

Faust

1995-1996

Thursday, October 26, 1995 7:30 PM

Sunday, October 29, 1995 2:00 PM

Tuesday, October 31, 1995 8:00 PM

Friday, November 3, 1995 8:00 PM

Sunday, November 5, 1995 2:00 PM

Wednesday, November 8, 1995 7:30 PM

Saturday, November 11, 1995 8:00 PM

Thursday, November 16, 1995 8:00 PM

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SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

1995 SEASON

FAUST



Stagebill



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San Francisco Opera Magazine

ISSN 0892-7189

Editorial Offices:
San Francisco Opera
301 Van Ness
San Francisco, CA 94102
Tel. (415) 861-4008

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President and Publisher
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Advertising Offices San Francisco: 314 Fourth Street, San Francisco, California 94111, (415) 536-0121, FAX (415) 536-0111. Chicago: 500 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60611, (312) 565-0890. New York: 144 East 44th Street, New York, NY 10017, (212) 687-9275. Washington: c/o Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Washington, D.C. 20566, (202) 416-7940.

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA MAGAZINE

Faust

1995 Season
Vol. 73, No. 8

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An introduction to and affectionate look at Gounod's perennial favorite.
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Piecing together the career of Florence Quartararo, San Francisco's own recently deceased diva.

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COVER

Delacroix, Eugène (French, 1798–1863)
Méphistophélès appears before Faust (1826–27)

Oil on canvas, 18 1/8 x 15 in.

Wallace Collection, London
Bridgeman-Giraudon Photo

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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

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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

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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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A VERY PROPER OPERA

By JOHN ARDOIN

Once upon a time, the alluring Mary Garden encountered philanthropist Andrew Carnegie on a luxury liner bound for England. During the crossing, the two luminaries had tea together one afternoon, and Carnegie made a confession.

"As much as I admire you as a singer, Miss Garden, there is one opera I can never bring myself to see you perform."

Her curiosity piqued, Garden asked for the name of the opera.

"Louise."

Amazed, Garden asked why.

"Well, it's so sordid and immoral. I mean, that young girl running off to live unmarried with that painter. No, no. It's just not proper."

Amused, Garden asked Carnegie to name a "proper" opera.

"Faust, of course," was his reply.

It obviously didn't bother Carnegie that Marguerite in *Faust* gives birth and then drowns an illegitimate child. After all, everything is made right at the end of the evening when the heavens open up to forgive and receive her. As she is wafted aloft by a band of golden angels, the chorus cries out "*Sauvée!*"—"Saved!" How proper can you get?

And indeed, *Faust* was so proper, it was quickly taken to the ample, bejeweled bosom of the Victorian age. To that era, it was a prettily wrapped box of chocolate-covered melodies. Or, as a more contemporary critic put it, "*Faust* is a sermon sugared with sentiment."

All the greats of the epoch appeared in *Faust*. Marguerite was a favorite part of Adelina Patti and Nellie Melba. Jean de

Reszke helped solidify his matinee-idol status with the tights he wore in the title role, and his brother Edouard and later that gentleman's gentleman of a bass, Pol Plançon, both made their mark as the Devil.

When it came time to inaugurate New York's old Metropolitan Opera House at Broadway and 39th Street, *Faust*, of course, was the choice. For opening night on October 22, 1883, it was sung in Italian. Later, *Faust* was heard in German before it was finally presented in its original French. So popular was the Gounod perennial at the old Met (over 600 performances before it closed its doors 83 years later) that the house was once dubbed the "Faustspielhaus," a pun on the German noun "Schauspielhaus," meaning "theater."

Though *Faust* has never been abandoned

by the world's opera companies, its frequency of performances has diminished in recent decades. Now, it is more often than not taken off the shelf when a star bass or tenor wants to add it to his repertory. Perhaps it has become too proper for contemporary audiences.

To be honest, it is not all that difficult to point out what is wrong with *Faust*. Those familiar with Goethe's play, the opera's principal source, will find no philosophical depth or meaningful symbolism in Gounod's treatment of the story. In fact, the opera usually strikes them as more of an impertinence than not. But then it is well to remember that Goethe once told a friend that he thought Meyerbeer was the perfect composer to set *Faust* to music. So much for the horse's mouth.

John Ardoin is music critic of The Dallas Morning News and author of The Furtwängler Record, published by Amadeus Press. He is currently beginning work on the first history in English of the Maryinsky Theater in St. Petersburg.

S T



Above: Ezio Pinza portrayed Méphistophélès at San Francisco Opera in 1928 and in seven seasons thereafter. He is shown in a studio portrait (*right*) and in a photo taken from the wings during a 1937 performance.

Right: Two of San Francisco Opera's early Fausts: Richard Crooks in 1934, complete with his "old man" disguise (*left*), and Giovanni Martinelli in 1937 in the Garden Scene with Charlotte Boerner as Marguerite (*right*).

PHOTOS: MORTON



Still, it is true that German-speaking countries have never been able to bring themselves to present the opera under the title of *Faust*. In Teutonic climes, as a sort of

And despite the love music he wrote for the Garden Scene, Gounod had from the start a priggish streak in him and a religious bent that emerged later in life in a string of oratorios, hymns and "Ave Mari-as." It was almost as if he spent his declining years doing penitence for the time he devoted to the opera house.

My mission, however, is not to dwell on what is wrong with *Faust*, but to tell you what's right about it, for I love the opera without shame

black-and-white duel between good and evil, honesty and deception. Gounod accomplished much the same ends with his adaptation of Goethe's play.

Furthermore, in opera one sings, one does not philosophize (unless you happen to be Wotan). In nineteenth-century opera, clean and clear story lines were the essential thing. The plot was carried forward by the wedding of a concise, dramatic idea with a singable melodic line that captured and reflected the essence of a thought, be it ever so humble as "I love you" or "I hate you."

This Gounod did with an admirable mastery. There is no denying the theatrical balances and the sheer effectiveness of most of the scenes in *Faust*. Just think how cleverly the final pages of Act II are brought to a head by Marguerite's cry into the night for Faust, followed by a burst of cynical laughter from Méphistophélès (a stretch of writing praised by Berlioz at the premiere), or how well-shaped and focused is Valentin's death, polarized as it is by his condemnation of his sister and pleas from the chorus to forgive her. Then there is the scene in the church that underlines so tellingly the dichotomy between the isolated and guilt-ridden Marguerite and the preying Devil and his horde of demons, or the final encounter between the three principals in the prison when Mephisto comes to collect two victims and is cheated out of one of them.

Those are instances in which the words and music of *Faust* brilliantly interact as one. But there are also important moments where the opera is propelled by the momentum of sheer melody alone. What a treasure-trove of good tunes is found in *Faust*—Valentin's aria, Marguerite's Jewel Song, the irresistible tread and inspired musical rhetoric of the Soldiers' Chorus and the vaulting final trio, where the heavenly hosts would have had to be deaf not to hear and forgive Marguerite.

It is easy to forget that *Faust* went a long way toward humanizing opera and deflating the pompousness in which it had become mired since the heyday of Meyerbeer. You may not appreciate the poetic and even intimate approach Gounod took in *Faust*, but you cannot deny his gift for producing natural, almost conversational exchanges between his principals. The Garden Scene quartets, for example, contain some very skillful character delineations.

disclaimer, it has always been performed as *Margarete*. George Bernard Shaw (always interesting and with something to say whatever the subject) once remarked under his critical pen name of Corno di Bassetto that "*Faust*, no matter who writes music to it, will remain the most popular opera story of the century until some great musician takes Henrik Ibsen's *Peer Gynt* as a libretto.

"Boito's version [an Italian setting of the Goethe play by Verdi's librettist for *Otello* and *Falstaff*, who was also a composer in his own right] seems almost as popular as Gounod's, though Gounod's is a true musical creation, whereas Boito has only adapted the existing resources of orchestration and harmony very ably to his libretto. In short, Gounod has set music to *Faust*, and Boito has set *Faust* to music."

Beyond the problems posed by Gounod's adaptation of Goethe, there are weaknesses in the score that cannot be denied, such as Siebel's silly ditty sung at the opening of the Garden Scene and much of the Walpurgis Night ballet. One also has to endure a certain amount of moralizing from Gounod that manifests itself in the score of *Faust* as a continual major-minor tonal tug-of-war between the good and the bad.

and hope to convince you to join me in my affection for its cologne-soaked drama and its string of pearly melodies. In carrying out this task, the first thing that has to be noted (and Gounod noted it with a canny skill) is that opera is not a book or a play. It has its own rules, its own time scale and its own dramatic needs.

For example, Verdi and Boito reduced *Othello* from some 3,500 lines of poetry to only 800 to create *Otello*. This meant its subtleties and subplots were boiled down to a



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SOHL

Photos—Two more San Francisco Opera devils: Cesare Siepi in the 1955 staging of *Faust* (top), and Robert Lloyd in the 1986 production.

(continued on page 38)

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TUESDAY, OCTOBER 31 AT 8:00

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 3 AT 8:00

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 5 AT 2:00

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 8 AT 7:30

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 11 AT 8:00

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16 AT 8:00

CAST

(in order of appearance)

Faust Richard Leech

Méphistophélès Samuel Ramey

Wagner Philip Skinner

Valentin Rodney Gilfry*

Marguerite Nancy Gustafson

Marthe Catherine Cook

Siebel Susan Quittmeyer

Students, soldiers, villagers, prisoners, angels, demons

*San Francisco Opera debut

TIME AND PLACE: Medieval Germany

ACT I Faust's study

ACT II The Kermesse

INTERMISSION

ACT III Marguerite's garden

INTERMISSION

ACT IV Scene 1 A street
Scene 2 A church
Scene 3 A public square

ACT V Scene 1 Walpurgis Night
Scene 2 A prison

Supertitles by Christopher Bergen, San Francisco Opera.

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The performance will last approximately three and one-half hours.

SYNOPSIS

Faust

ACT I—In his study, the aged philosopher Faust laments his inability to find a meaning in life. He thinks of committing suicide, but does not have the necessary courage. Tormented, he resorts to calling upon the forces of evil. Méphistophélès appears and proposes a contract: his soul in exchange for youth. When Faust hesitates, Méphistophélès conjures up a vision of a lovely maiden, Marguerite. Faust agrees to the bargain, drinks a magic potion, and is transformed into a young man.

ACT II—A Kermesse or town fair is in progress, celebrating the departure of soldiers to war. Valentin, a young army officer, holds a medal given him by his sister, Marguerite, to whom he offers a touching farewell. Wagner, a student, starts the revels with a lively song but is interrupted by Méphistophélès, who offers an impudent hymn in praise of greed and gold. He infuriates Valentin with an insulting toast to Marguerite. The soldier draws his sword, but it shatters. The other officers, recognizing Satan, hold their swords like crosses before Méphistophélès, who cowers before them. As the crowd begins a dance, Faust speaks to Marguerite, who refuses his offer to escort her home.

ACT III—Siebel, a youth in love with Marguerite, visits her garden to leave her a bouquet of flowers. The romantic young man is followed by Faust and Méphistophélès, who goes in search of a gift to outshine Siebel's. Left alone, Faust hails the simple beauty of Marguerite's home. Méphistophélès returns with a box of jewels, which he places near Siebel's flowers. When Marguerite arrives, she sings a ballad, interrupting the song with reflections on the stranger she has met. Discovering the flowers and the box, the young woman exclaims in delight as she adorns herself with jewels. A middle-aged neighbor, Marthe, arrives, and Méphistophélès pretends to woo her so that Faust may make his conquest. As night falls, Marguerite confesses her love, but begs Faust to leave. Just when Faust is about to comply, Méphistophélès mockingly sends him back and laughs as Marguerite yields to her lover's embraces.

ACT IV—Scene 1—Marguerite has been betrayed and deserted by Faust. The faithful Siebel, however, still offers her his love—but Marguerite still loves the man who abandoned her, and hopes against hope that he will return.

Scene 2—Marguerite seeks refuge in a church, only to be pursued by Méphistophélès, who torments her with threats of damnation. She collapses in terror.

Scene 3—Valentin and his comrades return from war, singing the glory of those slain in battle. The soldier questions Siebel about Marguerite, but receives only evasive replies. Faust, remorseful at having abandoned Marguerite, arrives with Méphistophélès, who serenades her with a lewd ballad. Valentin, stepping forward to defend his sister's honor, fights a duel with Faust, who, guided by Méphistophélès, fatally wounds him. As Méphistophélès drags Faust away, Marguerite kneels by her dying brother, who curses her.

ACT V—Scene 1—In a barren spot where witches celebrate Walpurgis Night, Méphistophélès tempts Faust to forget his love by invoking the ghosts of historic beauties, but a vision of Marguerite brings him back to reality.

Scene 2—Marguerite lies asleep in prison, condemned to death for the murder of her illegitimate child. Faust and Méphistophélès enter, with the intention of taking her away. When Faust awakens Marguerite, she is at first overjoyed to see him, but instead of fleeing with him she begins to recall their days of happiness. When Méphistophélès urges them to escape, Marguerite calls on the angels to save her. As she dies, Méphistophélès pronounces her condemned, but angelic choirs proclaim her salvation.

Supernumeraries

Traude Albert	Margory Cohen	Ursula Grunfeld	Will Murray	Mimi Timberlake
Sarah Anderson	Huguette Combs	Amalia Del Socorro	Beverly Mutnick	Too Too Tomato
Pat Angell	Nikolaje De Vrsac	Guerrero	Christine Okan	Kelly Toomey
Pat Beresford	Pam DeWeerd	Maria Guerrero	Annette R. Peretti	Linda Ann Unemori
Arlene Berner	Shawn Dubin	Mary Hanni	Paul Ricks	Ceci Valente
Phyllis Blair	Darcy Fink	Naomi Hartley-Dawson	Denise Scaglione	Lord Veerman
Rebecca Bryant	Serenity Forchion	Frank Jorgensen	Ludmila Shashurin	Rick Weil
Mark Burstein	Mary Freeman	Lisa Klein	Linda Jean Slocum	Susan Weiss
Tom Carlisle	Gwendolyn Nassera	Diane C. Knoll	Elsie Smith	Merry West
Pat Carpenter	Gardner	Joan Kwansa	Don Stoddard	Liebe Wetzel
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Faust



Photos taken in rehearsal by Marty Sohl

Samuel Ramey, Nancy Gustafson



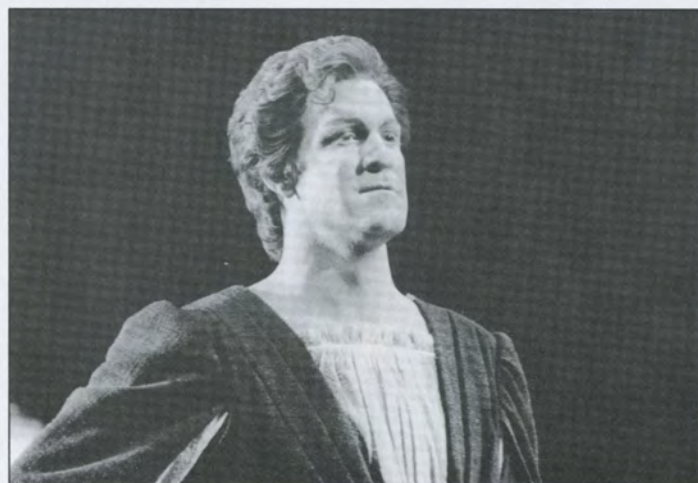
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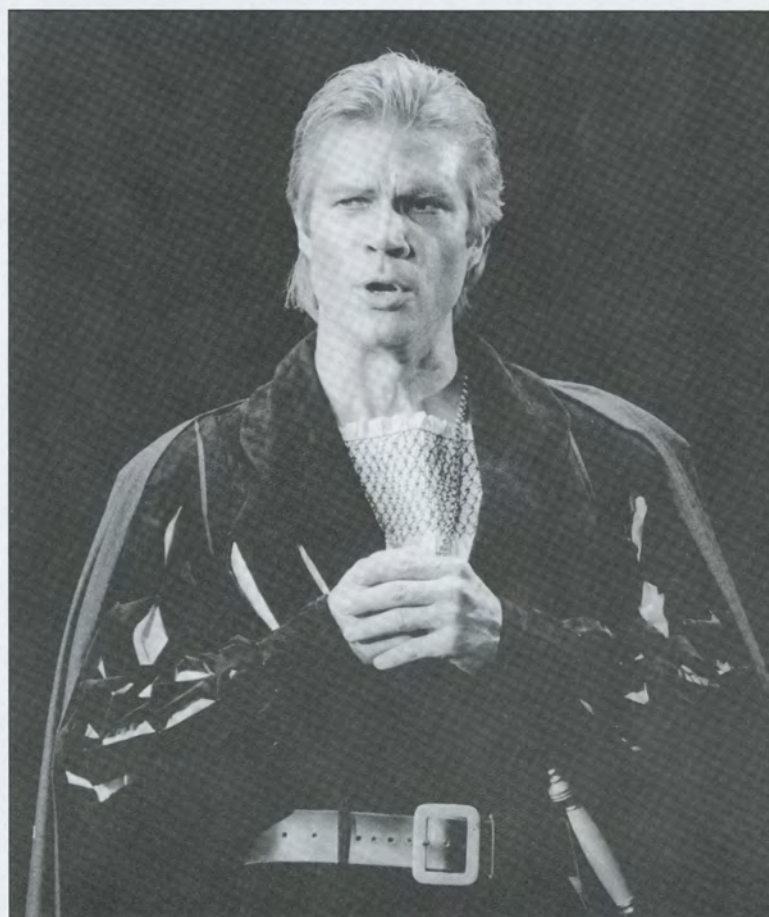
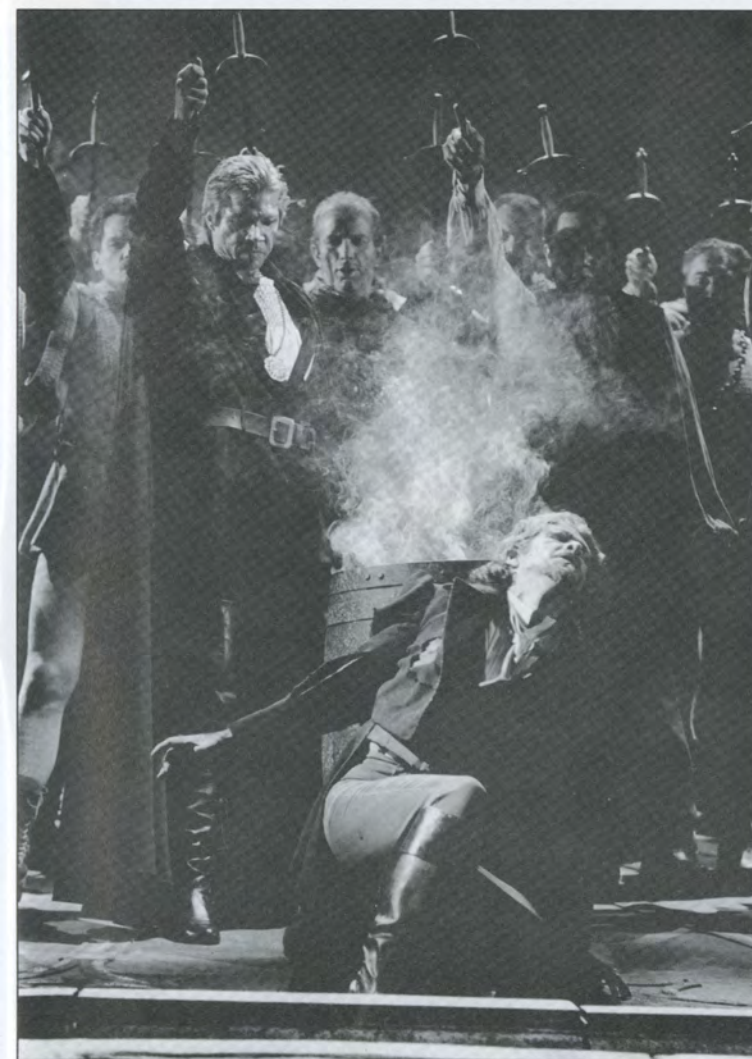


Nancy Gustafson, Richard Leech



Susan Quittmeyer

*Rodney Gilfry, Samuel Ramey,
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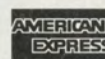
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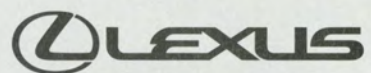
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Bezubenkov, Andras*, Gogin

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

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

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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.)

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Rossini

Borodina*, Claytont, 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, Claytont, Keen,
Cook, Bishop†, Cao†, Bean; Elming*,
Morris/White, Von Halem

Runnicles; Lehnhoff/Feldman/
Conklin/Munn

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

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November 17, 8 p.m.

New Production

DON GIOVANNI

Mozart

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

Runnicles; Mansouri/Howland/
Bosquet/Whitfield

Nov. 14, 18, 20, 24, 28

Dec. 1, 3, 7

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San Francisco Opera Premiere

RUSALKA

Dvořák

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

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

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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.

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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

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

EAST BAY

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Nov. 15 *Rusalka*

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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.

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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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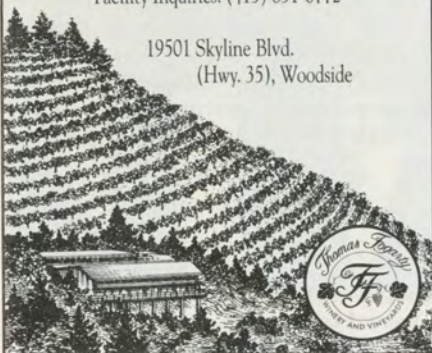
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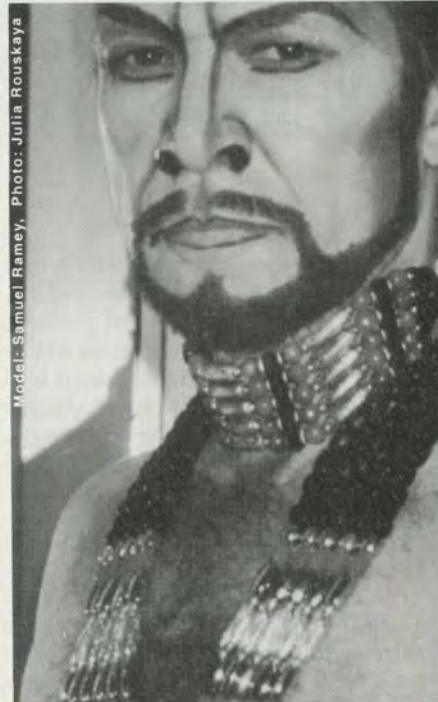
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JONES

Two San Francisco Opera Siebels: Lillian Clark in 1934 (far left), and Kerstin Meyer in 1962.

Faust had been on Gounod's mind for about a decade before the opera was actually written and performed. The project seriously took fire, however, in 1855 when Gounod met the team that would provide his libretto—poets Jules Barbier and Michel Carré. Actually, Carré had already written a version of the Faust legend that was fashioned after the Goethe original. In it, he had enlarged the presence of Valentin, Marguerite's brother, and Siebel, her suitor. It was this Carré-Goethe version that formed the framework for the Gounod opera.

Work on *Faust* was completed by the fall of 1858 and the premiere was set for the early part of the next year. The score that went into rehearsal, however, was longer and in several ways different from the one we normally encounter today. In fact, there are nearly as many edition questions surrounding *Faust* as there are for *Carmen* and *The Tales of Hoffmann*. At least Gounod lived to make clear-cut choices as to what was to be retained and what was to be discarded from his opera; neither Bizet nor Offenbach had this luxury.

During the first *Faust* rehearsals, some ten numbers bit the dust, including a trio for Faust, Siebel and Wagner in Act I, a duet for Marguerite and Valentin in Act II, and a mad scene in the last act for Marguerite. There was also some switching of scenes, particularly the church scene, which even today pops up in different places.

Ironically, considering its later prodigious successes, the initial reception of *Faust* was not all that warm. It was not a fiasco by any means (as was *Carmen* at its premiere), but it was met with reservations. A British critic who was in Paris at the time

happened to run into Gounod on the street a few days after the premiere—

I said to him, 'Is it not curious that people should take so to that Soldiers' Chorus which, you must agree with me, is not exactly the most distinguished piece in the opera?' 'Ah, my dear friend,' he said, 'don't you see, operas are not born like men, head foremost; operas are born feet foremost.'

Though *Faust* would eventually become one of the staples at the Paris Opéra, it began life in the lesser Théâtre-Lyrique because it was first conceived with a good deal of spoken dialogue. It was only after Gounod replaced the dialogue with sung recitative (a process begun in 1860) that *Faust* took up residence in Paris's main opera house, where it remained well enconced until the company vacated that grand building for the glass and steel of the new Bastille Opera in our time.

For its premiere at the Opéra, Gounod was asked to add the obligatory ballet, but with the other revisions that were needed, he had time to write only a few of the ballet's numbers. The rest were contributed by Léo Delibes, who also orchestrated the whole for his friend.

In various forms, *Faust* made its way quickly throughout Europe and the United States, hitting a snag only at its 1862 English premiere. The singer assigned the role of Valentin, Charles (later Sir Charles) Santley, objected to the absence of an aria for his character. Gounod, who had gone to London for the premiere, reluctantly took a tune from the opera's prelude and, to the words

"Even bravest heart may swell, in the moment of farewell" (a text supplied by critic Henry Chorley) created an aria for Santley without which *Faust* would be unthinkable today.

After the London premiere, sung in English, of course, this aria was then translated into French to become the familiar "Avant de quitter ces lieux." This, incidentally, was not the only instance of Gounod borrowing from himself when it came to *Faust*. The much admired Soldiers' Chorus, "Gloire immortelle de nos aïeux," was lifted from his unfinished opera on the life of Ivan the Terrible!

With the perspective of time, we can now see that historically *Faust* accomplished two important things: it stoked the fires of French opera, which were threatening to go out, and, in the words of one anonymous observer,

it provided a firm bridge between the melodic ambitions of the past and the dramatic aspirations of the future. Music endowed with such ecstasy and power was in Paris [at that time] an absolute novelty...Even Wagner, whose contempt for *Faust* is frequently quoted, conceded that in the Garden Scene, Gounod has introduced a power of expression hitherto unknown in French opera.

One last critical voice needs to be added in summation. In 1964, in the British magazine *Music and Musicians*, John W. Klein entered this judgment:

Alas, we live in an age when music is too austere, and often unimaginatively subordinated to the drama. Gounod, however, realized as few operatic composers have done, that it is chiefly in terms of sustained and glowing melody that certain highly emotional situations can be most powerfully handled...

That Gounod himself could rise to great occasions in at least two superb finales [in *Faust*], remains the triumphant vindication of a genius, that, however flawed and intermittent, was, nonetheless, genuine and sometimes even unexpectedly compelling. ■

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Florence Q

By ARTHUR KAPLAN



Just over fifty years ago, a young soprano from San Francisco named Florence Quartararo began a meteoric rise in the opera firmament. With a combination of luck, pluck and a healthy dose of native talent, in less than a year's time she went from her first professional engagement to major roles and rave reviews at the Metropolitan Opera. Then in 1951, seemingly at the threshold of a major career in opera, with outstanding successes with the opera companies of San Francisco, Philadelphia and the Met and two years of extensive recital touring under the aegis of Sol Hurok's management behind her, she left for Italy to try her fortune in the land of her forebears. Although she was greeted with enthusiasm by audiences and critics in various Italian cities, real stardom eluded her, and when she returned to the States three years later, her career in opera was ostensibly over. In 1954 she chose to retire and devote herself to family life. Florence Quartararo died after a brief illness last June at the age of 75.

Those who were fortunate enough to have been present at the soprano's triumphant homecoming concert in 1947 and her subsequent appearances through 1954 will not forget the impression created by the tall, auburn-haired beauty with the thrilling voice and striking stage presence.

Florence Quartararo grew up in a close-knit, music-loving Italian family along with two loving sisters, Marie and Jeri. "I sang ever since I can remember," she reminisced during a scripted radio interview a week after her Met debut. "We were a musical family. My father played the piano and had a beautiful tenor voice. In the evenings we would all gather

around the piano and sing. We even put on opera scenes in which the whole family joined. We would rig ourselves up in all sorts of costumes. I can still see daddy pulling the blanket off the bed [to impersonate] Cavaradossi, Alfredo or Radames." In these impromptu scenes

Florence would take the female lead and her Uncle Jack, a rabid opera enthusiast and devoted friend of San Francisco

Opera's general director Gaetano Merola, who was present at Florence's baptism, would sing the baritone lead. Friends who dropped in would join in the chorus.

Her parents felt that she had a trainable voice, and at 13 Florence began taking lessons from Elizabeth Wells, a patient at her father's ophthalmology office in North Beach. Miss Wells was at the piano when a teen-age Fofi, as her father affectionately called her, gave her first recital in front of friends and family at the Century Club. As the young singer neared the end of "Sempre libera" from Verdi's *La Traviata*, a voice from behind the curtain intoned Alfredo's haunting love theme. To the surprise and delight of soloist and audience, it was her father lending his support, just as he did in their impromptu home musicales. In 1939, Florence sang at the Golden Gate Exposition on Treasure Island before the California Federation of Music Clubs.

She had attended the Star of the Sea Academy in San Francisco and was beginning studies toward a B.A. in languages at San Francisco State when the war broke out. Her parents had planned to send her to Europe for further vocal studies after graduation, but that proved impossible. Instead she joined the U.S. Navy Western Frontier doing confidential naval intelligence work, all the while continuing her music lessons. Her sister Marie recalls their singing with a U.S.O. chorus for enlisted men in camps and hospitals in the area, and even chatting in Italian with prisoners of war at Fort Ord.

Invited by friends to vacation at their home in Los Angeles, Florence went south in the summer of 1944. While there, she began a year's study in the operatic repertoire with noted coach and conductor Pietro Cimini, who said of her: "I have never seen anyone work as Quartararo did; Sundays, holidays, weekdays, and sometimes twice a day...She did everything but eat the music." Her host, leading Hollywood cameraman Tony Gaudio, managed to obtain for her an audition with Bing Crosby and his musical staff. So impressed were they by her talent that she was immediately hired as the first unknown young opera singer ever to be introduced on Crosby's popular Kraft Music Hall radio show.

On April 4, 1945, Florence Alba (Crosby thought Quartararo too long and difficult for the radio audience to retain) made her professional debut over the national airwaves singing "Vissi d'arte" from *Tosca*. The public response was so positive that she returned for three subsequent appearances. Crosby prophetically predicted a meteoric career for the young Californian and suggested that her place was in New York.

That was soon to be, but not before an unexpected and momentous event occurred that summer. Leopold Stokowski, then music director of the Hollywood Bowl Symphony, had heard Florence on the Crosby show and auditioned her for the title role in *Aida* to be performed at the Bowl in August. Shortly thereafter, famed Wagnerian soprano Helen Traubel, who was to be featured in an all-Wagner program at the Bowl under Otto Klemperer, came down with a sudden sore throat on the morning of the concert. A frantic Stokowski called Florence at 11:30 a.m. to ask her to replace Traubel that evening. Stunned and breathless, she at first declined, saying she was unprepared and had had no orchestra rehearsal. But Stokowski would not take "no" for an answer. He phoned Cimini, who gave his permission on the condition that his protégée could perform with piano accompaniment rather than full orchestra. An irate Klemperer was forced to change the entire program. On that evening, July 12, 1945, Florence Alba sang "Ritorna vincitor" from *Aida*, "Bel raggio" from Rossini's *Semiramide* and several encores before a cheering crowd of 18,000. A few weeks later she performed her first operatic role, Leonora in *Il Trovatore*, at the Redlands Bowl, again to great success.

Arthur Kaplan, former co-editor of San Francisco Opera magazine, currently directs opera tours for Dailey-Thorp Travel.

Earle Lewis, a veteran Metropolitan Opera scout who happened to be vacationing in Los Angeles at the time, had heard Florence sing and told her there was someone in the neighborhood who wanted to hear her. He took her to the Beverly Hills Hotel salon of Bruno Walter. The thought of auditioning for the celebrated maestro may have been too much for her, for she forgot both words and music shortly into her first aria, "Depuis le jour" from *Louise*. After a bout with tears, renditions of "Dove sono" from *Le Nozze di Figaro*, "Tacea la notte" from *Il Trovatore* and "Care selve" from Handel's *Atalanta* must have impressed Walter because he advised her to turn down a seven-year contract at MGM and go to New York. He said he would personally write to Edward Johnson, then general manager of the Met, about her.

Florence left for New York with her mother in late September of 1945. She sang for Johnson and Frank St. Leger, who recommended her to the Caruso Scholarship committee. They granted her a \$1,000 award to continue her studies with assistant coaches at the Met, from which she had received a two-year contract.

In order to give her some experience on the stage of an opera house, the Met management arranged for her to sing Micaëla in *Carmen* in the first student matinee of the season on January 18, 1946, prior to her official house debut in the role. The *New York Times* music critic Howard Taubman happened to be in the audience that afternoon. In a cast that included Risë Stevens and Robert Merrill, Taubman singled out the talented newcomer for special praise. Citing her "astonishing assurance," he continued:

...she has a voice of size, range and true lyric quality. It is produced with a smoothness and accuracy that make you wonder how it happened that the voice has been so well placed....As for Micaëla's music, Miss Quartararo sang it with affecting simplicity.

The January 28, 1946 issue of *Time* magazine featured a picture of Fiorenza Quartararo, as Johnson chose to bill her, quoting from Taubman's review and filling readers in on her immediate background.

Her official Met debut on February 7 was thus eagerly anticipated, by none more than her proud parents, Dr. V. Charles Quartararo and his wife Caroline, who were seated in the front of the orchestra. The critics were unanimous in their praise, agreeing with Taubman that "she may be the find of the season."

Fiorenza Quartararo was heard in a radio interview a week after her debut and received a profile in the March 11 issue of *Opera News*, where she credits her family and faith for her overnight success:

Photos—*Opposite page:* Florence Quartararo in her San Francisco Opera dressing room before a performance in 1947. *This page:* Quartararo in a studio portrait as Marguerite in *Faust*.

Deep in my heart I have always prayed for a singing career in opera....When I read the newspapers [following her debut], I was completely flabbergasted. I was bombarded with telephone calls and telegrams. It is beyond my wildest dreams to find that things have worked out like this. I realize that a voice is a gift of God, and I am grateful for the guidance that never pushed or forced the voice I was born with....

Her next big break occurred in early March when Nadine Conner had to cancel a performance of *The Magic Flute*. On four hours' notice and without any orchestra rehearsal she appeared as Pamina on March 4 under the baton of her mentor Bruno Walter, who guided her carefully through the role.

There followed a Flower Maiden in *Parsifal* and various radio appearances throughout the spring, including the Ford Sunday Evening Hour with conductor Eugene Goossens, and two Texaco broadcasts in the "Let's Go to the Opera" series with tenor James Melton.

When Florence returned home to San Francisco on May Day following her New York triumphs, she received a heroine's welcome at the Ferry Building from her family and friends. Her alma mater conferred upon her their first ever honorary Bachelor of Music degree at a banquet at the St. Francis Hotel.

Perhaps the climax of a whirlwind rise to fame took place in January of 1947. It earned her the name "Cinderella of the Met." On January 9, Stella Roman, the scheduled soprano in Verdi's *Otello*, fell ill, and again the Met management called on Quartararo to pinch hit. It was her first Desdemona on any stage and she was unfamiliar with the staging, but under the baton of Fritz Busch, with whom she had coached the role, she came through with flying colors. Howard Taubman raved:

Miss Quartararo gave a performance that would have been a credit to any outstanding veteran. It was a performance that reminded old-timers of another American girl who appeared on this stage more than 25 years ago....That was Rosa Ponselle, and it would not be surprising if this girl were to go that far. Miss Quartararo's voice is perfectly suited for Desdemona and she used it last night with a sure instinct for the molding of the musical phrase. She had at her command a finely controlled range of tone from the delicately soft to the ringingly full....Her handling of the 'Willow Song' and 'Ave

Maria' made you forget the soprano on the opera stage and left you only with the heartbreak of the poor, bewildered Desdemona.

The audience response was so overwhelming that a subsequent performance was programmed for February 22, replacing a previously scheduled *Lucia*. After that performance she received a phone call, and a croaking voice in Italian said, "Signorina, sono Arturo Toscanini." Believing this a prank, she reportedly responded, "Yes, and I'm Margaret Truman!" Further conversation, however, convinced her it was indeed the maestro, who wanted her to audition for him. After preparing with one of his assistants, she went through "Addio del passato" with Toscanini at the piano giving her pointers. He wanted her for his recordings of *Otello* as well as *La Bohème* (Musetta) and *La Traviata*, but the Met management, with which he was at odds, refused to release her.

Soon, unexpected opportunity again came knocking, and again Quartararo made the most of it. At the end of January, she was called upon by the Met to replace back-to-back two extremely popular sopranos as Violetta in *La Traviata*. On January 29, Bidú Sayão was suffering from laryngitis, and, less than two days later, Licia Albanese came down with a cold before a special Guild matinee performance. The circumstances alone would have assured headlines, but Quartararo, who had never previously sung the role in Italian, again acquitted herself with distinction. The *N.Y. Times* critic wrote

Florence Quartararo seems destined to make her way through the Met opera



repertoire the hard way....She could not have had any full rehearsal with the other members of the cast [James Melton and Lawrence Tibbett]....She sang the brilliant florid music with technical address...her conception of the role had brightness, color and the vivacity of youth...she presented a passionate, touching human being.

On February 11, she again replaced Albanese, this time at a Carnegie Hall benefit alongside Ezio Pinza. It was her fourth substitution in a little over a month.

Meanwhile, supporters in San Francisco began wondering when they would finally get to hear on home turf the sensational local girl who had conquered the Met and national radio audiences. The San Francisco Art Commission wanted to engage her for the series it sponsored with the San Francisco Symphony, but first it had to enter financial negotiations with the Met to obtain her services during the New York season. Secondly, some members of the commission protested that the soloist spot had been reserved by resolution "for Bay Area talent before it had won much or any attention elsewhere," clearly not the case regarding Quartararo.

The obstacles overcome, Florence Quartararo finally made her local debut on March 8, 1947, at the Civic Auditorium with the San Francisco Symphony under its musical director Pierre Monteux. She sang four demanding and diverse arias plus five encores, including the song "Homecoming," before a rapt, cheering audience of over 7,000 listeners.



The critics scrambled to outdo each other. Alfred Frankenstein of the *Chronicle* wrote:

Florence Quartararo, the Metropolitan Opera's split-second girl, did it again Saturday night at the Civic Auditorium in one of the most sensational homecoming concerts ever given by a San Francisco artist who has made good elsewhere....Miss Quartararo also has an incredibly beautiful voice—warm, pure, strong, caressing and delectable in quality, without a trace of nasality or harshness of any kind. She has the sort of phrasing and interpretation nuance that cannot be taught, but are the results of an inborn musical gift.

Alexander Fried of the *Examiner* said, "Not only is the voice itself totally vivid, warm and beautiful, Miss Quartararo uses it with a masterly, sensitive freedom and outflowing ease." Marie Hicks Davidson of the *Call-Bulletin* summed up the impression she made on the hometown audience:

Florence Quartararo, San Francisco nightingale...was cheered to the rafters by an audience which appeared to be saying with flowers and applause that the advance notices of her voice...which a few months ago stirred a staid Met audience to frenzy...were not exaggerated.

An undoubtedly thrilled young artist flew back to the Met the next day to prepare a role debut for what would arguably prove to be her finest achievement on the opera stage, the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro*.

When the San Francisco Opera announced its schedule for the 1947 season, some local supporters were disappointed in the roles assigned to her. Fried voiced a general complaint in an article headlined **QUARTARARO'S FANS PROTEST**. Neither of the roles she was to sing—Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* and the Countess in *Figaro*—"...is a solo prima donna role in the good old operatic sense." Why not Marguerite in *Faust*? he asked. (She would sing the role with the Company in Seattle, but not in San Francisco, where it was Claudia Pinza who would partner her father in two performances of the Gounod opera that season.) Why not Desdemona in Verdi's *Otello*? (Licia Albanese was assigned the only performance scheduled.) "No wonder North Beach is casting a questioning eye at the San Francisco Opera and director Gaetano Merola."

The long-awaited San Francisco Opera debut of the local-girl-made-good took place on September 19, 1947, in *Don Giovanni* with a dream cast that included Ezio Pinza, Salvatore Baccaloni, Charles Kullman, Stella Roman as Donna Anna and Licia Albanese as Zerlina, conducted by the experienced Mozartean Paul Breisach. It was Quartararo's first stage appearance in the role and proved an immediate and resounding success.

On September 28, 1947, she had the honor of appearing alongside Pinza, Baccaloni, Kullman and Nadine Conner on the Standard Hour broadcast celebrating San Francisco Opera's 25th anniversary singing "Dove sono" and participating in the second act trio from *Le Nozze di Figaro* and the Balcony Scene from *Don Giovanni*, led by Maestro Merola.

A few short weeks later, her first Countess at the War Memorial had Frankenstein exclaiming:

If through some highly improbable arrangement Joe DiMaggio should give a guest appearance with the [S.F.] Seals, that event could scarcely arouse more excitement than Florence Quartararo's appearance in *The Marriage of Figaro*.... this San Francisco girl, whom we all managed so beautifully to ignore until she made a hit at the Metropolitan, won the major ovation of the day.

Quartararo did not appear with the opera company during the 1948 season, but she did sing locally to continued acclaim, first under Maestro Merola's baton with the San Francisco Symphony at the Civic Auditorium and later at a War Memorial recital with Vladimir Brenner at the piano. The recital program included groups of English, French, Italian and even German songs, in addition to "Bel ragazzo," "Poveri fiori" from Cilea's *Adriana Lecouvreur* and "Ebben, ne andrò lontana" from Catalani's *La Wally*. Critics remained impressed by the sensual richness of her middle and lower registers, her instinctive flair for dramatic phrasing and character, and her warm personality.

During the year's Centennial Cavalcade, celebrating California's 100 years of statehood, Quartararo was announced to play the part of Luisa Tetrazzini, the San Francisco symbol of operatic excellence at the beginning of the century. Again in the Tetrazzini tradition, she sang as soloist at the Downtown Association's Christmas Eve celebration at Union Square, broadcast nationally. She was heard in Schubert's "Ave Maria," "O Holy Night" and, fittingly, "Home, sweet home," a Tetrazzini favorite.

(Continued on page 48)

Photo—In March of 1947, Florence Quartararo is captured during a coaching session with Company founder Gaetano Merola.



Soprano **NANCY GUSTAFSON**, considered one of the finest singing actresses of her generation, portrays Marguerite in *Faust*. Now in her eighth season with San Francisco Opera, she was a member of the 1982 Merola Opera Program and a 1984 Adler Fellow with the Opera Center. The Illinois native made her Company debut during the 1983 Summer Season as Woglinde in *Das Rheingold*, and has since sung numerous roles here including Freia in *Das Rheingold* ('85), Musetta in *La Bohème* ('86), Antonia in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* ('87), Elettra in *Idomeneo* ('89), and Rosalinda in *Die*

Fledermaus (1990). Miss Gustafson continues to add new and challenging roles to her lyric-dramatic repertoire. She has had notable success as Violetta in *La Traviata* in Vienna and Hamburg, and as Eva in *Die Meistersinger* at Milan's La Scala, Vienna State Opera, Bavarian State Opera in Munich, and at Covent Garden. She has also appeared in Europe as Nedda in *Pagliacci* and as Musetta in Vienna, in the title role of *Ariabella* at La Scala and in Vienna, as Lisa in *The Queen of Spades* at Glyndebourne, and as Alice Ford in *Falstaff* in Vienna. The artist is well-known for her interpretation of Janáček's heroines: the title role of *Katya Kabanova* at Glyndebourne, in Toronto and Vienna, as well as the title role of *Jenůfa* at Covent Garden. Recent engagements include *La Traviata*, *Pagliacci*, *Carmen* and *Hérodiade* in Vienna, *Rusalka* in Rome, concert performances of *Idomeneo* and *La Bohème* with the London Symphony Orchestra, *Peter Grimes* at the Châtelet in Paris, *La Bohème* at Covent Garden, and *The Queen of Spades* at Glyndebourne. Future plans include *Die Fledermaus* at the Metropolitan Opera, *La Traviata* and *Peter Grimes* in Vienna, the title part of Floyd's *Susannah* (role debut) in Houston, and *Jenůfa* at the Châtelet. Miss Gustafson can be heard on recordings of *La Bohème* under Kent Nagano, *Das Rheingold* led by Christoph von Dohnányi, and Mahler's Second Symphony conducted by Colin Davis.



Mezzo-soprano **SUSAN QUITTMAYER**, who sings the role of Siebel in *Faust*, began her association with San Francisco Opera in 1979 as an Affiliate Artist, appearing as La Ciesca in *Gianni Schicchi* and Dorabella in the family performances of *Così fan tutte*. Her roles with the Company include the Composer in *Ariadne auf Naxos* (1983), Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro* ('86), Niklausse in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* ('87), and her first Marina in the 1992 staging of *Boris Godunov*. Since making her Metropolitan Opera debut during the 1987-88 season as Nicklausse, Miss Quittmeyer has returned to

the Met as Dorabella, Siebel, Idamante in *Idomeneo*, Varvara in *Katya Kabanova*, and most recently as Cherubino. In Europe, she has performed at many of the major opera houses, among them the Hamburg Opera, where she appeared in a new staging of *Così fan tutte*, the Bastille Opera in Paris as Cherubino, and at Munich's Bavarian State Opera where she sang Annio in *La Clemenza di Tito* and Cherubino. Additional appearances include the Composer, Cherubino, and Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* at the Vienna State Opera, Sextus in *Giulio Cesare* at the Paris Opera, Octavian in *Der Rosenkavalier* in Amsterdam, Sesto in *La Clemenza di Tito* in Geneva, and her debut at the Salzburg Festival as Idamante. In North America, the artist has sung with the opera companies of Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Toronto, Calgary, Cincinnati, Miami and Santa Fe, among others. Also active on the concert stage, she has performed with numerous orchestras including the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Minnesota Orchestra, Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra and the San Francisco Symphony. Miss Quittmeyer can be heard on recordings of *Das Rheingold* and *Falstaff*. A native of Port Washington, New York, she attended Illinois Wesleyan University and the Manhattan School of Music.



CATHERINE COOK returns to San Francisco Opera for her fourth season to sing Naina in *Ruslan and Lyudmila*, Marthe Schwerlein in *Faust*, and Rossweisse in *Die Walküre*. The mezzo-soprano made her 1991 Company debut in *War and Peace* and *Elektra*, and subsequently performed here in *Boris Godunov* and *Christophe Colomb* (1992), as well as in *The Makropulos Case* and the student matinee presentation of *La Fille du Régiment* (1993). A 1990 Merola Opera Program participant and 1991-92 Adler Fellow, her Opera Center credits include the title role of *Ariadante*, Meg Page in *The Merry*

Wives of Windsor, performances in the Micronesian Islands of Guam, Saipan and Pohnpei, and a highly acclaimed 1994 Schwabacher Debut Recital. A native of Chicago, the young artist made her Lyric Opera of Chicago debut last season as the Innkeeper in *Boris Godunov* followed by Berta in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, a role which was the vehicle for her recent Portland Opera debut as well. Future engagements include Rossweisse at the Lyric Opera of Chicago and Marcellina in *Le Nozze di Figaro* for Portland Opera.



In his third season with San Francisco Opera, **RICHARD LEECH** sings the roles of Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* and the title role of *Faust*. The acclaimed young tenor made his 1990 Company debut as the Duke of Mantua in *Rigoletto* and returned in 1993 to portray Rodolfo in *La Bohème*. He first came to international attention in 1987, when he made his European debut at the Berlin Opera as Raoul in Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots*. He has since been applauded at the world's major opera houses and with many of America's finest orchestras. He has made successful debuts at

the Metropolitan Opera (*La Bohème*), Milan's La Scala (*Madama Butterfly*), the Royal Opera at Covent Garden (*Les Huguenots*), and the Vienna State Opera (*Rigoletto*). Engagements during the 1993-94 season included a role debut as Cavaradossi in *Tosca* for the Cincinnati Opera, *Roméo et Juliette* in Philadelphia and Cincinnati, *Tosca* for the Lyric Opera of Chicago, as well as *La Bohème* and *Madama Butterfly* at the Met. Among his most recent appearances are *Tosca* in Pittsburgh and at Chicago's Ravinia Festival, *La Bohème* at San Diego Opera, plus additional performances of *Bohème* and *Butterfly* at the Met. His most recent concert appearances have included Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* and Ninth Symphony with Lorin Maazel and the Pittsburgh Symphony, Berlioz's *The Damnation of Faust* with the Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal, and performances in New York of the Verdi Requiem with the Scala Orchestra under Riccardo Muti. Leech has made complete recordings of *Faust*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Les Huguenots*, *Salome*, *Die Fledermaus*, *Rigoletto*, *La Bohème*, in addition to the forthcoming *Un Ballo in Maschera* and *The Damnation of Faust*. He can be seen later this season as Pinkerton in the Met telecast of *Madama Butterfly*.

Nancy Gustafson



Richard Leech, Nancy Gustafson



Nancy Gustafson, Samuel Ramey,
Women of the San Francisco Opera Chorus



Bass **SAMUEL RAMEY** sings the roles of Méphistophélès in *Faust* and the title part of *Don Giovanni* (Nov. 14, 18, 20). Heralded not only as one of the world's most acclaimed opera stars, but also as the most recorded American-born bass in history, he has literally dozens of recordings to his credit. He is frequently the focal point of new productions at Milan's La Scala, Covent Garden, the Vienna State Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Metropolitan Opera and San Francisco Opera. Ramey made his Company debut in 1978 as Colline in *La Bohème* and has since returned as Count Rodolfo in *La*

Sonnambula (1984), in the title roles of *Le Nozze di Figaro* (1986), *Mefistofele* (1989—a production that was nationally televised and released on videocassette—and 1994), *Don Quichotte* (1990), *Don Giovanni* (1991, when he stepped in as a last-minute replacement for an ailing colleague), and *Attila* (1991). A native of Kansas, Ramey made his New York City Opera debut in 1973 as Zuniga in *Carmen* and went on to become a leading bass with that company, singing nearly 40 roles there. By now, he is a welcome and sought-after guest at all major opera centers and music festivals of the world. In addition to his success in different types of repertoire—from baroque literature to coloratura roles of the bel canto era and dramatic bass works—Ramey has added another dimension to his already spectacular career. His return to Carnegie Hall for a solo recital earlier this year was the culmination of an extensive, critically acclaimed North American tour. His European recital career is equally notable, with sold-out performances in all the major capitals. His exposure on television and video is no less impressive, with films of the Met's *Carmen* and *Bluebeard's Castle*, Glyndebourne's *The Rake's Progress*, Salzburg's *Don Giovanni*, and San Francisco Opera's *Mefistofele*, among others. His most recent full-length operatic recording, Carlisle Floyd's *Susannah*, was a 1994 Grammy award winner.



RODNEY GILFRY makes his San Francisco Opera debut as Valentin in *Faust*. The American baritone has been enjoying a major career on both sides of the Atlantic since gaining important notices with his 1986 Hamburg Opera debut as Figaro in *Le Nozze di Figaro*. Mozart forms the core of the artist's repertoire with recordings and videos of *Don Giovanni* (Giovanni), *Le Nozze di Figaro* (the Count), and *Così fan tutte* (Guglielmo), all led by John Eliot Gardiner. He has appeared as the Don in London, Parma, Amsterdam, Los Angeles and Lyon, as the Count in London, Paris, Amsterdam,

Lisbon, Los Angeles, Santa Fe and Zurich, and as Guglielmo in Paris, Amsterdam, Ferrara, Lisbon, Dallas, Zurich, Tel Aviv and Los Angeles. The title role of *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* is also central to his career. He has performed it in Zurich, Los Angeles, and for his debuts at the Vienna State Opera and the Berlin State Opera. Additional recent highlights include the title role of *Billy Budd* in Geneva and at Covent Garden, Olivier in *Capriccio* at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Ford in *Falstaff* in Zurich, Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte* in Los Angeles and Zurich, and Dr. Malatesta in *Don Pasquale* in Los Angeles. Upcoming engagements include *La Bohème* in Munich, *Fidelio* and a new production of *Le Nozze di Figaro* in Zurich, *Billy Budd* at the Bastille Opera in Paris, *Madama Butterfly* in Los Angeles, and a debut at the Metropolitan Opera as Demetrius in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. As a concert soloist, he has performed throughout France, Italy, Germany, England and the United States under such eminent conductors as Herbert Blomstedt, Carlo Maria Giulini, Christopher Hogwood and Helmuth Rilling. Recent additions to his discography are Haydn's *The Creation* led by Maestro Gardiner, and Handel's *Israel in Egypt* conducted by Nikolaus Harnoncourt.



PHILIP SKINNER portrays the Bonze in *Madama Butterfly*, Wagner in *Faust*, and the Water Sprite in *Rusalka*. In his eleventh consecutive season with San Francisco Opera, the bass-baritone has appeared here in over 20 different operas since his 1985 debut in *Adriana Lecouvreur*. Among the numerous roles he has sung with the Company are Ferrando in *Il Trovatore*, Méphistophélès in the student/family performances of *Faust*, Monterone in *Rigoletto*, Count Horn (Sam) in *Un Ballo in Maschera*, Colline in *La Bohème*, and, last fall, Ferrando in *Il Trovatore*. Skinner was a 1985

Merola Opera Program participant who also toured with Western Opera Theater in the title role of *Don Giovanni*. A 1986-87 Adler Fellow, he appeared in several of the Center's Showcase productions and was a 1990 Schwabacher Debut Recitalist. This past season, Skinner sang King Philip in *Don Carlo* with Portland Opera, Timur in *Turandot* with Atlanta Opera, Monterone with the Israel Philharmonic, and Colline with Dallas Opera. He also appeared with the Chicago Lyric Opera in *Boris Godunov* and made his Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie debut in *Salome*. Additional engagements were with the opera companies of Houston (title role of *Le Nozze di Figaro* and the four villains of *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*), Seattle, Vancouver, Toronto, Edmonton, and Melbourne, Australia, among others, as well as with several prominent U.S. orchestras. The American artist, currently a resident of the Bay Area, graduated from Northwestern University and received his master's degree from Indiana University.



PATRICK SUMMERS is on the podium for the new production of *Faust* as well as for the student matinee presentation of *La Cenerentola*. The young conductor, who served as Music Director of the San Francisco Opera Center from 1990-1994, made his Company conducting debut in 1990 with performances of *Die Fledermaus*. He has since led SFO productions of *Così fan tutte*, *La Traviata*, Rossini's *Ermione* (U.S. premiere) and *Otello*, *L'Elisir d'Amore*, *Tosca*, *La Bohème* and *La Fille du Régiment*. He also led the Company's 1994 and '95 Opera in the Park concerts. A participant of the 1986

Merola Opera Program, Maestro Summers has conducted numerous concerts for the various programs of the Opera Center (Grand Finals, Fall Season Previews, Pacific Voices Gala), Showcase presentations (*Rosina*, *The Ghost Sonata*, *Ariodante*), Merola Opera Program productions (*The Bartered Bride*, *Don Pasquale*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Carmen*, *Falstaff*, *Don Giovanni*), and Western Opera Theater's tours of *Don Pasquale*, *Madama Butterfly* and *La Bohème*. He has traveled extensively for the Center, leading performances of *Carmen* in Guam and Japan, *Tosca* in Shanghai, and *La Bohème* in Japan. Elsewhere, he has recently been applauded for his engagements with the Teatro Nacional São Carlos in Lisbon (*Tosca*), Wolf Trap Opera (*Giulio Cesare*), Rome Opera (*Manon Lescaut*), Calgary Opera (*Lucia di Lammermoor*), Australian Opera (*La Cenerentola*) and the Dallas Opera (*L'Incoronazione di Poppea*), among others. Next year's assignments include *La Cenerentola* for Calgary Opera, *Ariadne auf Naxos* in Lisbon, *La Finta Giardiniera* at the Washington Opera, as well as *La Bohème* and *Lucrezia Borgia* for the Australian Opera. A native of Indiana, Summers graduated from Indiana University's School of Music.

ARTIST PROFILES



French director **NICOLAS JOËL** returns to San Francisco Opera for his eighth season to stage the new production of *Faust*. His first local assignment was in 1977 as assistant to the late Jean-Pierre Ponnelle on the highly acclaimed production of *Turandot* with Luciano Pavarotti and Montserrat Caballé. Additional Company engagements include the new 1979 mounting of *La Voix Humaine*, the new staging of *Samson et Dalila* in 1980 (which was seen in a national telecast and released on videocassette), the revival of *Samson* in 1983, the season-opening presentation of *Ernani* in 1984, and

the new production of *Parsifal* in 1988. In past seasons, Joël has staged *Ring* cycles in Lyon, Wiesbaden and Strasbourg, a highly praised production of *Aida* at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, and was responsible for a new staging of *Faust* in Toulouse, a production which was the recipient of the coveted Critics Award in France. Other career highlights include *Dido and Aeneas* at the Paris Opera, a new staging of *Lohengrin* in Copenhagen, and *Aida* at the Vienna State Opera. Currently in his sixth year as Artistic Director of the Théâtre du Capitole in Toulouse, Joël has recently directed *Roméo et Juliette*, *Il Trovatore* and *Eugene Onegin* in Toulouse, *Samson et Dalila* in Chicago, *Aida* for the Washington Opera, *Simon Boccanegra* in Bonn, *Un Ballo in Maschera* at the Bastille Opera in Paris, *La Rondine* at Milan's La Scala, *Tosca* in Lausanne, *Roméo et Juliette* at the Paris Opéra-Comique and Covent Garden, as well as *Aida*, *Faust*, and *Nabucco* at the Orange Festival. He will make his Metropolitan Opera debut next spring with *Andrea Chénier*. The director was recently appointed a Chevalier des Arts et Lettres by the French Ministry of Culture.



GERARD HOWLAND designed the sets for the new stagings of *Faust* and *Don Giovanni*. His work was introduced to San Francisco Opera audiences with sets for the 1992 production of *Guillaume Tell* (U.S. opera debut), and he served as set designer for the world premiere of *Dangerous Liaisons* and the new productions of *Macbeth*, *Il Trovatore*, *Otello*, (Rossini), *Tannhäuser*, *Hérodiade*, and *Lucia di Lammermoor* during the 1994 season. The artist studied at the English National Opera Design School and then served as Associate Designer for the Royal Academy and the Royal

Shakespeare Company. Among his theater designs are *Tom Jones* and *The Way of the World* for the Royal Academy, *Henry IV* (Parts I and II), *The Winter's Tale*, *Hyde Park*, *Divine Gossip* and *Scenes from a Marriage* for the Royal Shakespeare Company, and *Major Barbara* for the Chichester Festival. He has also designed several plays and musicals for London's West End, as well as for television and film throughout Europe. In Germany, Howland created sets for *L'Elisir d'Amore*, *Madama Butterfly*, *La Bohème*, *Jenůfa*, *The Makropulos Case*, *Die Zauberflöte*, *Gianni Schicchi*, *La Traviata*, *Cardillac* and *Mahagonny*; also *Uncle Vanya*, *The Father*, *Andorra* and *Accidental Death of an Anarchist*. His operatic assignments in England include *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Pagliacci* for the English National Opera, *Ruddigore* and *The Gondoliers* for Sadler's Wells Opera, *Tosca* for Opera North, and *Ariadante* for the Buxton Festival. Since moving to the Bay Area, the native of England has designed several productions for the American Conservatory Theater, the South Coast Repertory Theatre, Disney Studios and *La Bohème* for the Los Angeles Opera. He has won five major awards, including two Drama-Logue Awards and the Los Angeles Drama Critics Award.



WALTER MAHONEY designed the costumes for the new production of *Faust*. Resident Costume Shop Manager for San Francisco Opera (he celebrated his fifth decade with the Company in 1994), his designs were seen here last fall in the new staging of *Tannhäuser*. Additional SFO design credits have been *La Bohème* and *Die Meistersinger* (1993); *L'Elisir d'Amore* (1992); *Manon Lescaut* (1988), the same year he interpreted the late Nicola Benois's costume designs for *Maometto II*; the costumes for Ruth Ann Swenson in *Roméo et Juliette* and for Hoffmann's three loves (Olympia, Antonia and Giulietta) in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* (1987); as well as the designs for Mirrella Freni in *Manon Lescaut* (fall 1983) and for Frederica von Stade in *La Sonnambula* (fall 1984). He also designed the original costumes for Marilyn Horne in *Samson et Dalila* (fall 1983); Katia Ricciarelli in *La Traviata* (fall 1984); Renata Scotto and Cheryl Parrish in *Werther* (fall 1985); and Ghena Dimitrova in *Il Trovatore* (summer 1986). The native San Franciscan began his local association in 1943 in the Wardrobe Department, and worked with Goldstein & Company, the then-supplier of costumes for San Francisco Opera, until 1971. Since then, he has concentrated most of his efforts on the San Francisco Opera Costume Shop.



Lighting Director and Design Consultant for San Francisco Opera since 1976, **THOMAS J. MUNN** created the lighting 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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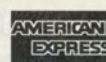
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FLORENCE Q

Both 1948 and 1949 were largely spent concertizing. She added two new roles at the Met, Nedda in *Pagliacci* opposite Ramon Vinay and Leonard Warren for her sole appearance on the Texaco Saturday broadcasts on February 28, 1948, and Lauretta in *Gianni Schicchi* in March of 1949, where she met her future husband, bass Italo Tajo, who sang the title role. Quartararo sang her first *Faust* Marguerite in San Francisco at the War Memorial in October of 1949 with Jussi Bjoerling as Faust and Nicola Moscona as Méphistophélès under the baton of future San Francisco Opera general director Kurt Herbert Adler. Fried lauded her characterization, especially in the anguish of the Church Scene, where he found her "intensely touching," and *Frankenstein* was taken with the expressivity of her singing:

Marguerite is the biggest role Miss Quartararo has had with the San Francisco Opera, and her performance of it was by far the most thoroughly studied and expertly projected of the several assignments she has undertaken at the War Memorial. It was especially remarkable for the mellow timbre of Miss Quartararo's voice, which combined the richness of the dramatic with the lightness and delicacy of the lyric.

In 1949 and 1950, the soprano appeared a few times with the San Francisco Symphony, first singing four Puccini arias under Dimitri Mitropoulos and, in June 1950, under Maestro Merola at Stern Grove. After another two successful performances as the Countess in *Figaro* in 1950, replacing a scheduled Renata Tebaldi on three days' notice (Tajo was the Figaro), her career at the War Memorial came suddenly and unexpectedly to an end. The following year she was featured with the Civic Grand Opera of Philadelphia in two new and starring roles, Mimi in *La Bohème* and the title role in *Thaïs*. Such was her acclaim in the Massenet work that they revived it for her in June of 1951. It was to prove her final opera performance in the United States.

Starring roles in Philadelphia could not overcome the disappointment of being passed over at the Met and in San Francisco for the Verdi and Puccini roles she longed to sing in favor of established divas from abroad. She had been studying Tosca, Aida, Amelia in *Un Ballo in Maschera* and Elisabetta in *Don Carlo*, but could not foresee the opportunity of singing them in the States. An RCA Victor recording of the Act I *Tosca* duet with Ramon Vinay illustrates what a wonderful Roman diva she would have made. There is real spirit and drama in the voice, diversely displaying anger, affection, jealousy, piety—a telling portrait of a woman in love. The same care in word painting, in the art of dramatic transitions, in the intensity of emotion without exaggeration, in the rightness of phrasing and the use of rubato, along with the characteristic richness of tone and exciting vibrato, are already in evidence in the early

broadcast tapes of "Vissi d'arte," "Ritorna vincitor," "Un bel di" and "Dove sono."

In order to broaden her repertoire, Quartararo departed for Italy. She received praise in Bari for her 1952 Italian opera house debut as Mimi, and with the San Carlo of Naples in 1953 appeared opposite Rossi Lemeni as Margherita in Boito's *Mefistofele* under the baton of Tullio Serafin to critical acclaim. She sang in Rome, Turin and Como, and was invited to tour Europe in a production of Honegger's *Joan of Arc*. Although she had learned seven new roles, her Italian career failed to take flight. Regarding her Italian experience, she expressed the following regret in a 1978 interview: "The timing was wrong...and the country was not receptive to American artists. If I could do anything differently, this would be it. I would not have gone to Italy at that time."

After three years in Italy, Quartararo returned home to visit with her family. She opened the 1954 San Francisco Summer Pops concert series under Arthur Fiedler singing four difficult verismo arias. Critics remarked that she sang with the same warmth, richness, emotional pull and expressivity as before. Rumors were rife that she was soon to enter the nightclub field or appear in musicals and light opera. In November of 1954, she gave a unique Bay Area recital at the Berkeley Community Theater. At the end of the recital she addressed the audience, saying that since this might be her last recital for some time, for reasons that would soon become apparent she had decided to sing "...a song which I learned as a little girl with piano accompaniment by one who was very dear to me [Dr. Quartararo had died in 1953 while she was still in Italy]." Suppressing a tear in her voice, she proceeded to perform Mimi's Act III aria, which ends with "Addio, senza rancor."

It was a poignantly prophetic farewell to her loyal fans. She married Italo Tajo in 1956 and their daughter Cecilia (Cici) was born the following year. Perhaps with the idea that two singers in a family is one too many, Florence Quartararo, seemingly "senza rancor," gave up a once promising career in opera to devote herself to the raising of her daughter.

The Tajo family moved to Los Angeles and then to Italy, but the marriage did not work out. Mother and daughter returned to San Francisco in 1960. Quartararo began working for her cousins in the Pisani Printing firm, where within a short time she became advertising manager, a position she held for many years. She didn't like to talk about her former career and chose to live a quiet family life surrounded by those she loved.

War Memorial audiences saw her publicly for the last time at the 1978 gala celebrating Kurt Herbert Adler's 25th year at the helm of the San Francisco Opera. On the arm of an escort, she crossed the stage which she had formerly graced, tall and handsome in a stunning silver gown that matched her silver hair, every inch the glamorous diva. ■



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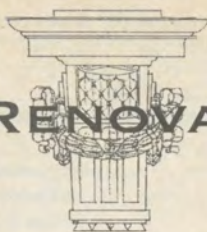
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Thursday, October 5
Sunday, October 8
Saturday, October 14
Tuesday, October 24
Saturday, November 4
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Information: (415) 552-8338.

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.

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

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

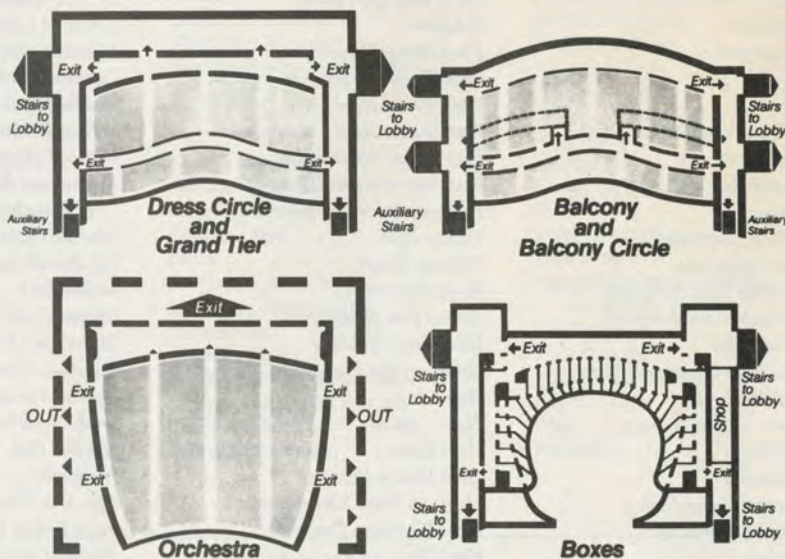
For the safety and comfort of our audience, all large parcels, backpacks, luggage, etc., must be checked at Opera House cloak-rooms.

Opera glasses are available in the lobby.

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

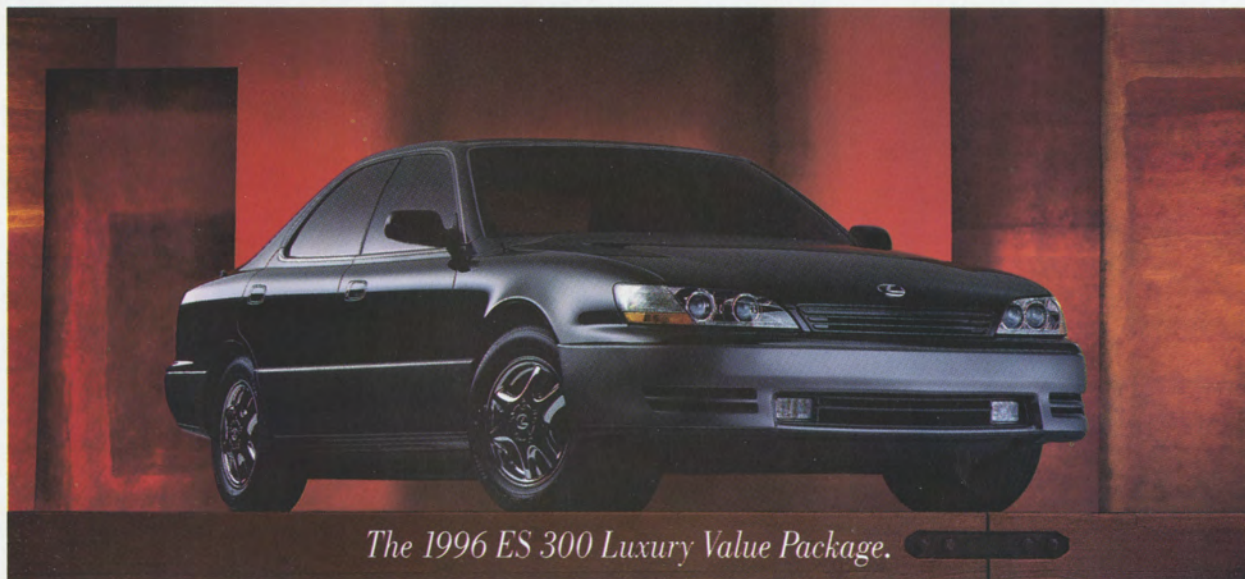
Management reserves the right to remove any patron creating a disturbance.

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



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

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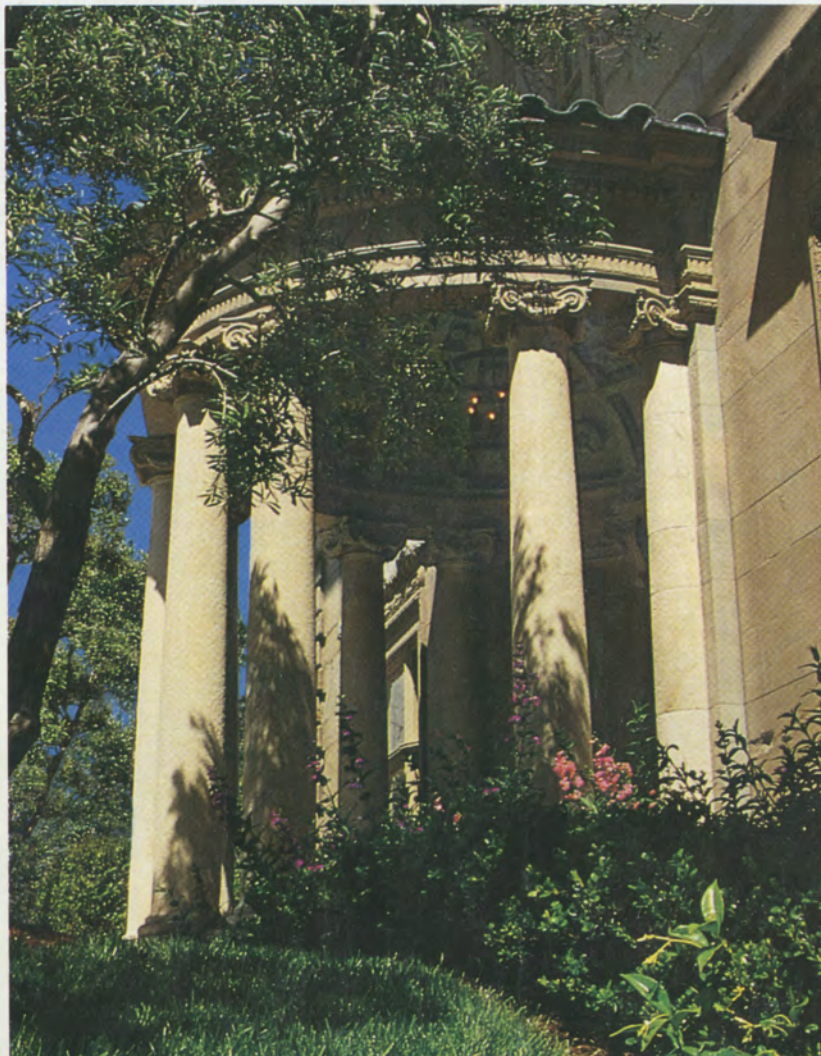
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