

Die Walküre
(The Ring Cycle: The Valkyrie)

1995-1996

Saturday, November 4, 1995 7:00 PM
Tuesday, November 7, 1995 7:00 PM
Sunday, November 12, 1995 1:00 PM
Wednesday, November 15, 1995 7:00 PM
Tuesday, November 21, 1995 7:00 PM
Saturday, November 25, 1995 7:00 PM
Wednesday, November 29, 1995 7:00 PM

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SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

1995 SEASON

DIE WALKÜRE



Stagebill



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Editorial Offices:

San Francisco Opera

301 Van Ness

San Francisco, CA 94102

Tel. (415) 861-4008

Stagebill

Carol Evans

President and Publisher

Neil Rice

Senior V.P. Production

Clifford S. Tinder

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SAN FRANCISCO OPERA MAGAZINE

Die Walküre

1995 Season
Vol. 73, No. 9

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COVER

Rackham, Arthur, (1867-1939)

Brünnhilde, 1910

Watercolor illustration to Margaret Armour's translation of *The Ring of the Niblung* [sic], 1910-11

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Performance HIGHLIGHTS

Three favorite fables finish up the **San Francisco Opera's** 1995 season. First, no woman is safe when he's near, yet all women wish to be near him. He's the dastardly dashing *Don Giovanni*, and he sings some of Mozart's most sublime music, in a new SFO production Nov. 14–Dec. 7. Next, Dvořák's fairy tale of the water nymph *Rusalka* makes a splash on the Opera stage in an SFO premiere, Nov. 26–Dec. 10. Based on Hans Christian Andersen's *The Little Mermaid*, *Rusalka* is designed to delight audiences of all ages. Finally, the achingly beautiful *Madama Butterfly* returns for four encore performances Dec. 2, 4, and 9 (mat. and eve.), with sopranos Yoko Watanabe and Christiane Riel as Cio-Cio-San.



Soprano Renée Fleming sings the title role of Dvořák's *Rusalka* for six performances at the War Memorial Opera House Nov. 26–Dec. 10.

tion is a warm, intimate version of the holiday classic, accompanied live by the Oakland East Bay Symphony. To toss in a curve, OB also hosts an annual **A's Night**, in which team members of the Oakland A's appear as toy soldiers and Arabian consorts! *The Nutcracker* runs Dec. 9–24 at Oakland's historic Paramount Theatre.

Meanwhile, Seattle's Paramount Theatre hosts a different team. The Washington Senators are on a winning streak, and there's the devil to pay. *Damn Yankees*, the socko Broadway revival of the 1955 Tony Award-winning musical, stops in Seattle Dec 12–24, on a 36-city tour. It's the classic story of a fan who wants to help his team beat the Yankees, so he offers to sell his soul to—**Jerry Lewis!**—who made his belated Broadway debut as the devil.

—Peter Cieply

A flame flickers at the Stage Door Theatre as **American Conservatory Theater** rekindles *Gaslight*, by Patrick Hamilton. Perhaps best known as the 1943 film starring Ingrid Bergman, the 1938 "Victorian thriller" plays—well, like mad on stage, keeping audiences on the edge of their seats as the maniacal Mr. Manningham connives to drive his wife to insanity. More than a mere whodunnit, the play is a suspense-driven psychological study that delves into issues of mental and emotional manipulation. A.C.T. Associate Artist Albert Takazaukas (*Dinner at Eight*) directs, beginning Dec. 14.

If you like your Victoriana a little less stressful, how about a *Nutcracker* designed after Victorian greeting cards? **Oakland Ballet's** new produc-

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... *Adventure In The Arts Opera Tours presents its 11th annual series of opera programs in the USA & to the enchanting towns of Europe to experience great opera performances and remarkable sightseeing in carefully planned programs to create wonderful memories and meet other caring opera goers.*

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*.

New

Opera Under The Stars

The Santa Fe Opera & Chamber Music Festival

July 29th to August 5th with Rusty Rolland & Jean Rowan

&

The Santa Fe Opera & Chamber Music Festival

August 6th to 13th with Sherwin Sloan

The Operas in the amphitheater in the beautiful mountainous countryside just seven miles from Santa Fe are *Don Giovanni*, *Madama Butterfly*, *The Rake's Progress*, *Daphne*, and the World Premiere of Tobias Picker's *Emmeline*. You may choose 5 operas & 1 chamber/ 4 operas & 2 chamber / 3 operas & 3 chamber. Also, spectacular full-day Cumbres & Toltec narrow gauge steam railroad.

Full day Taos, private lectures, wonderful day with backstage tour & lunch at Rancho Chimayo. Much more. (Former Adler Fellows participating: Patricia Racette, Kevin Langan, Dale Travis)

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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If you have been fortunate enough to attend a cycle of Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* at the Bayreuth Festival, you will be familiar with the sight of those individuals who, for hours before and right up to the start of the performance, parade alongside the Festspielhaus holding aloft cards or bits of paper inscribed "Suche Karte" ("Seeking a ticket"). Often they are lucky; but it is fair to assume that the evenings on which their hopes of success will be lowest is when the opera is *Die Walküre*. Undoubtedly, it is the most popular constituent of the tetralogy comprising the three "days"—*Die Walküre*, *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung*—preceded by the preliminary "evening" of *Das Rheingold*. The reasons for this are manifold, chief among them the lyrically romantic and impassioned nature of the love music and the sympathetic presentation of the chief characters enmeshed in amorous and moralistic situations. It contains two of the best known and best-loved individual items in the whole of the *Ring*, the Ride of the Valkyries which opens Act III and Siegmund's Spring Song in Act I, and it ends with Wotan's noble and moving farewell to Brünnhilde as he puts her to sleep on her rock.

It is in *Die Walküre*, too, that humans enter the drama. In *Das Rheingold*, the action concerns only the gods and mythological beings such as the giants Fasolt and Fafner. It is dominated by the chief of the gods, Wotan, who is presented in an unsavory light as a double-dealer and a thief. He breaks his contract with the two giants who have built his castle, Valhalla. For their remuneration when the job was completed, he had promised to hand over to them the goddess of youth Freia. But when the point is reached, he says he was only joking. Freia is seized by the giants. The ransom for her return is the hoard of gold stolen by the dwarf Alberich from the Rhinemaidens. Wotan and Loge, the god of fire, descend to Nibelheim to capture Alberich and to steal the gold, which includes not only the Tarnhelm, the magic helmet which enables the wearer to assume any shape, but the ring which gives its wearer power to rule the world. When Wotan has torn the ring from the dwarf's finger, Alberich lays a curse on it: torment and death for whoever owns it, consuming envy for those who do not. Wotan, against his will, is forced by Fasolt to surrender the ring. It thus passes into the possession of Fafner, who has meanwhile killed his brother Fasolt. The rest of the *Ring* is concerned with the means by

GODDESS INTO WOMAN

By MICHAEL KENNEDY



which Wotan decides to return the ring to its rightful owners, the Rhinemaidens. Fafner turns himself into a dragon and, in a cave in the forest, guards the gold including the Tarnhelm and the ring. To retrieve the ring, therefore, Wotan must find someone to kill the dragon. Between the end of *Das Rheingold*, when the gods enter Valhalla to

the sound of the Rhinemaidens bemoaning their loss, and the start of *Die Walküre*, Wotan has established Valhalla as the home for heroes killed in the battle. Selecting them is the task of the nine Valkyries (girl-warriors). Of these, his favorite is Brünnhilde, the Valkyrie of the opera's title. She is the daughter of Wotan and Erda, the earth goddess and fount of all wisdom. The other eight are the results of the philandering of which his wife Fricka complains. But Wotan, under the name Wolfe, has also fathered twins, a boy and a girl, on a mortal woman. The children, known as the Volsungs, were separated when their home was burned down and the girl abducted while Wolfe and the boy were out hunting. The boy is Siegmund, whom we meet as a man when the curtain rises on Act I of *Die Walküre*. Exhausted and wounded after fighting his enemies, he bursts into Hunding's hut during a thunderstorm and falls on a bearskin rug. Let us leave him there for a moment.

Wagner, as is well known, wrote the libretti of the *Ring* in reverse order. He began in 1848 with *Siegfrieds Tod*, the basis of what we know as *Götterdämmerung*. But it left a good deal unexplained, so by June 1851 he had written *Jung-Siegfried*. By the end of 1852 he had completed the poem of *Die Walküre* and that of *Das Rheingold* at about the same time. The music of *Die Walküre* was composed between 1854 and 1856 but not performed until June 26th, 1870, when Franz Wüllner conducted it in Munich. The early 1850s, while he was writing and composing *Die Walküre*, were exciting and important years for Wagner. He had fled from Dresden in May of 1849, with a price on his head for revolutionary activities, and had settled in Switzerland with his wife Minna. In February of 1852 he met a wealthy German businessman, Otto Wesendonk, and his 24-year-old wife Mathilde. Wagner fell in love with Mathilde and she with him. He wrote a piano sonata for her and later set some of her poems to music (the *Fünf Wesendonk-lieder*). But, more significantly, she was undoubtedly the inspiration of the tender and passionate love music for Siegmund and Sieglinde in Act I of *Die Walküre*. There are 17 coded messages to her in the composition sketch of this act. For example, when Siegmund and Sieglinde "gaze raptly into each other's eyes," he wrote "L.d.m.M.?" ("*Liebst du mich, Mathilde?*"—"Do you love me, Mathilde?"). The cynic may say that Wagner would have written the same music, Mathilde or no Mathilde—there is his letter

Michael Kennedy is chief music critic of the London Sunday Telegraph and has been a music critic of the London Daily Telegraph since 1950. He is the author of books on Mahler, Strauss, Elgar and Britten and has written biographies of Sir John Barbiroli and Sir Adrian Boult.

to Liszt of November 20th, 1851, written before he met her, in which he speaks of "the wonderful, fatal love of Siegmund and Sieglinde"—but the fact remains that he was infatuated while he composed and when he laid aside the *Ring* in 1857 to compose *Tristan und Isolde*, it was again his passion for Mathilde that drove him on and gave the music incandescence.

Time to return to Siegmund on the bearskin rug in Hunding's house. He is found by Sieglinde, Hunding's wife. She brings him water and invites him to stay. The music tells us that there is not only nascent love but a strong existing bond between these two. How and why has

grasp, the woman was killed and he had to flee. Hunding at this point realizes that the man Siegmund attacked was his kinsman and that he is therefore giving shelter to an enemy. He will allow him to remain overnight, but next day he must fight to the death. Left alone, Siegmund recalls how his father had told him that he would find a sword in his hour of greatest need. The fire-light gleams on the hilt of a sword buried in an ash tree which grows through the roof of the hut. When Sieglinde returns, having drugged her husband's drink, she tells Siegmund of her forced marriage to Hunding and how, on the wedding day, "a stranger dressed in grey, with a hat pulled

members of any audience attending a performance of *Die Walküre* are shocked. The reason is simple. Siegmund and Sieglinde fall in love, to extremely beautiful music, before they know of their relationship. Wagner is not beguiling us with a tract on behalf of incest; what he is doing, however, is to make out a case for illicit love outside of marriage, something which affected him personally. Not only is the union of Siegmund and Sieglinde incestuous; it is adulterous. But it is a spontaneous, passionate and fruitful love, whereas the marriages of Wotan and Fricka and of Hunding and Sieglinde are loveless and childless, like Wagner's marriage to Minna. Marriage, he said, was "the curse of his life," and even after his marriage to Cosima after an adulterous affair with her during which children were born to them, he continued to have passionate affairs with other women.

The attentive listener to Act I of *Die Walküre* will for a certainty be overwhelmed by the apparently inevitable rightness of its construction: the prelude, which describes simultaneously the storm and Siegmund's flight from his enemies through the forest; the tender glances between Siegmund and Sieglinde; the tension which arrives with Hunding and increases while Siegmund narrates his life story; then the declaration of love between Siegmund and Sieglinde, reaching a climax with the withdrawal of the sword Nothung from the tree. It has a symphonic logic and grandeur. Yet it might have been very different if Wagner had kept to his prose-sketch of 1851. In this, Hunding is living in the house abandoned by Siegmund and Wolfe. Siegmund appears there and, while he tells his story, is attracted to Sieglinde. So far, much the same. But during the meal, Wotan arrives in his disguise as the Wanderer, and thrusts a sword into the ash tree. Siegmund immediately pulls it out. Sieglinde senses he must be a Volsung and goes to him in the night, with results as before. In the second prose-sketch, Wagner has Wotan stay the night and witness the love-making between his progeny. He dropped this idea in his final prose-sketch, but he still involved Wotan and the sword. This time, Hunding tries to pull it free and is furious when Siegmund succeeds. This version ends with the Spring Song and the consummation of the twins' love. Wagner suddenly decided to give Sieglinde a narration of her own in which she describes the events of her wedding day. Thus, he removed Wotan from the action and made it possible to make the withdrawal of the sword the symbolic climax of the act.

It is possible, as the late Deryck Cooke suggested in his book about the *Ring* (called *I Saw the World End*), that Wagner at first wanted Wotan to appear in Act I because he

Continued on page 24



(Opposite page) Kirsten Flagstad as The Valkyrie at the San Francisco Opera in 1935; (above) About to become a woman, with father (Friedrich Schorr) and sisters (Olga Callahan, Doris Doe, Querita Eybel, Gertrude Gerdau, Eva Gruninger, Marie Leandre, Dorothee Manski and Jean Merrill).

Siegmund landed up in this homestead? When Hunding arrives, Siegmund speaks of his father Wolfe, who has brought him up in the forest as a kind of guerrilla fighter—it is, of course, Wotan's plan to create a hero who will win back the ring for him. Yet Wolfe/Wotan abandoned him—Siegmund's words are "seine Spur verlor ich," ("I lost track of him")—and wherever he went thereafter he ran into feuds or found himself out of favor "so I had to be called Woeful: Woe is all I possess." He went to help a woman forced into a loveless marriage. He killed her kinsman but his sword was hacked from his

down over one eye" had thrust a sword into the tree trunk. Many have tried and failed to pull it free. She longs for the day when the hero will come who will withdraw the sword: "I would clasp him to my arms." Siegmund declares his love for her and at this moment the door of the hut flies open, moonlight floods the room and Siegmund sings his great song of the coming of spring. "You are the spring for which I have longed in the frosty winter," Sieglinde replies and names him "Siegmund, guardian of victory." Siegmund pulls the sword from the tree and Sieglinde declares that she is his sister. "Wife and sister you'll be to your brother," Siegmund cries, "let the Volsung blood increase"—and they convert the word into the deed right then and there.

So here on the operatic stage is that most taboo of sexual subjects, incest. Yet few

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Text by the composer

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(in German)

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Donald Runnicles

Original production by

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Projections

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Musical Preparation

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WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 15 AT 7:00

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 21 AT 7:00

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 25 AT 7:00

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 29 AT 7:00

CAST

(in order of appearance)

<i>Sieglinde</i>	Anne Evans
<i>Siegmund</i>	Poul Elming*
<i>Hunding</i>	Victor von Halem
<i>Wotan</i>	James Morris (11/4, 7, 12) Willard White (11/15, 21, 25, 29)
<i>Brünnhilde</i>	Jane Eaglen* (11/4, 7, 12, 15) Susan Marie Pierson* (11/21) Marilyn Zschau* (11/25, 29)
<i>Fricka</i>	Marjana Lipovšek*
<i>Gerhilde</i>	Nicolle Foland†
<i>Ortlinde</i>	Dvora Djoraev
<i>Helmwige</i>	Claudia Waiter†
<i>Schwertleite</i>	Andrea Baker
<i>Waltraute</i>	Catherine Keen
<i>Siegrune</i>	Elizabeth Bishop†
<i>Rossweisse</i>	Catherine Cook
<i>Grimgerde</i>	Zheng Cao†

Hunding's men

*San Francisco Opera debut

†1995 Adler Fellow

ACT I Hunding's house

INTERMISSION

ACT II Scene 1 Wotan's fortress
 Scene 2 A clearing in the forest

INTERMISSION

ACT III A remote mountaintop

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SYNOPSIS

Die Walküre

Wotan, wandering the earth disguised as a human Wälse, has fathered twin children by a mortal woman: the Wälsungs Siegmund and Sieglinde. To prepare Siegmund for his task, Wotan separated the twins in their youth, leaving Sieglinde to enter a loveless marriage with Hunding, while putting Siegmund through endless trials of misery.

Siegmund, who calls himself Wehwalt ("Woeful"), went to the aid of a woman who was being forced into marriage by her brothers. In his struggle to save her, Siegmund lost his weapons but managed to kill several of the woman's brothers. As he fled, Wotan created a mighty storm to separate Siegmund from the brothers' pursuing kinsmen.

ACT I—Exhausted from his flight, Siegmund seeks shelter from the raging storm in a house built around a great ash tree. Collapsing unconscious on the floor, he is discovered by Sieglinde, who offers him water and mead. She reveals only that the house is Hunding's and she is Hunding's wife. As they talk, an overpowering attraction for each other takes hold of them.

When Hunding returns and hears Wehwalt recount his history, Hunding reveals that he is himself one of the pursuing kinsmen. The laws of hospitality demand that he offer strangers shelter for one night; but in the morning Wehwalt must be prepared to fight him. Sending his wife to prepare him a drink, Hunding leaves Siegmund alone. Siegmund then recalls that Wälse had vowed to provide his son with a sword in his hour of need.

Sieglinde, after drugging her husband's drink, returns to Siegmund and tells him of a one-eyed stranger who appeared at her wedding feast and thrust a sword deep into the ash tree, saying that only a great hero would retrieve it. Many had tried and all had failed to pull the sword from the tree. Still ignorant of their identities, Wälse's children give way to their passionate love. Magically, the walls open up and spring moonlight streams in on the embracing lovers. From Wehwalt's mention of his father's name, Sieglinde understands that he is her brother. Joyfully, she calls him by his true name, Siegmund. Seizing the hilt of the sword, Siegmund names it *Nothung*, the Needed One. Drawing it from the tree, he presents it as a bridal gift to Sieglinde. From her response he, too, understands that they are brother and sister, united in love and in blood.

ACT II—Scene I—Wotan, his plans developing just as he intended, instructs his favorite Valkyrie, Brünnhilde, to ensure that Siegmund kills Hunding in the impending fight. But no sooner has Brünnhilde left than Fricka, Wotan's wife and goddess of marriage and the home, arrives, angrily protesting the sacrilege of Sieglinde's incest and infidelity. Fricka argues that in *Nothung* Siegmund has an instrument of the gods and is therefore no longer an untrammelled innocent. She then demands that Siegmund die for her honor. Wotan, who must abide by the laws and contracts engraved on his spear, reluctantly pledges to withdraw his protection of Siegmund. Brünnhilde's exuberant return is cut short by the tension between Wotan and his wife. Utterly downcast, Wotan now foresees only the end of the gods. Revealing to Brünnhilde the story of the Ring, he

commands her to withdraw *Nothung's* power. When Brünnhilde protests, Wotan irately instructs her to ensure Siegmund's death in the fight. Leaving her to carry out his bidding, he departs in angry distress. Miserable over her obligation, Brünnhilde nonetheless goes off to do her duty.

Scene 2—After a wild flight through the forest, Siegmund and Sieglinde come upon a clearing. Exhausted, frightened and guilt-ridden, Sieglinde sinks to sleep in her brother's arms. Brünnhilde approaches Siegmund and tells him he must die, but that she will take his soul to join the heroes of Valhalla. Siegmund, learning that Sieglinde can never join him there, refuses, saying he would rather kill himself and his sister than allow anyone else to touch her. His devotion arouses such pity in the Valkyrie that she vows to disobey Wotan. Experiencing feelings of love for the first time, she prepares to protect Siegmund as Hunding's hounds are heard in the forest nearby. But Wotan's purposes are not so easily deflected. Furious at Brünnhilde's disobedience, Wotan appears in the middle of the fight and shatters *Nothung* with his spear. After Hunding has killed Siegmund, Wotan contemptuously dismisses him. Brünnhilde flees with Sieglinde and the broken pieces of *Nothung*.

ACT III—On a remote mountaintop, Brünnhilde's sisters are assembling with newly slain heroes they have gathered for Valhalla's guard. The fleeing Brünnhilde brings Sieglinde to them. When her warrior sisters refuse their help, Brünnhilde reveals that Sieglinde is carrying Siegmund's child, destined to become the greatest of heroes and to bear the name of Siegfried. Giving Sieglinde the shattered *Nothung*, Brünnhilde sends her into the forest to escape Wotan's wrath. Sieglinde has hardly left before Wotan arrives. Shielded at first by the other Valkyries, Brünnhilde turns to face her angry father. Wotan tells her she has forfeited her rights as a demi-god; she shall be cast into a deep sleep on a rock, prey to any man who finds her. Her pleading softens Wotan's anger, and he finally agrees to her request: only the greatest of heroes shall be able to take her. Sadly, Wotan bids farewell to his most-loved daughter. He tells her she shall be surrounded by a wall of flame, and with a final kiss he removes her divine attributes. Gesturing with his spear, he commands Loge, the spirit of fire, to encircle her with flames.

Supernumeraries

Steve Bauman	Larry Hunnicutt
David Clover	Steve Moulds
Peter Felleman	Ray Sullivan

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Die Walküre

Photos taken in rehearsal by Marty Sohl



Willard White, Jane Eaglen



James Morris



Anne Evans, Poul Elming

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Marjana Lipovšek





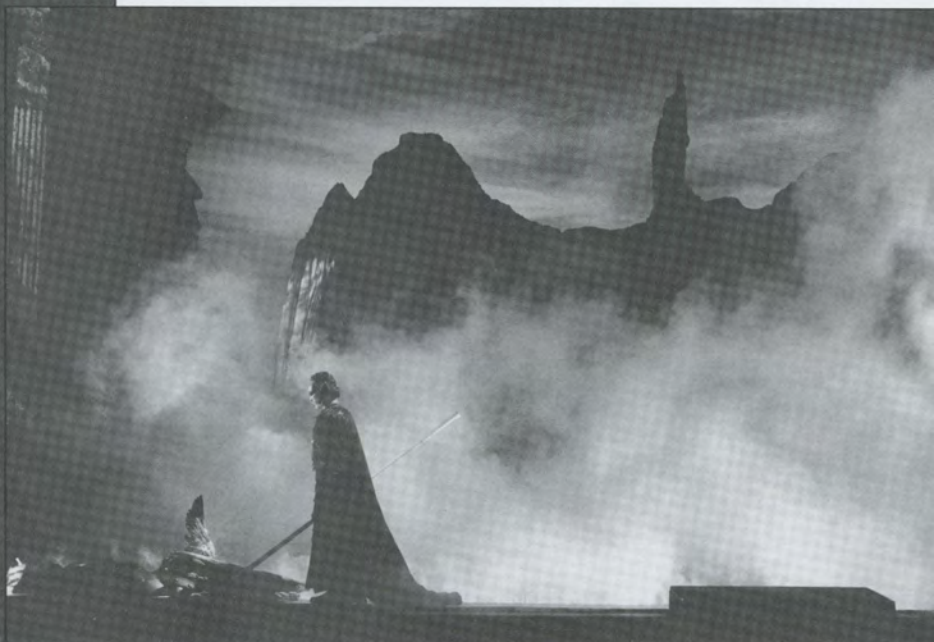
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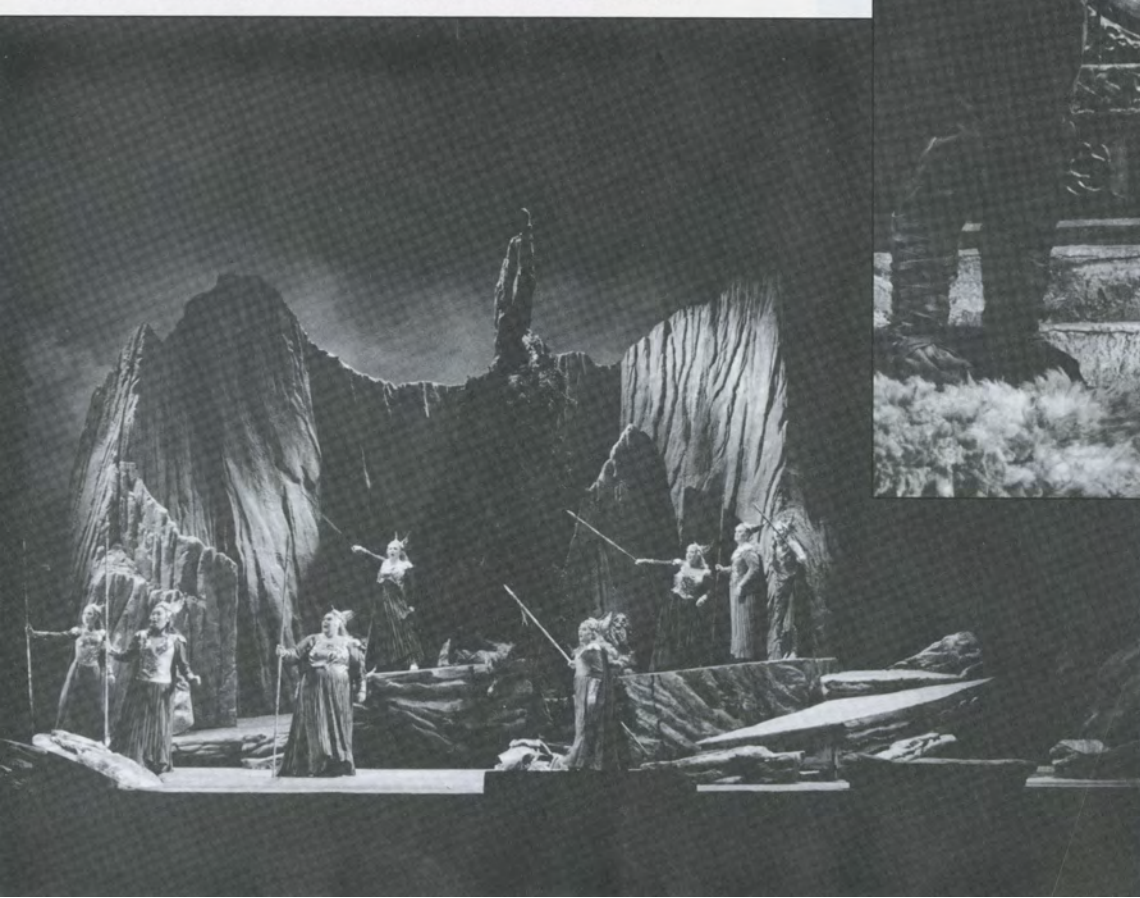


Willard White



James Morris

(L. to R.) Dvora Djoraev, Zheng Cao, Gwenneth Bean, Elizabeth Bishop, Catherine Cook, Catherine Keen, Claudia Waite, Nicolle Foland



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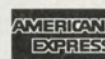
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Two of our more recent Brünnhildes: (left) Hildegard Behrens and (right) Gwyneth Jones, both part of our 1990 presentation of Wagner's *Ring* cycle.

felt that without him there would be no apparent connection with *Das Rheingold*. The three characters, Siegmund, Hunding and Sieglinde, did not appear in the earlier opera and perhaps he feared that a love story involving humans would seem too far removed from the power-politics of *Das Rheingold* if one of the gods did not take part. Concerned with writing a libretto, he had perhaps overlooked the power of his music and his system of leitmotifs. For through the use of the Valhalla theme, the sword motif and the spear theme, Wotan is present in Act I of *Die Walküre* as an unseen but dominating presence. And it makes his appearance in Act II all the more effective. Here, in what is a truly marvelous example of sheer musical story-telling, we encounter a Wotan who has changed since *Das Rheingold*. There he was greedy for power. Now he knows that all that matters is to restore the gold to the Rhinemaidens through Siegmund, the hero acting of his own free will. So we first meet Wotan instructing his daughter Brünnhilde to make sure Siegmund is victor in the fight with Hunding. If she were to use the vernacular of today, Brünnhilde's reply is roughly: "No problem. But look out, here comes trouble—your wife. I'm off, and good luck."

Fricka, goddess of wedlock, is in a blazing temper on Hunding's behalf. Adultery is bad enough, but incest between brother and sister...! When did one ever see that occur? You've just seen it, Wotan replies. He resists Fricka on the matter of incest, but that is the progressive side of Wotan which Fricka cannot comprehend. She is wily enough to know that it is the conservative Wotan, guardian of the old order, who is vulnerable and she veers away from incest to attack him on the power of the gods. Men, even

heroes like Siegmund, can only function through the gods' favor. Do not protect Siegmund, she urges; take back his sword. He is only your pawn, not a free hero at all. He must die so that the power of the gods remains unchallenged. To his fury, Wotan acknowledges she is right. He must let Siegmund die.

But now he has to countermand his orders to Brünnhilde. The Valkyrie is not accustomed to seeing the non-progressive Wotan—she is, after all, the daughter of his "progressive" nature. She persuades him to tell her what is troubling him and he does so in a long monologue which is *not*, as is sometimes said, a re-telling of the whole plot of *Das Rheingold*. It is Wotan's reflections and commentary on the events of *Das Rheingold* and he follows these by recounting what has happened since the end of *Das Rheingold*—his relationship with Erda, resulting in Brünnhilde's birth, and his recruitment of an army of heroes in Valhalla. He points out to Brünnhilde that while he and his heroes could easily defeat Alberich and the Nibelungs, he cannot regain the ring from Fafner by force of arms because of the contract he made with the giants to pay for the building of Valhalla. That is why he needed a free hero (who is Brünnhilde's human half-brother, remember). But Siegmund, he now realizes after Fricka's tirade, is not free and independent—he is a pawn, an extension of Wotan himself, and his protection is a sword bestowed on him by a god. Alberich's curse is working: Wotan must betray and murder the son who trusts him. Moreover, Wotan has heard a rumor that Alberich is expecting a child by a woman he has seduced (we meet this child, Hagen, in *Götterdämmerung*). "Well, take my blessing, Nibelung's son," the embittered Wotan cries. "What deeply revolts me I

bequeath to you: the empty glory of divinity."

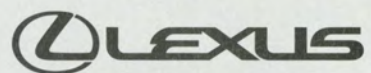
Brünnhilde is horrified by what she hears. Now ordered to ensure that Siegmund dies, she is tempted to defy her father, thereby ironically revealing that in her, too, he has created a free and independent being, but reluctantly agrees to obey him. It is in the next great scene, when she encounters Siegmund and Sieglinde fleeing from Hunding's hunting dogs, that Brünnhilde finally decides to disobey Wotan. She tells Siegmund that he is to die and follow her to Valhalla. When Siegmund learns that Sieglinde cannot go there with him, he vows to kill himself and Sieglinde and says he would prefer hell to Valhalla. It is at this moment, perhaps the most crucial in the whole cycle, that Brünnhilde becomes woman instead of goddess. Love of man and woman, she perceives, is worth more than gold or the pursuit of idealistic concepts. She reveals, too, that she knows Sieglinde is pregnant with Siegfried. You all shall live, she vows, but it is useless. Wotan's power prevails, his spear shatters Siegmund's sword, Hunding kills Siegmund, Brünnhilde rescues Sieglinde, and Wotan, after killing Hunding, sets off in pursuit of Brünnhilde.

All is set, therefore, for the wonderful Act III. And as we listen to it, we may also marvel anew at the superb characterizations in *Die Walküre*, not only the ardent lovers Siegmund and Sieglinde about whose incestuous relationship, as I said earlier, one experiences no qualms, but also Fricka, whose inflexible upholding of authority puts her, however much Wotan and we may resent it, in the right. Brünnhilde takes the law into her own hands, too, like many a defiant teenage daughter. But it is Wotan, in the final scene when he condemns Brünnhilde to sleep on a rock until "whoever wakes you defenseless has you as a wife," who shows overpowering compassion by agreeing to her plea that he should surround her with a circle of fire that will be penetrated by only the bravest, most fearless, of heroes (who she knows will be Siegfried). It is Wotan now who becomes, momentarily, a human father. The music tells us how deeply he loves her; and he loves her because he now sees she is the hope of the world and that it is only through her that the ring will be returned to its rightful owners. The hush that comes over a great opera house as this last scene of the opera holds the audience in thrall is always among the most moving of all theatrical experiences. The point of *Die Walküre* is that Wotan recognizes Brünnhilde as his better self and his participation in the rest of the *Ring* is almost that of a minor character. His farewell to Brünnhilde is also his farewell to greatness, and he knows it. ■



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CELEBRATING

Kirsten Flagstad

By PAUL THOMASON



MORTON

San Francisco Opera, 1936: Before a performance of *Tristan und Isolde*, Kirsten Flagstad poses backstage for the photographer.

Paul Thomason is a Bay Area freelance writer. Next spring, he will teach a class on "How to Listen to Opera" at the S.F. Conservatory of Music Extension Division.

This year the opera world is celebrating the centennial of the birth of Kirsten Flagstad, who was born on July 12, 1895 in Hamar, Norway. Today, Flagstad is remembered primarily for the ease with which her rich, beautiful voice sang Wagner's most demanding roles. But for most of her career she was simply a respected, hardworking, provincial Scandinavian soprano who sang everything *except* Wagner. And it was by the merest chance that she came out of retirement, undertook the roles for which she became best known and got hailed as, perhaps, "the voice of the century."

Though Flagstad's U.S. debut was at the Metropolitan Opera on February 2, 1935, two important "firsts" of her career took place here in San Francisco: she sang her first *Siegfried Brünnhilde* on November 6, 1935 as part of the Company first *Ring* cycle (thus singing her first complete *Ring* cycle ever), and it was here she returned to the U.S. operatic stage after World War II, appearing as *Isolde* on September 30, 1949.

Before arriving in this country, her most frequently performed role was that of Micaëla in *Carmen* (which she had sung 47 times), followed by Marguerite in *Faust* (41 times.) She had not yet sung any of the Brünnhildes, Kundry in *Parsifal*, or Senta in *The Flying Dutchman*. She had sung Elsa in *Lohengrin*, Elisabeth in *Tannhäuser* and Leonore in *Fidelio* only in Swedish or Norwegian (and not very often at that). She had sung *Isolde* in German, but only a few times.

What she had sung (since her 1913 debut in the small role of Nuri in d'Albert's *Tiefland*) was lots and lots of operetta, gradually working her way through roles like the First Lady in *The Magic Flute* and Desdemona in *Otello* to heavier roles such as Aida (which she adored), Amelia in *Un Ballo in Maschera* and Tosca. She had been singing for over 15 years before she performed her first Wagner opera, *Lohengrin*, in 1929. And it was at a cast party after the opening performance that she met Henry Johansen, a wealthy businessman who would become her second husband.

"He always insisted he fell in love with me the moment he saw Elsa come out on the balcony in the second act," she later recalled. "At least that's what he said. Men are all romantics at heart." Three days later Johansen proposed, and with their marriage the unambitious soprano happily retired, quite content to enjoy her big new house and supervise the servants.

But Flagstad was a good musician and a quick study, so theaters kept calling her in emergencies. In 1932, the Oslo National Opera asked her to sing Handel's *Rodelinda*, then *Isolde*, which she had to learn—in German—in only six weeks. While she was studying Wagner's long, sustained phrases for hours at a time, Flagstad made a rather disconcerting discovery: all her dresses

continued on page 40

San Francisco Opera



RUSLAN & LYUDMILA — PHOTO: VALENTINE BARANOVSKY

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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.

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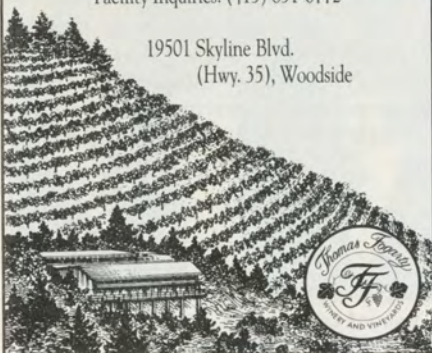
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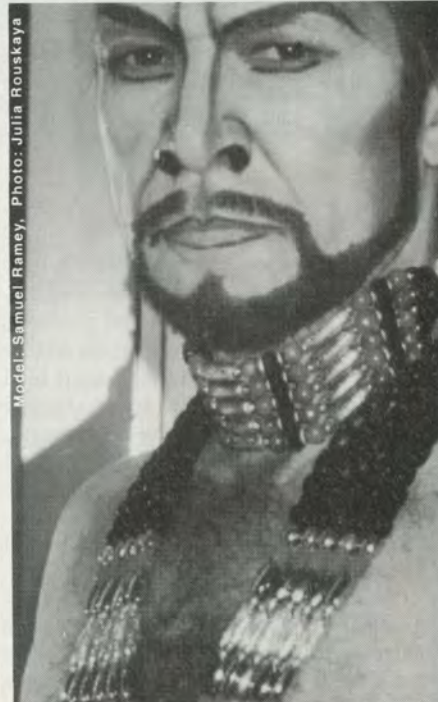
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Mercurio*; Copley/Conklin/

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Sept. 16, 20, 23, 28

Oct. 1, 4, 7, 10, 12

MADAMA BUTTERFLY Puccini

Malfitano*/Watanabe*/Riel*,

Keen/Bishop, Foland†;

Leech/Margison/Portilla†,

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Sénéchal, Barrett*,

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Runnicles/Mackerras (Dec.);

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

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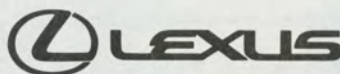
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1995 SAN FRANCISCO OPERA COMPANY

(continued)

Although our program magazines regularly list members of the Administration and Company (please see pages 10 and 12), we know that those lists are by necessity incomplete. In order to give recognition to the many skilled professionals whose work has contributed so greatly to the quality of San Francisco Opera productions, we provide, once a year, a list of everyone involved with our season. In this issue, department heads and regular staff are listed in front of the magazine, as usual; the many others, upon whom so much depends, are listed below.

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Some of the stars of San Francisco Opera's 1936 *Ring of the Nibelung*: Lauritz Melchior (Siegmund/Siegfried), Kirsten Flagstad (Brünnhilde) and Fritz Reiner (conductor).

were splitting down the back. She wasn't putting on weight; her lungs and back muscles were developing. A happier discovery was that her voice was growing in size and becoming darker in color.

Bayreuth heard about the performances and invited her to audition. She was invited to sing the Third Norn in *Götterdämmerung*, Ortlinde in *Die Walküre* and asked to understudy Eva in *Die Meistersinger* and Sieglinde in *Die Walküre* for the 1933 Festival. All the parts were new to her except Eva, which she had only done in Swedish.

However, Heinz Tietjen, who was a conductor and stage director in both Bayreuth and Berlin, was impressed enough with her audition to invite Flagstad to come to Berlin, join the Staatsoper, and get into the heavy Wagnerian repertory. She refused, saying, "Why should I? I'm happily married and I like staying in Oslo."

After her first Bayreuth appearances she was invited back for the 1934 festival and offered Guttrune in *Götterdämmerung* and Sieglinde.

Between her two seasons at Bayreuth, Fritz Reiner, who would later conduct her

first San Francisco Isolde, invited the soprano to make her U.S. debut singing three performances of *Tristan* in Philadelphia in October of 1933. But the Göteborg Opera refused to release her from scheduled appearances in *Tannhäuser*. "Who knows how different my career in America might have been if I had accepted?" she later wrote.

It was during the 1934 season at Bayreuth that Flagstad got a cable from Eric Simon, the Met's European agent, asking whether she would be able to sing roles like Brünnhilde and Isolde during the coming season and warning her to keep quiet about the cable for reasons he could not specify. (In fact, the Met was looking to replace the great dramatic soprano Frida Leider who was unhappy at the Met and sending the management a steady stream of letters and telegrams asking to be released from her contract. Though the Met also had the Viennese soprano Anny Konetzni under contract for big Wagnerian roles, she could only stay the first six weeks of the season, which left a critical hole in the rest of the 1934-35 season.)

Flagstad telephoned her husband in

Oslo and asked what she should do. When he reassured her that he would go to America with her, she agreed to audition. On the train to St. Moritz, Flagstad met another soprano, Elisabeth Delius, who had also been asked to audition. "[She] had a gorgeous voice and knew everything in Italian and German, including all the big Wagnerian roles. Beside her I was nothing at all," Flagstad later recalled. The two women discovered they were expected to audition in front of each other in a hotel room full of heavy draperies and overstuffed furniture, all guaranteed to swallow any voice.

Finally it was decided that Delius was 30 pounds too heavy to sing at the Met and Flagstad was engaged. (It would be interesting to know whatever happened to Miss Delius.) The Met thought so little of their new dramatic soprano they only offered her a one-year contract with no renewal option (a fact management would often rue in years to come). She was engaged for nine weeks from January 28 to March 31, 1935, for no more than 18 performances. She was required to know Leonore in *Fidelio*, the three Brünnhildes, Elsa in *Lohengrin*, Isolde and, surprisingly, the Marschallin in Strauss's *Der Rosenkavalier*. (She was later released from the Marschallin out of consideration for all that she had to learn. Alas, Flagstad never sang a Strauss role on the stage though, at the composer's own request, she gave the world premiere of his "Four Last Songs" in 1948.)

No one at the Met had ever seen their new soprano in a performance, so shortly after her arrival, she was asked to sing a dress rehearsal of *Götterdämmerung* on January 15, 1935, in makeup and costume so the management could get an idea of how she looked on stage. Flagstad had always sung rehearsals in full voice, and when she let loose that morning she caused a sensation. The conductor, Arthur Bodanzky, immediately turned the rehearsal over to his assistant and sent for the general manager, Giulio Gatti-Casazza, before running into the office of the Met's assistant general manager, Edward Ziegler, shouting, "My God, Ned! My God! Come hear this woman sing!"

The Siegfried, American tenor Paul Althouse, was so astonished at the sound of Flagstad's voice he missed his cue. The auditorium began to fill up as word of the astonishing new singer raced through the house. When she hit the high C at the end of the Prologue's love duet the orchestra stopped playing, put down their instruments, jumped to their feet, and cheered.

"It must have gone well," Flagstad later recalled. "We had to sing the duet three times."

Flagstad's Met (and U.S.) debut was as Sieglinde (a part she had originally wanted but was refused.) It was not the first *Walküre* of the season, so she had no rehearsal, even though the performance was the subject of a nationwide radio broadcast. The commentator was the famous soprano Geraldine Farrar. After the first act she threw away her script and announced to the listening audience that they had just witnessed the most exciting event in the theater, the birth of a star.

When Flagstad left the stage, clutching the pieces of Siegmund's sword in the middle of Act III, the audience gave her an unprecedented ovation.

Shortly after the first act had begun, Gatti-Casazza got a call in his office. It was from his first wife, the feisty soprano Frances Alda. She had tuned into the broadcast late and wanted to know who was singing Sieglinde.

"Why?" asked Gatti.

"Because she's got an extremely beautiful voice and she sings very well," Alda replied.

"Oh," the ever-laconic Gatti replied, "it's a certain Flagstad."

Four days later, Flagstad sang Isolde and it was obvious to everyone that here was a voice such as one hears, maybe, once in a lifetime. "After that [*Tristan*] I felt the American public and I understood one another," Flagstad said. What many people did not realize was that after singing Brünnhilde in *Walküre* on February 15 (once again, she got no rehearsal) the soprano came down with laryngitis which left her almost entirely deaf for two years. "For a long time I couldn't even hear the orchestra. I had an awful time," she later recalled. "I tried to cover myself as best I could. Luckily, I have perfect pitch."

Naturally, Gaetano Merola and the San Francisco Opera were eager to get the sensational new soprano for their 1935 season. The company had given its first Wagner opera, *Tristan und Isolde*, in 1927, then waited until 1930 before attempting another. But with *Tannhäuser* in 1930, Wagner's works became a yearly occurrence with some combination of either *Lohengrin*, *Meistersinger* or *Tannhäuser* served up each season. However, the company had never attempted any of the *Ring* operas. When Flagstad agreed to come west for the 1935 season, Merola decided to take the plunge. The results were the talk of the town (even with an election taking place at the same time).

The *Ring* was given during the first week of the season, which meant the

socially all-important opening night opera (November 1) was *Das Rheingold*, a one-act work. (It was given with an intermission following the second scene, causing some local Wagnerites to grumble at the desecration, though an air-check of a 1937 broadcast of the work shows the Met did the same thing, even without the excuse of an opening night.)

Flagstad threw the S.F. Opera into a bit of a panic when her scheduled train from Denver arrived without her. Company officials scoured the town in vain for their Brünnhilde. At noon the next day, she arrived for her first rehearsal explaining, "Instead of riding two days and a night, I rode two nights and a day. I do some of my best sleeping on American Pullmans."

For *Die Walküre* (November 4), Merola assembled a cast that would make any Wagnerian today weep. In addition to Flagstad, the audience heard Elisabeth Rethberg (a local favorite) as Sieglinde, Lauritz Melchior (Siegmund), and Friedrich Schorr (Wotan), all conducted by Artur Bodanzky. The next day, *San Francisco Chronicle's* music critic, Alfred Frankenstein, wrote of Flagstad's performance, "She was a kind of living Nordic Winged Victory...Before such an artist the customary analysis of vocalism and gesture would be nothing short of impudent."

Alexander Fried wrote in the *San Francisco Examiner*, "*Die Walküre* last night, marked a high point—probably THE high point—in the 13-year-career of the San Francisco Opera....To put the matter bluntly, Mme. Flagstad is 'as advertised.'"

Before *Siegfried* on November 6, the *Examiner* (incorrectly) assured readers Flagstad and Melchior had sung their roles "many times at the Metropolitan in New York," though in reviewing the performance Fried noted, "It is said that Mme. Flagstad sang this of the three *Ring* Brünnhildes last night for the first time. How impresarios kept her from the role so long is a mystery. In personality and in voice she is such a Brünnhilde as Wagner must have cherished in his dreams."

The following season (1936) Flagstad, Melchior, and Schorr returned for repeat performances of *Götterdämmerung* and *Walküre* and added *Tristan und Isolde*, all conducted by Fritz Reiner. That season, Merola succeeded in doing what the Met was never able to do: with Flagstad as Brünnhilde and Lotte Lehmann as Sieglinde, local opera lovers got to see the two great sopranos in the same performance. (They only sang together three times in their entire careers, two 1936 *Walküres* in San Francisco and one in Milwaukee in 1937.) The NBC broadcast of Act II of the *Walküre* on November 13 also



Kirsten Flagstad as Sieglinde and Lauritz Melchior as Siegmund between acts of our 1939 presentation of *Die Walküre*.

featured Emanuel List as Hunding. (It has been issued on various record labels.)

But, not surprisingly, it was Flagstad's first local Isolde that were the most eagerly awaited event of the season. The evening before the *Tristan* dress rehearsal, Flagstad had scheduled a recital in Pasadena. Despite Flagstad's pleas, Merola insisted she must attend the rehearsal. To accommodate her, the Pasadena recital began 15 minutes early so she could get on the overnight train. The next morning in San Francisco, a police escort met the train and, with sirens wailing, Flagstad raced to the opera house. Fritz Reiner had started the rehearsal with Act III in which the tenor sings for about an hour before the soprano enters. As Flagstad ran in the stage door she heard her cue and flew on stage just in time to sing, "*Tristan, Geliebter!*"—much to the amazement of everyone.

If critics had been enthusiastic about the soprano's Brünnhilde, those words paled in comparison to her Isolde notices. "One searches for words, but there are no words," began *Frankenstein's Chronicle* review. "It all hinges in Flagstad, and the miracle of her voice and person....It is partly a matter of a voice that knows no tiring, that rides the surge of every climax with a firm, sure lead, and is touched with glints of color and tenderness in strange, unexpected ways. It is partly a matter of a stage presence like some young Nordic madonna stepped from the frame of a richly colored Dürer. And from the fusion of these emerges an Isolde who melts the hearts and stops the breath with such perfection of art as one might not dare believe existed."

During her 1937 season, local fans were dismayed when Flagstad said she planned to retire. She had, after all, been singing in public for almost 25 years and she wanted to be with her husband in Norway.

Though she did not retire, San Francisco had to wait until 1939 before she returned to the opera—with a different twist. In *Walküre*, she sang Sieglinde while Australian soprano Marjorie Lawrence made her debut as Brünnhilde; in a later performance the two women switched roles. Performances on tour to Sacramento and Los Angeles repeated the process. (The general critical consensus was that while Flagstad was a very good Sieglinde, she was a great Brünnhilde.) A story persists that at a *Walküre* performance the company gave in Sacramento on October 28, 1939, the Ortlinde, Olive Ponitz, suddenly became ill and Flagstad, who had made her Bayreuth debut in the small role only six years earlier, sang Ortlinde's lines from behind the scenery.

San Franciscans also witnessed the seeming indestructibility of Flagstad's voice that season when she sang her one and only local performance of Leonore in *Fidelio* on November 3, the day after singing Isolde. (In March of 1937, she astounded New York audiences by singing *Götterdämmerung*, *Lohengrin* and *Tristan* three days in a row—without any apparent evidence of vocal strain.)

World War II brought personal tragedy to Kirsten Flagstad. Her husband was in Norway when the Nazis overran the country, and for weeks the frantic soprano was unable to get any news of her family. Then she got a cable from her husband, "Stay where you are. I am all right." That was the only news she would have from him for several months. Then came another cable: "Why don't you come home? I am waiting for you."

Flagstad, who had been ready to return to her home months earlier, honored her

remaining commitments for that season, and left the United States on April 19, 1941. (In a post-performance curtain speech after her last *Tristan* at the Met on April 12, she assured the audience, "I am very happy to be going home, but I shall be even happier to return to you.") On June 15, her husband announced that Flagstad would remain in Norway until the war was over.

Shortly after the end of the war, on May 13, 1945, Flagstad and her husband were walking in their garden when two men with drawn revolvers suddenly appeared, handed her husband a warrant for his arrest, and ordered him to come with them. He protested, then asked if he could get his coat. Told no, he turned to his wife and said, "Will you please telephone —"

"Not another word! Come along!" one of the men demanded.

Henry Johansen kissed his wife and was taken away. She never saw him again. He died in June of 1946 before ever coming to trial on charges of treason and collaboration. Flagstad herself was never charged with anything and, throughout the war, had only performed two concerts in neutral Sweden and two seasons at the June Festival in Zurich, Switzerland.

She resumed her career in January of 1947 with concerts in France and England, and was received rapturously by the public. ("Like the taste of butter after ten years of margarine," commented one Londoner.) She made her La Scala debut as Isolde in February of 1947 and returned to the U.S. in April, singing without any trouble in Boston. But Walter Winchell began writing that she had been a long-time Nazi, a personal friend of Hitler's, had sung in Berlin during the war (all of which were blatant lies) and protesters began picketing, and occasionally disrupting, her concerts. The Metropolitan, which she had single-handedly saved from going under during the Depression, refused to reengage her.

After a concert in Oakland on January 11, 1949, a local reviewer reported "a capacity audience gave her what amounted to one long ovation." There were no incidents. Six days later the Board of Directors of the San Francisco Opera unanimously voted to engage Flagstad for the coming season. When the season was announced on June 27th, Flagstad was scheduled for two performances each of *Walküre* and *Tristan*. (In fact, a third *Tristan* was added to meet the demand for tickets.) They would be her first appearances in a U.S. opera house since 1941—and though the public snapped up tickets for Flagstad's appearances, not everyone was happy about it.

Supervisor John J. Sullivan submitted a resolution on July 11 aimed at preventing

Flagstad from singing in the War Memorial Opera House, and on July 14th, the War Memorial Board of Trustees ("a somewhat less sophisticated group than it is today," notes Arthur Bloomfield in his history of the S.F. Opera) voted to "disapprove" her appearance officially "because of the highly controversial character of her public appearance elsewhere in the United States."

The Opera's Board of Directors insisted that unless the ban was revoked, the season would be canceled. For the rest of July, the controversy raged on the front pages of the local newspapers. Mayor Elmer Robinson, who was vacationing at his Grass Valley ranch, refused to return to town (though six local unions and both the S.F. Symphony and Opera Orchestras demanded he do so), leaving it to Acting Mayor George Christopher to handle the situation.

Newspaper editorials, unions, and the general public seemed in favor of Flagstad's appearance. The *Chronicle* announced letters were running seven to one in favor of the soprano, and denounced the War Memorial trustees as "craven."

The most vocal of the trustees was Richard Newhall who consistently referred to Flagstad as "Madame Flagstaff" and admitted "I never heard of Madame Flagstaff before this thing came up." (In the middle of the whole affair, Herb Caen grumbled: "One thing you must admit: 'Tokyo Rose' is getting a fairer treason trial from the Government than Kirsten Flagstad got from the Opera House Board of Trustees.")

Acting Mayor Christopher called meeting after meeting (some of which were described in the press as "stormy and acrimonious") between the two sides, eventually losing 11 pounds while mediating the controversy. Finally, on July 31, the War Memorial Board of Trustees reversed their previous stand and, by a vote of 6 to 5, canceled their ban on Flagstad's appearance.

After her performance in *Tristan und Isolde* on September 30, 1949, the press reported "the police and plain-clothes men on the alert for 'disturbances' that never happened joined a sell-out audience in cheering Kirsten Flagstad."

The following season Flagstad sang her last performances with the Company, two Isolde and her only two appearances here as Kundry in *Parsifal*.

Two years before her death in 1962 she wrote to a friend here, "I nearly envy you the sights of San Francisco, my favorite city in the U.S.A." It was a love affair on both sides. ■



The acclaimed British soprano **JANE EAGLEN** makes her first San Francisco Opera appearance as Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre*. The artist is internationally recognized as one of the most exciting and versatile young dramatic sopranos active today, with a command of both the German and Italian repertoires. She has already enjoyed successes as the *Walküre* Brünnhilde and Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* at the Vienna State Opera; Mathilde in *Guillaume Tell* at the Royal Opera Covent Garden and the Grand Théâtre de Genève; the title role of *Norma* at the Scottish Opera and in

Ravenna; Donna Anna and Amelia in *Un Ballo in Maschera* in Bologna; Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre* for Scottish Opera and Opera Pacific at Costa Mesa; as well as the title role of *Tosca* with the Cleveland Orchestra and at the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires. Highlights from her 1994-95 season include a debut with the Lyric Opera of Chicago as Brünnhilde in *Siegfried*; a bow at Milan's La Scala as Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre*; her first appearance at the Opera Bastille in Paris as Ballo's Amelia; Ariadne (role debut) in *Ariadne auf Naxos* at the English National Opera; her first Abigail in concert performances of *Nabucco* at the Ravenna Festival; Act III of *Die Walküre* at the Hollywood Bowl; as well as Act III from both *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung* at the Edinburgh Festival. Among her future plans are her Metropolitan Opera debut as Donna Anna, a return to Chicago as Brünnhilde in the *Ring* cycle, and debuts at the Frankfurt Opera and the Salzburg Festival as Rezia in Weber's *Oberon*. Her first major recording is now available, on which she sings the title role of *Norma* in the 1994 Ravenna Festival production led by Riccardo Muti. Born in England, she attended Manchester's Royal Northern College of Music and studied with Joseph Ward. Early in her career, she joined the English National Opera, where her roles included Leonora in *Il Trovatore*, Eva in *Die Meistersinger*, Santuzza in *Cavalleria Rusticana*, as well as Donna Elvira and Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*.



In her first appearance with San Francisco Opera, **SUSAN MARIE PIERSON** sings the role of Brünnhilde in the November 21 performance of *Die Walküre*. The young soprano is already an experienced interpreter of the three *Ring* Brünnhildes (*Walküre*, *Siegfried*, and *Götterdämmerung*), and has been applauded in these roles at the *Ring* cycles of the Opera de Nantes and the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris. In addition, she was heard as Brünnhilde in the concert of *Götterdämmerung* excerpts with the Orchestre National-Radio France, conducted by Jeffrey Tate. Miss Pierson first came to inter-

national attention when, as a winner of the Opera Company of Philadelphia/Luciano Pavarotti Competition, she sang Amelia opposite the tenor in a nationally televised production of *Un Ballo in Maschera*. She subsequently made her debut at Milan's La Scala as Ballo's Amelia, again with Pavarotti. Other career highlights include *Un Ballo in Maschera* at the Teatro Comunale in Bologna, with Opera Delaware, and the Florentine Opera; Elisabetta in *Don Carlo* at the Netherlands Opera; the title role of *Aida* in Mexico City and for Cincinnati Opera; and Desdemona in *Otello* and Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* at the Arizona Opera. Born in Portland, Oregon, Miss Pierson studied at the Eastman School of Music and at Boston University. She began her career with the Wolf Trap Opera and the San Diego Opera Center.



Acclaimed throughout the opera world as one of its finest dramatic sopranos, **MARILYN ZSCHAU** makes her San Francisco Opera debut as Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre* performances of November 25 and 29. Her appearances as Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre* for Seattle Opera and Australian Opera have received the finest critical praise, as have her performances as *Götterdämmerung*'s Brünnhilde in Seattle. The native of Chicago made her European debut as Marietta in Korngold's *Die Tote Stadt* in Vienna, and has since performed at the major theaters of Europe, including Covent Garden, La Scala in

Milan, as well as in Paris, Vienna, Hamburg, Munich, Stuttgart and the Maggio Musicale in Florence. Applauded as an artist of great range and versatility, she has appeared in roles as diverse as Musetta in *La Bohème* and the Dyer's Wife in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. Career highlights include Minnie in *La Fanciulla del West* at the Vienna State Opera, Covent Garden, and in Chicago; Kostelníčka in *Jenůfa* in Florence, Edmonton and Dallas; her first Ortrud in *Lohengrin* for Geneva Opera; Elektra and Renata in *The Fiery Angel* for the Los Angeles Music Center Opera; Giorgetta in *Il Tabarro*, Musetta in *La Bohème*, the title role of *Tosca*, and the Dyer's Wife at the Metropolitan Opera; and a series of triumphs at the Lyric Opera of Chicago: the Dyer's Wife and the title roles of *Elektra*, *Salome*, and *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*. Miss Zschau returns to the Met next season for her first performances as the Witch in *Hänsel und Gretel*.



Internationally renowned for her portrayals of Wagner heroines—she made her 1978 San Francisco Opera debut as Elsa in *Lohengrin*—**ANNE EVANS** sings the role of Sieglinde in *Die Walküre*. A graduate of the Royal College of Music in London and the Geneva Conservatory, the Welsh soprano has sung Brünnhilde in the *Ring* cycle at the 1989, 1990, 1991 and 1992 Bayreuth Festivals, with the Deutsche Oper both in Berlin and on tour to Washington, D.C., as well as in Vienna, Paris and Nice. Highlights from the 1992-93 season include her successful Metropolitan Opera debut as

Elisabeth in *Tannhäuser*, Isolde in *Tristan und Isolde* (role debut) with the Welsh National Opera led by Charles Mackerras (whose tour included performances at Covent Garden), Elisabeth in Berlin, and concert performances of *Die Walküre* with the Cleveland Orchestra under Christoph von Dohnányi. Recent engagements have included Leonore in *Fidelio* at the Met, Isolde in Brussels, the Marschallin in *Der Rosenkavalier* for English National Opera, and *Siegfried*'s Brünnhilde in the new Royal Opera House *Ring* production and in Dortmund. Among her future commitments are Leonore in Stuttgart, Isolde in Dresden, Berlin and Brussels, and Brünnhilde in *Götterdämmerung* for the Royal Opera. In addition to her operatic work, Miss Evans enjoys an extensive concert and recital career both in Great Britain and abroad. She received the Wagner Society's Sir Reginald Goodall Memorial Award in 1993. The video and CDs of the artist's performance as Brünnhilde at the 1992 Bayreuth Festival have recently been released.

ARTIST PROFILES



Highly regarded as a versatile and gifted singer of opera, oratorio and lieder repertoires, mezzo-soprano **MARJANA LIPOVŠEK** makes her San Francisco Opera debut as Fricka in *Die Walküre*, the role that brought her much acclaim in Munich's new *Ring*, at the opening of La Scala's 1994-95 season, and which she performed in her U.S. opera debut last year in Chicago. Born into a musical family in the Slovenian capital of Ljubljana, she completed her studies at the Music Academy in Graz and was immediately invited to join the Vienna State Opera, where she acquired her early stage experience. She subsequently became a member of the Hamburg State Opera, where her roles included Octavian in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Dorabella in *Così fan tutte*, Marina in *Boris Godunov*, and Ulrica in *Un Ballo in Maschera*. She then performed more of the repertoire's great dramatic roles at Munich's Bavarian State Opera—Marie in *Wozzeck*, Preziosilla in *La Forza del Destino*, Gaea in *Daphne*, and Fricka. Her first Dalila in *Samson et Dalila* at the Bregenz Festival was a spectacular success which led to repeats of the role in Berlin, at Spain's Perelada Festival, at the Vienna State Opera and the Opéra de Paris-Bastille. Her first *Carmen*, also at the Bregenz Festival, was a similar triumph. Miss Lipovšek has also appeared as Brangäne in *Tristan und Isolde*, Amneris in *Aida*, Azucena in *Il Trovatore*, Orpheus in *Orfeo ed Euridice*, Mistress Quickly in *Falstaff*, Marfa in *Khovanshchina*, and Eboli in *Don Carlos* at the major opera houses of Vienna, Munich, Hamburg, Berlin, Frankfurt, Salzburg, Milan, Madrid and London. Her ample discography includes *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, *Elektra*, *Orfeo ed Euridice*, *Khovanshchina*, *Hänsel und Gretel*, *Boris Godunov*, *Die Walküre*, the Verdi Requiem, as well as four recital discs.



NICOLLE FOLAND sings four roles in her first season with San Francisco Opera: Kate Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly*, Clorinda in *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.



CLAUDIA WAITE, a second year Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, portrays Helmwige in *Die Walküre*. She made her San Francisco Opera debut last fall in *Macbeth* and sang Leonora in three performances of *Il Trovatore*, replacing an indisposed colleague. A member of the 1993 Merola Opera Program, the young artist's credits for the Opera Center include two tours of the Pacific islands of Guam, Saipan and Pohnpei, Merola Opera and Western Opera Theater performances as Rosalinda in John Copley's production of *Die Fledermaus*, and Hecuba in the North American premiere of Tippet's *King Priam* as part of the Opera Center's Showcase Series. The soprano has also appeared as Musetta in *La Bohème* and Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte* in the Center's successful

Educational Outreach programs, *Opera Inside Out* and *Opera Out*. A California native, she received her bachelor of music education degree from Angelo State University in Texas and a master of music degree from Florida State University. Most recently, she was featured in *When we no longer touch* with the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus, and appeared as soloist with the San Mateo Masterworks Chorale in Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* as well as the soprano soloist in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony as part of San Francisco Opera's United Nations 50th Anniversary Concert.



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.



The role of Ortlinde in *Die Walküre* is performed by soprano **DVORA DJORAEV**. A native of New Jersey, she received her bachelor of music degree from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. A prize-winner of the East Bay Opera League vocal competition, the artist has been seen in Bay Area productions as Violetta in *La Traviata*, the Queen of the Night in *The Magic Flute*, in the title role of *Lucia di Lammermoor* for the S.F. Opera Guild's *Opera à la Carte* program, and as soprano soloist in televised performances of Handel's *Messiah* presented by the S.F. Conservatory of Music. She will be featured early next year as Gilda in West Bay Opera's production of *Rigoletto*. Miss Djoraev has been a member of the San Francisco Opera Chorus since 1993. During the run of the Company premiere of *The Fiery Angel* last fall, she met her husband, Rusdem Djoraev, a member of St. Petersburg's Maryinsky Theater Acrobatic Troupe.



Mezzo-soprano **CATHERINE KEEN**, Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly* and Waltraute in *Die Walküre*, was a 1989-90 Adler Fellow and a 1987-88 Merola Opera Program participant who has sung numerous roles here since her 1989 Company debut in *Satyagraha*. They include Schwertleite in *Die Walküre*, Maddalena in *Rigoletto*, Prince Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus*, Sonya in *War and Peace*, Zulma in *L'Italiana in Algeri*, Hermia in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Magdalene in *Die Meistersinger*, and Venus in *Tannhäuser*. Opera Center credits include a Schwabacher Debut Recital and Leocasta in Handel's *Giustino*. Highlights from recent seasons elsewhere include her European debut with the Deutsche Oper Berlin as Dalila in *Samson*

et Dalila, a debut with the Netherlands Opera as the Duchess in *Luisa Miller*, *La Traviata* at the Orange Festival, *Samson et Dalila* in Amsterdam, *Luisa Miller* in Geneva, Falla's *The Three-Cornered Hat* with the Atlanta Symphony, a recording of *La Vida Breve* with the Cincinnati Symphony, Mahler's *Lied von der Erde* in Paris, and Mahler's Eighth Symphony both in Lyons and Edinburgh, the latter led by Donald Runnicles. Miss Keen has appeared in recital throughout North America, and as soloist with several prominent orchestras. She is the recipient of a George London/William Sullivan Study Grant, a Puccini Foundation Award, Mac Allister Award and a grant from the Wagner Society of Northern California. Future plans include *Venus* at the Royal Danish Opera, and a European telecast of *Otello* with the Netherlands Opera.



In her debut season with San Francisco Opera, **ZHENG CAO** portrays Grimmerde in *Die Walküre*, the Kitchen Boy in *Rusalka*, and Tisbe in the student matinee performances of *La Cenerentola*. A native of Shanghai, the mezzo-soprano recently sang the role of Suzuki in the Opéra de Lyon production of *Madama Butterfly*, a part she also sang for the New York City Opera's 1994 National Tour. She has also appeared as Cherubino in *The Marriage of Figaro* at the European Opera Center in Ghent. As a member of the Curtis Institute Opera Center, she performed the roles of Carmen in Peter

Brook's *The Tragedy of Carmen*, Amastris in *Xerxes* and Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*. During the 1991-92 season, she made her recital debut at the Kennedy Center Terrace Theater in Washington, D.C., and was a soloist in Handel's *Messiah* with the National Symphony Orchestra and the Warsaw Philharmonic. A 1995 Adler Fellow, Miss Cao performed the role of Dorabella in the 1994 Merola Opera Program production of *Così fan tutte*. The mezzo holds a bachelor's degree from the Shanghai Conservatory of Music and a master's degree from the Curtis Institute 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 Rosswisse 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 *Ariodante*, 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 Rosswisse at the Lyric Opera of Chicago and Marcellina in *Le Nozze di Figaro* for Portland Opera.



ANDREA BAKER sings the role of Schwertleite in *Die Walküre*. The mezzo-soprano, currently in her second year as a member of the San Francisco Opera Chorus, appeared here last fall as Lady Macbeth's Lady-in-Waiting in *Macbeth*. On the concert platform, the young artist has been heard as soloist in the Requiems of Verdi and Duruflé, Vivaldi's *Gloria*, and Handel's *Messiah*. Upcoming assignments include the *Messiah* with the Tokyo Philharmonic, the title role of Handel's *Xerxes* with San Francisco's Pocket Opera, and an engagement with Houston Grand Opera as the

Strawberry Woman in *Porgy and Bess*. The recipient of numerous honors, Miss Baker was a prize-winner in the 1994 Leontyne Price Vocal Artists Competition, a national finalist in the Metropolitan Opera's Competition, and the winner of a grant from the International Institute of Education. She is also an accomplished jazz singer, and has performed in numerous clubs on the East Coast and in the Bay Area. The native of Massachusetts currently studies with Blanche Thebom in San Francisco.



POUL ELMING makes his San Francisco Opera debut singing one of his signature roles, Siegmund in *Die Walküre*. Born in Denmark, he began his early studies as a baritone and became a member of the Jutland Opera in Aarhus in 1979, for whom he sang many leading baritone roles. In 1984, he joined the Royal Opera in Copenhagen where his roles included the Count in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Germont in *La Traviata*, and the title part of *Eugene Onegin*. After further studies in Copenhagen and New York, he made his debut as a tenor in 1989, singing the title role of *Parsifal* as well as Erik

in *Der Fliegende Holländer* at the Royal Opera. Following his 1990 Bayreuth Festival debut as Siegmund (a role he subsequently sang for five seasons at the Festival), he made his debut at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden during the 1991-92 season, again singing Siegmund to great critical acclaim. Later that season, he appeared as Parsifal at Bayreuth and the Flanders Opera, and as Siegmund in Berlin, Hannover and at Bayreuth. Among his performances during the 1992-93 season were *Parsifal* in Berlin and Vienna, *Die Walküre* in Munich, Berlin and Vienna, and his debut in the title role of *Lohengrin* in Copenhagen and Berlin. His most recent appearances include Max in *Der Freischütz* (role debut) in Madrid; Siegmund in Oslo, Berlin, at Covent Garden, and in the new *Ring* cycle at Bayreuth led by James Levine; *Parsifal* at Bayreuth and in Berlin, Paris, Amsterdam and Paris; as well as Florestan in *Fidelio* at Copenhagen's Royal Opera. Elming is also an active concert and recital artist and has made numerous appearances in Denmark, Great Britain, Germany, Switzerland and Finland. He has recorded the role of Siegmund with the Cleveland Orchestra under Christoph von Dohnányi and his 1992 Bayreuth performance of this role has recently been released on CDs and on video.

ARTIST PROFILES



One of the world's leading interpreters of the roles of Wotan and the Wanderer in the *Ring* cycle, **JAMES MORRIS** portrays Wotan in the first three performances of *Die Walküre*. Master of a remarkable repertoire that spans the opera stage, concert and recital halls, the American bass made his 1981 San Francisco Opera debut as Assur in *Semiramide*. He has since appeared here as Wotan in the 1985 *Ring* Festival (singing the *Rheingold* Wotan for the first time), Scarpia in *Tosca* (another career first) and Claggart in *Billy Budd* (1985), the four villains in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* (1987), the *Ring* cycle again in 1990, the title role of *Boris Godunov* in 1992 (singing the part in Russian for the first time), Procida in *I Vespri Siciliani* in 1993, and the title role of *Macbeth* last fall. Born and educated in Baltimore, Morris became the youngest male singer on the Metropolitan Opera roster at the age of 23 and at 27 was on the Met stage as Don Giovanni, a role he has sung in numerous seasons there and in other opera centers of the world. His Metropolitan Opera record consists of over 47 roles, sung since his debut there in 1971 (he currently celebrates his 25th season at the Met by portraying Iago in *Otello*). The artist is in constant demand internationally for his opera roles, which range from Mozart to Wagner to Britten, as well as for concert appearances and recitals. His extensive discography includes two complete *Ring* cycles, *Maria Stuarda*, *Le Roi de Lahore*, *I Vespri Siciliani*, *Così fan tutte*, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, *Aida*, *Parsifal*, *Salome*, Berlioz's *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Beggar's Opera*, Haydn's *The Creation*, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, the Requiems of Mozart and Fauré, as well as a recording of arias by Wagner and Verdi.



WILLARD WHITE, Wotan in the final four performances of *Die Walküre*, made his San Francisco Opera debut in 1980 as the Foreman in *Jenůfa* and the Speaker in *The Magic Flute*. Local audiences have also heard him as Osmin in Spring Opera Theater's 1975 production of *The Abduction from the Seraglio*. After studying at Juilliard, the Jamaican-born artist made his debut with New York City Opera in 1974, singing bass leads in *I Puritani*, *Medea* and *La Bohème*. He has since appeared in the opera houses of London (both the Royal Opera and English National Opera), Glyndebourne, Munich, Amsterdam, Geneva, Hamburg, Madrid and Paris, among others. His repertoire comprises the bass-baritone roles in operas by Monteverdi, Handel, Mozart, Rossini, Verdi, Puccini, Wagner, Debussy, Shostakovich, Prokofiev and Gershwin. A frequent concert artist both in Europe and the U.S., he has performed with the London Symphony Orchestra, London Philharmonic, Royal Philharmonic, Concertgebouw Orchestra, La Scala Orchestra of Milan, Berlin Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic and the Cleveland Orchestra. In addition to numerous recordings of operas, oratorios and recitals, White has recorded the role of Porgy in *Porgy and Bess* under Lorin Maazel, and portrayed the same character in the recently televised film of Gershwin's opera. In 1989, White took the unusual step of playing the title part of Shakespeare's *Othello* with the Royal Shakespeare Company, and his acclaimed performance was also filmed for television. The artist's operatic schedule in recent seasons has been highlighted by appearances as Porgy, Pizarro in *Fidelio*, and Timur in *Turandot* at Covent Garden; Leporello in *Don Giovanni* in Buenos Aires; Golaud in *Pelléas et Mélisande* and Méphistophélès in *La Damnation de Faust* at the Netherlands Opera; Moses in concert presentations of *Moses and Aaron* at the Edinburgh Festival; Claggart in *Billy Budd* in Geneva; and Prince Ivan Khovansky in *Khovanshchina* in London and Brussels.



Bass **VICTOR VON HALEM**, Landgraf in last fall's new production of *Tannhäuser*, returns to the Company to sing Hunding in *Die Walküre* and the Commendatore in *Don Giovanni*. Born in Berlin and raised in Italy and Portugal, he began his career in 1966 when Herbert von Karajan engaged him for the Deutsche Oper in Berlin, chose him for many recordings, and invited him to perform at the Salzburg Festival numerous times. He has since appeared in concert and opera throughout the world with other prominent conductors (Sinopoli, Mehta, Abbado, Ozawa, Maazel, Chung), and at important musical festivals (Salzburg, Edinburgh, Orange, Tanglewood, Athens, Barcelona). The artist's repertoire includes more than 90 roles (from Sarastro to Philip II to Rocco to Gurnemanz, Hagen and many others), some of which are featured on a long list of recordings, the most recent of which are La Roche in *Capriccio* and Brander in *La Damnation de Faust*. He received a Grammy Award for his recording of *Parsifal* and in 1992 received the Pegasus Award for his first Hans Sachs in *Die Meistersinger* at Italy's Spoleto Festival. Recent engagements include Daland in *Der Fliegende Holländer* in Montreal, the Grand Inquisitor in Catania's *Don Carlo*, Seneca in *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* in Marseilles, *Salome* in Florence, Pogner in *Die Meistersinger* in Frankfurt, an acclaimed performance in the title part of *Der Fliegende Holländer* (role debut) in Dallas, his debut at Milan's La Scala as Hunding in their season-opening *Die Walküre*, and the Commander in Strauss's *Der Friedenstag* at the Vienna Festival. Among his future plans are the Doctor in *Wozzeck* in Catania, a debut with Opera Colorado as Wagner's Dutchman, Ramfis in *Aida* at the Arena di Verona, Arkel in *Pelléas et Mélisande* at the Paris Opera, and a recording of *Arabella* (Count Waldner) conducted by Giuseppe Sinopoli.



Music Director of San Francisco Opera since 1992, **DONALD RUNNICLES** is highly regarded as one of the finest conductors active today, with a distinguished series of international triumphs to his credit. Born in Edinburgh, the Scottish artist began his career in Germany, where he rose from répétiteur in Mannheim in 1980 to General Music Director of Städtische Bühnen in Freiburg in 1989. During this period, he assisted at the Bayreuth Wagner Festival and began conducting in guest appearances throughout Europe. His credits include highly praised engagements with the Vienna State Opera, where he has led productions of Wagner's *Ring*, *Manon Lescaut* and *Tosca*, Zurich Opera, Royal Opera at Copenhagen, Netherlands Opera and the Vienna Volksoper. In Great Britain, his opera debut took place at the Glyndebourne Festival in 1991 (*Don Giovanni*), while in 1992 he made his native city debut with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra at the prestigious Edinburgh Festival, where he returned to lead Mahler's Eighth Symphony at the opening concert last summer. His North American debut was in 1988, when he led the Metropolitan Opera's *Lulu* on five hours' notice, while his San Francisco Opera debut occurred in 1990 with highly acclaimed performances of two cycles of Wagner's *Ring*. Additional SFO credits include *Guillaume Tell*, *Boris Godunov*, *Fidelio*, *Don Carlo*, *Salome*, televised productions of *Capriccio* and *Turandot*, *Die Meistersinger*, *La Clemenza di Tito*, *Macbeth*, *Tannhäuser*, the world premiere of Conrad Susa/Philip Littell's *The Dangerous Liaisons* (telecast nationally on "Great Performances"), the North American premiere of Tippet's *King Priam*, and this summer's concert presentation of Gluck's *Orphée et Eurydice*. (A studio recording of Gluck's opera was made earlier this year, with Runnicles conducting the SFO Orchestra and Chorus, and is scheduled for release during the fall of 1996.) Highlights elsewhere include the opening performance of the 1993 Bayreuth Festival (a new production of *Tannhäuser*, the opera he conducted once again this summer for the

Festival's first performance), a debut with the Munich National Opera (*Don Giovanni*), Prokofiev's *The Fiery Angel* in Vienna, and symphonic debuts with the San Francisco Symphony (highly successful performances earlier this year of Britten's *War Requiem*), London Symphony, Orchestre de Paris, Israel Philharmonic, Rotterdam Philharmonic, Seattle Symphony, Pittsburgh Symphony and Chicago Symphony. This summer, he received an Honorary Doctorate of Music from the University of Edinburgh. The maestro's first commercial recording, Humperdinck's *Hänsel und Gretel*, was recently released to critical acclaim. Runnicles is on the podium for the Company this season to conduct *Madama Butterfly*, *Die Walküre*, and a new staging of *Don Giovanni*.



NIKOLAUS LEHNHOFF conceived and directed the original production of Wagner's *Ring of the Nibelung* which was presented at San Francisco Opera in the summer of 1985. His most recent Company assignment was in 1987, when he recreated his acclaimed production of *Salome*, first seen here during the 1982 season. He began his career as an assistant director at the Deutsche Oper in Berlin and at the Bayreuth Festival under Wieland Wagner. This led to a contract at the Metropolitan Opera where he served as assistant director from 1966-1971. He made his directorial debut

at the Paris Opera with the 1972 production of *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. Lehnhoff first came to San Francisco Opera to direct *Salome* in 1974 and returned here two years later to stage *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, a work he recreated again in 1980. Highlights of his distinguished career include a new staging of the complete *Ring* cycle in Munich, *Katya Kabanova* and *Jenůfa* at the Glyndebourne Festival, a new staging of *Salome* at the Metropolitan Opera, *Dido and Aeneas* for the Graz Festival, and a new production of *Der Fliegende Holländer* at Santa Fe Opera. The German director's most recent successes include new stagings of *Don Giovanni* and *Così fan tutte* at the Canadian Opera Company, new productions of *Elektra* and *Salome* in Leipzig, Henze's *Der Prinz von Homburg* in Munich and Zurich, in addition to *The Makropulos Case* at this year's Glyndebourne Festival.



Laurie Feldman, the director of *Die Walküre* and the Company's first presentation of *Rusalka*, made her San Francisco Opera directorial debut in 1990 with *Das Rheingold* and *Götterdämmerung*, and has since staged our productions of *Don Giovanni* (1991), the student matinee performances of *La Fille du Régiment* (1993), *Falstaff* for the 1993 Merola Opera Program, and last fall's premiere presentation of Rossini's *Otello*. She has also staged San Francisco Opera productions of *Fidelio* for the Washington Opera, *The Tales of Hoffmann* and *Eugene Onegin* for the Canadian Opera

Company, *Der Fliegende Holländer* for Calgary Opera, and *La Traviata* for Santa Fe Opera. Additional credits include engagements with the Metropolitan Opera, Dallas Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Los Angeles Music Center Opera, as well as the opera companies of Munich, Cologne and Reykjavik. She will stage *Un Ballo in Maschera* for Florida Grand Opera next season.



JOHN CONKLIN designed the sets for *La Traviata* as well as the sets and costumes for *Die Walküre*. Spring Opera Theater audiences first saw his work in productions of *Orfeo* (1972), *Death in Venice* (1975 and '79), and *Julius Caesar*. His first Company assignment was the 1977 *Un Ballo in Maschera*, a production which was also mounted in 1982, 1985 and 1990. Additional SFO credits have been *Don Pasquale* (1980, '84), *La Traviata* (1987, 1991), *Idomeneo* (1989), and *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* (1992). He also created designs for the four operas of Wagner's *Ring of the Nibelung*, which

had been unveiled in 1983 (*Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*), 1984 (*Siegfried*), and 1985 (*Götterdämmerung*). In addition, he served as production consultant for the Company's 1990 *Ring* presentation. Elsewhere in the U.S., his designs have been seen at the Metropolitan Opera, New York City Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Dallas Opera, Seattle Opera, Opera Theatre of St. Louis and Santa Fe Opera, among others. On the other side of the Atlantic, Conklin has been responsible for production designs for the Holland Festival, Scottish Opera, and the Munich Opera. Last season, his busy schedule included the Met's first presentation of *I Lombardi*, the Washington Opera's premiere of Argento's *The Dream of Valentino*, San Diego Opera's premiere of Daniel Catan's *Rappaccini's Daughter*, the Chicago Lyric's new production of *Die Walküre*, as well as *Tosca* for Seattle Opera and the English National Opera. Conklin's designs have also been seen in numerous ballet and legitimate theater productions.



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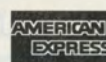
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Sponsored by the San Francisco Opera Guild, house and backstage tours of the War Memorial Opera House will be conducted every half hour from 10 a.m. to 12 noon on weekdays and on Saturday; and every 15 minutes from 10 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Sundays on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

Thursday, October 5
 Sunday, October 8
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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.

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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.

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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.

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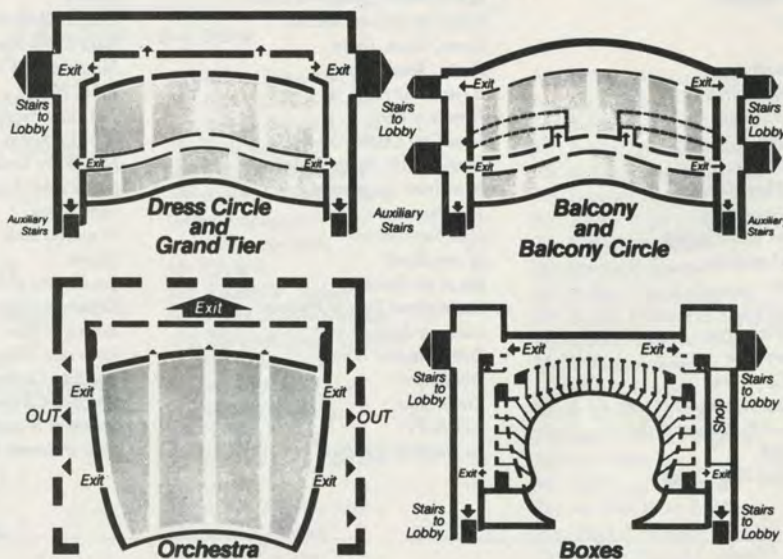
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For the safety and comfort of our audience, all large parcels, backpacks, luggage, etc., must be checked at Opera House cloak-rooms.

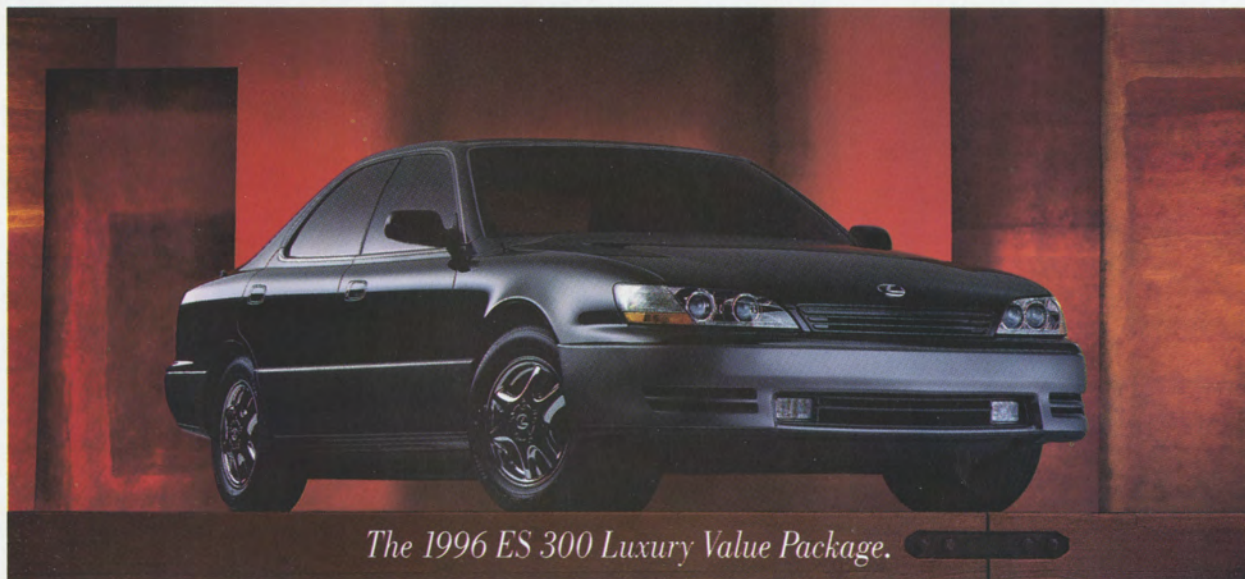
Opera glasses are available in the lobby. No cameras, tape recorders or cellular phones are permitted in the Opera House. Children of any age attending a performance must have a ticket. Management reserves the right to remove any patron creating a disturbance.

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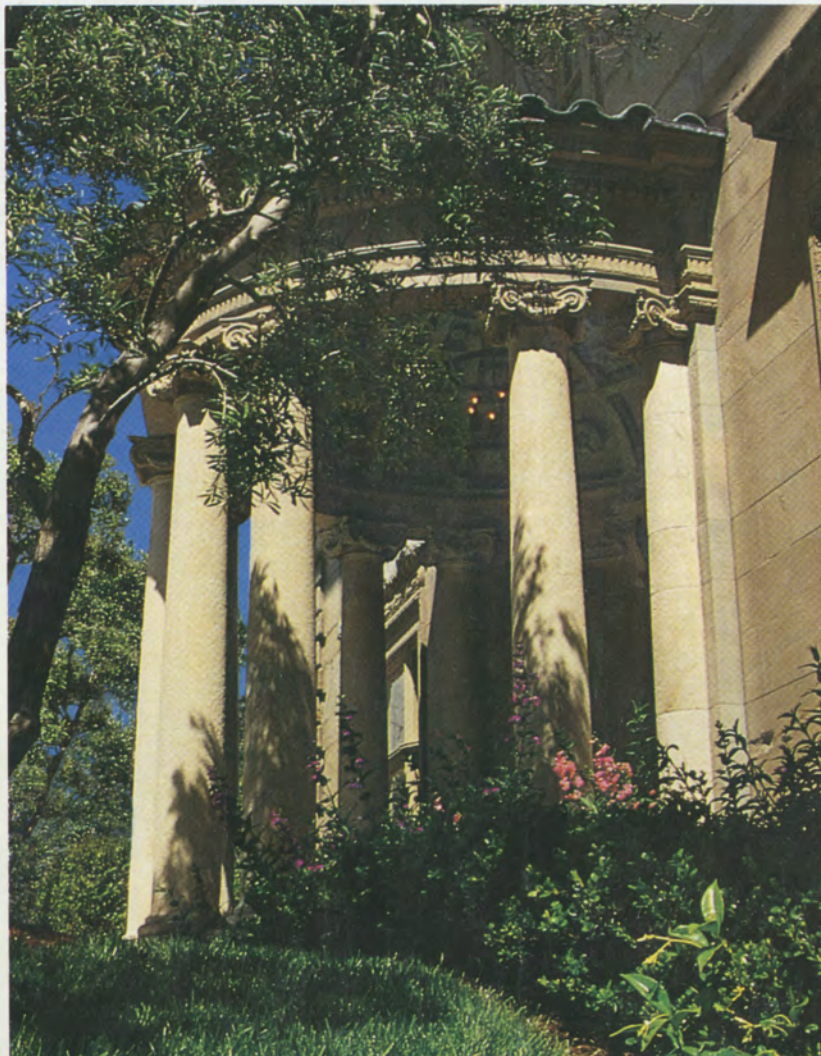
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Die Walküre will be sung by Catherine Keen.

The previously scheduled Marjana Lipovšek

has had to cancel due to a family emergency.

In addition to assuming the role of Fricka,

Miss Keen continues to perform

the part of Waltraute.

November 15, 21, 25, 29

