character and destiny of these men and women who can't help singing the blues even when they're just talking." Wilson's longtime collaborator Lloyd Richards directs, getting the show ready for its Broadway premiere in March 1996.

* * * * *

When *West Side Story* opened in New York in 1957, it was a shocking shot in the arm for Broadway theater, integrating dance into musical theater in an original and electrifying way, and introducing some of the world's greatest theater music. Today, the show still rocks, its familiar themes (musical and sociological) as beautiful, pertinent, and troubling as ever. The show's dynamic revival, which re-creates Jerome Robbins' Tony Award-winning choreography, springs into Seattle's **Paramount Theatre** November 28–December 10, on its way around the world in a 30-city tour de force.

—Peter Cieply



Sir Charles Mackerras



RUSLAN & LYUDMILA — PHOTO: VALENTINE BARANOVSKY

*E*very great performance
begins with great
inspiration.



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Vienna and Opera at Christmas

December 14th to 26th with Peter Bessol

... full day to Salzburg in the most beautiful Christmas town of Europe ... afternoon old town Bratislava with performance of Rigoletto at the historic Slovak Opera. In Vienna, special excursions to Vienna Woods and Danube Valley. At the Staatsoper: early Verdi Jerusalem, Wozzeck, Le Nozze di Figaro, Die Zauberflöte ... at the Volksoper: Pearl Fishers, Carmen, Hansel & Gretel.

Metropolitan Opera Debut of Cecilia Bartoli

February 25th to March 2nd

... lectures and private MMA tour with Dale Harris. The operas: La Forza del Destino (Domingo), Così fan Tutte (Carol Vaness, Susanne Mentzer, Cecilia Bartoli, Jerry Hadley), Madama Butterfly, Aida.

Spring and Opera Extravaganza in New York at the Metropolitan Opera with Levine Gala

April 21st to 28th with Sherwin Sloan

... the final spectacular week at the Met. The Operas: Die Walküre (Domingo), La Bohème (Gheorghiu, Mattila), Andrea Chenier (Pavarotti), Romeo & Juliette (Swenson, Araiza). NY Philharmonic: Mendelssohn Violin Concerto & Bruckner Symphony No. 6. Private Lectures & tour of MMA with Dale Harris. Met Opera Gala with James Levine.

The Arizona Ring in Flagstaff

June 2nd to 9th with Sherwin Sloan

... we went to Flagstaff to select the seating in orchestra center and the resort hotel. There will be private dinners and lunches and a wonderful atmosphere in this ponderosa pine covered mountainous setting. A wonderful vacation with the Ring and great optional sightseeing to the south Rim of the Grand Canyon and Sedona.

The Third Annual Grand Tour of Italian Opera Houses

May 2nd to 20th with Peter Bessol

... without a doubt the greatest program we have done with best seating at La Fenice in Venice, La Scala in Milan, Teatro Regio in Parma, La Comunale in Florence and Teatro dell' Opera in Rome.

Includes two nights at beautiful Cernobbio on Lake Como, tours of Roman Verona and Bologna, trip to Siena, San Gimignano. Superb lunches and dinners. Walking tours in each town.

Spring in Renaissance & Baroque Prague

June 2nd to 14th with Herb Rowan

... join Herb for the magnificent old town of Prague with walking tours each day to the Loretto, the Hradcany Castle, the Sternberg Museum, the Wallenstein Palace, the Jewish quarter, the old town and guided tours of the museums. The operas: Rigoletto, Katya Kabanova, La Forza del Destino, Otello, Le Nozze di Figaro, Il Trovatore, Rusalka, Don Giovanni, Libuse (Smetana), Boris Godounov, Die Zauberflöte.

St. Petersburg, The Hermitage & the Savonlinna Summer Opera Festival on a Lake in a 14th Century Castle in Finland

July 15th to 29th with Sherwin Sloan

(May be combined with the Verona Festival & La Scala from July 4th to 16th)

... join Sherwin for 2 days touring the Hermitage, private tours and ballet and opera in St. Petersburg, then opera in a 14th century castle on a lake in Finland. The Operas at Olavinlinna Castle: Macbeth, Tannhäuser, The Palace (Sallinen). Also, Beethoven's Symphony No. 9. Carefully selected sightseeing. Private candlelight dinner in the great hall of the castle in a splendid lake setting.

A Private Walking Tour of Venice & Florence with Dale Harris May, 1996

... join a true Renaissance lecturer and art historian and focus on the museums, paintings, cathedrals, & architecture of these two Renaissance cities. Dale Harris, renowned lecturer of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Stops in Padua and Roman Verona. Some wonderful dining.

The Verona Festival and La Scala

July 4th to 16th, 1996 with Sherwin Sloan

(May be combined with St. Petersburg and Savonlinna Summer Opera Festival in Finland, July 16th to 29th). ...

two wonderful days at lovely Cernobbio on Lake Como, a performance at La Scala and at the famed Verona Arena: Nabucco, Il Barbiere di Siviglia & Carmen in best seating. Walking tours and carefully selected sightseeing. Of course, wonderful dining.

For a copy of the itineraries call:

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FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD



Welcome to the 1995 Fall Season and the beginning of a challenging three-year period. Following this season, the Company will need to vacate the War Memorial Opera House to clear the way for seismic work. Although we will miss our home while we are out for 18 months, we will be presented with an ideal opportunity to implement much needed improvements.

The Opera, Ballet and the War Memorial have formed the Committee to Restore the Opera House (CROH), with a goal of raising \$24 million for improvements not paid by the city. These will include: spot air conditioning and improved ventilation, upgraded electrical and lighting systems, and expanded storage and backstage facilities.

San Francisco Opera's own artistic plans include the use of two historic San Francisco venues: the Civic Auditorium and the Orpheum Theatre. Reconfiguring these theaters to make them suitable for opera, plus the new productions needed will result in extraordinary costs beyond our normal budget.

To do the job for 1995, 1996 and 1997—that is, to stay in the black operationally and fulfill our commitment to the Opera House renovation—San Francisco Opera has launched a single, three-year campaign to raise \$20 million above and beyond our annual fundraising goals. It is an ambitious program, but we feel optimistic because two years of successful Board fundraising efforts and cost reductions implemented by management have resulted in a greatly improved financial position for the Company. These goals and successes are made possible by you, the members of our generous family. And it is to you that we turn once again, to make it possible to carry forth the important legacy this Company has built over 73 years.

We want to extend a special thank you to Lexus for its ongoing support of San Francisco Opera. We also wish to acknowledge the invaluable contributions made by the San Francisco Opera Guild, as well as the efforts of the BRAVO! CLUB.

We also wish to thank our generous production sponsors for the 1995 Fall Season. The production of *Anna Bolena*, originated by the Canadian Opera Company, is made possible by a gift from The Gramma Fisher Foundation, through the auspices of the Lyric Opera of Chicago; *Ruslan and Lyudmila* is made possible by Mr. and Mrs. Reid W. Dennis and Mr. and Mrs. John R. Hamilton; *Madama Butterfly* by The Franklin/Templeton Group of Funds; *La Cenerentola* by The Herman J. Miller and Edward J. Clarke Foundation; the new production of *Don Giovanni* by gifts from Mr. George M. Bowles and the estate of Edith Bentley Bailey Cook; and *Rusalka* by The L.J. and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation and the Carol Franc Buck Foundation.

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 William Lee for their invaluable support; and to the War Memorial Board of Trustees for their ongoing support and assistance.

Reid W. Dennis
Chairman

William W. Godward
President

A MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL DIRECTOR



San Francisco Opera's 73rd season is a time to cherish for all opera lovers. Not only is our 1995 Fall Season overflowing with the artistic elements that make opera the most exciting of art forms, but at the conclusion of this season, we will vacate the War Memorial Opera House for 18 months. This is the kickoff for a tremendous adventure outside of our beautiful home until we return in time for a gala 1997 Fall Season—San Francisco Opera's 75th anniversary.

During the 18-month closure of the Opera House our home will undergo major seismic upgrading. This period also presents a golden opportunity to perform restorations and improvements that will add significantly to your comfort and enjoyment. Bear in mind that this will be the first opportunity for any significant work to be performed on the Opera House since the building was opened in 1932—more than 60 years ago! It's time to give this, one of the finest opera houses in the world, the loving attention that it deserves.

While we're out of the Opera House, we will present a season of opera in a dynamic and unique way at Civic Auditorium and the Orpheum Theatre. There will be new productions, exciting stars and a variety of repertoire, including *Carmen*, *Aida* and the West Coast premiere of *Harvey Milk* (co-commissioned by San Francisco Opera). From September 19 through October 1 this season, members of the Opera's staff will present a series of informative pre-performance lectures about our plans for the Opera House and for the new venues. We have also created a special video to illustrate our plans for Civic Auditorium.

During the 1995 Fall Season, from September 8 to December 10, you will see a marvelous array of operas at the War Memorial Opera House, including two Company premieres and two new productions. We are pleased to present an artistic roster that boasts some of the world's finest singers, with outstanding directors, beautiful productions and internationally acclaimed conductors leading the San Francisco Opera Orchestra and Chorus. Our fine music director, Donald Runnicles, will lead three operas this fall, and we welcome back our principal guest conductor, Sir Charles Mackerras, who will lead two productions. We are also proud to honor Sir Charles on his 70th birthday with a special concert on November 17.

It is an exciting time, like no other in our Company's history. Stay with us, it's going to be an incredible adventure!

Lotfi Mansouri
General Director

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Left: Gioachino Rossini around the year 1820.

Opposite page: The celebrated sextet from *La Cenerentola*, the way it looked at the San Francisco Opera in 1969: (Left to right) Renato Capecchi (Dandini), Sheila Marks (Clorinda), Paolo Montarsolo (Don Magnifico), Teresa Berganza (Angelina), Sona Cervená (Tisbe), Pietro Bottazzo (Don Ramiro).

The Triumph of

By JULIAN BUDDEN

Rossini's *La Cenerentola* shares with Massenet's *Werther*, Tchaikovsky's *Queen of Spades* and Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette* the distinction of being its composer's second most popular opera, and like them it explores quite different territory from the first. While *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* is a classic unclouded comedy, Rossini's version of the Cinderella story, as might be expected, carries a charge of pathos behind the laughter. Described on the title page as a "dramma giocoso," it touches on the world of the *comédie larmoyante*.

For Rossini in his mid-twenties, creative self-renewal was not a problem. In 1817, he composed four operas, each in a different vein: *La Cenerentola* and, in the high style, *Adelaide di Borgogna* for Rome; the opera semiseria *La Gazza Ladra* for Milan; and *Armida*, a heroic-fantastic opera based on Torquato Tasso for Naples. Indeed, the com-

mission to write an opera to be given during the Carnival season of 1816-17 at the Teatro Valle, Rome, found him fully occupied with a previous commitment, namely *Otello*, planned for performance at the Teatro del Fondo, Naples, early in December. Therefore, the clause in his contract that required his presence in the last days of October, the delivery of Act I by the end of November and Act II by mid-December remained a dead letter.

Meanwhile, a libretto had already been chosen: Gaetano Rossi's *Nina alla corte*, evidently derived from the French comedy *Francesca de Foix*. The Roman censors, however, deemed it immoral (though Donizetti would have no difficulty in getting it passed by the Neapolitan authorities in 1831) and so the librettist Jacopo Ferretti was brought in to clean up the text. But both he and Rossini declared this to be impossible without mak-

ing nonsense of the plot. The stalemate continued until December 23rd, three days before the opera was due to open. That evening, Ferretti was summoned to the home of the impresario Pietro Cartoni, where Rossini was lodging. He himself takes up the story.

There we sat drinking tea all through that bitterly cold evening. I suggested twenty or thirty subjects for an opera, but one was considered too solemn since in Carnival time the Romans wanted a good laugh; another was rejected as being too complicated and another too expensive for the management's purse...and another was unsuitable for the company engaged. Tired of making suggestions and practically falling asleep, I murmured in the middle of a

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

yawn: "Cinderella." Rossini, who had lain down on the bed in order the better to concentrate, sat bolt upright like Dante's Farinata. "Would you be prepared to write me a Cinderella?" he asked. "And would you be prepared to set it to music?" I asked in my turn. "When can I have the program?" "Tomorrow morning, if I can keep awake." "Good night," and with that he wrapped himself in the bedclothes, stretched out his limbs and fell into a blessed sleep like that of Homer's gods. I took another cup of tea, arranged my fee, shook Carloni by the hand and hurried off home. There, a cup of good strong black coffee took the place of Jamaican tea. Several times I measured the length and breadth of my bedroom with folded arms; and when, as God willed it, I had the picture before me, I wrote down the program and next day sent it to Rossini. He was quite happy with it.

Ferretti had intended to call his opera *Angiolina, or the Triumph of Goodness*. But again the censors objected, since Angiolina was the name of a well-known society beauty of the time, who had indeed enjoyed many a triumph, but who could have retorted along with Mae West, "Goodness

sisters ("Sventurata, io credea") and another for Alidoro, the prince's tutor. The first two are eminently dispensable and regularly omitted (the chorus does not even appear in the printed score). Alidoro, however, is sufficiently important to the plot to need a number of his own, and until recently Agolini's "Vasto teatro è il mondo" figured in most productions of the opera—quite unnecessarily. For a revival of 1820, with the fine bass Gioachino Moncada at his disposal, Rossini wrote an entirely new bass aria ("Là del ciel nell'arcano profondo"). It will be heard in the current performances.

La Cenerentola, ossia La Bontà in Trionfo had its premiere on January 25th, having been written and rehearsed in just over four weeks. The cast included Geltrude Righetti-Giorgi, who had created Rosina in *Il Barbiere* the previous year, and the buffo baritone Giuseppe De Begnis, lately married to one of the great prima donnas of the age, Giuseppina Ronzi. Like *Il Barbiere*, the opera was received badly at first, mainly because the cast had not had time to master its technical difficulties. But Rossini was undismayed. "Before the Carnival season has ended," he assured Ferretti, "everyone will have fallen in love with it." Within two years, he predicted, it would be the delight of France and the wonder of England; prima donnas and impresarios would fight to get their hands on it. He was not mistaken. Admittedly, Stendhal, that self-appointed champion of Rossini,

During the first half of the nineteenth century, *La Cenerentola* vied in popularity with *Il Barbiere*; thereafter, it fell behind. Rossini's biographer, Giuseppe Radiciotti, whose monumental, three-volume study is, alas, out of print, ascribed its subsequent neglect to the libretto—"a hybrid confection of the probable with the improbable, the good with the less than mediocre, the high falutin' with the vulgar...faults which are naturally reflected in the music."

A more likely reason is the vocal character of the heroine, a flexible contralto whose part lends itself less easily to upward transposition than does that of Rosina, often assigned to a soprano. After 1850, following the example of Pauline Viardot-García, contraltos and low mezzos tended to become type-cast as mother figures, such as Fidès in Meyerbeer's *Le Prophète*, Azucena in *Il Trovatore* and La Cieca in *La Gioconda*. Their rich, velvety tones were best exploited outside the theater in pieces like Mendelssohn's "O rest in the Lord" or Brahms's *Alto Rhapsody*. It was the Spanish contralto Conchita Supervia, active in the 1930s, who first reminded us that the lower female voice is capable of all the agility of a coloratura soprano. Nowadays, it is the old-fashioned "oratorio" contralto that has become a rarity, while coloratura mezzo-sopranos can be found in every country of the world.

Rossini's was not the first musical setting of Charles Perrault's fairy tale. It had been the subject of a comic vaudeville of 1759 by the French composer Laurette. In 1810 the Maltese Niccolò Isouard produced a *Cendrillon* which for a time became the rage of Paris, and which many years later the Viennese critic Eduard Hanslick pronounced superior to Rossini's work. But it was Felice Romani's libretto for Stefano Pavesi's *Agatina, ossia La virtù premiata* (Milan, 1814) that would serve Ferretti as a model. Romani

Cenerentola

had nothing to do with it, honey!" So he settled for *Cenerentola* prefixed by the definite article, the traditional Italian way of indicating a character of myth.

Rossini set to work at once, composing each number as it reached him, and putting the finishing touches to the buffo duet "Un segreto d'importanza" the night before the opening (or so Ferretti tells us). Given the need for haste, it is understandable that he should have indulged in a little self-borrowing. The overture is identical with that of *La Gazzetta*, a comic opera written for Naples the previous year. The music, however, has a certain relevance to its new context since the "crescendo" theme is quoted in the Act I finale. *Cenerentola*'s concluding "Non più mesta" began life as a virtuoso cabaletta for Almaviva preceding the vaudeville-finale to *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*; but as it quickly dropped out of performances there was no danger in transplanting it to *La Cenerentola*. Three of the numbers Rossini delegated to an adjutant, Luca Agolini: a chorus placed at the start of Act II, an aria for Clorinda, one of the step-

would rail against it, finding the music lacking in "idealism" (whatever he meant by that); but he was in a minority.





Frederica von Stade and Ugo Benelli in San Francisco Opera's 1974 staging of *La Cenerentola*.

it was who first turned Perrault's "conte" into a modern comedy of manners with no pumpkin coach and no fairy godmother, but instead a philosopher who makes all the necessary arrangements. For the slipper he substituted a rose, which in Ferretti's libretto became a bracelet, much to the indignation of a French critic, who suggested that the expedient had been due to the fact that Signora Righetti-Giorgi's nether limbs would not stand up to scrutiny—a charge which the singer vehemently rebutted. On the contrary, she maintained, her ankle was shapely enough to have aroused considerable interest; it was merely the Roman concern for decorum that forbade its exposure. It was Romani, too, who abolished the odious Madame de la Haltière, Cinderella's stepmother, for the very reason that in Italian opera of the time, mothers, step- or otherwise, are traditionally saintly and usually dead (hence no Lady Ashton in *Lucia di Lammermoor*). The villain of the piece is therefore the stepfather. This likewise conforms to the conventions of the mixed genre to which *La Cenerentola* essentially belongs, and in which the basso buffo is not just an old booby, easily duped, but downright malevolent (see the Podestà in *La Gazza Ladra* and Don Gherardo in Donizetti's *Torquato Tasso*, also to a text by Ferretti). In the present opera he combines both characteristics in full measure, being, like Samuel Butler's headmaster, "as harmless as a serpent and as wise as a dove." Again it was Romani who invented the valet Dandini, with whom the Prince exchanges clothes in order to test the respective characters of the three daughters.

image of their father ("Son tutte papà!"), to be sharply reproved by his master (likewise disguised) with a whispered "Bestia! Attento, ti scosta, va là!"—needlessly, however, since the old man is too preposterously vain to notice the gaffe. Indeed if Ferretti never achieved the fame of his predecessor, that was partly because he seems to have confined his activity to Rome. A member of the Arcadian Society, which had been founded in the seventeenth century and to which both Corelli and Queen Christina of Sweden had belonged, he was a figure of consequence who turned out sonnets as well as libretti. In 1844 he wrote a poem in honor of Verdi, whose *I Due Foscari* had enjoyed a mild success at the Teatro Argentina. But, although the two men corresponded cordially, Ferretti never wrote a libretto for Verdi. High romantic tragedy was not for him; his domains were the "buffo" and "semiserio" genres.

The first three decades of the nineteenth century were the age of virtuosity *par excellence*. The castrato had almost vanished from the scene, but the expressive value associated with his voice type still prevailed. In "opera seria," his place was at first taken by the female contralto, with her propensity for cool heroics. Not until the 1830s did the tenor hero become the rule, singing throughout in the natural register of his voice. In "opera buffa" and "semiseria" he had long held sway as the juvenile lead; but it was a lighter tenor that did so, with a technique that permitted him to rise to high D and E flat in what was then called "falsetto" (today we would call it "head voice," since it bore

All this, according to Romani's biographer, Mario Rinaldi, amounts to a "huge plagiarism" on Ferretti's part. But we should remember that librettists were not expected to show originality of thought, the best of them being content to aim at "what oft was said but ne'er so well expressed." Ferretti's verse is as sharp and vivid as Romani's and his humor, far from lapsing into vulgarity, as Radiotti would have it, is often refreshingly modern—as for instance when Dandini, in his princely disguise, assures Don Magnifico that his two daughters are the

no resemblance to the countertenor hoot). Together with the other voices he was required to command total flexibility. All this made possible a certain "instrumentalization" of the voice such as Rossini exploits to delightful effect in the sextet from *La Cenerentola* ("Questo è un nodo avviluppato") with its threads of coloratura passing from one singer to another.

But let no one think that the opera is all vocal mechanics. Within the conventions of the time, many of which were of Rossini's own forging, the characters are convincingly drawn; nor are they two-dimensional. The duet "Un soave non so che" between Cenerentola and Don Ramiro perfectly evokes the dawn of young love. But it is a more mature Prince who sings in Act II "Sì, ritrovarla io giuro," a heroic aria in three short movements similar to that with which Rossini had brought on the protagonist of his *Otello*. Don Magnifico alternates between pomposity and chattering buffoonery with moments of cruel sarcasm when addressing Cenerentola. Dandini has something of the amused detachment of Figaro, relishing to the full his royal disguise ("Come un'ape ne' giorni d'aprile"), not to mention his unmasking before the outraged Don Magnifico in the buffo duet of Act II ("Un segreto d'importanza").

Moreover, the drama is beautifully paced. Within the compass of a single number, the "introduzione," we are shown the shallowness and vanity of the two step-sisters (there is no need for them to be ugly) and the sad simplicity of Cenerentola, limned in her somber, minor-key ditty ("Una volta c'era un re"). Not only that; the same piece finds room for her first encounter with Alidoro, who has come to the door disguised as a beggar. Clorinda and Tisbe chase him away, but not before Cenerentola has had time to slip him a mite of "breakfast," only to receive a slap from the sisters. A few moments later a chorus of knights brings the invitation to the Prince's ball; at once Cenerentola is sent scurrying hither and yon to fetch fine clothes and jewelry. Thus from the outset we do not have to take the heroine's kindness and subjection for granted; we have already seen both in action, and the interest gains accordingly. Indeed, the title role is unusually varied and wide-ranging in its expression, combining sorrow and dignity with occasional flashes of spirit. Her final aria ("Nacqui all'affanno") envelops the scene in a glow of tenderness and so makes a fitting conclusion to what his recent biographer, Richard Osborne, rightly calls one of the richest and most humane of Rossini's scores. ■

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Opera in two acts by GIOACHINO ROSSINI

Libretto by JACOPO FERRETTI

La Cenerentola

(in Italian)

Conductor

Carlo Rizzi*

Production

Jean-Pierre Ponnelle

Stage Director

Christopher Alden

Designer

Jean-Pierre Ponnelle

Lighting Designer

Thomas J. Munn

Chorus Director

Ian Robertson

Musical Preparation

Robert Morrison

Adelle Eslinger

Peter Grunberg

Ernest Fredric Knell

Prompter

Jonathan Khuner

Harpsichord

Robert Morrison

Assistant Stage Directors

Paula Williams

Beth Greenberg

Stage Manager

Jerry Sherk

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First performance:

Rome, January 25, 1817

First San Francisco Opera

performance:

November 5, 1969

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SUNDAY, OCTOBER 15 AT 2:00

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 18 AT 7:30

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 21 AT 8:00

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 25 AT 8:00

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 28 AT 8:00

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 2 AT 7:30

CAST

(in order of appearance)

Cenerentola Olga Borodina*

Clorinda Nicolle Foland†

Tisbe Elizabeth Bishop†

Alidoro Dale Travis

Don Magnifico Simone Alaimo

Don Ramiro Kurt Streit

Dandini Lucio Gallo

Friends of Don Ramiro, courtiers

*San Francisco Opera debut

†1995 Adler Fellow

TIME AND PLACE: Legendary

ACT I Scene 1: Don Magnifico's house

Scene 2: Don Ramiro's palace

INTERMISSION

ACT II Scene 1: Don Ramiro's palace

Scene 2: Don Magnifico's house

Scene 3: Don Ramiro's palace

Supertitles provided by a generous gift from The Stanley S. Langendorf Foundation.

Supertitles by Christopher Bergen, San Francisco Opera.

Latecomers will not be seated during the performance after the lights have dimmed.

The use of cameras, cellular phones, and any kind of recording equipment is strictly forbidden.

The performance will last approximately three hours and twenty minutes.

SYNOPSIS

La Cenerentola

ACT I

Scene 1

Introduction

The run-down house of Don Magnifico. The two sisters, Clorinda and Tisbe, preen themselves while their older sister Cenerentola (Cinderella) consoles herself with a song about love. This infuriates the sisters, whose threats are cut short by the arrival of Alidoro, disguised as a beggar, who is searching for a fiancée for his pupil, Prince Ramiro.

Recitative

Clorinda and Tisbe express their excitement at the news.

Aria

Don Magnifico tells of a dream he has just had which he interprets as meaning a sudden improvement in the family's fortunes.

Recitative

Told of the Prince's impending visit, Don Magnifico is elated and hurries his daughters to make themselves ready.

Duet

Ramiro enters, disguised as his valet, Dandini. He and Cenerentola fall in love at first sight.

Chorus and Cavatina

Dandini arrives, dressed as the Prince. He pays court to Clorinda and Tisbe and invites them to the ball.

Recitative and Quintet

Cenerentola begs to be allowed to attend the ball, but Don Magnifico is deaf to her pleas. Alidoro enters, in his normal attire, and demands to see Don Magnifico's third daughter. The Baron pretends that she is dead. All express their amazement and confusion.

Recitative and Aria

Alidoro tells Cenerentola that he will take her to the ball.

Scene 2

Recitative

Dandini, still masquerading as the Prince, appoints Don Magnifico chief cellar master.

Aria

Don Magnifico celebrates his new appointment.

Duet

Dandini paints for Ramiro a very unflattering portrait of the deportment and character of Clorinda and Tisbe.

Finale

Tisbe and Clorinda pursue Dandini who states he can marry only one of them and that the other should marry his valet. Both are indignant at the suggestion. Alidoro enters and announces the arrival of an unknown lady wearing a veil. When she is persuaded to show her face, the jealous sisters are struck by her resemblance to Cenerentola.

ACT II

Scene 1

Recitative and Aria

Don Magnifico admonishes Tisbe and Clorinda not to forget their old father, convinced as he is of their coming prosperity, and fantasizes on his life ahead as the father of a princess.

Recitative and Aria

Ramiro, who has fallen in love with the mysterious lady, suspects that Dandini entertains similar feelings for her. Concealing himself, he overhears Dandini's proposal of marriage to Cenerentola. She refuses, confessing that she is already in love with his valet. Ramiro comes forth and proposes to Cenerentola himself. She tells him that before she will marry him he must discover her identity. She gives him one of a pair of bracelets she is wearing so that he may recognize her when he finds her, and leaves. Ramiro enlists his followers' aid in his search for the unknown beauty.

Recitative and Duet

Don Magnifico presses Dandini for his decision as to which daughter he has chosen for a wife. Dandini reveals that he is not really the Prince, but his valet.

Scene 2

Sextet

Don Magnifico, Clorinda and Tisbe return home to find Cenerentola awaiting their arrival. A storm breaks out. Ramiro and Dandini enter.

Ramiro announces his intention of marrying Cenerentola, to the amazement of Don Magnifico and the sisters.

Scene 3

Chorus and Finale

Cenerentola forgives Don Magnifico and her stepsisters and all ends happily amidst general rejoicing.

Supernumeraries

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La Cenerentola

Photos taken in rehearsal
by Marty Sohl

Olga Borodina





Dale Travis



Simone Alaimo

Lucio Gallo

Nicolle Foland, Simone Alaimo, Elizabeth Bishop





Olga Borodina



Kurt Streit

Olga Borodina, Men of the San Francisco Opera Chorus

Nicolle Foland, Elizabeth Bishop





(L. to r.) Lucio Gallo, Nicolle Foland, Olga Borodina, Simone Alaimo, Elizabeth Bishop, Kurt Streit

Olga Borodina, Kurt Streit, Men of the San Francisco Opera Chorus





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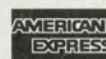
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The San Francisco Performing Arts Library and Museum is honoring the legendary artist Kirsten Flagstad with an exhibit, running September 14 to December 28, 1995. The exhibit will draw on S.F. PALM's extensive collection of Flagstad memorabilia and will include photographs, her personal opera scores, correspondence, and numerous personal items.

On November 4, at the San Francisco Ballet Building, *Wall Street Journal* music critic and lecturer Dale Harris will talk about Flagstad's life and career. The lecture, sponsored by PALM and the Wagner Society of Northern California, starts at 11 a.m.

Information: (415) 255-4800, San Francisco Performing Arts Library and Museum, 399 Grove Street, San Francisco, CA 94102

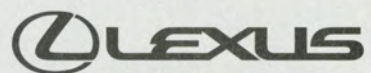
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Opening Night

ANNA BOLENA Donizetti

Vaness, Mentzer; Bardon**;
Scandiuizzi, Sabbatini*, Wilde,
Petersen

R. Abbado; Copley/Pascoe/
Stennett/Whitfield

Sept. 8, 12, 15, 21, 24, 27, 30

Production, originated by the Canadian Opera Company, is made possible by a gift from the Gramma Fisher Foundation through the auspices of the Lyric Opera of Chicago.

San Francisco Opera Premiere

RUSLAN AND LYUDMILA Glinka

Netrebko*, Tsidipova*/Vassileva
(9/26, 29), Zarembo, Cook; Atlantov,
Wells/Ognovenko, Marusin,
Bezubenkov, Andrasy*, Gogin

Gergiev/Titov**; Mansouri/Golovin/
Korovin/Bosquet/Fokine/Shavrov**/
Munn

Sept. 9, 14, 17, 19, 22, 26, 29

Production made possible by generous gifts from Mr. & Mrs. Reid W. Dennis and Mr. & Mrs. John R. Hamilton.

LA TRAVIATA Verdi

Villarroel, Bishop†, Petersen;
Aronica, Yurisich*, Portillat,
Okerlund†, Knežević†, Wilde

Mercurio*; Copley/Conklin/
Walker/Clara/Munn

Sept. 16, 20, 23, 28

Oct. 1, 4, 7, 10, 12

MADAMA BUTTERFLY Puccini

Malfitano*/Watanabe*,
Keen/Bishop, Foland††;
Leech/Margison/Portillat,
Ledbetter/Baerg, Petersen/
Sénéchal, Barrett*, Skinner

Runnicles/Mackerras (Dec.);

Bernhard/Büsinger

Oct. 3, 6, 8, 11, 14, 17, 20, 22

Dec. 2, 4, 9 (mat. & eve.)

Production made possible, in part, by a generous gift from The Franklin/Templeton Group of Funds.

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Gioachino Rossini/in Italian
Wednesday, October 25 at 1:00
Thursday, November 2 at 1:00

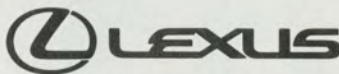
LA CENERENTOLA Rossini

Borodina*, Clayton†, Bishop†; Streit,
Alaimo, Gallo, Travis
Rizzi*; Ponnelle/Alden/
Ponnelle/Munn
Oct. 13, 15, 18, 21, 25, 28
Nov. 2

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New Production

FAUST Gounod

Gustafson, Quittmeyer, Cook; Leech,
Ramey, Gilfry*, Skinner
Summers; Joël/Howland/Munn

Oct. 26, 29, 31

Nov. 3, 5, 8, 11, 16

DIE WALKÜRE Wagner

Schnaut, A. Evans, Lipovšek*,
Foland†, Waitet†, Clayton†, Keen,
Cook, Bishop†, Cao†, Bean; Elming*,
Morris/White, Von Halem

Runnicles; Lehnhoff/Feldman/
Conklin/Munn

Nov. 4, 7, 12, 15, 21, 25, 29

SPECIAL EVENT

GALA CONCERT

A Celebration for Sir Charles
Mackerras on the occasion
of his 70th birthday. Featuring
opera stars, San Francisco Opera
Chorus and Orchestra, all led
by Maestro Mackerras.

November 17, 8 p.m.

New Production

DON GIOVANNI Mozart

Riedel*, Dessi*, R. Evans*; Ramey
(11/14, 18, 20)/ Shimell,
Ainsley*/Olsen*, Antoniazzi,
Patriarco, Von Halem

Runnicles; Mansouri/Howland/
Bosquet/Whitfield

Nov. 14, 18, 20, 24, 28

Dec. 1, 3, 7

Production made possible by generous gifts from Mr. George M. Bowles and the Estate of Edith Bentley Bailey Cook.

San Francisco Opera Premiere

RUSALKA Dvořák

Fleming, Sundine, Palmer, Clayton†,
Foland†, Dillard, Cao†; Larin,
Skinner, Sénéchal, Knežević†

Mackerras; Feldman/
Schneider-Siemssen/Solt*/Arhelger
Nov. 26, 30, Dec. 2, 6, 8, 10

Production made possible, in part, by grants from the L.J. and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation and the Carol Franc Buck Foundation.

**U.S. opera debut

* San Francisco Opera debut

† 1995 Adler Fellow

All performances are in the original language with English Supertitles.

Repertoire, casts and dates are subject to change.

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SAN FRANCISCO OPERA 1995

ARTISTS

Patricia Bardon**
Gwenneth Bean
Elizabeth Bishop†
Olga Borodina*
Zheng Cao*†
Kristin Clayton†
Catherine Cook
Daniela Dessì*
Pamela Dillard
Anne Evans
Rebecca Evans*
Renée Fleming
Nicolle Foland*†
Nancy Gustafson
Catherine Keen
Marjana Lipovšek*
Catherine Malfitano*
Susanne Mentzer
Anna Netrebko**
Felicity Palmer
Donna Petersen
Susan Quittmeyer
Deborah Riedel*
Gabriele Schnaut
Mika Shigematsu
Stephanie Sundine
Valentina Tsidipova*
Carol Vaness

Zvetelina Vassileva
Verónica Villarroel
Claudia Waiter†
Yoko Watanabe*
Elena Zarembo

John Mark Ainsley*
Simone Alaimo
Gabor Andrasz*
Alfonso Antoniozzi
Roberto Aronica
Vladimir Atlantov
Theodore Baerg
Thomas Barrett*
Gennadi Bezubenkov
Poul Elming*
Lucio Gallo
Rodney Gilfry*
Michael Lee Gogin
Bojan Knežević*†
Sergei Larin
Victor Ledbetter
Richard Leech
Richard Margison
Yuri Marusin
Dan Montez*
James Morris
Vladimir Ognovenko

David Okerlund*†
Stanford Olsen*
Earle Patriarco
Chester Patton†
Dennis Petersen
Alfredo Portilla†
Samuel Ramey
Giuseppe Sabbatini*
Roberto Scandiuizzi
Michel Sénéchal
William Shimell
Philip Skinner
Kurt Streit
Dale Travis
Victor von Halem
Jeffrey Wells
Willard White
Scott Wilde
Gregory Yurisch*

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Valery Gergiev
Charles Mackerras
Steven Mercurio*
Carlo Rizzi*
Donald Runnicles
Patrick Summers
Alexander Titov**

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Christopher Alden
Sandra Bernhard
John Copley
Laurie Feldman
Nicolas Joël
Lotfi Mansouri
Paula Williams

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Toni Businger
John Conklin
Alexander Golovin
Gerard Howland
Konstantin Korovin
John Pascoe
Jean-Pierre Ponnelle
Günther Schneider-Siemssen

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Jean-Pierre Ponnelle
Dietmar Solt*
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Michael Whitfield

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Adela Clara
Michel Fokine
Victoria Morgan
Alexander Shavrov**

FIGHT COORDINATOR

Larry Henderson

** U.S. opera debut

* San Francisco Opera debut

† 1995 Adler Fellow

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA CHORUS

Lori Anderson
Andrea Baker
Deanna Barraza
Julianne Booth
Roberta Bowman
Pamela Dale
Dvora Djoraev
Margaret Genovese
Joy Graham
Ann Hughes
Dallas Lane
Sally Munro
Sharon Navratil
Alexandra Nehra
Rose Parker
Virginia Pluth
Laurel Rice
Shelley Seitz Saarni
Sue Ellen Scheppke
Claudia Siefer
Page Swift
Donna Maria Turchi

Daniel Becker
Richard Brown
Jim Croom
Frank Daniels
Henryk De Rewenda
Robert Delany
Daniel Harper
Cameron Henley
Ken Johnson
Frederick Matthews
Jim Meyer
William Pickersgill
Daniel Pociernicki
Valery Portnov
Ken Rafanan
Tom Reed
Colby Roberts
James Ryan
Sigmund Seigel
Dan Stanley
Jere Torkelsen
Richard Walker
Frederick Winthrop

EXTRA CHORUS

Jill Anderson
Deborah Benedict
Theresa Cardinale
Melodi Dalton
Joy Davis
Marcelle A. Dronkers
Candida Arias Duazo
Ana Duma
Christina Jaqua
Gemma Kavanagh
Victoria Kelp
Christine Lloyd
Sara MacBride
Juliene Malécot
Nadja Matisoff
Ellyn Peabody
Aimée Puentes
Penelope Rains
Elisabeth Rom
Julia Ronskaya
Janine Shafer
Delia Voitoff
Lola Watson
Mitzie Weiner
Susan Witt

Gennadi Badasov
John Beauchamp
William Berges
Michael Bierbaum
John Coffin
Patrick Cox
Mario Dioneda
Peter Girardot
George G. Hernandez
David Taft Kekuewa
Gregory Kharik
Daniel Leal
Tom McEachern
John Musselman
William Neil
David L. Oliver
Dmitri Plotnikov
Robert V. Presley
William Roberts
Michael Rogers
Byron Russell
Ron Schrieve
Sergei Selezniyoff
Peter Shypertt
Erich Stratmann
Joseph Tambornino

Grant Otto Thompson
Peter Tokarchuk
Will C. Tredway

DANCERS

Carolyn Houser
Carvajal
Nora Heiber
Marina Hotchkiss
Debra Rose

David Bier
Ney Fonseca
Danny Furlong
Jon Konetski



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Beuningen, Rotterdam,
The Netherlands

Museo de Arte
Contemporáneo
Caracas, Venezuela

Finnish Museum of
Horology Espoo,
Helsinki, Finland

Sezon Museum of Art
Tokyo, Japan

Kunstindustri-museets
Billedbog,
Copenhagen, Denmark

Musée International
d'Horlogerie
La Chaux-de-Fonds,
Switzerland

Museo de Bellas Artes
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Richard McHenry, *Assistant*

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Adolf Bruk *Associate Concertmaster **
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William Rusconi
Janice McIntosh
Lev Rankov
Barbara Riccardi
Robert Galbraith
Leonid Igudesman
Chang Liu
Julia Skiff
Sara Usher

2ND VIOLIN

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Martha Simonds *Associate Principal**
Beni Shinohara *Assistant Principal*
Eva Karasik
Lani King Chang
Gerard Svazlian
Linda Deutsch
Maki Ishii
Craig Reiss

VIOLA

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Dawn Harms *Acting Principal*
Elizabeth Prior *Acting Associate Principal*
Patricia Heller *Acting Associate Principal*
Sergei Rakitchenkov *Assistant Principal*
Jonna Hervig
Natalia Igudesman
Thomas Heimberg

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Thalia Moore *Associate Principal**
David Budd *Assistant Principal*
Nora Pirquet
Emil Miland
Victoria Ehrlich
Ruth Lane

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Jon Lancelle *Associate Principal**
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1995 OPERA PREVIEW

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

PRE-OPERA TALKS

Our popular Pre-Opera Talks, which are held in the Orchestra section one hour prior to curtain, will include a special lecture describing SF Opera's plans for the 1996 performances out of the Opera House. These 1996 previews will run between Sept. 19 and Oct. 1. After Oct. 1, the traditional Pre-Opera Talks will continue throughout the 1995 Fall Season. Lectures are free with your ticket for the performance and are held on most performance dates. Watch for talk dates in S.F. Opera newspaper advertisements.

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD — INSIGHTS

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

Information: (415) 565-6432

Oct. 11 *La Cenerentola*
Nov. 20 *Rusalka*

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD — PREVIEWS

Speakers: *Ruslan and Lyudmila*: Richard Taruskin; *Anna Bolena*: William Ashbrook; *Madama Butterfly*: James Keolker; *Faust*: Perry Lorenzo; *Don Giovanni*: Robert Glick; *Rusalka*: Michael Beckerman

MARIN

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

Information: (415) 388-6789

Oct. 23 *Faust*
Oct. 30 *Don Giovanni*
Nov. 13 *Rusalka*

SAN FRANCISCO

Held at 12:00 noon, The Unitarian Center, 1187 Franklin St., San Francisco.

Information: (415) 565-6432

Oct. 23 *Faust*
Nov. 1 *Don Giovanni*
Nov. 15 *Rusalka*

SAN JOSE

Held at 10:00 a.m. at the Los Gatos History Club, 123 Los Gatos Blvd., Los Gatos.

Information: (408) 741-1331, or (408) 354-7525

Oct. 24 *Faust*
Oct. 31 *Don Giovanni*
Nov. 14 *Rusalka*

SONOMA COUNTY

Held at various locations and times.

Information: (707) 938-2432

Oct. 25 *Faust*
Oct. 30 *Don Giovanni*
Nov. 13 *Rusalka*

SOUTH PENINSULA

Held at 8:00 p.m. at the Palo Alto Senior Center, 450 Bryant St., Palo Alto.

Information: (415) 941-3890

Oct. 24 *Faust*
Oct. 31 *Don Giovanni*
Nov. 14 *Rusalka*

EAST BAY

Held at 8:00 p.m. at different locations.

Information: (510) 527-1846

or (510) 838-9255

Nov. 15 *Rusalka*

SAN FRANCISCO CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC EXTENSION DIVISION

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Puccini: *Heir to the Verdian Tradition*

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MERRITT COLLEGE OPERA LECTURE SERIES

Held on Tuesday evenings in Building R, Room 130, 7 to 10 p.m., *Introduction to Opera* (Music 13A) is based on the operas of the 1995 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 the Berkeley hills. Series began on September 5; lectures are \$15 at the door.

Information: (510) 526-5244

Nov. 6 *Faust*
Nov. 13 *Don Giovanni*
Nov. 22 *Rusalka*
Dec. 11 *Season Review*

SAN FRANCISCO CITY COLLEGE PREVIEWS

A music course of opera previews will deal with all operas of the 1995 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 began August 23 and continue for 17 weeks.

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ROBERT GOODHUE'S FALL OPERA COURSE

Held at the Holiday Inn, 480 Sutter St., San Francisco, mostly Monday evenings, 6:15-8:30 p.m. Remaining dates: Oct. 9, 23, 30; Nov. 6, 11.

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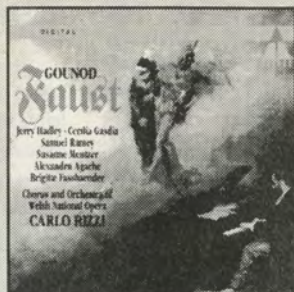
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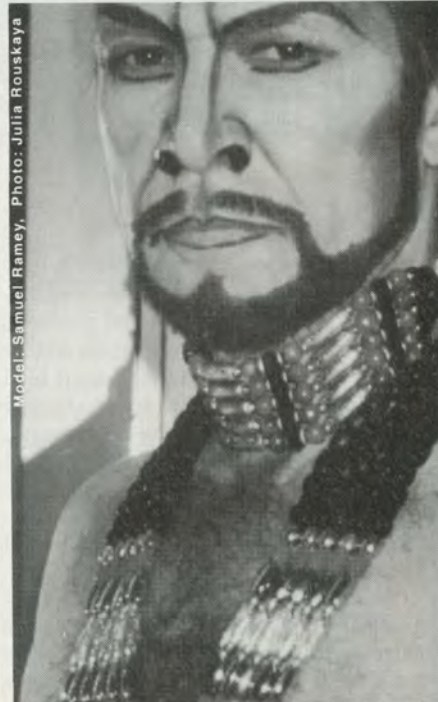
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Ellen Kerrigan, Robert Presley, Janet Campbell and Baker Peeples in rehearsal for the Opera à la Carte in-school program.

Thank you for performing for us. I liked the show. I hope I become an opera man some day. And I want to have a big voice like that man and sing in front of 1,000 people.

—Paul

Statements like the one above abound after one of San Francisco Opera Guild's student matinees. The matinees and the Guild's Opera à la Carte program have served as the foundation of the Guild's comprehensive education programs ever since the organization was founded in 1939. Each year, more than 5,000 elementary to high-school-aged children in approximately ninety schools in Northern California experience the Opera à la Carte program and they soon discover that opera can be funny, action-packed and, indeed, very, very cool. The program is coordinated by Ellen Kerrigan, a well-known soprano and Merola Opera Program graduate, and her husband, tenor Baker Peeples. This year, they are concocting a 35-minute mini-opera made up of essential music and English dialogue from Rossini's *La Cenerentola*, the opera for the 1995 student matinees.

While preparing the opera, Kerrigan reworks the piece by adding contemporary spoken dialogue and changing some of the roles into spoken parts suitable for student actors. At the same time, she also tackles the so-called "squirm factor." "We hardly ever kiss on stage," she says. "Something always happens in the plot to prevent the characters from kissing," she adds.

Next, she assembles the singers, pianists and docents who will stage two to three shows a day over a grueling ten-week period. The Guild volunteer docents act as liaisons with the schools, they help with the rehearsals and give lectures. On performance days, they step in as stage managers. There are four "casts" — a total of sixteen singers (often including Kerrigan herself) and four accompanists, all of whom haul costumes and props from Ukiah to Salinas and from Sacramento to Pacifica.

The payoff does not come in the form of glowing critical reviews, cast parties or gala opening nights. It comes from the plain-spoken and heartfelt responses of the children, such as: "Before I saw you today I thought that opera was the worst thing that had happened to civilization," or "I really liked Opera à la Carte. It was funny and I really liked the parts where they sang. It was loud but good."

I wish I could have a voice like you. I like your voice, it is so high. When you sang it almost blew up my ears. I hope you will be famous some day and when you do the performance you won't forget me.

—Phuong

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Kay Stern

By ELENA PARK

Few things are more gratifying than admiration from one's peers, particularly in a field as demanding as classical music. But that recognition is exactly what Kay Stern received as she finished playing her first major solo as San Francisco Opera Orchestra's new concertmaster. The piece was the celebrated violin solo in the "white" act of Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake*. As she rested her bow, spontaneous applause spread throughout the orchestra pit.

That response during last summer's dress rehearsal for The Royal Ballet is indicative of the orchestra's enthusiastic support of this artist, and the excitement generated by having a new concertmaster. In August of last year, this 35-year-old musician succeeded Zaven Melikian, the orchestra's esteemed leader for seventeen years. "Of all the string players I have come across," comments San Francisco Opera Music Director Donald Runnicles, "Kay is particularly remarkable because of her consummate talent, authority, and technical and musical brilliance."

"*Swan Lake* has one of the biggest concertmaster solos, and it was my first big solo in the Opera Orchestra. The part is huge and beautiful, and I had never played it before. With every performance, it got a little closer to how I ultimately imagined it," concludes this self-described perfectionist. "Kay is such a virtuoso, though she's probably the last person to know because she is so personally demanding. She is always seeking that next level," comments Debbie Henry, assistant principal oboe in the orchestra.

Solo violin passages display only some of Stern's gifts, since the position of concertmaster asks far more of an artist than an exceptional command of the instrument. "Obviously, I must always be prepared, know what the music is about, and be flexible," says Stern, "but being concertmaster is not only about playing the notes. It's also about helping to unify the orchestra, and learning what the conduc-

tor wants, and then making it work."

To prepare for an opera, Stern says she "spends time working out bowings which will satisfy the music and be the least taxing for the players in the course of a four-hour opera." These decisions are important because a single phrase may be played with various bowing combinations, each of which may influence the style and the character of the musical passage in a different way. Stern then relays the markings to section leaders, who in turn pass them on to their sections. Prior to or during orchestra readings, she also may confer with a conductor about the bowings and articulations.

The concertmaster serves as conduit between orchestra and conductor, and the exchange of ideas takes the form of gestures as well as words. "When I play, I think not only about doing what the conductor wants, but playing in agreement with what his arms are doing, or what he's described. It's about interpreting his body language. My body language must be in agreement with his, then that is extended to my stand partner, and to the people sitting around and behind me, and so on. In a given week we may have several conductors who use different body language for the same kind of note, so we must always be on our toes.

"I especially appreciate the way Donald [Runnicles] conducts—he's so clear in what he conveys. The character of his body lives the character of the music," she states. "His presence on the podium and the way he moves give the orchestra so much information about the sound and meaning of the music."

Her job is also made easier, Stern is quick to point out, due to the impressive level of communication and unity that exists between players. "The level of listening in this orchestra is so remarkable," she says. "We're not constantly looking at each other, but if I have a doubt about the length of a note during a performance, for example, or if a singer takes more or less

time with a phrase than usual, the section leaders are in tune with me so that we'll be together."

Asked to explain how this non-verbal communication works, she elaborates thoughtfully: "What the body does during the duration of a long note lets others know when and how the next note will happen. There are physical gestures such as the articulation of changes in the left hand fingers, and the use and speed of the bow. When there is a series of fast notes for the violins, and the cellos have half as many notes, the way the cellists play their notes outlines the notes we play so that we make the same musical shapes together. Musicians in all sections listen for volume and intensity to hear where the music is going, then they respond in their playing, so it's like having a conversation with sounds.

"Plenty of music is made without this sort of communication," Stern concedes, "but the level of communication in this orchestra is so high, it makes it possible to create great music."

At times, she plays the part of diplomat. "If someone has a different opinion than the conductor, it's important for me to stay supportive, to listen to people's concerns, but always to be thinking about the bigger picture and communicating with the conductor," says Stern. "I check that the information from the podium is clear, or to clarify it when it's not, in order to maintain unity." Even if occasionally she has different ideas from the conductor about interpretation, she says that, "my job is to interpret and play it as the conductor wants. My commitment is that we play with integrity as an ensemble so that we communicate the music. I want to make sure that every note we play is what the maestro wants.

"I also am open to the players' suggestions and to making changes. What I'm hoping for as concertmaster is to have a framework in which each individual's contributions and talents are welcomed."

Elena Park is Associate Director of Public Relations at San Francisco Opera.

"Some concertmasters have an untouchable, unapproachable air," remarks Henry. "Kay is nothing like that. She pulls together with the rest of us to make a great product."

Her role exacts a unique balance of confident leadership and creative flexibility. "I try to be egoless," Stern remarks. "It's not about me, it's not about how I play; it's about leading the orchestra together to fulfill the conductor's and the director's vision of a huge, magnificent piece of music. My goal is to be in the moment in order to respond to the conductor and the singers. As concertmaster, I don't have time to dwell on a missed note or difficult fingering; I must stay aware of the music happening around me."

In those moments when Stern does take center stage with a solo, as will be case in this fall's *Ruslan and Lyudmila*, her playing may have a great effect on the music making of those around her. "I set the tone with the conductor for musical expression with my sound—with my dynamics, articulations and expressions," Stern acknowledges. "Kay is extremely musical," adds Emil Miland, a cellist in the Opera Orchestra. "When she spins a phrase with conviction and beauty, she can inspire the rest of us to dig a little deeper and bring out our best work."

Stern is one of a handful of gifted women chosen to lead top orchestras, and the first woman to be appointed as San Francisco Opera Orchestra's leader (as the concertmaster is sometimes called). Prior to that time, she had enjoyed an active and varied freelance career based on the East Coast. She was first violinist for the Lark String Quartet, a quartet of women (profiled by CNN's program, "Women Today") which toured extensively and also reached wide audiences through performances on "St. Paul Sunday Morning" and on Garrison Keillor's "A Prairie Home Companion." In addition to doing concertmaster work for many orchestras in New York City, including the Orchestra of St. Luke's and the Concordia Chamber Orchestra, she also performed music that

was distinctly non-classical during her nine years living in New York City. "I did all sorts of jingles, soundtracks and strange recordings on the side," explains Stern with a smile, "like music for the 'Mr. Rogers' show or tango albums—and even a recording with the Beastie Boys."

Her strong interest in teaching, and a desire to take a break from New York City's exhausting pace, prompted her to relocate to Ohio, where she joined the faculty at the Cleveland Institute of Music. She also served as concertmaster for both the Cleveland Chamber Symphony and the Youngstown Symphony—while still returning to the Big Apple to perform. Her wide-ranging schedule changed by a fluke, she relates: "I had been concertmaster for Marin Alsop [Concordia's music director] for almost ten years. When she got the Cabrillo Music Festival gig in 1992, she needed a concertmaster and asked me to lead the orchestra."

SOHL



The summer festival in Santa Cruz changed the direction of both her musical career and personal life: "I met my husband, Jimmy Lee [Feinstein]," shares Stern. "Though he worked in a computer company at the time, for almost eighteen years he had taken his two-week vacation and spent it as stage manager for the Cabrillo Musical Festival."

Upon returning to Cleveland, Stern "knew that it was time to move on. I was tired of living the life of a freelancer. At that point, Jimmy, whom I'd met only months before, and I were visiting each other whenever possible, and talking on the phone every day. Soon our conversations started becoming 'we.' He said he was willing to move anywhere in the country, so I looked in union papers to see what positions were available in orchestras and conservatories. After that I made a short list of the things I thought I would like to do. The first thing on the list was



At the first orchestra rehearsal for *Anna Bolena*, Kay Stern greets the conductor, Roberto Abbado, then prepares for tuning.

After one year in her post, Stern says that "I think I know everyone better and they know me, so I'm more relaxed. Now, I'm just excited and honored to be here."

She has also enjoyed becoming better acquainted with San Francisco audiences. "I was at the Cabrillo Music Festival this summer, where I did a lot of solo and concertmaster work. Many people came up and told me that they loved coming to the opera and that they were glad that I was concertmaster. A lot of violinists in the Opera Orchestra have gotten to know the audience over the years: the Tuesday crowd, the Wednesday crowd, and all that. I'm just starting to get to know the

what I was most excited about—a viola opening here [in San Francisco].

"Joining the Opera Orchestra was the first thing I *chose* to do," she explains. "In my career, opportunities always came to me. This time, I went to it."

She had wonderful impressions of San Francisco from a visit she made while on tour with the Lark Quartet, and knew of the Opera Orchestra's outstanding reputation. The prospect of playing viola, not violin, in an opera orchestra also appealed to her. "What makes the melody work or not—no matter how beautifully you phrase it—is what's underneath it, and what carries or opposes it," Stern explains. "There's a lot of magic in the inner lines [played by the viola]; I wanted to be the magic and to see what someone else did with the top lines."

She joined the ensemble as acting principal viola beginning with the 1993 Celebration of Strauss. Immediately, she was struck by the quality of playing, as well as the atmosphere in the Opera House; she had never been part of an orchestra that had played together full-time for many years. "There I was playing principal viola, sandwiched in between [principal second violinist] Virginia Kvistad, [principal cellist] David Kadarauch and [associate principal cellist] Thalia Moore, and it was just remarkable. I was impressed with the level of playing, listening and flexibility in the pit. Also, it was so different from the freelance world. These musicians had chosen to settle here and commit themselves to this orchestra; there was a feeling of family."

After completing her first summer opera season, she heard about the search for a new concertmaster. She had mixed feelings about the prospect: "I was happy



as a clam as violist with these musicians around me, and I loved working with Donald. I knew I could do the job of concertmaster, but I also knew what kind of commitment it would take. I had been concertmaster in freelance situations, but not for a consistent 40 hour-a-week schedule week after week with the same people. I had to ask myself a few times, do I want to work that hard? Do I want to be on the line during each of those hours? To be the concertmaster that I wanted to be, and one that Donald and the orchestra deserve, I knew it would demand for me to operate at my highest level all the time."

For his part, Runnicles had no reservations about Stern accepting the post: "I was very happy to encounter her considerable talent and ability in the viola section, and now I am even happier to have her leading the orchestra and galvanizing the string section."

people and to get a feeling of how much the music means to them, and I am moved by it."

During breaks from the demanding opera schedule, Stern has served as concertmaster for San Francisco Chamber Symphony programs and just completed her fourth season as concertmaster at the Cabrillo Music Festival. Playing chamber music is also a particular interest, and she often performs with Maestro Runnicles at the piano, his wife, violist Elizabeth Prior Runnicles, and members of the Opera Orchestra. According to Marty Simonds, who recently moved into the role of associate concertmaster, "Kay's style of playing is very intimate and elegant, which brings a sense of chamber music to playing in a big orchestra. With her [in the orchestra], I feel like I'm playing in a string quartet."

(continued on page 48)



Mezzo-soprano **OLGA BORODINA** makes her San Francisco Opera debut in the title role of *La Cenerentola*. The Russian artist first sang the part in a concert performance with the Kirov Opera in St. Petersburg in 1993, and received public and critical acclaim when she performed the role last year at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden. A first prize gold medal winner of the Rosa Ponselle International Vocal Competition, she also won the 1989 Barcelona competition which brought her critical recognition in Europe and the United States. In the

space of a few years, she has established herself as one of the world's most sought-after singers. In recent seasons she has performed extensively throughout Spain, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, and on a tour of Japan with the Kirov. Highlights include Dargomyzhsky's *The Stone Guest* in Salzburg, *The Queen of Spades* (Paulina) and *Khovanshchina* (Marfa) in St. Petersburg, a debut at the Bastille Opera in Paris as Marina in *Boris Godunov*, *Khovanshchina* at the Vienna State Opera, Marguerite in *La Damnation de Faust* and Dalila opposite Plácido Domingo in *Samson et Dalila* at Covent Garden, in addition to appearances in New York with the Kirov in *Boris Godunov* and *The Queen of Spades*. Her most recent successes include concert performances of *Boris Godunov* with the Berlin Philharmonic, a debut at the Hamburg State Opera in a new staging of *Khovanshchina*, and her debut at the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires in *La Favorita*. In addition to her operatic activity, Miss Borodina has given recitals in London at Wigmore Hall and Queen Elizabeth Hall, in Milan at La Scala, in Rome at the Accademia Santa Cecilia, and in New York. Most recently, she was featured with the San Francisco Symphony and baritone Dmitri Hvorostovsky in a program of opera excerpts. The artist's recordings and videos include *The Queen of Spades*, *War and Peace*, *Khovanshchina*, *La Traviata*, *Eugene Onegin*, *Boris Godunov*, and a solo disc of Tchaikovsky songs.



ELIZABETH BISHOP, who most recently took part in San Francisco Opera's United Nations 50th Anniversary Concert, sings four roles for the Company: Flora in *La Traviata*, Suzuki in the December performances of *Madama Butterfly*, Tisbe in *La Cenerentola*, and Siegrune in *Die Walküre*. The mezzo-soprano, a 1994-95 Adler Fellow, was featured in four operas of the San Francisco Opera 1994 Fall Season, which included the role of Emilie in the world premiere production of *The Dangerous Liaisons*. She has numerous credits for the Opera Center, among them Helen in the 1994

Showcase production of Tippet's *King Priam*, Meg Page in *Falstaff* and Ida in *Die Fledermaus* for the 1993 Merola Opera Program, and Prince Orlofsky and Ida in Western Opera Theater's national tour of *Die Fledermaus*. She recently appeared in *The Ghosts of Versailles* at the Metropolitan Opera after having made her Met debut in the 1993 production of *Death in Venice*. A native of Greenville, South Carolina, the young artist earned a master of music degree from The Juilliard School in 1991 and completed a two-year apprenticeship program as a Juilliard Opera Center Young Artist. Since 1992, Miss Bishop has been annually featured in the San Francisco Symphony Pops Concerts.



NICOLLE FOLAND sings four roles in her first season with San Francisco Opera: Kate Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly*, Clorinda in both the mainstage and student matinee productions of *La Cenerentola*, Gerhilde in *Die Walküre*, and a Wood Nymph in *Rusalka*. A 1995 Adler Fellow, the soprano appeared as Adele in the 1993 Merola Opera Program production of *Die Fledermaus* and sang both Adele and Rosalinda in Western Opera Theater's national tour of the same production. The following year, she was applauded as Donna Anna in the Merola Program's mounting of *Don Giovanni* and again on WOT's national tour. Miss Foland received a master of music degree from the University of Northern Iowa, where she appeared as Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte* and Lauretta in *Gianni Schicchi*. The winner of numerous awards and competitions, she was a studio artist with Central City Opera and has appeared with Peoria Civic Opera as Mabel in *The Pirates of Penzance*. The young artist most recently portrayed Adina in *L'Elisir d'Amore* with Indianapolis Opera.



KURT STREIT, one of America's most highly acclaimed lyric tenors, sings the role of Don Ramiro in *La Cenerentola*. A member of the 1986 Merola Opera Program, he made his 1990 San Francisco Opera debut as Belmonte in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* and returned here to portray his first Lysander in the 1992 staging of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Currently regarded as one of the opera world's leading Mozart interpreters, one of his signature roles is Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte*, which he has performed at the Metropolitan Opera and Covent Garden, and in Vienna, Munich, Hamburg, Berlin, Geneva and Los Angeles. Roles performed in *Don Giovanni*, *Così fan tutte* and *Die Entführung* have met with similar success at these important venues, and have also taken him to the opera houses of Zurich, Brussels, Rome, and on a tour of Japan with the forces from the Royal Opera. In addition to *La Cenerentola*, Streit's expanding repertoire now includes *L'Elisir d'Amore*, *Don Pasquale*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Strauss's *Capriccio* and *Salome*, as well as Britten's *The Turn of the Screw*, which have led to further engagements in Berlin, Chicago, Barcelona and at La Fenice in Venice. His most recent appearance at the Met was in *The Ghosts of Versailles*. He has appeared in concert with many of the world's leading orchestras (led by such conductors as Zubin Mehta, Lorin Maazel, Nikolaus Harnoncourt and John Eliot Gardiner) and is a regular guest at major music festivals including Glynebourn, Salzburg and Aix-en-Provence. Most recently, he has begun to explore the lieder repertoire with recitals in London, Vienna, Zurich and at the Edinburgh Festival. His recordings include *Così fan tutte* under Daniel Barenboim, *Die Zauberflöte* led by Arnold Östman, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* with Bruno Weil, and *The Yeomen of the Guard* conducted by Neville Marriner.



Dale Travis



Olga Borodina, Men of the San Francisco Opera Chorus



Lucio Gallo

Nicolle Foland



*Olga Borodina,
Kurt Streit*



Elizabeth Bishop



Bass-baritone **SIMONE ALAIMO**, Don Magnifico in *La Cenerentola*, made his 1988 San Francisco Opera debut in the title role of *Maometto II*, and has since been seen with the Company as Figaro in *Le Nozze di Figaro* (1991), Mustafà in *L'Italiana in Algeri* (summer 1992), and Doctor Dulcamara in *L'Elisir d'Amore* (fall '92). A native of Italy, he completed his musical training in Palermo and studied at the Vocal Academy of La Scala in Milan under the tutelage of famed soprano Gina Cigna. Alaimo is the winner of several vocal competitions, including that of the first

RAI Italian television Maria Callas Award, which launched his career in the major opera houses of Europe. Since his U.S. opera debut at the Lyric Opera of Chicago in 1987 as Mustafà, the artist has had major triumphs at Covent Garden, the Vienna State Opera, Munich Staatsoper, Rome Opera, Dallas Opera, Geneva Opera and Metropolitan Opera, among others. During the 1992-93 season, he made debuts at the Metropolitan Opera and Dallas Opera as Assur in *Semiramide*, returned to the Met as Mozart's Figaro, and sang Don Basilio in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* at Covent Garden, Alfio in *Cavalleria Rusticana* in Geneva, as well as the title role of *Il Turco in Italia* in Lausanne. His most recent assignments include the Pharaoh in *Mosè in Egitto* and Don Magnifico at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, Polidoro in *Zelmira* at the Rome Opera, Leporello in *Don Giovanni* in Munich, Severo in *Poliuto* in Bergamo, Mustafà in Toulouse, and Doctor Dulcamara in Genoa. Future plans include Mustafà in Buenos Aires, Vienna and Catania, and a return to the Met to portray Don Basilio and Don Magnifico. His numerous recordings include *L'Elisir d'Amore*, *Poliuto*, *Don Pasquale*, *L'Italiana in Algeri*, *Attila*, *Il Turco in Italia*, *Don Giovanni*, *La Cenerentola*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *I Masnadieri* and *Ermione*, in addition to solo albums of arias by Rossini and Verdi.



Baritone **LUCIO GALLO**, who made his U.S. opera debut as Leporello in San Francisco Opera's 1991 staging of *Don Giovanni*, returns to portray Dandini in *La Cenerentola*. Born in Taranto, Italy, he graduated from the Turin Conservatory (where he studied under Elio Battaglia) and soon after won several vocal competitions in London, Venice, Parma, Barcelona and Genoa. He was subsequently engaged in Genoa to make his 1986 operatic debut in Stravinsky's *Renard*, Britten's *The Prodigal Son*, and *La Bohème* (Marcello) opposite Luciano Pavarotti. Since then, he has rapidly

come to the attention of the major opera houses of the world. Highlights from recent seasons include debuts at the Metropolitan Opera and the Vienna State Opera as Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte*; a debut at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden as Figaro in *Le Nozze di Figaro*; Dandini in Bologna; Pizarro in *Fidelio* at La Fenice in Venice; the Count in *Le Nozze di Figaro* in Hamburg; and the title role of *Don Giovanni* at La Scala in Milan. His most recent engagements have been Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly* and Belcore in *L'Elisir d'Amore* at the Met; a role debut as Scarpia in *Tosca* in Turin; Malatesta in *Don Pasquale* in Munich and Milan; Mozart's Figaro in Vienna, Ferrara and on Hamburg Opera's tour of Israel; the Count in *Le Nozze di Figaro* in Hamburg, Munich and Vienna; Ford in *Falstaff* in Parma; Enrico in *Lucia di Lammermoor* in Israel; the title role of *Don Giovanni* in Strasbourg; Figaro in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and Leporello in Vienna; as well as *L'Inganno Felice* at Pesaro's Rossini Festival. Also a popular concert soloist and recitalist, Gallo's recordings include *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *La Cenerentola*, *Il Viaggio a Reims*, two recordings of *Le Nozze di Figaro* (as Figaro under Claudio Abbado and as the Count conducted by Zubin Mehta), in addition to *Rigoletto*.



Bass-baritone **DALE TRAVIS** portrays Alidoro in *La Cenerentola*. Since his 1988 Company debut, he has appeared here in over 25 roles including Don Alfonso in *Così fan tutte*, Melcthal in *Guillaume Tell*, Haly in *L'Italiana in Algeri*, the Sacristan in *Tosca*, and Quince in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. He was a member of the Merola Opera Program in 1986 and '87, toured with Western Opera Theater in *La Bohème* and *Don Pasquale*, and was an Adler Fellow with the Opera Center in 1988-'89. Engagements during the 1994-95 season included his debut with the Chicago Lyric Opera

as Trulove in *The Rake's Progress*; Maximilian in *Candide*, Zuniga in *Carmen* and Moruccio in *Tiefland* with the Washington Opera at the Kennedy Center; Antonio in *Le Nozze di Figaro* and Mr. Ruskin in the world premiere of *Modern Painters* at Santa Fe Opera; as well as Brander in *La Damnation de Faust* with the San Francisco Symphony. In recent seasons elsewhere, the artist has appeared as Don Alfonso at Berlin's Komische Oper (European debut), as Pistola in *Falstaff* at New Orleans Opera, Dr. Bartolo in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* at Tulsa Opera, Leporello in *Don Giovanni* with Opera San Jose, and in the title role of *Don Pasquale* for the New Israeli Opera.



In his first San Francisco Opera engagement, **CARLO RIZZI** is on the podium for *La Cenerentola*. Since his 1982 debut, the maestro has conducted more than 50 different works in the leading opera houses of Italy, Australia, France, Germany, The Netherlands, Switzerland and Great Britain. He is also sought after as an orchestral conductor, and has appeared with all the orchestras of London, as well as the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, and Philadelphia Orchestra, among other prominent ensembles. He succeeded Charles Mackerras as Music Director

of the Welsh National Opera in 1992, and during his first season in that post he led new productions of *Elektra*, *Tosca*, *La Favorita* and *Eugene Onegin*, in addition to revivals of *Un Ballo in Maschera* and *La Bohème*. In 1993, he made his Metropolitan Opera debut with *La Bohème*, and returned to the Met later that season for *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*. Additional highlights have been his 1994 Lyric Opera of Chicago debut leading *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, his first appearance at the Edinburgh Festival conducting the Verdi Requiem, and opening the 1993 Covent Garden season with *Madama Butterfly*, followed by *L'Italiana in Algeri*. His 1994-95 season was also highlighted by appearances at Milan's La Scala for Verdi's *Stiffelio*, at Covent Garden with *Otello*, in Berlin for *La Traviata*, in Pesaro for Rossini's *L'Inganno Felice*, and at the Welsh National Opera with performances of *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Turandot*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *La Traviata*, *Così fan tutte* and *Nabucco*. Maestro Rizzi has made several complete opera recordings, including *La Traviata*, *La Cenerentola*, *Rigoletto* and *Faust*. He was born in Milan and studied at the Milan Conservatory, with Vladimir Delman in Bologna, and with Franco Ferrara at the Accademia Chigiana in Siena.

ARTIST PROFILES



One of the world's most noted directors and designers, the late **JEAN-PIERRE PONNELLE** conceived and designed this production of *La Cenerentola*, the opera which was the first American project in which he served as both director and designer—at San Francisco Opera in 1969. He studied at the Sorbonne in Paris, his native city, and in 1952 created the scenery for the world premiere of *Boulevard Solitude*, Hans Werner Henze's first opera. During the 1950s, he designed for the principal German theaters, both opera and drama, and made his design debut at the Vienna State Opera, the

Rome Opera, the Opéra-Comique in Paris, and San Francisco, where his U.S. debut was marked by productions of Orff's *The Wise Maiden* and *Carmina Burana*. He returned to the Company in 1959 for the U.S. premiere of *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. Ponnelle's additional productions here include *Carmen*, *Rigoletto*, *Pagliacci*, *Der Fliegende Holländer*, *Così fan tutte*, *Lear*, *Cavalleria Rusticana*, *Otello*, *Falstaff*, *Gianni Schicchi*, *Tosca*, *Turandot*, *La Bohème*, *Il Prigioniero* and *Idomeneo*. For the Zurich Opera, he mounted highly acclaimed cycles of operas by Monteverdi and Mozart. He had other notable successes in Munich (Wagner's *Liebesverbot*), Paris (*Così fan tutte*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*), Vienna (*Cavalleria Rusticana* / *Pagliacci*), at Covent Garden (*Aida*), the Metropolitan Opera (*La Clemenza di Tito*), Bayreuth (*Tristan und Isolde*), and the Munich Opera Festival (*Lulu*). Television viewers have been able to see many of his productions including *Idomeneo* and *Le Nozze di Figaro* from the Met, *Die Zauberflöte* from the Salzburg Festival, as well as filmed versions of *Madama Butterfly*, *Carmina Burana*, *Rigoletto*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *La Cenerentola*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *La Clemenza di Tito*, and the three extant Monteverdi operas.



CHRISTOPHER ALDEN, the stage director of *La Cenerentola*, has enjoyed a long and successful association with San Francisco Opera. He began his directing career with Western Opera Theater's 1975 production of *The Tales of Hoffmann*, subsequently staging a WOT *L'Elisir d'Amore*, the acclaimed U.S. premieres of Reimann's *The Ghost Sonata* for the Opera Center and Henze's *Das Verratene Meer* for the main Company, and the 1993 season-opening production of *I Vespri Siciliani*. Currently Director of Production for the Long Beach Opera, he has mounted for that company a series of

works ranging from Monteverdi's *The Coronation of Poppea* to Offenbach's *Bluebeard* to Britten's *Death in Venice*. Alden has also staged productions for the New York City Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Seattle Opera, Wolf Trap, Santa Fe Opera, Washington Opera, Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Dallas Opera, Los Angeles Music Center Opera, Basel Opera, the Opéra-Comique in Paris, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the London Sinfonietta, Michigan Opera Theater, Opera Omaha, Connecticut Grand Opera, Fort Worth Opera, the American Music Theater Festival, New York Shakespeare Festival, Opera Memphis and Opera at the Academy, among others. Recent highlights include a new staging of *Turandot* for Welsh National Opera, *Boris Godunov* and *The Turk in Italy* for Long Beach Opera, a new production of *Idomeneo* in Geneva, *Orphée aux Enfers* at the Opéra Français de New York, *Cavalleria Rusticana* / *Pagliacci* for the New Israeli Opera, and the world premiere of *Harvey Milk* for Houston Grand Opera and New York City Opera. Later this season, he will direct *Der Fliegende Holländer* for the Canadian Opera Company, *Madama Butterfly* for the New Israeli Opera, *Faust* for the Welsh National Opera, and *Turandot* for the English National and Scottish Operas.

Bringing to life the wonderful Jean-Pierre Ponnelle production of *La Cenerentola*, first seen at the San Francisco Opera in 1969, I feel a bit like a painter forging an Old Master. Ponnelle, who died tragically and prematurely in 1988, was truly a master opera producer whose influence on the theatrical side of opera in the latter half of this century is probably unparalleled. Those three words—"a Ponnelle production"—still have a magical ring, promising a unique balance between strong, personal interpretation and respect for tradition. For, despite the controversy he inevitably provoked, Ponnelle was a traditionalist in the best sense, a magician who brought the past to life again on the stage rather than exhibiting it embalmed in an operatic museum. San Francisco audiences can certainly count themselves lucky that so many Ponnelle productions were created on the stage of the War Memorial. And I hope that in this *Cenerentola* revival we have conjured up even a brief flash of the old Ponnelle magic.

—Christopher Alden



Lighting Director and Design Consultant for San Francisco Opera since 1976, **THOMAS J. MUNN** created the lighting and special effects for *Ruslan and Lyudmila*, in addition to the lighting for *La Traviata*, *Madama Butterfly*, *La Cenerentola*, *Faust* and *Die Walküre*. He has designed the lighting and special effects for over 155 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's Emmy-winning telecast of *La Gioconda*, also *Samson et Dalila*, *Aida*, *L'Africaine*, *La Bohème*, *Orlando Furioso*, *Mefistofele*, *Capriccio*, *Turandot* and *The Dangerous Liaisons*. Credits for other companies include work for the Dallas Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Washington Opera, Chicago Lyric Opera and the Netherlands Opera, as well as scenery and lighting for Hartford Ballet's *Nutcracker*. Recent credits include lighting for the Dallas Opera's production of *La Cenerentola*, scenery and lighting for Ballet Arizona's staging of *Coppélia*, as well as art direction and lighting for the video "The Universe Story." In the future, Munn will design the lighting for Dallas Opera's production of *Il Trovatore*, and will also serve as consultant/designer of the War Memorial's new renovated and computerized lighting system.

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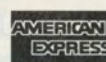
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Kay Stern during a rehearsal

Earlier this year she also participated in the Olympic Music Festival for the first time and saw the release of two recordings, chamber music by Henry Cowell and a violin concerto by Edward Miller.

Having the time to work on solo material is satisfying, but not something she ever aspired to pursue full-time. "I had thoughts about a solo career, but from a young age I was excited about orchestras. I went to Ohio State, where a wonderful conductor named Marshall Haddock led the orchestra. We learned to play as an ensemble and with a sense of responsibility for what the composer intended, and it was exciting to have such a sense of group accomplishment. In my first year at Juilliard, I was placed in the back of the second violins in the third orchestra. I went into it thinking I had a lot to learn, then during the first rehearsal I cried because many people didn't do the dynamics or treat the music seriously. It seemed most violinists were more interested practicing their own cadenzas during orchestra breaks than in the orchestra music. I knew from earlier orchestra experiences what the potential of satisfaction was and how powerful the communication could be.

"Doing *only* solo work didn't appeal to me—it seemed a little lonely, maybe. And I wasn't necessarily the type of person who wanted to walk out in front of a different audience night after night. I really enjoy the sense of playing and communicating

with others through music. I do enjoy solo work, but wouldn't like it full-time."

Off-season she also has a more conventional schedule pursuing one of her passions: teaching. In addition to giving private lessons, she is on the San Francisco Conservatory of Music staff. "I think a great teacher is rare, and I think there are new ways to teach the old tradition—new language, new sensation and new thought," says Stern, who studied with and taught for the legendary Dorothy DeLay at The Juilliard School. "During the season, I have the students come to my house at really odd hours. I don't know how Zaven [Melikian] managed the teaching and performing; his commitment to his students had him teaching several hours a week on top of his schedule at the Opera."

Stern says that she likes the music of many different composers—particularly Mozart and Mahler—and sometimes misses the symphonic repertoire. However, one of the reasons she is devoted to opera is because, "I find it exciting that we are telling a story." And she even has reason to envy her colleagues on stage: "I've always been jealous that singers have words and we don't," admits Stern. "I always thought if I could have words with the music, I'd know exactly how to play."



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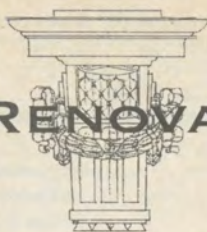
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In order to increase the enjoyment of opera for hearing-impaired members of the audience, the War Memorial Opera House is equipped with a Sennheiser Listening System. Headphones and induction devices (adaptable to hearing aids) are available in the 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:

Thursday, October 5
 Sunday, October 8
 Saturday, October 14
 Tuesday, October 24
 Saturday, November 4
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Tickets for Guild members, \$2; non-members, \$5. Reservations required. Information: (415) 565-6433.

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

Information: (415) 552-8338.

OPERA HOUSE PATRON ENTRY/ EXIT:

During all 1995 San Francisco Opera performances, patron entry and exit will be via Van Ness and Grove Street doors ONLY. The door that opens one and one-half hours prior to curtain time will be on Grove Street. Three doors on the north (carriage) side of the Opera House will be available during performances for EMERGENCY EXIT ONLY via ramps over the basement excavation.

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 taxi entrance on Grove Street. 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.

For **LOST AND FOUND** information, inquire at checkroom #3 or call (415) 621-6600, 8:30 to 11:30 a.m., Monday through Friday.

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.

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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.

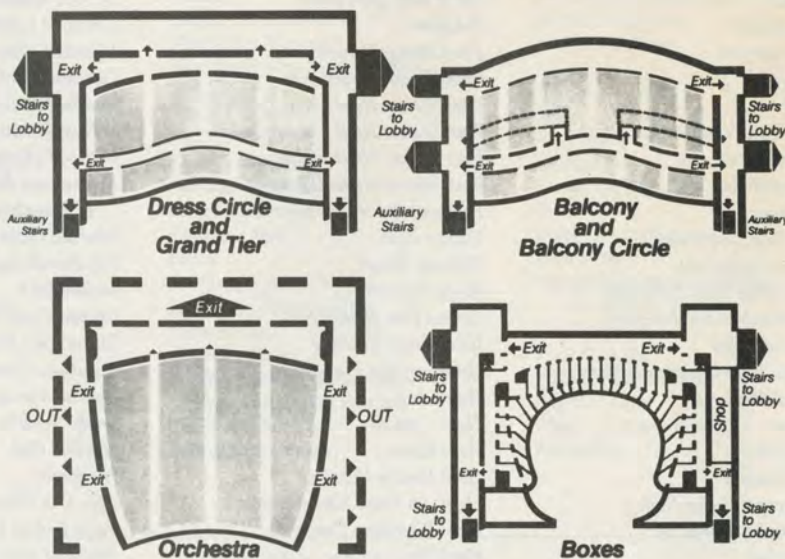
For the safety and comfort of our audience, all large parcels, backpacks, luggage, etc., must be checked at Opera House cloak-rooms.

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.

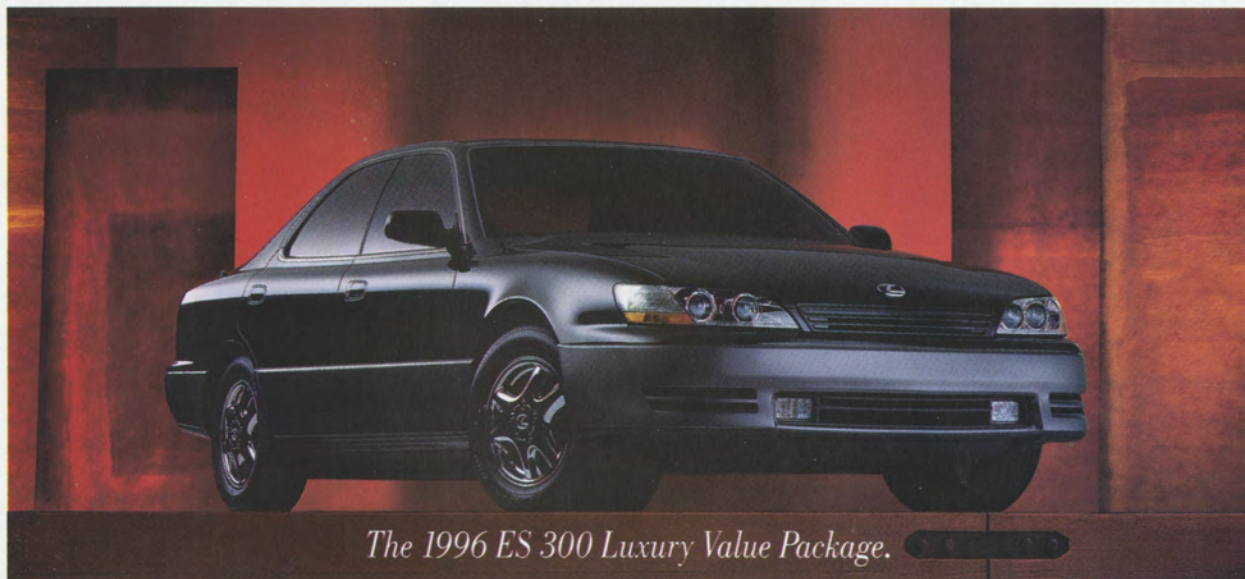
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San Francisco War Memorial and Performing Arts Center War Memorial Opera House



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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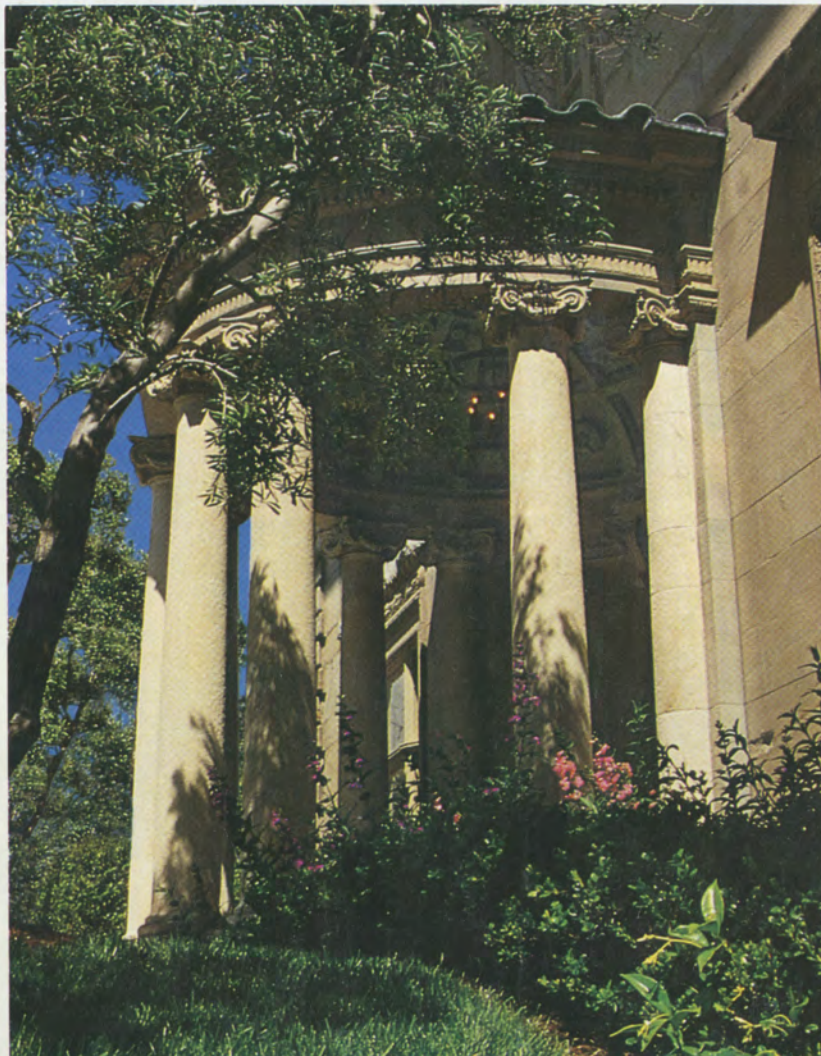
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