

Les Contes d'Hoffmann
(The Tales of Hoffmann)

1996-1997

Sunday, November 17, 1996 2:00 PM
Wednesday, November 20, 1996 7:30 PM
Saturday, November 23, 1996 8:00 PM
Tuesday, November 26, 1996 8:00 PM
Friday, November 29, 1996 8:00 PM
Sunday, December 1, 1996 2:00 PM
Tuesday, December 3, 1996 7:30 PM

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SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

1996-97 SEASON

LES CONTES D'HOFFMANN



Stagebill

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FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD



ON BEHALF OF THE SAN FRANCISCO OPERA ASSOCIATION, we are delighted to welcome you to our 1996/97 Season at the Bill Graham Civic Auditorium and the Orpheum Theatre. This is a season that started with a bang seven years ago, when the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake rattled the War Memorial Opera House and the forecast for San Francisco Opera changed dramatically. The extensive Opera House renovation, which includes seismic and safety upgrades, improvements for your comfort in the audience as well as to backstage areas, is nearly a year under way—on time and on budget. Despite the May 2 fire in the Opera House, we are optimistic that the work will be completed, as scheduled, in June of 1997. More than anything, that blaze has served as a reminder of just how fragile and special the Opera House is to this community and the world.

In order to fulfill our commitment to the Opera House renovation and stay in the black operationally during this period, we launched a special three-year campaign in 1995 to raise \$20 million above and beyond our normal fundraising goals. The Company's financial position continues to be strong, with ticket sales and donations at record highs. We have just finished our third year operating in the black and we are also well along, but not finished, with our extra fund-raising programs. Our gratitude goes out to all patrons who have responded to the extra needs of this period by contributing to our three-year campaign and the Committee to Restore the Opera House. Currently, more than 15,000 households support San Francisco Opera. With your help, the restored Opera House will be ready in time for the 1997 Fall Season—and San Francisco Opera will sail into its 75th season maintaining a solid fiscal profile.

For our single season out of the Opera House, General Director Lotfi Mansouri and his fine team have worked diligently to provide you with an exceptional season of great opera, maintaining the high standards that you expect from San Francisco Opera. We have reconfigured the theaters and planned for new productions that will utilize these unique spaces to their fullest extent. Innovation has been the cornerstone of this Company throughout its history, and this year you will see it more visibly than at any other time. As we look to the future of San Francisco Opera, that spirit of innovation will continue to grow.

We extend a special thank you to the San Francisco Opera Guild for its support of the Opera, its outstanding success in taking opera out to the schools, and for coordinating hundreds of volunteers and the thousands of hours they contribute every year. We also thank the BRAVO! CLUB for its efforts in developing a younger audience for opera.

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 goes to San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown 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



WELCOME TO SAN FRANCISCO OPERA'S 1996/97 Season—the most adventurous and varied in our Company's rich 74-year history. During our one season in the Bill Graham Civic Auditorium and the Orpheum Theatre, we will present ten operas over a six-month period that runs from September through February—nearly three months longer than our traditional fall season. This is an exciting time filled with new artistic opportunities, a distinguished roster of great international singers, designers, directors and conductors, eight new productions, the Company premieres of *Prince Igor* and *Hamlet*, and the West Coast premiere of our commissioned work, *Harvey Milk*. Hundreds of people have planned and worked for countless hours over several years to create this special season—and we are delighted that you have joined us.

Music Director Donald Runnicles will be here to conduct four productions this season, leading our wonderful San Francisco Opera Orchestra and Chorus, both acclaimed as being among the world's finest opera ensembles.

During the extensive Opera House renovation, we wanted to offer you an exciting new opera experience. We couldn't begin to recreate the magnificent Opera House, so we went in an entirely new direction and created a bold festival environment for the Civic Auditorium, complete with thrust stage and audience seating in the round. Because it is an epic space, we chose six grand operas well suited to arena stagings which will fill the space with the glorious music and drama opera audiences adore. The Orpheum Theatre features three smaller-scale operas perfectly suited to a more intimate space. The overwhelming success of our three-week run of *La Bohème* at the Orpheum this past summer not only proved that it is a fine theater for opera, but also introduced thousands of new audience members to opera. We are hopeful that this will continue during this season, especially with the increased seating capacity at the Civic (1,001 more than at the Opera House) and a broad range of ticket prices.

The great Plácido Domingo will return to us this year for a special concert at the Civic on October 20. And in December, we will have the rare opportunity of performing during the holidays for the first time in our history: a glittering production of the classic Viennese operetta *Die Fledermaus*, sung in English for five performances, December 26-29. We have also planned a spectacular New Year's Eve party at the Civic: "Prince Orlofsky's Masked Ball," featuring Act 2 of *Die Fledermaus*, special cameo performances by singers and dancers, and a masquerade ball with dinner, dancing and a champagne toast to the new year.

Enjoy the season, and stay with us as we look forward to our 75th season and a sparkling return to the War Memorial Opera House.

LOTFI MANSOURI
GENERAL DIRECTOR

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SAN FRANCISCO OPERA MAGAZINE

Les Contes d'Hoffmann

1996-97 Season
Vol. 74, No. 8

FEATURES

10 The Tales of Offenbach by John Ardoin

Although Jacques Offenbach and E.T.A. Hoffmann lived many years apart, their talents combined in the creation of one of the staples of the operatic repertory.

30 "Bel Canto"—More Than Beautiful Singing

How opera lovers help to plan the future of San Francisco Opera.

DEPARTMENTS

- 4 Administration
- 8 Repertoire, 1996-97 Season
- 14 San Francisco Opera Association
- 14 Series A Boxholders
- 16 Artist Roster
- 18 San Francisco Opera Orchestra
- 21 Cast
- 22 Synopsis
- 28 1996-97 Opera Previews
- 43 Artist Profiles
- 38 Medallion Society
- 53 Supporting San Francisco Opera
- 60 Bel Canto Society
- 62 Corporate Council
- 66 San Francisco Opera Center Supporters
- 68 Services/Exit Maps

COVER

Court, Joseph Désiré (1797-1865), French
Portrait of Composer Victor Rifaut (1822)

Oil on canvas
Rouen, Musée des Beaux-Arts
Photo Lauros-Giraudon

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*San Francisco Opera debut

(continued on page 6)

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REPERTOIRE • 1996-97 SEASON

Opening Night

San Francisco Opera premiere

PRINCE IGOR

Borodin

Flanigan*, Zarembo, Cook;
Leiferkus, Baker, Wells,
Burchuladze*, Ognovenko,
Pluzhnikov/Rideout, Petersen

Anissimov;
Zambello/Brown/Poulin/Munn
Civic Auditorium
Sept. 6, 10, 13, 15, 18, 21, 25

San Francisco Opera premiere

HAMLET

Thomas

Swenson, Forst; Hampson, Lloyd,
Boutet/Hendrick, Langan, Relyea†,
Autry†, Skelton*†, Knežević

Abel*;
Graham/Howland/Perdziola/ Kaczorowski*
Orpheum Theatre
Sept. 12, 14, 17, 19, 22, 24, 27, 29
Production made possible by a generous grant from the
Carol Franc Buck Foundation

New production

LOHENGRIN

Wagner

Mattila, Connell; Heppner/Sunnegårdh**
(10/6,12), Fox, Rootering, Okerlund†,
Boutet, Skelton†, Autry†, Relyea†

Runnicles;
Feldman/Brown/P.J.Hall/Munn
Civic Auditorium
Sept. 28; Oct. 1, 4, 6, 9, 12

IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA

Rossini

Larmore, Cook; Hovorostovsky*, Ford,
Miles, Del Carlo, Autry†

Campanella;
Copley/Siercke/Walker/Arhelger
Orpheum Theatre
Oct. 10, 13, 18, 20, 23, 26, 28

Shigematsu, Cook; Patriarco,
Saccà**, Patton, Condry, Knežević

Summers;
Copley/Siercke/Walker/Arhelger
Orpheum Theatre
Oct. 11, 19, 24, 26 (m)

SPECIAL EVENT

PLÁCIDO DOMINGO IN CONCERT

With Adler Fellows of the San Francisco
Opera Center and the San Francisco
Opera Orchestra
Civic Auditorium
Oct. 20

New production

CARMEN

Bizet

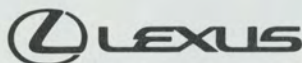
Borodina, Mills, Dillard, Foland†;
Cura*, Fink*, Skinner, Okerlund†,
Autry†, Skelton†
Runnicles;
Mansouri/Yeargan/Bosquet/Morgan/Whitfield
Civic Auditorium
Oct. 22, 25, 27, 30; Nov. 2, 5, 8

Maultsby*, Racette, Dillard,
Foland†; Larin, Quilico, Skinner,
Okerlund†, Autry†, Skelton†

Joël**;
Mansouri/Yeargan/Bosquet/Morgan/Whitfield
Civic Auditorium
Feb. 12, 15, 19, 22

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HARVEY MILK **Wallace/Korie**

Gondek*, Bishop, Grove*,
Buchanan†, Foland†, Kriha
Dyet†; Orth, Williams*, Wong*,
Very*, Maddalena, Saks*, Autry†,
Chioldi, Okerlund†, Skelton†,
Bryant*, Yu*

Runnicles;
C. Alden/Steinberg/Berry*/Carson*
Orpheum Theatre
Nov. 9, 13, 16, 19, 21, 24, 27, 30

New production

LES CONTES D'HOFFMANN Offenbach

Dahl, Racette, Keen, Donose**
Bishop; Hadley, Ramey, Sénéchal,
Frank, Skinner, Autry†, Skelton†,
Knežević, Relyea†

Mercurio;
C. Alden/Howland/Björnson*/Munn
Civic Auditorium
Nov. 17, 20, 23, 26, 29; Dec. 1, 3

DIE FLEDERMAUS

Strauss, J. Jr.

Lappalainen*/Foland†, Dahl/Kriha
Dye†; Asawa, Baerg/Okerlund†,
Portilla/Scibelli*, Chioldi/Patriarco,
Strummer, Molomot*

Sander*;
Mansouri/Skalicki/Bosquet/Munn
Civic Auditorium
Dec. 26, 27, 28 (m & e), 29

PRINCE ORLOFSKY'S MASQUERADE BALL

Civic Auditorium
Dec. 31

New production

SALOME

Strauss, R.

Huffstodt*, Forst, Cao†; Cochran,
Weikl, Streit, Patton, Skelton†,
MacMaster*, Molomot, Okerlund†,
Relyea†, Sumegi, Knežević

Weikert*;
Mansouri/Skalicki/Walek/Morgan/Munn
Civic Auditorium
Jan. 18, 21, 23, 26, 29; Feb. 1

New production

AIDA

Verdi

Crider*, Terentiev, Buchanan†;
Armiliato, Noble/C. Robertson (2/20),
D'Artegna*, Patton/Sumegi (2/20, 23),
Skelton†

Runnicles;
Williams/Skalicki/Casey/Byrd*/Munn
Civic Auditorium
Feb. 8, 11, 14, 18, 20, 23

Lister, Grunewald*, Buchanan†;
Fraccaro*, C. Robertson* (2/13)/Noble,
D'Artegna,
Sumegi, Skelton†

Runnicles;
Williams/Skalicki/Casey/Byrd/Munn
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THE TALES O



By JOHN ARDOIN

Poor Offenbach. He wanted so badly to be really respectable.

It was not enough that he was a man Rossini christened "The Mozart of the Champs-Élysées," a man who was the toast of Europe and whose tunes were whistled in the streets, and a man whose wit and style were models for the operettas of Gilbert and Sullivan and Johann Strauss, Jr.

No, Offenbach wanted to be taken more seriously as a composer, and the only way to accomplish that was to write a grand opera. He was like a stand-up comedian who dreamed of playing *King Lear*.

You must remember that Paris, Offenbach's adopted home town, had taken over from Vienna as the music capital of Europe, and the quickest way to conquer Paris was

in its opera houses as Meyerbeer (like Offenbach, another displaced German) had done. Wagner

knew this, too, and went hat in hand to the administration of the Paris Opéra. It didn't do him much good, and he spent the remainder of his life cursing the French.

Offenbach had already tried his hand at more extended stage works prior to beginning his masterpiece *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, or *The Tales of Hoffmann*; in fact, five of these had had their premieres at the Opéra-Comique. He had even attempted a sort of grander opera for Vienna, which was titled *Die Rheinnixen* (from it, Offenbach would borrow the famous melody that became the Barcarolle in *The Tales of Hoffmann*). Finally, it was a slump in Offenbach's fortunes and a decline in his popularity that made him

decide to undertake a serious operatic work for Paris.

For a number of years, Offenbach had been attracted to a stage adaptation by Jules Barbier and Michel Carré (librettists for Gounod's *Faust* and *Roméo et Juliette*) of stories by the German author E.T.A. Hoffmann. Offenbach was certain that this play was the answer to his problems. A libretto had already been fashioned by Barbier, but for another composer, who graciously agreed to step aside when he learned Offenbach was interested in the story.

On the surface, Barbier's libretto appears to be a cleverly told story of four loves with the figure of Hoffmann as the binding, central character. Hoffmann, a dreamer and a loser, pursues the mechanical doll Olympia in Paris, the doomed Antonia in Munich, the courtesan Giulietta in Venice, and the opera singer Stella in Nuremberg, and we are witness to his gradual spiritual and physical decay and the losses he suffers at the hands of a quartet of adversaries—Coppélius in Paris, Dr. Miracle in Munich, Dapertutto in Venice, and councilor Lindorf in Nuremberg.

In reality, however, the libretto of *Hoffmann* is a good deal more. It is a symbolic work in which the women Hoffmann pursues are the varying sides of love itself (from the mindless to the ideal to the carnal), just as the opera's villains form four aspects of evil out to thwart Hoffmann's genius. Put in simplest terms, the opera is basically a triangle involving Hoffmann, Stella and Lindorf, with the latter two appearing in different guises.

To underscore this idea, Offenbach had planned from the outset that his four heroines and his four villains would be sung by only two artists, and this is how the opera was presented at its premiere. Though use of four different artists for the opera's heroines (and sometimes even four different villains) is a 20th-century practice, Offenbach's original concept has had its champions in our times. Beverly Sills and Joan Sutherland both appeared as the quartet of heroines, often seconded by artists such as Norman Treigle and Gabriel Bacquier as the villains. Incidentally, when Maria Callas was asked to sing all four heroines in *Hoffmann*, she answered, none too coyly, "Will you pay me four fees?"

John Ardoin is music critic of the Dallas Morning News and author of *The Callas Legacy* and *The Furtwängler Record*. He is currently at work on the first book in English devoted to Russia's Maryinsky Theater in St. Petersburg.

FOFFENBACH

An important dramatic element in the plot, however, was lost from the outset: it concerned the role of Nicklausse. For this crucial character (a trouser part sung by a mezzo-soprano) to fulfill itself, Nicklausse must be seen not just as a friend or sidekick of Hoffmann's but as his muse, who protects him if not always from himself, at least from those who wish him harm. But the part was so truncated at the premiere that all sense of Nicklausse's significance went by the boards for a very long time.

At this point, it is probably well to pause for a moment to ask and answer the question, "Who was E.T.A. Hoffmann?" First of all, he was a real eighteenth-century figure who wrote stories of fantasy, madness and the supernatural, a sort of Germanic Edgar Allan Poe, if you will. He never captured the imagination of Americans, for much of the spirit and style of his writing is lost in translation. He remains popular to this day, however, in German-speaking countries.

The historic Hoffmann (for the record, his initials stand for Ernst Theodor Amadeus, the latter name changed from the original Wilhelm in honor of Mozart) was a good deal more than just an author of seven vol-

umes of stories plus his memoirs. Born in 1776, he crowded into his 48 years of life an amazing number of careers. He was a lawyer, a legislator, an illustrator, a music critic, an opera administrator and a composer.

The wonder of Hoffmann seems to be not that he did so many things, but that he did so many things so well. As a composer of eleven operas, he earned the praise of Carl Maria von Weber (composer of *Der Freischütz*), his music criticism championed and enlarged the audience for the music of Gluck, Mozart and Beethoven, and his creative presence influenced Schumann to compose what many think is his masterpiece for the piano—*Kreisleriana*. As an impresario, Hoffmann headed companies in Hamburg and Leipzig, while as a jurist, he became the presiding judge of Berlin's Supreme Court.

His life, however, was not just a series of triumphs. Like Poe, he

had a morbid fascination with horror and death, and was an alcoholic. It has been suggested that his visions and fantasies were as much liquid as they were mental. Hoffmann's alcoholism became an important factor in Offenbach's opera, for the poet drinks himself into a stupor during the course of retelling his tales, and thereby loses Stella, his latest and dearest love.

Like Hoffmann, Offenbach was German, born in Cologne in 1819, the seventh child of ten born to a poor Jewish musician and cantor. He soon became his father's star pupil and, at a great financial sacrifice, his family sent him and his brother to Paris for further study. There, Jakob Eberst became Jacques Offenbach. After study at the Paris Conservatoire, he earned his living as a cellist in various orchestras, including that of the Opéra-Comique, and after a while established himself as a cello virtuoso, one in constant demand for appearances in leading Paris salons.

After a stint as music director of the Théâtre Français, Offenbach opened his own theater in 1855 to

perform the frothy one-act musical comedies he had begun writing a few years earlier, as well as works by Mozart, Rossini, and such friends as Adolphe Adam and Léo Delibes. This theater, Bouffes Parisiens, was soon at the center of the Paris nightlife, for this was the time of the first great world exhibition held in the capital. By day, crowds flocked to the Palace of Industry and other exhibition sites; by night, they packed the Bouffes Parisiens. Over the years, Offenbach introduced in dizzying succession a string of comic delights that included the still riotous *Orphée aux enfers* (*Orpheus in the Underworld*), *La Grande Duchesse de Gérolstein* and *La Périhole*, to quickly skim the cream off the top of his output of over 100 stage works.

So why call him "poor Offenbach"? It is not just because after years of fame and fortune he suddenly found himself on the outside looking in. By 1870, the superficial, carefree days of Napoleon III had evaporated and the Republic that followed was a more serious, less fun-loving era. Offenbach attempted to survive by opening a new theater, but it went bankrupt. To offset his losses, he undertook a tour of the United States, which brought some financial relief.

No, he is "poor" in our eyes because of his need to be more than he was and because



Opposite page: Jacques Offenbach, 1819–1880, in a contemporary photo. Above: Self-portrait of E.T.A. Hoffmann, 1776–1822. Left: Plácido Domingo in the title role of San Francisco Opera's *Contes d'Hoffmann* in 1987.



SOHL



STROHMEYER

he lived to finish *Hoffmann* but did not live to see its premiere or its becoming a success. It was as if he instinctively knew he wouldn't. In a letter to the director of the Comique, Offenbach urged, "Make haste and produce my opera. I have not much time left, and my only wish is to see the first night." That note was penned in July of 1880. On October 4 of the same year, he died, leaving behind only a piano score of *Hoffmann* and some forty pages of orchestration. Indeed, it is claimed that he passed away with the score of his opera in his hands. In his book *Jacques Offenbach and the Paris of His Time*, author Siegfried Kracauer makes this touching observation of the composer's final months:

He was a lonely old man, whose only ambition was to complete the work on which his heart was set . . . He was deeply affected by the story of Antonia who, if she sang, was bound to die. He sadly told himself that he had always succumbed to the temptation to sing in a fashion different from that in which he should have sung; and by dint of incessant brooding about his supposed life-long aberration, he arrived at the conclusion that there was a secret connection between his work on *The Tales of Hoffmann* and the approach of death: that he, like Antonia, would die because in his opera he would really sing.

With Offenbach's death, open season was virtually declared on the score of *Hoffmann*. All manner of distortions and changes were inflicted upon it even before its premiere, and these alterations would prevail and be compounded for nearly a century. The attitude seems to have been one of "It's

only music by Offenbach; we can do as we please with it."

The problems began when Offenbach's family asked Ernest Guiraud (the composer of the recitatives for Bizet's *Carmen*) to complete *Hoffmann* (some music was still needed for the Venice scene and the epilogue and most of the score needed to be orchestrated). Guiraud, however, did much more. On his own, or at the urging of the

the epilogue at the time of the premiere. It is impossible to be certain of its source, for Offenbach's original manuscript was destroyed in a fire in 1887.

Also, using music from the Offenbach operetta *Le voyage dans la lune*, a new baritone aria was created for Dapertutto—the brilliant "Scintille, diamant," ironically (given its origins) now one of the most popular excerpts from *Hoffmann*. Dapertutto's original aria was transferred to the Olympia scene and reassigned to Coppélius. All of these changes were then perpetuated in the 1907 Choudens edition of the score, which became the gospel.

It was only after World War II, and in a period consumed with questions of authenticity, that questions finally began to be seriously asked as to what exactly Offenbach had intended in *Hoffmann*. A new critical edition of the score by Fritz Oeser was published in 1978 which righted a number of wrongs, and as late as the 1980s new performance material relating to *Hoffmann* was being uncovered.

Suddenly, as is the case with Bizet's *Carmen*, *Hoffmann* presented opera companies with an embarrassment of riches as well as a number of headaches. Each company and each conductor were forced to come up with a performance solution of their own. Some opted for more rediscovered music than others, some were loath to part with "Scintille, diamant" or the familiar and undeniably effective septet of the Venice finale, while others let go of these familiar set pieces but denied the Venice scene its proper place. And so it goes.

This fall, San Francisco Opera is offering the 1907 Choudens version with three interpolations from the Oeser edition that contain some of the rediscovered music. Most of the changes have been made by conductor Steven Mercurio and director Christopher Alden to establish the character of Nicklausse as Hoffmann's muse. The first addition creates a slightly different and longer version of the prologue, the second adds an aria for Nicklausse during the Antonia scene, and the third is an expanded version of the epilogue. Mercurio and Alden are also restoring the Venice scene to its rightful place after the Antonia scene. There

(continued on page 28)



POWERS

Above left: *The Tales of Hoffmann* at the San Francisco Opera in 1945: Raoul Jobin (Hoffmann), Ezio Pinza (Dr. Miracle), and Hertha Glaz (Nicklausse). Above: In 1987, Hoffmann (Plácido Domingo) is about to be equipped with Dr. Miracle's (James Morris) eyeglasses.

Comique, he also decided that the spoken dialogue in the score should be sung.

This decision, of course, lengthened the opera, so it then became necessary to make cuts, and opera's second act, the scene in Venice (which Offenbach had originally planned as Act 3) was thrown out as well as a part of the epilogue. But Guiraud was smart enough to realize that the Barcarolle from the Venice act was too lovely a moment to be lost, so it was moved to the Antonia act and the setting for that scene was changed from Munich to Venice (are you still with me?).

It was in this garbled version that *Hoffmann* finally had its premiere at the Comique in February of 1881 and, as far as the public was concerned, very successfully. It ran for a hundred performances in its first season alone. The Comique's version was the one that would largely prevail until 1904, when *Hoffmann* underwent another overhauling for a production in Monte Carlo. There, the Giulietta scene was reinstated, but with a septet added as its finale that might (according to conductor Richard Bonyngue, who has long struggled over the issues involved in arriving at an authentic *Hoffmann*) have been the quartet cut from



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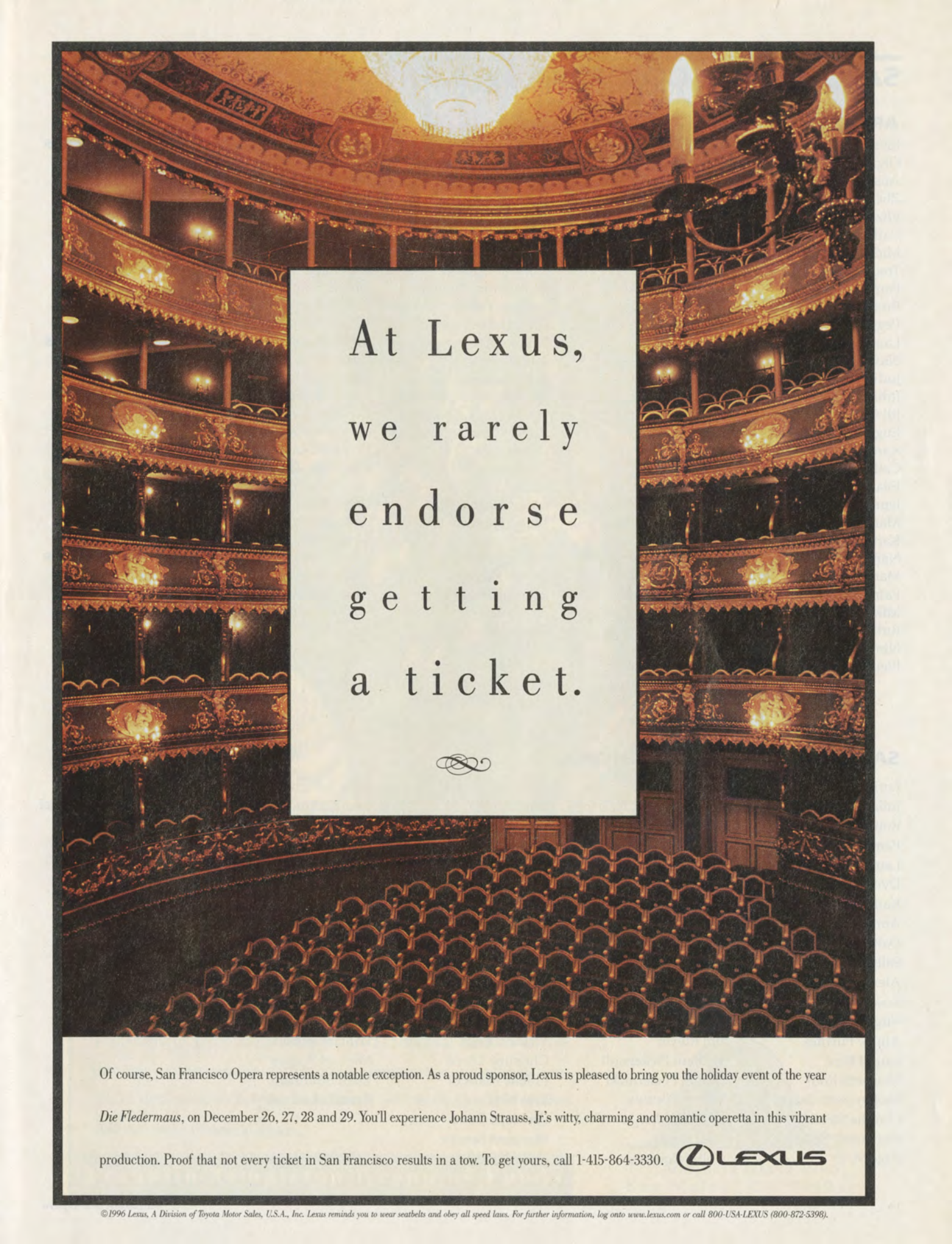
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** U.S. opera debut

* San Francisco Opera debut

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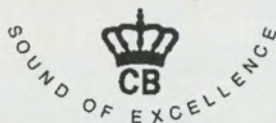
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September 1996-review of the VTL MB-750

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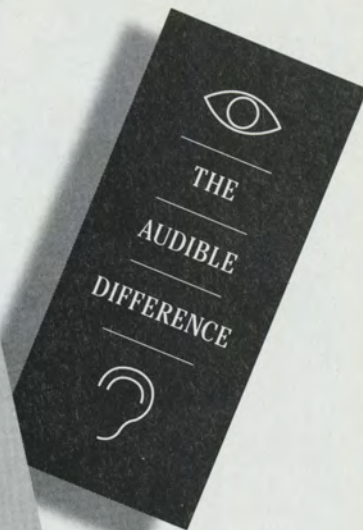
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Libretto by JULES BARBIER and MICHEL CARRÉ, based on stories by E.T.A. Hoffmann

Revision, recitatives and part of orchestration by Ernest Guiraud

(This production uses, in part, Fritz Oeser's critical edition. Used by arrangement with Baerenreiter Music Corporation for Alkor-Edition, publisher and copyright owner.)

Les Contes d'Hoffmann

(in French)

Conductor

Steven Mercurio

Production

Christopher Alden

Set Designer

Gerard Howland

Costume Designer

Maria Bjørnson*

Additional costumes designed by

Zack Brown

Lighting Designer

Thomas J. Munn

Sound Designer

Roger Gans

Chorus Director

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First San Francisco Opera

performance:

October 24, 1944

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 17 AT 2:00

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 20 AT 7:30

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 23 AT 8:00

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 26 AT 8:00

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 29 AT 8:00

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1 AT 2:00

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 3 AT 7:30

CAST

(in order of appearance)

<i>Hoffmann</i>	Jerry Hadley
<i>The Muse</i>	Ruxandra Donose**
<i>Stella</i>	Victoria Morgan
<i>Lindorf</i>	Samuel Ramey
<i>Andrès</i>	Michel Sénéchal
<i>Luther</i>	Bojan Knežević
<i>Nathanaël</i>	Stuart Skelton†
<i>Hermann</i>	John Autry†
<i>Nicklausse</i>	Ruxandra Donose
<i>Spalanzani</i>	Joseph Frank
<i>Cochénille</i>	Michel Sénéchal
<i>Coppélius</i>	Samuel Ramey
<i>Olympia</i>	Tracy Dahl
<i>Antonia</i>	Patricia Racette
<i>Crespel</i>	Philip Skinner
<i>Frantz</i>	Michel Sénéchal
<i>Dr. Miracle</i>	Samuel Ramey
<i>Voice of Antonia's mother</i>	Elizabeth Bishop
<i>Giulietta</i>	Catherine Keen
<i>Schlemil</i>	John Relyea†
<i>Dapertutto</i>	Samuel Ramey
<i>Pitichinaccio</i>	Michel Sénéchal

Students, tavern waiters, guests of Spalanzani, gamblers, valets, spirits of beer and wine

**U.S. opera debut *San Francisco Opera debut †1996 Adler Fellow

The opening performance of *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* is dedicated
to the memory of Prentis Cobb Hale.

TIME AND PLACE: Early 19th century; Nuremberg, Munich and Venice

PROLOGUE Luther's tavern in Nuremberg

ACT I Spalanzani's house

INTERMISSION

ACT II Crespel's house in Munich

INTERMISSION

ACT III Giulietta's palace in Venice

EPILOGUE Luther's tavern

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

Latecomers will not be seated during the performance after the lights have dimmed.
The use of cameras, cellular phones and any kind of recording equipment is strictly forbidden.
The performance will last approximately three and one-half hours.

SYNOPSIS

Les Contes d'Hoffmann

PROLOGUE

In Luther's tavern, a chorus of spirits of wine and beer is heard, while inside the adjoining opera house there is a performance of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. The Muse appears, professing her love for the poet Hoffmann. To protect him in his adventures, the Muse transforms herself into his faithful friend Nicklausse with help from the spirits. Councillor Lindorf bribes Andrès, a servant of the singer Stella, to intercept a note she has written inviting Hoffmann to meet her after the performance. Lindorf himself will keep that appointment. As offstage applause signals the end of the opera's first act, students fill the tavern, among them Hoffmann, accompanied by his friend Nicklausse. Students urge him to drink and sing, and he tells them the ballad of a dwarf named Kleinzach, then calls for the punch bowl. Noting the devilish Lindorf, he senses bad luck. When the students tease him about Stella, he begins the stories of three past loves . . .

ACT I

The inventor Spalanzani is aided by his servant, Cochenille, in assembling a mechanical doll, Olympia. With her, he hopes to recoup the fortune he lost in the collapse of the banking house of Elias. Hoffmann declares his love for her and Nicklausse hints that he is making a fool of himself. Coppélius, Spalanzani's partner, sells the poet a pair of glasses which make Olympia appear human. Spalanzani and Coppélius haggle over the doll, and Spalanzani agrees to pay 500 ducats by way of a draft on the house of Elias. Guests arrive, and Olympia captivates them with a charming song. Oblivious to the periodic mechanical difficulties of the doll, Hoffmann is enchanted. When the guests leave for dinner, Spalanzani leaves the two alone, and Hoffmann declares his love. When he grabs her hand, she whirls out of control. Coppélius returns, bent on revenge for having been given a worthless bank draft. As the guests start to dance, Olympia is destroyed.

ACT II

The musician Crespel has fled to Munich with his daughter, Antonia, hoping she will forget her love affair with Hoffmann

there. She sings and becomes exhausted; her father demands that she never sing again, since it will endanger her life, and orders his deaf servant Frantz to allow no one into the house. Frantz tries to sing and dance. Hoffmann's voice attracts Antonia, and they swear eternal love. Breaking her promise, she sings for Hoffmann. The sinister Dr. Miracle appears, whom Crespel considers an omen of doom, because Miracle treated Crespel's wife the day she died. The evil doctor inquires after Antonia, while Hoffmann watches. The charlatan begins to "examine" the girl, then commands her to sing—and her voice is heard. Miracle offers medicines to save her. The father, knowing this means death, throws Miracle out. Hoffmann begs her not to sing and leaves. The doctor reappears, taunting Antonia with prospects of glory as a singer and invokes the memory of her mother, a famous singer. As Miracle plays his violin, Antonia sings until she collapses and dies.

ACT III

Hoffmann and Nicklausse are in Venice at the palazzo of the courtesan Giulietta, who has discarded her lover Schlemil in favor of the poet. Hoffmann drinks to pleasure, and Giulietta takes her guests to the gambling tables. Nicklausse warns his friend, who declares that should he fall in love, the devil may take his soul. The magician Dapertutto declares he will bribe the courtesan by means of a glittering diamond; she has already obtained Schlemil's shadow (or soul) for Dapertutto, who now insists on possessing Hoffmann's reflection. The poet capitulates to her, and Dapertutto, Schlemil, Nicklausse, Pitichinaccio and the chorus view the obsession of love. Schlemil, who refuses to give Hoffmann the key to Giulietta's apartment, is killed by the poet in a duel. As Nicklausse drags Hoffmann away, Dapertutto gloats in triumph.

EPILOGUE

As Hoffmann finishes his tales, the crowd goes to supper. When the students hail Stella, she finds the poet drunk and leaves on Lindorf's arm. The Muse claims Hoffmann, who remains behind to create new works.

The performance of November 17th is sponsored by American Airlines.

The performance of November 23rd is sponsored by Ravenswood.

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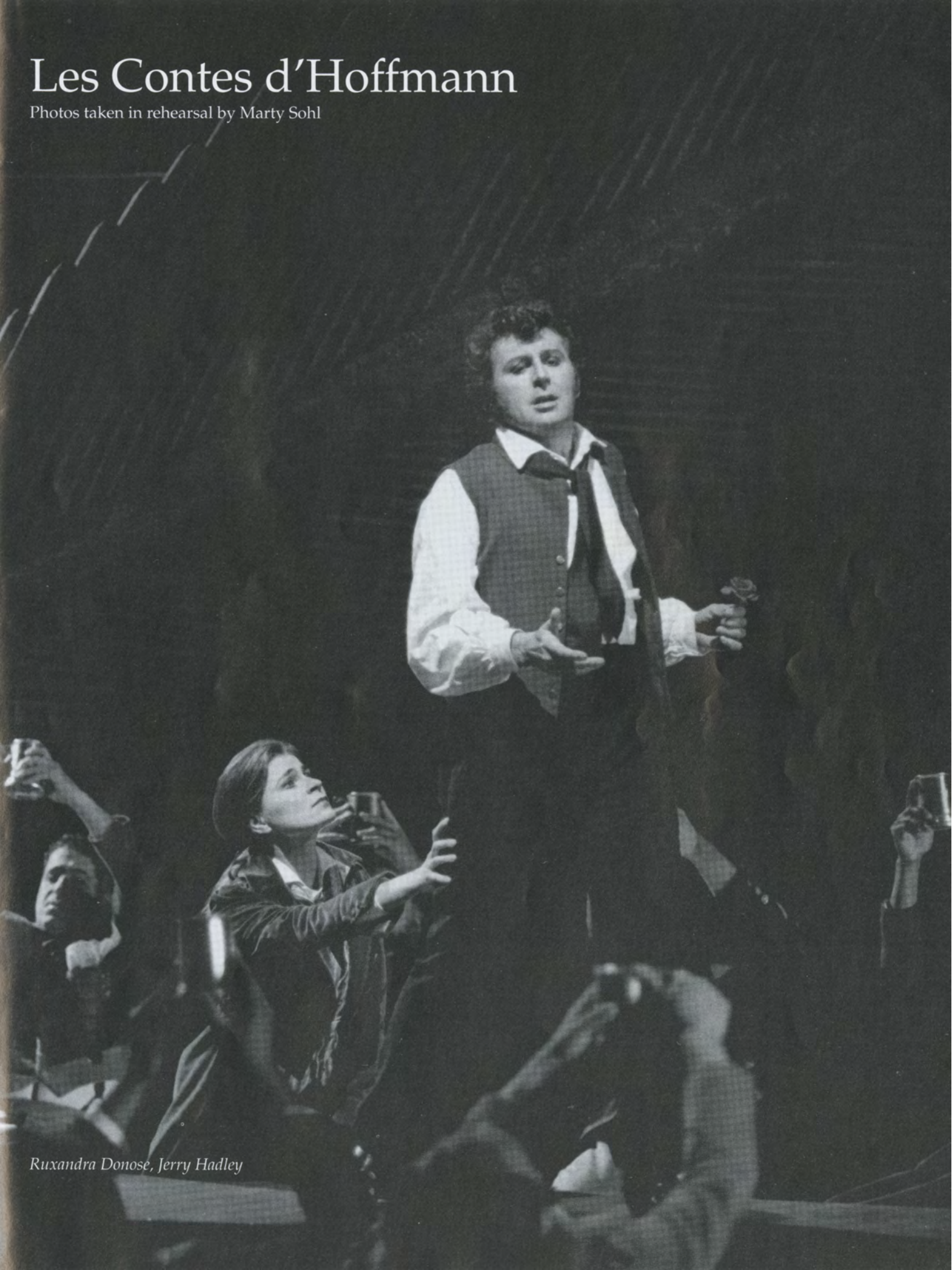
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Les Contes d'Hoffmann

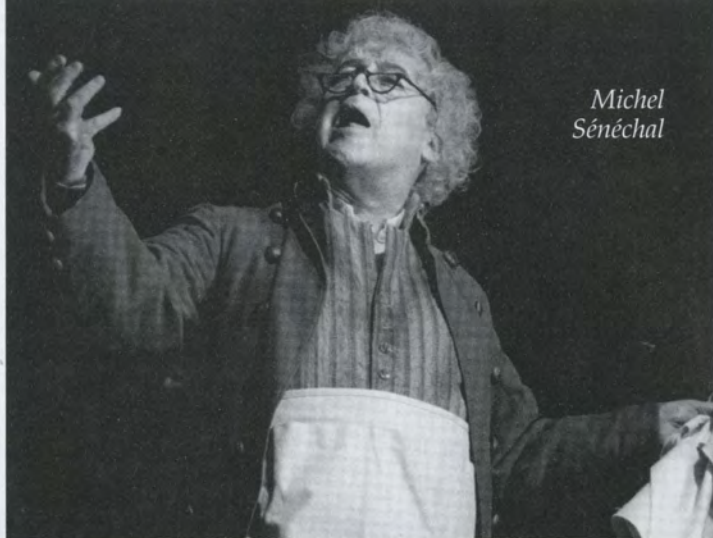
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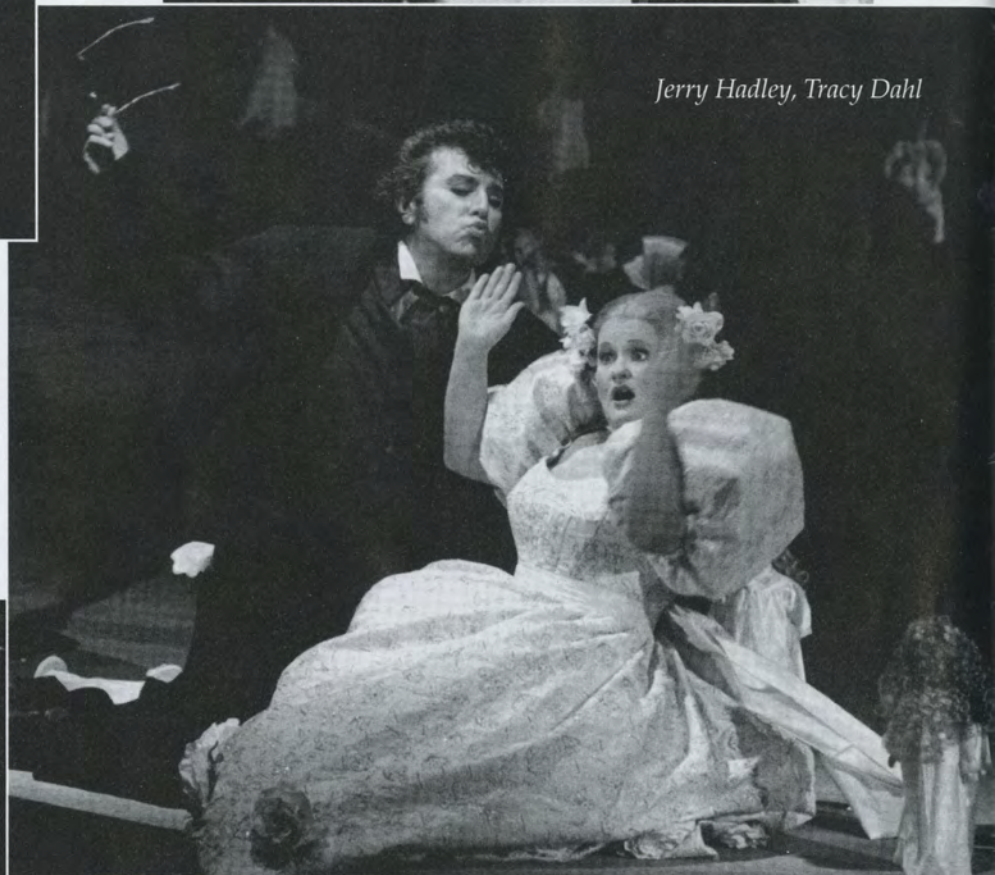
Ruxandra Donose, Jerry Hadley



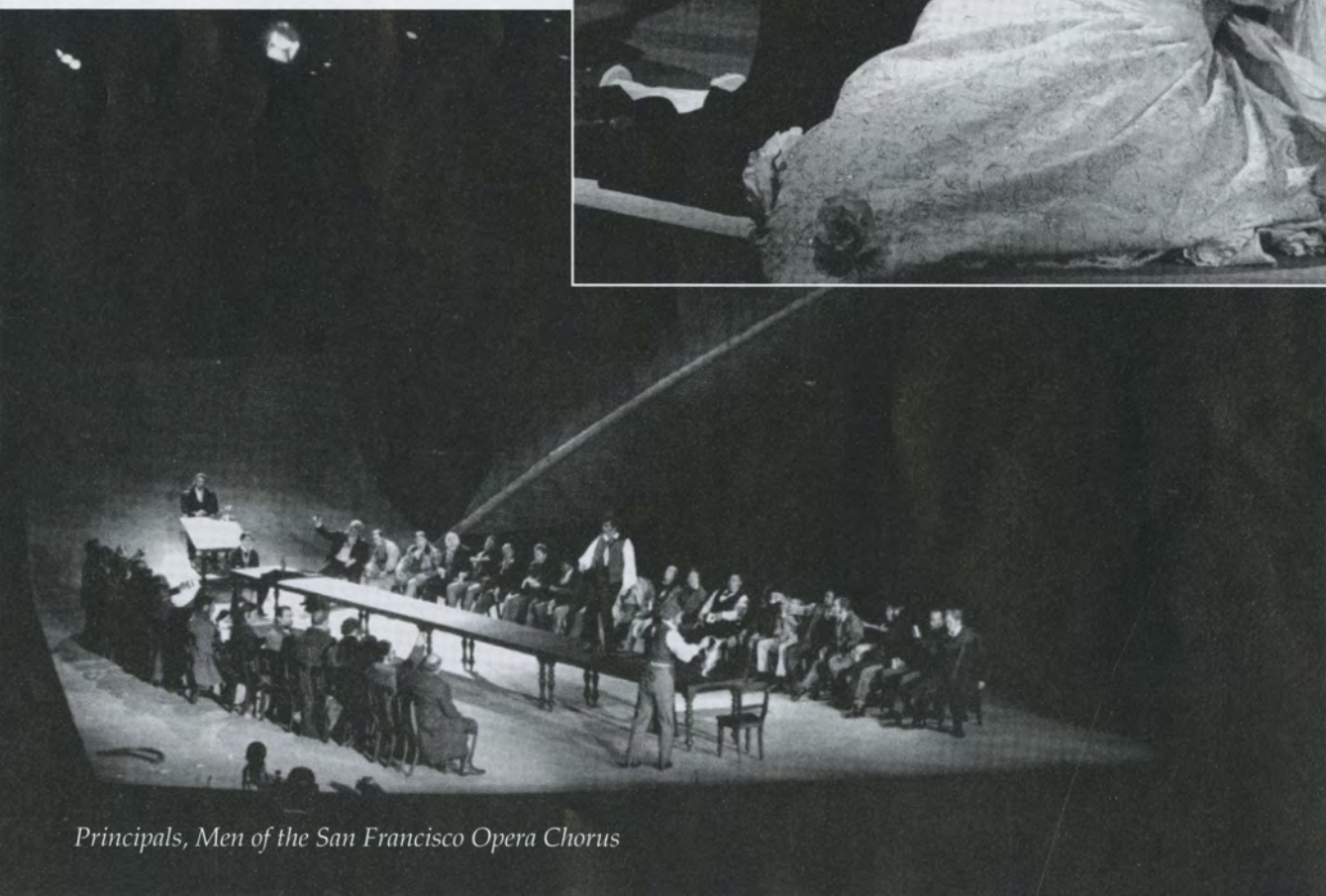
Victoria Morgan



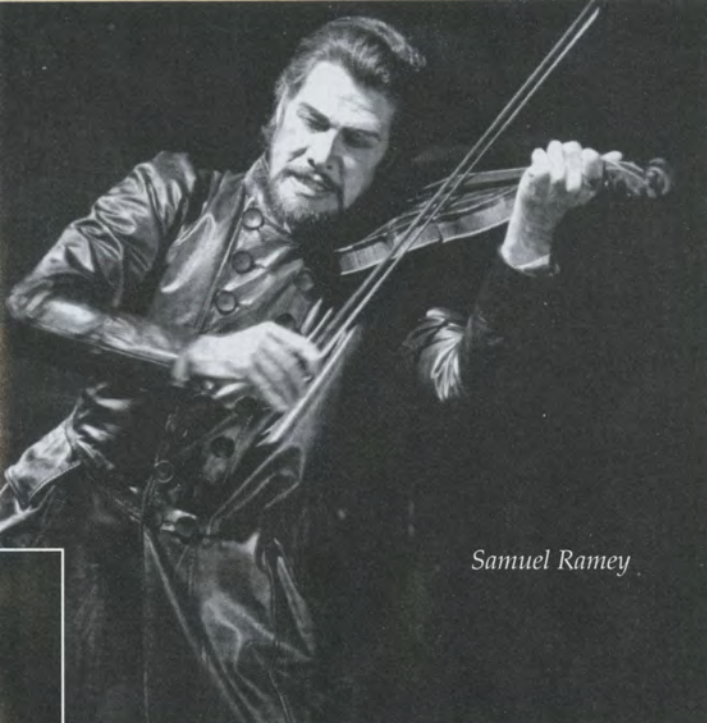
*Michel
Sénéchal*



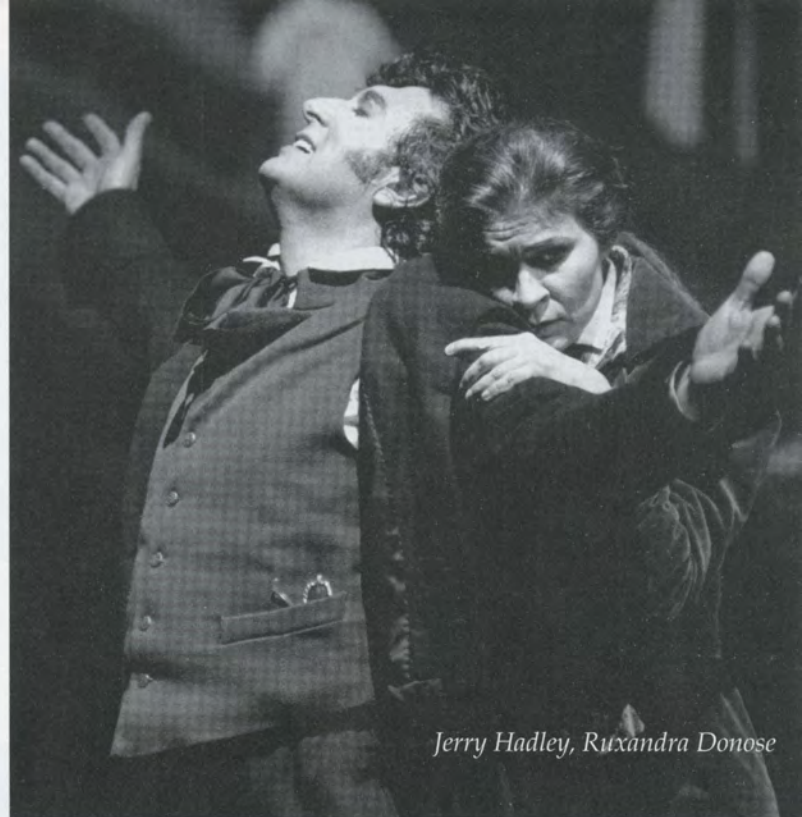
Jerry Hadley, Tracy Dahl



Principals, Men of the San Francisco Opera Chorus



Samuel Ramey



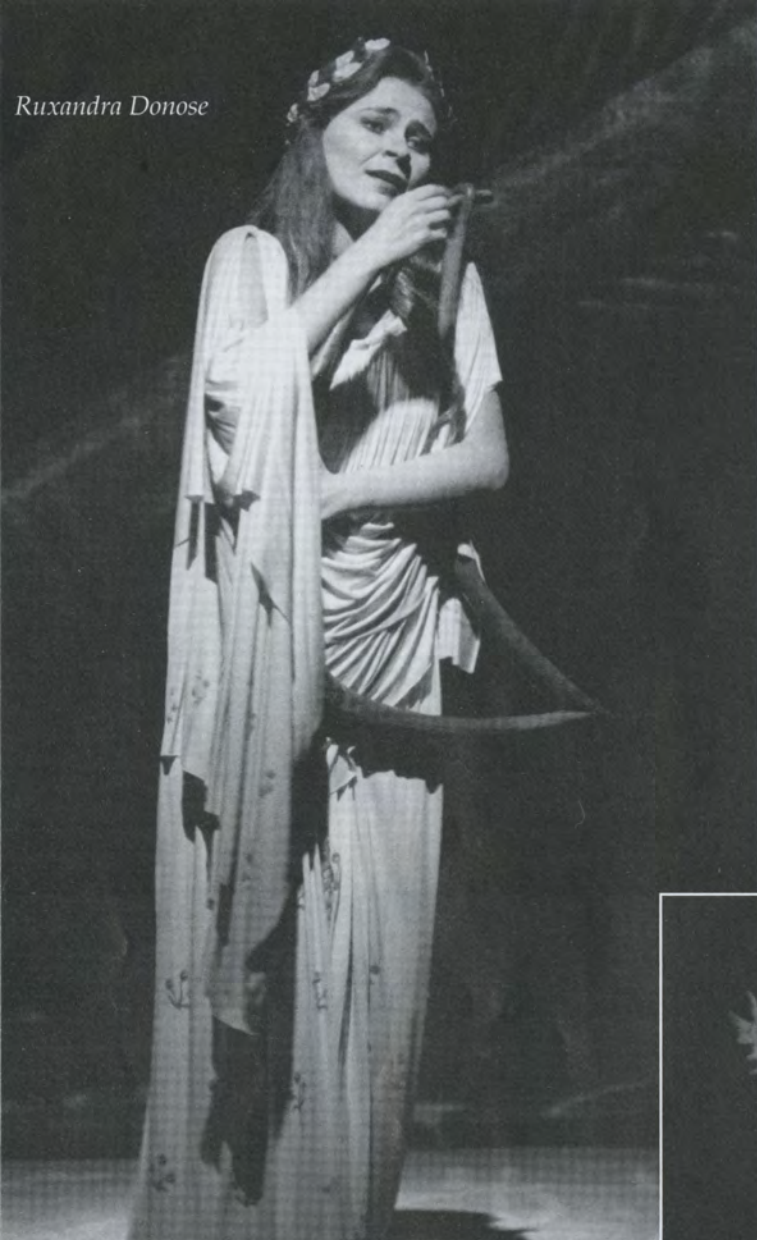
Jerry Hadley, Ruxandra Donose



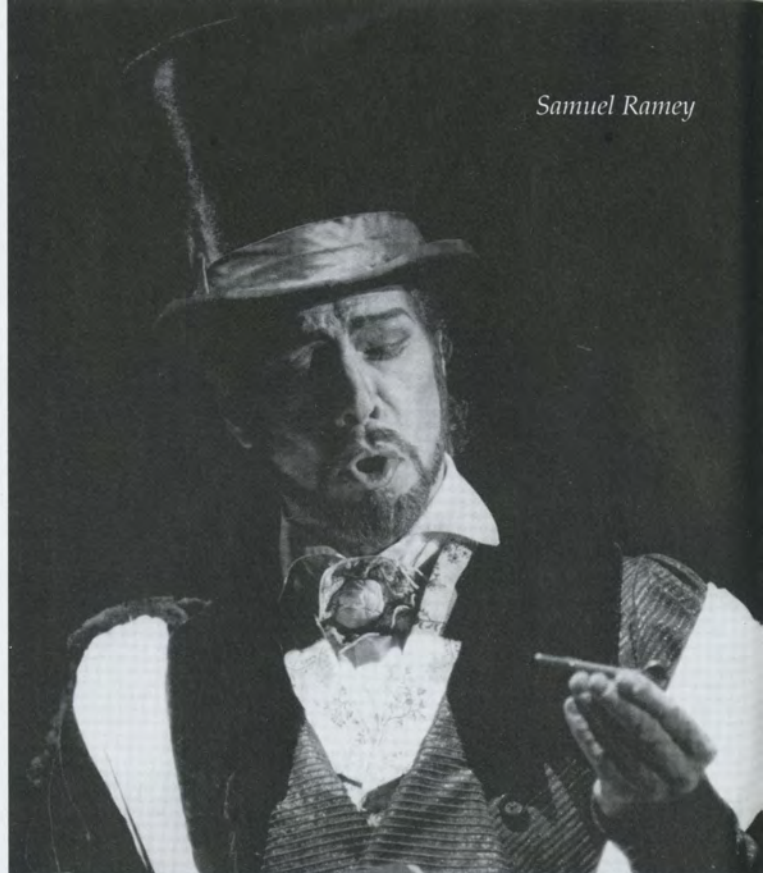
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will be a single singer for the villains, but there will be three for the heroines.

Looking back, it seems a great pity that Offenbach couldn't have been around to read this posthumous praise (however left-handed it might be) heaped on him by Friedrich Nietzsche:

If by artistic genius we understand the most consummate freedom within the law, divine ease and facility in overcoming the greatest difficulties, then Offenbach has even more right to the title 'genius' than Wagner has. Wagner is heavy and clumsy; nothing is more foreign to him than the moments of wanton perfection which this clown Offenbach achieves as many as five times, six times, in nearly every one of his buffooneries.

Wagner was also invoked, obliquely, in this glowing estimate of Offenbach's gifts by the English writer Sacheverell Sitwell:

This composer of more than a hundred operettas could achieve moments, like the 'Letter Song' [from *La Périchole*], which have the purity, the clean jet of inspiration, of Mozart. This is no audacious comparison to anyone who knows enough Rossini to compare him to Mozart, and enough of Offenbach to think of him as close to the comic genius of Rossini. The *Contes d'Hoffmann* is in vindication of this coupling of their names. And it is more than probable that Mozart himself, could he have seen it, would prefer this opera to a 'music-drama' that lasts for four evenings and has never a light or lyrical moment.

Rich words that Offenbach was destined never to know. But I strongly suspect that, deep down, he died fully knowing his worth. And after all the abuse he and his *Hoffmann* have suffered through the years, he is entitled, I think, to the final word, especially since these words have such a prophetic ring:

I have one terrible, invincible vice, that of working all the time. I'm sorry for those people who do not like my music because I shall certainly die with a tune on the tip of my pen. ♦

1996-97 OPERA PREVIEWES

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

PRE-PERFORMANCE LECTURES

The popular Pre-Performance Lectures are held at the Bill Graham Civic Auditorium in Room 415 and in the orchestra section of the Orpheum Theatre. Guest speakers will provide insights and information about the opera and the composer. The half-hour talks are free with your ticket for the performance and take place one hour before curtain. The lecture schedule is as follows:

- Carmen** (Civic)
Nov. 5—6:30 p.m.
- Harvey Milk** (Orpheum)
Nov. 13—6:30 p.m.
Nov. 21—7 p.m.
Nov. 24—1 p.m.
- Les Contes d'Hoffmann** (Civic)
Nov. 17—1 p.m.
Nov. 20—6:30 p.m.
Nov. 23—7 p.m.
- Salome** (Civic)
Jan. 23—6:30 p.m.
Jan. 29—6:30 p.m.
Feb. 1—7 p.m.
- Aida** (Civic)
Feb. 8—7 p.m.
Feb. 11—7 p.m.
Feb. 21—6:30 p.m.

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD—INSIGHTS

Renowned artists and personalities from the world of opera in informal interviews. Held from 6 to 7 p.m. in Herbst Theatre, 401 Van Ness, in San Francisco. Complimentary to Guild members, \$5 at the door. Information: (415) 565-6432

- Nov. 4
Harvey Milk
- Jan. 17
Salome

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD—PREVIEWS

Speakers: *Harvey Milk*: Michael Korie; *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*: Marvin Tartak

MARIN

Held at 8 p.m. at Mt. Tamalpais United Methodist Church, 410 Sycamore Avenue, Mill Valley. Information: (415) 388-6789

- Nov. 4
Harvey Milk
- Nov. 11
Contes d'Hoffmann

SAN FRANCISCO

Held at 12:00 noon, Koret Auditorium, Lower Level, New Main Library, 100 Larkin Street, San Francisco. Information: (510) 652-3799

- Nov. 6
Harvey Milk
- Nov. 13
Contes d'Hoffmann

SAN JOSE

Held at 10:00 a.m. at the Los Gatos History Club, 123 Los Gatos Blvd., Los Gatos. Information: (408) 741-1331, or (408) 354-7525

- Nov. 5
Harvey Milk
- Nov. 12
Contes d'Hoffmann

SONOMA COUNTY

Held at various locations and times. Information: 707) 938-2432

- Nov. 4
Harvey Milk
- Nov. 14
Contes d'Hoffmann

SOUTH PENINSULA

Held at 8:00 p.m. at the Palo Alto Senior Center, 450 Bryant St., Palo Alto. Information: (415) 941-3890

- Nov. 5
Harvey Milk
- Nov. 12
Contes d'Hoffmann

EAST BAY

Held at 8:00 p.m. at Lafayette United Methodist Church, 955 Moraga Road, Lafayette. Information: (510) 527-1846 or (510) 838-9255

- Nov. 6
Harvey Milk

MERRITT COLLEGE OPERA LECTURE SERIES

Held on Tuesday evenings in Building R, Room 130, 7 to 10 p.m., *Introduction to Opera* (Music 13A), is based on the operas of the 1996-97 season. The College is at 12500 Campus Drive (off Redwood Road in the Oakland hills). Information: (510) 436-2430

SAN FRANCISCO CITY COLLEGE PREVIEWES

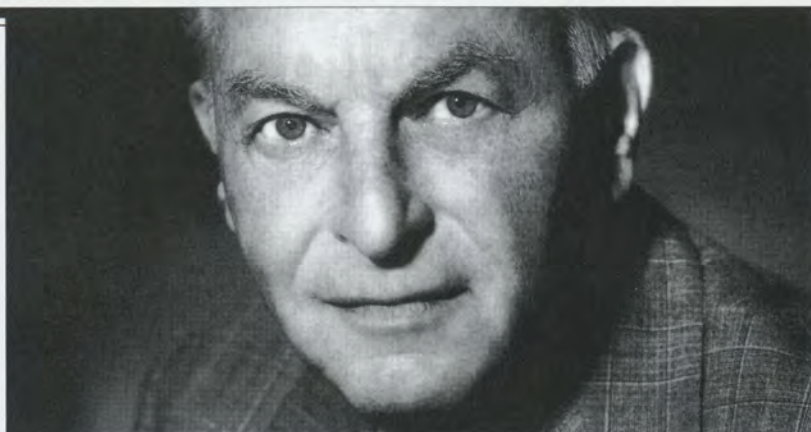
A music course of opera previews will deal with all operas of the 1996-97 Season. Taught by Marvin Tartak on Wednesday afternoons from 3 to 6 p.m., it takes place at the College, 50 Phelan Ave., Creative Arts Building, Room A-135 in San Francisco. Classes began August 19 and continue for 17 weeks. Information: (415) 239-3641

OPERA EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL PREVIEW SERIES

Given by Michael Barclay, director of OEI. Lectures start at 7:15 p.m. at 400 Yale Ave. (at Vassar) in the Kensington section of the Berkeley hills. Series began on September 4; lectures are \$15 at the door. Information: (510) 526-5244

- Nov. 4
Harvey Milk
- Nov. 11
Contes d'Hoffmann
- Dec. 2
Hansel and Gretel
- Jan. 13
Salome
- Feb. 3
Aida
- Feb. 10
Season Review

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For future San Francisco Towers resident Bernard Werth, the view from the top started with a long hard look at the bottom line.

The financial benefits weren't the first thing that attracted Bernard Werth to San Francisco Towers.

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But I think the ultimate financial security is knowing the very best medical services will be available when and where I want, at no extra charge."

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“*Bel Canto*”— MORE THAN BEAUTIFUL

“Each of our Bel Canto Society members is helping to ensure that coming generations, in the Bay Area and beyond, will be able to experience what is truly the world’s greatest art form.”

—General
Director Lotfi
Mansouri

B*el canto* is the Italian phrase for “beautiful singing”; stylistically it is used to categorize the florid 19th-century operas of Donizetti, Bellini and Rossini. But at San Francisco Opera, the beautiful singing goes beyond the stage—and the time is here and now.

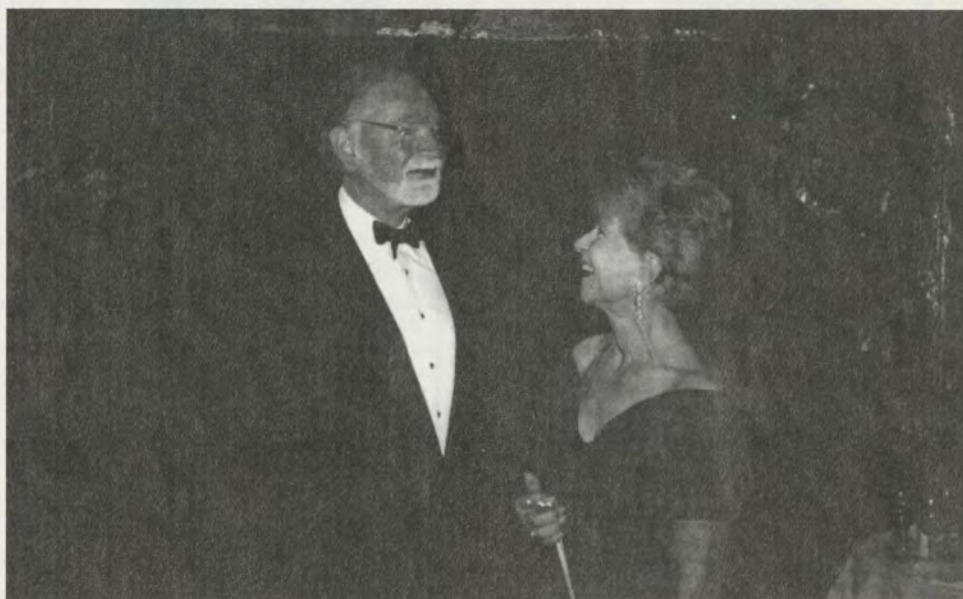
Members of the Bel Canto Society don’t sing on the stage, but they do sing from the heart. Established in 1991 and now into its fifth year, this special group boasts more than 250 members, including opera lovers who are single, married, with and without children, from young professionals in their 30s to those in their golden years. In addition to their love of opera, the members of the Bel Canto Society have something else in common: they have all included San Francisco Opera in their estate plans. Some have left bequests in wills, some have established charitable remainder trusts, and some have made a gift to San Francisco Opera’s pooled income fund.

Each year, the members of the Bel Canto Society are honored at a special luncheon. During the past two years, our friends at the Hayes Street Grill have generously hosted the event. But this year, because membership has

increased so dramatically, the luncheon will be held at the Sheraton Palace Hotel.

Opera Association Chair Reid W. Dennis and his wife Peggy have included the Opera in their estate plans. “San Francisco Opera means a great deal to Peggy and me, and it means a great deal to our children,” remarks Mr. Dennis. “We want to do what we can to perpetuate the art form and enable coming generations to enjoy it as we have. Like many people, we do what we can on an annual basis; but by making a larger contribution through a ‘planned gift,’ we were able to increase our generosity to the Company.” He continues: “Planned giving can help you think creatively about a meaningful contribution to San Francisco Opera. Even persons of modest means can create significant future gifts by using tax-advantaged estate and financial planning techniques. If we all do what we can this way, the Opera is assured of having a bright outlook.”

“My commitment to San Francisco Opera is stronger than ever,” remarks Opera Association President William W. Godward, a charter Bel Canto Society member. “As a long-standing subscriber and donor who



Long-time opera lovers Charles and Dorothy Davis are captured by the camera just before a performance of *Prince Igor* at Civic Auditorium. The Davises joined the Bel Canto Society last year with a gift of appreciated stock to the Opera’s Pooled Income Fund. Their gift allowed them to avoid capital gains tax and receive income on their gift for life. Most importantly, their gift will help ensure a strong future for San Francisco Opera.

SINGING

remembers the old days—the *first* time the Company was in the Civic Auditorium—I have always wanted to do the most I can to support the Company and see that it continues to flourish so that it will be there for my grandchildren and theirs, too. The Bel Canto Society provides an excellent vehicle to make this happen, and proves that proper estate planning can lead to great satisfaction for the operagoer as well as for the Opera. Everybody wins."

"Making the Opera a retirement plan beneficiary is not only for people who are retired," remarks Fred Hartwick, an active volunteer for the Bel Canto Society. The 39-year old lawyer and San Francisco Opera subscriber recently made the Opera Association a partial beneficiary of his own retirement plan. "I love being part of Bel Canto," he remarks. "This is a visionary group, a group that wants to assure that future generations will be able to enjoy the incredible experience of grand opera. I can't give a major gift now because I'm still building my estate. Other than my house, my retirement plan is my most significant asset. It feels good to have left the Opera a percentage of my plan and to know that this legacy for the Opera is increasing through investment growth and my annual plan contributions."

James Schwabacher is something of a legend in the San Francisco Opera family. Before he was a generous donor to the Opera and founder of the prestigious Schwabacher Debut Recital Series, he was an acclaimed tenor who sang with the Company for four seasons under Gaetano Merola (1948, 1950-52) and toured internationally. He has since been a founder and president of the Merola Opera Program Board of Directors and deeply involved with the careers of hundreds of young singers, many of whom have gone on to international acclaim. A charter member of the Bel Canto Society, Mr. Schwabacher notes that "*bel canto* has denoted different meanings in different historic periods, but it always implies a quality of sound that is eternal and ethereal—one that will ring forever in our Opera House. Bel Canto members are the force that will keep that beautiful singing alive in San Francisco for all eternity."

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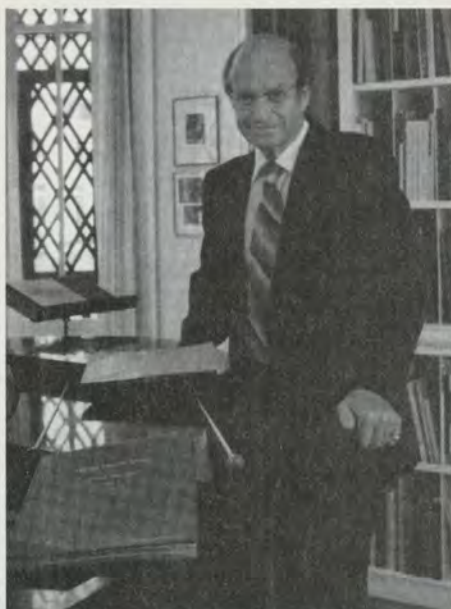
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James H. Schwabacher, in addition to being a longtime and very important member of the San Francisco Opera family, is also a charter member of the Bel Canto Society.

San Francisco native Gloria Valair joined Bel Canto last year. When she was just eight years old, her parents took her to her first opera here, and she remembers that they would play recordings of the legendary tenor Enrico Caruso as she went to sleep. Her love for the tenor voice runs deep. An artist herself, Ms. Valair has included the Opera in her estate plans so that, eventually, the Company will establish a "Principal Tenor" Fund in her name.

When Charles and Dorothy Davis joined the Opera's Pooled Income Fund last year, they made a gift of appreciated stock that gives them income for life, and then goes to the Opera. Mr. Davis feels there are two great benefits to this special fund: "You avoid capital gains tax on appreciated stock and you see some of your assets going to the Opera, where you want them to go." Mr. Davis is a retired pianist who used to perform in recitals and teach on the faculty at Diablo Valley College in Pleasant Hill. Mr. and Mrs. Davis have three children, all of whom love opera as much as their parents do. Opera subscribers for the past 15 years, the Davises were at a dinner following a performance by the Adler Fellows last year and remember thinking how they "felt great about the role we are playing in supporting these young singers."

It is a satisfaction that is felt by all members of this generous and forward thinking group. *Bel Canto* also means beautiful people.

For information on joining the Bel Canto Society, contact Carolyn Mason at (415) 565-

BEQUESTS— GIVING THE GIFT OF OPERA TO FUTURE GENERATIONS

A great concern of tried and true opera lovers is knowing that this magnificent art form will continue to be enjoyed in all its splendor by generations to come. They want to be sure that opera will thrive: new productions and new operas will continue to invigorate the repertoire, and young artists will receive the support and nurturing they need to master their craft and carry forth the legacies of the legendary artists who have come before. The tremendous joy that opera has brought to them, they wish to pass along to others.

One way to do this is by remembering San Francisco Opera with a bequest. Remembrances of all sizes are important to the Opera, and last year more than \$1 million in bequests was received. This is a wonderful way to give the gift of opera to future generations.

The late Francesca Deering Howe was a longtime San Francisco Opera subscriber, donor, and a member of the Board of Directors. Through good estate planning, she established a trust which, upon her passing in 1984, secured an income for her husband. Upon his death in 1994, the \$2 million trust fund was transferred to San Francisco Opera and became one of the most generous gifts in the Company's long history. With the permission of her daughter, Francesca D. Howe II—a singer who once performed on the War Memorial Opera House stage—the Opera has established the Francesca Deering Howe Principal Artist Fund. Beginning next season, a principal artist will be designated specially in Mrs. Howe's name.

When Vera Sichel passed away last year, she left a generous legacy to San Francisco Opera. Her love affair with the Company began in 1954, and blossomed over the years. When she died, her home was filled with opera books

and recordings—she made it a habit to study the libretto and a recording of an opera before attending a performance. In those early days, she also volunteered and would meet artists at the airport. As a result, she developed some long-lasting friendships with great artists such as Leonie Rysanek, Richard Lewis, James King, and Carlo Bergonzi, who would stay at her home when performing in San Francisco. Though Verdi was her favorite composer, Mrs. Sichel had a special affection for Puccini's *Tosca*. Her generous bequest will be used, in part, to sponsor the production of *Tosca* that will open the 1997 Fall Season—the Company's 75th anniversary and the return to the newly renovated Opera House.

Robert E. Bentley was one of the founders of San Francisco Opera in 1923 and president of the Opera Associate Board of Directors when the Opera House was built in 1932. His granddaughter was the late Edith Bentley Bailey Cook. A San Francisco native, her family roots in the Opera were a source of pride throughout her life. She was a dedicated Opera supporter, and a charter member of the Medallion Society; her friends will remember how she always enjoyed the annual luncheon. Mrs. Cook's bequest helped to underwrite last season's acclaimed new production of *Don Giovanni*—which proved to be so popular that it was necessary to add an extra performance.

These people, and others like them, were actively involved with San Francisco Opera during their lives. Now, after their passing, they have seen to it that others will be enriched as they were for many years to come.

If you are interested in making a bequest to San Francisco Opera, please contact Carolyn Mason at (415) 565-6446. ♦



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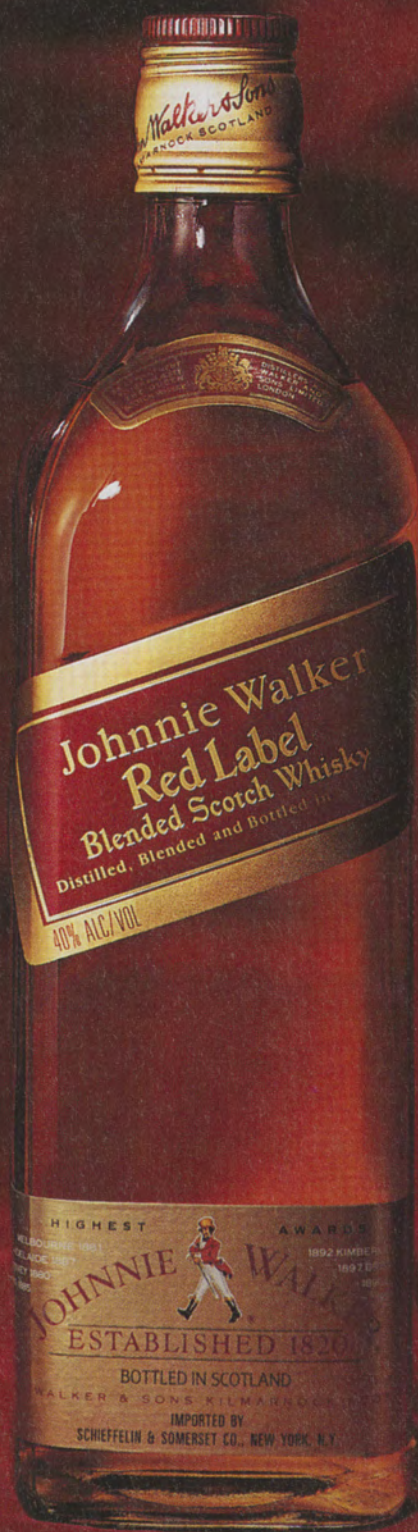


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Coming ATTRactions

To salute the season in style, **San Francisco Opera** offers a toast: To the King of Effervescence—Champagne! In addition to five performances of the complete *Die Fledermaus* (December 26–29), on New Year's Eve the Opera hosts **Prince Orlofsky's Masquerade Ball**, a gala performance of Act II of Johann Strauss Jr.'s fizzy opera followed by a masquerade party with dinner, dancing, and a toast to 1997. Special guests include Broadway stars **Donna McKechnie** and **Gary Chryst** and American Ballet Theatre principal dancers **Cynthia Harvey** and **Wes Chapman**.

* * * * *

If you like your *Nutcracker* a little less nutty, cozy up to a version of *The Nutcracker* designed after Victorian greeting cards. **Oakland Ballet's** production is an intimate staging that glows like a yule log, choreographed by Artistic Director Ronn Guidi and accompanied live by the Oakland East Bay Symphony. The only complete *Nutcracker* on view in the San Francisco area this Christmastime, this *Nutcracker* plays December 12–29 at Oakland's historic Paramount Theatre.

* * * * *

Another sugarplum classic originally had a more serious vision. Charles Dickens wrote *A Christmas Carol* as an indictment of social injustice, exhorting readers to more compassion and calling for a revolution in the human spirit. When **American Conservatory Theater's** Laird Williamson and Dennis Powers set out to create their own adaptation in 1977, they were determined to remain faithful to Dickens' intentions. They crafted a *Christmas Carol* rich with psychological insight and bright with the joy of renewal. After a three-year absence, the ghosts of Christmas are back at the Geary Theater December 1–26. A.C.T. veteran Raye Birk is Scrooge, and Candace Barrett directs.

* * * * *

In 1813 E.T.A. Hoffmann published *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King*, a brooding fable of a girl who is guided into adulthood by a mysterious family friend. Sounds like a Christmas story! Well, it did to Alexandre Dumas, who adapted *The Nutcracker* for Marius Petipa, the original choreographer of the ballet that has become a holiday standard. Now there's an alternative, as choreographer **Mark Morris** has reinvented the ballet as *The Hard Nut*. Set in '60s suburbia, *The Hard Nut* is danced to Tchaikovsky's famous score, but Morris gives it a satirical, though surprisingly not cynical, spin (big hair, cross-dressing, cartoonish sets) that makes the tale fresh. Bay Area residents can witness the West Coast premiere of this wacky take on the tale December 14–21 at Zellerbach Hall in Berkeley, thanks to **Cal Performances**.

—Peter Cieply



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SAN FRANCISCO OPERA'S \$20,000,000 THREE-YEAR CAMPAIGN

San Francisco Opera is pleased to honor the members of the San Francisco Opera family who, through their loyal and generous support, play a vital role in maintaining the company's stature as one of the world's leading opera companies. Friends of San Francisco Opera who join the Medallion Society help ensure the fiscal stability necessary to attract the world's greatest opera artists, designers, and directors.

We are particularly grateful to those donors who responded to our urgent appeal for a three-year pledge. 1995, 1996 and 1997 will be some of the most exciting and challenging years for San Francisco Opera as we meet major added costs incurred because of the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake. Relocating the entire company during the eighteen months out of the house, establishing temporary operations at the Bill Graham Civic Auditorium and Orpheum Theatre, and renovating the facilities are significant extraordinary expenses beyond our annual costs.

Successfully meeting our three-year campaign goal of \$20,000,000 will require extensive new contributions and major increased gifts from the opera family. We ask those thoughtful and valued friends of the opera to respond to our appeal with extraordinary generosity to help us continue the tradition of artistic excellence and ensure that we all can enjoy one of the finest opera houses in the world.

San Francisco Opera gratefully acknowledges members of the Medallion Society who have made gifts for performance years 1995 or 1996 (recorded February 1, 1995 through September 15, 1996).

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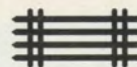
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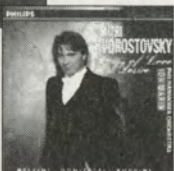
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ARTIST PROFILES



Coloratura soprano **TRACY DAHL** has received high praise for her performances with, among others, the San Francisco Opera, Metropolitan Opera, Canadian Opera Company, Washington Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Los Angeles Music Center Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Opera Theatre of St. Louis, the Châtelet in Paris, and the Aix-en-Provence Festival. A native of Canada, she received her training at the Banff School of Fine Arts and is a graduate of the 1985 Merola Opera Program. Miss Dahl made her acclaimed 1987 San Francisco Opera debut as Olympia in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* and

was seen here in 1990 as Oscar in *Un Ballo in Maschera*. She has also been praised for her performances as Marie in *La Fille du Régiment*, Zerbinetta in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Despina in *Così fan tutte*, Norina in *Don Pasquale*, Susanna in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*, Blondchen in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, and Adele in *Die Fledermaus*. Recent operatic highlights include Zerbinetta, Adele and Florestine in *The Ghosts of Versailles* at the Met, Marie for Michigan Opera Theatre, Zerbinetta for the Canadian Opera Company, Adele for the Edmonton Opera, and her first Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* for the Manitoba Opera. Among her recent concert appearances are her first Amina in *La Sonnambula* with Toronto's Opera in Concert, Eurydice in Offenbach's *Orfée aux enfers* with the Opéra Français de New York, as well as performances with the Vancouver Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, Dallas Symphony, Toronto Symphony and the Atlanta Symphony as part of the Olympics Arts Festival. Future engagements include Fiakermilli in *Arabella* and Iris in *Semele* for Santa Fe Opera, Marie at Edmonton Opera, as well as the Queen of the Night in *The Magic Flute* and Yum-Yum in *The Mikado* for Calgary Opera. Miss Dahl can be heard on a recent CD, *Glitter and be Gay*, with the Calgary Philharmonic led by Mario Bernardi.



Soprano **PATRICIA RACETTE** has already performed major roles with the San Francisco Opera; the Metropolitan Opera, Royal Opera at Covent Garden and the Opéra National de Paris (Musetta in *La Bohème*); the Vienna State Opera and San Diego Opera (Mimi in *La Bohème*); Grand Théâtre de Genève (Micaëla in *Carmen*); Welsh National Opera (Liù in *Turandot*); New York City Opera (Musetta and Micaëla); and Boston Lyric Opera (all three heroines of *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*). She also recently made two major role debuts—Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte* for the Opera Company of Philadelphia and Marguerite in *Faust* at Vancouver Opera. Recent appearances elsewhere include the title role of Gluck's *Iphigénie en Tauride* at the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Ellen Orford in *Peter Grimes* with Vancouver Opera, and the title role in the world premiere of Tobias Picker's *Emmeline* for Santa Fe Opera. A 1989-90 Adler Fellow with numerous Opera Center credits, she made her Company bow in 1989 as Mistress Ford in family performances of *Falstaff*. Since then the New Hampshire native has sung many roles here, including Freia in *Das Rheingold*, Helmwig in *Die Walküre*, Micaëla, and Mimi (fall 1993, summer 1996). Miss Racette is the recipient of numerous awards and grants, the most recent of which is the prestigious 1994 Marian Anderson Award. Upcoming assignments include Liù, Mimi, Ellen Orford, and Antonia in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* at the Met, as well as Violetta in *La Traviata* in Santa Fe, Houston, and at the Opéra National de Paris.



Mezzo-soprano **CATHERINE KEEN**, Giulietta in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, 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*, Madalena 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*. Last fall, she appeared here as Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly* as well as Waltraute and Fricka in *Die Walküre*. Among

her many Opera Center credits are 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, Venus with Copenhagen's Royal Danish Opera, *Otello* with the Netherlands Opera (telecast throughout Europe), 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 Lyon and Edinburgh, the latter concert 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, and a grant from the Wagner Society of Northern California.



RUXANDRA DONOSE makes her U.S. opera debut as Nicklausse in the new staging of *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*. A young and new presence in today's music world, the Rumanian mezzo-soprano has already received critical and popular acclaim in leading European opera houses and concert halls. She made her 1991 operatic debut at the Basel Opera as Varvara in *Katya Kabanova*. Her success there led to her immediate re-engagement as Romeo in *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*. The following year she made her debut at the Salzburg Festival as Isaura in Rossini's *Tancredi*. Since her 1992 debut at the

Vienna Staatsoper as Varvara, she has maintained a close relationship with the Staatsoper and Volksoper, returning every season for such roles as Nicklausse, Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Dorabella in *Così fan tutte*, Hänsel in *Hänsel und Gretel*, and the title role of *Carmen*. Additional engagements include the title role of *La Cenerentola* with the Dresden Staatsoper and in Liège; Rosina with the Hamburg Staatsoper as well as in Toulon and São Paulo; her 1994 debut at La Fenice in Venice as Speranza and Proserpina in Monteverdi's *Orfeo*; a featured role in the world premiere of Beat Furrer's *Narcissus* in Graz; Carmen in Leipzig and Prague; and her first performances of Zaida in *Il Turco in Italia* at the Monnaie in Brussels. Continually in demand for concerts with leading orchestras and conductors, Miss Donose counts among her successes performances in Austria, Germany, Norway, Ireland, Luxembourg and Greece. Her recordings include Schubert's *Ständchen*, Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* led by Michael Halasz, Bach's B-Minor Mass under Sergiu Celibidache, and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony conducted by Béla Dra-
hos.

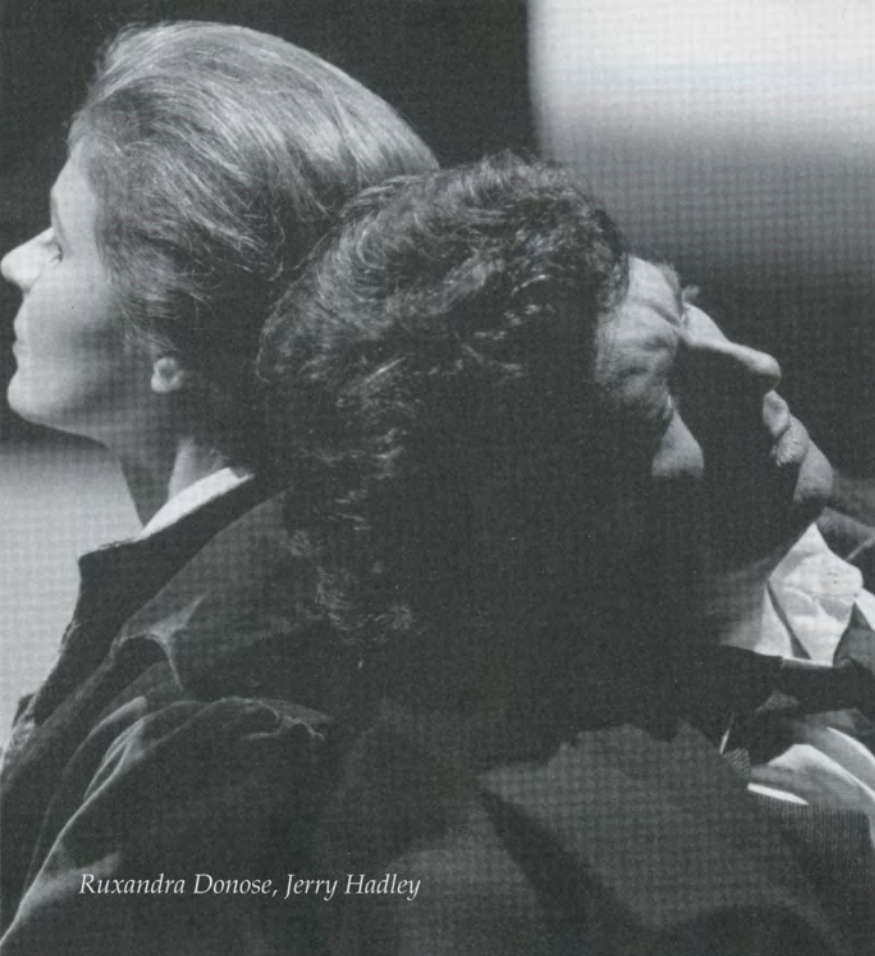
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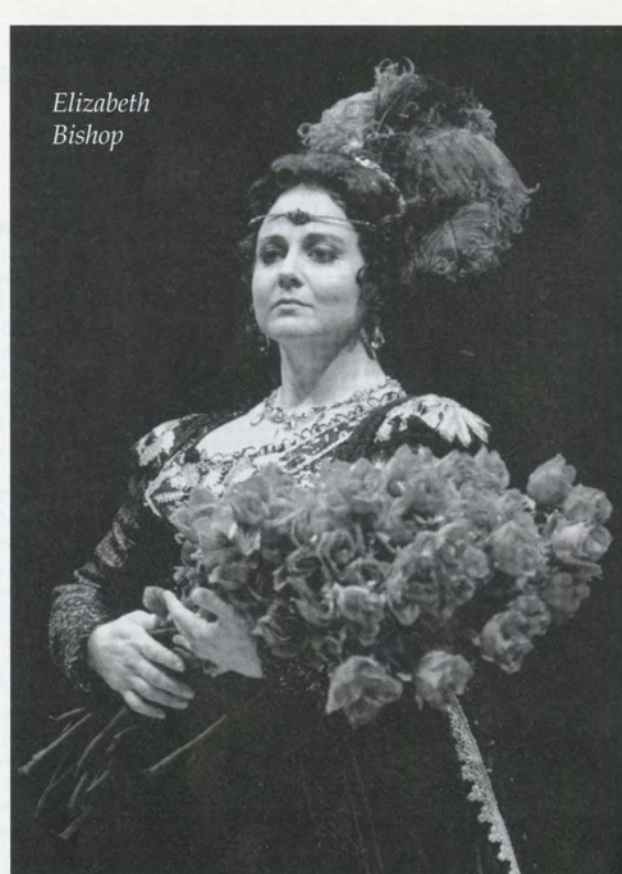
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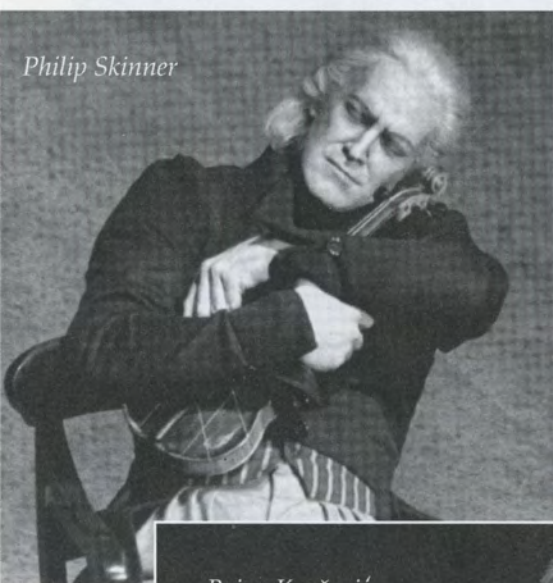
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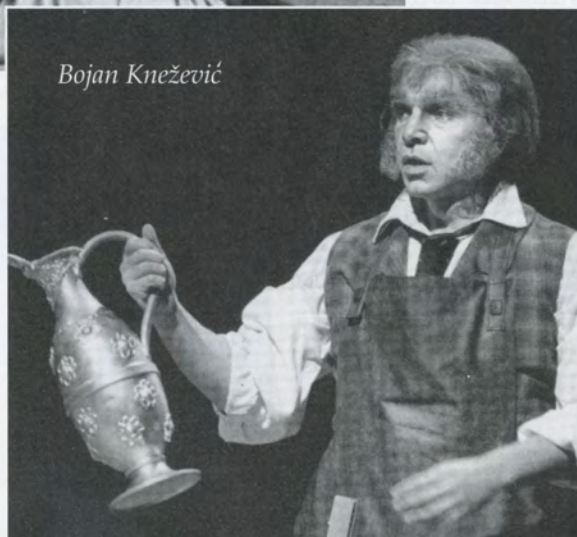
Ruxandra Donose, Jerry Hadley



*Elizabeth
Bishop*



Philip Skinner



Bojan Knežević



*Patricia
Racette*



ELIZABETH BISHOP sings the parts of Mama in the Company premiere of *Harvey Milk* and the Voice of Antonia's Mother in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*. The mezzo-soprano, a 1994-95 Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, was featured in four operas of the 1994 Fall Season, which included the role of Emilie in the world premiere production of *The Dangerous Liaisons*. Last season she was seen on the War Memorial stage as Flora in *La Traviata*, Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly*, Tisbe in *La Cenerentola*, and Siegrune in *Die Walküre*. 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 Mero-la Opera Program, and Prince Orlofsky and Ida in Western Opera Theater's national tour of *Fledermaus*. She 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. Miss Bishop has been a featured performer in the San Francisco Symphony Pops Concerts since 1992.



One of the foremost tenors of his generation, **JERRY HADLEY** has received international acclaim for his interpretations of the great Mozart tenor roles, those of the French romantic and bel canto repertoires, as well as for his ventures into Broadway musical theater, operetta, and American popular song. A native of Illinois, Hadley made his San Francisco Opera debut in 1988 as Tom Rakewell in *The Rake's Progress* and has since been heard here as Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte* (1991 Mozart Festival) and as Nemorino in *L'Elisir d'Amore* (1992), the role that launched his international career in 1982 at the

Vienna State Opera. A regular visitor to the world's great opera stages, this season will see him add debuts at the Zurich Opera and the Paris Opera/Bastille. He will also create the title role in the world premiere of Myron Fink's opera, *The Conquistador*, for San Diego Opera. He is no stranger to the concert stage, appearing regularly with the world's great orchestras and as both a solo recitalist and in collaboration with baritone Thomas Hampson. His long list of television credits will be augmented this season with the Met's telecast of *Così fan tutte*, PBS's *I Hear America Singing*, and a Lincoln Center salute to American Musical Theater. His voice can also be heard in the recent feature film, *The Adventures of Pinocchio*. A prolific recording artist with dozens of titles to his credit, he is a three-time Grammy winner and frequent nominee. His appearance in the landmark 1987 recording of *Show Boat* earned him the nickname "the king of cross-over," a reputation subsequently solidified by being chosen by Leonard Bernstein to record *Candide* and by Paul McCartney to create and record *Liverpool Oratorio*. Recent releases include *The Rake's Progress*, *A Song of Naples*, *The Art of Bel Canto*, *Man of La Mancha*, and English versions of Lehár's *The Czarevich* and *The Land of Smiles*, the latter translated by Hadley. Upcoming are *Werther*, English versions of Lehár's *Paganini* and *Giuditta*, as well as two discs of Viennese operetta arias.



As he enters the third decade of an extraordinary career, **SAMUEL RAMEY** continues to reign as one of the foremost interpreters of bass and bass-baritone operatic and concert repertoire. Heralded not only as one of the world's most acclaimed opera stars, but also as the most recorded bass in history, he has well over 80 recordings to his credit. He is frequently the focal point of new productions at Milan's La Scala, Covent Garden, the Vienna State Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Metropolitan Opera and San Francisco Opera. Ramey made his Company debut in 1978 as Colline in *La Bohème*

and has since returned as Count Rodolfo in *La Sonnambula* (1984), in the title roles of *Le Nozze di Figaro* (1986), *Mefistofele* (1989—a production that was nationally televised and released on videocassette—and 1994), *Don Quichotte* (1990), *Don Giovanni* (1991, when he stepped in as a last-minute replacement for an ailing colleague, and 1995), *Attila* (1991), as well as Méphistophélès (his most-performed role with over 200 performances in over 20 productions) in *Faust* (1995). In concert, he has performed with the Philharmonic orchestras of London, New York, Berlin and Vienna, the La Scala Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra, and the symphonies of Chicago, Philadelphia and San Francisco. In addition to his success in different types of repertoire—from the lyric and heroic roles of the bel canto era to dramatic bass works—Ramey has added another dimension to his already spectacular career. His return to Carnegie Hall for a solo recital last year was the culmination of an extensive, critically acclaimed North American tour. His European recital career is equally notable, with sold-out performances in all the major capitals. The artist's exposure on television and video is no less impressive, with video recordings of the Met's *Carmen* and *Bluebeard's Castle*, Glyndebourne's *The Rake's Progress*, Salzburg's *Don Giovanni*, and San Francisco Opera's *Mefistofele*, among others. The Kansas native is also frequently seen on television in appearances with "Live from the Met" and "Live from Lincoln Center" productions.



In his seventh season with San Francisco Opera, **MICHEL SÉNÉCHAL** sings four roles in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*: André, Cochenille, Pitichinaccio and Frantz. Following his 1989 Company debut as Dr. Caius in *Falstaff*, the venerable French tenor has appeared here as Monsieur Taupe in *Capriccio* (1990, '93), Don Basilio in *Le Nozze di Figaro* (1991), the Abbé in *Andrea Chénier* as well as several roles in *Christophe Colomb* (1992), Valzacchi in *Der Rosenkavalier* and Hortensius in *La Fille du Régiment* (1993), in addition to the Gamekeeper in *Rusalka* and Goro in *Madama Butterfly* (1995). Celebrat-

ing over 40 years of professional operatic activity, Sénéchal made his debut at the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie in Brussels in 1950. He has since performed at the major opera houses of the world and has been a regular guest artist at the Paris Opera and at the Opéra-Comique since 1958. He has sung at all of the major festivals, including those at Aix-en-Provence, Salzburg, and Glyndebourne. The Metropolitan Opera has engaged him in the French repertoire since 1982, and he has been one of the few French tenors to have sung principal Mozart roles at the Vienna State Opera. A prolific recording artist, Sénéchal's discography includes *Dialogues des Carmélites* led by Kent Nagano, Massenet's *Chérubin* conducted by Pinchas Steinberg, as well as Ravel's *L'Heure Espagnole* and *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges*, Rameau's *Platée*, Berlioz's *L'Enfance du Christ*, and an anthology of songs by Francis Poulenc. He is currently Director of the School of Lyric Art at the Paris Opera, and regularly offers master classes at the Metropolitan Opera. His numerous awards include the coveted one of Officer of the Legion of Honor.



Since his 1974 San Francisco Opera debut as the Dancing Master in *Manon Lescaut*, **JOSEPH FRANK** has appeared with the Company in over 25 lyric and character roles which include Goro in *Madama Butterfly*, Beppe in *Pagliacci*, Pong and Emperor Altoum in *Turandot*, Triquet in *Eugene Onegin*, Bardolfo in *Falstaff*, the Fool in *Wozzeck*, Snout in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Wagner in *Mefistofele*, and the Dancing Master in *Ariadne auf Naxos*. It was in this last role that he made his 1979 Metropolitan Opera debut, returning there for numerous assignments including *Manon Lescaut*, *Der Rosenkavalier* and *Madama Butterfly*. The tenor is a familiar figure on the stages of leading opera companies including those of Seattle, Los Angeles, Houston, Washington, D.C., San Diego, Dallas, St. Louis, Miami, Chautauqua, Denver and Santa Fe. As a recitalist and oratorio singer, he has performed with such conductors as Günther Herbig, Christoph Eschenbach, Jean-

ARTIST PROFILES

Pierre Marty, Edoardo Müller and Emil Tchakarov. Highlights from recent seasons include his debut with the Opéra de Montréal as Dr. Caius in *Falstaff*, a bow with Los Angeles Music Center Opera in *The Makropulos Case*, and a return to the Met for *Der Rosenkavalier* and *La Fanciulla del West*. Among his future engagements are *Madama Butterfly* for Palm Beach Opera, *Fidelio* with the Hartford Symphony, and *Die Zauberflöte* with Pittsburgh Opera as well as in Japan with the Japan Philharmonic led by Seiji Ozawa. The artist appears in the video and laserdisc releases of the Met's *Ariadne auf Naxos* and the Company's 1993 production of *Turandot*, and can be heard as Prince Shuisky on a critically acclaimed recording of *Boris Godunov* with Nicolai Ghiaurov. Frank joined the faculty of the San Jose University School of Music in 1991.



PHILIP SKINNER portrays Zuniga in *Carmen* and Crespel in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*. In his twelfth consecutive season with San Francisco Opera, the bass-baritone has appeared here in over 30 different operas since his 1985 debut in *Adriana Lecouvreur*. Among the numerous roles he has sung with the Company are Ferrando in *Il Trovatore*, Méphistophélès in the student/family performances of *Faust*, Lorenzo in *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* and Count Horn (Sam) in *Un Ballo in Maschera*. During the 1995 season he appeared here as the Bonze in *Madama Butterfly*, Wagner in *Faust*, the Water Spirit in *Rusalka*, and was seen this summer as Colline in *La Bohème*. The artist was a 1985 Merola Opera Program participant and went on to tour with Western Opera Theater in the title role of *Don Giovanni*. A 1986-87 Adler Fellow, he appeared in several of the Center's Showcase productions and was a 1990 Schwabacher Debut Recitalist. In recent seasons Skinner sang King Philip in *Don Carlo* with Portland Opera, Timur in *Turandot* with Atlanta Opera, Colline and Ferrando with Dallas Opera, Angelotti in *Tosca* and the First Workman in *Wozzeck* with the Chicago Lyric Opera, made his Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie debut in *Salome*, and appeared as the Commendatore in *Don Giovanni* at the Opéra de Nantes. He has also performed with the opera companies of Houston (title role of *Le Nozze di Figaro* and the four villains of *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*), Seattle, Vancouver, Toronto, Edmonton, and Melbourne, Australia, among others, as well as with numerous prominent U.S. orchestras. The American artist, currently a resident of the Bay Area, graduated from Northwestern University and received his master's degree from Indiana University. Later this year, Skinner will be a soloist with the San Francisco Symphony in Handel's *Messiah*.



1996 Adler Fellow **JOHN AUTRY**, who made his Company debut this summer as Schaunard in *La Bohème* and portrayed Pasquale in the Opera Center's '96 Showcase production of *The Aspern Papers*, performs during the 1996-97 season in *Hamlet*, *Lohengrin*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *Carmen*, *Harvey Milk*, and *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*. In 1994, he made his New York City Opera debut as Figaro in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, a role he repeated on that company's 1995 national tour of the same production. Additional recent engagements include Dr. Malatesta in *Don Pasquale* with Birmingham Opera Theater, Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly* with Shreveport Opera, as well as Ping in *Turandot* and Benoit in *La Bohème* with Palm Beach Opera. As a member of the 1995 Merola Opera Program he sang the roles of the Viceroy in *La Périochole* and Antonio in *Le Nozze di Figaro*. A native of Birmingham, Alabama, the baritone received his bachelor of music degree from Samford University and continues his studies at Boston University and Philadelphia's Academy of Vocal Arts. A 1994 National Winner in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, Autry had also won awards at vocal competitions in Palm Beach, Birmingham and Mobile. Most recently, the young artist was the recipient of a career grant from Opera Index.



In his debut season with San Francisco Opera, 1996 Adler Fellow **STUART SKELTON** performs a number of roles, appearing in *Hamlet*, *Lohengrin*, *Carmen*, *Harvey Milk*, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, *Salome* and *Aida*. The tenor made his operatic debut in his native Australia as Alfredo in *La Traviata* with Rockdale Opera Company. The winner of two of Australia's most prestigious competitions, the Marianne Mathy Award and the McDonald's Aria Award, he made his 1993 Australian Opera debut in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. Skelton recently received his master of music degree from the University of Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music where his credits included Sam Polk in *Susannah*, Don José in scenes from *Carmen*, and Peter Quint in *The Turn of the Screw*. Concert engagements include highlights from *Madama Butterfly* and *La Traviata* with the Louisville Symphony Orchestra, and the Verdi Requiem with Lubbock Symphony Orchestra. A 1995 Merola Opera Program participant, he appeared as Piquillo in *La Périochole* as well as Don Basilio and Don Curzio in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, repeating his Figaro roles for Western Opera Theater's 1995 national tour. Skelton most recently portrayed the composer Aspern in San Francisco Opera Center's Showcase production of Dominick Argento's *The Aspern Papers*, a West Coast premiere.



Bass-baritone **BOJAN KNEŽEVIĆ** appears with the Company during the 1996-97 season in *Hamlet*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* and *Salome*. He recently portrayed Benoit and Alcindoro in San Francisco Opera's production of *La Bohème* and sang the role of the Painter in San Francisco Opera Center's Showcase '96 presentation of *The Aspern Papers*. A 1995 Adler Fellow with the Opera Center, he appeared in his first season with the Company last fall as Marquis d'Obigny in *La Traviata*, Don Magnifico in the student matinee production of *La Cenerentola*, and as the Hunter in *Rusalka*. A native of Belgrade, he received his bachelor's and master's degrees from the Academy of Music in Novi Sad, and has performed with the National Theatre in Novi Sad, as well as in Zagreb and Belgrade. As a three-year member of the Merola Opera Program (1992-94), he performed in Merola stagings of *La Bohème* (Schaunard), *Falstaff* (Pistola), *Die Fledermaus* (Frosch), and *Don Giovanni* (Leporello). He repeated the roles of Schaunard, Frosch and Leporello for Western Opera Theater's national tours. The young artist's credits also include Marcello in *La Bohème* and Leporello with Virginia Opera; Carnegie Hall performances of Mozart's *Coronation Mass* and Great Mass in C Minor as well as the U.S. premiere of Mascagni's *Silvano* (available on CD); and being a soloist in the Company's 1995 United Nations 50th Anniversary Concert. Earlier this year he appeared as Leporello with the Minnesota Opera and as Escamillo in *Carmen* to inaugurate the new opera house in Fort Worth. Future plans include Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte* for Minnesota Opera and Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly* with New Jersey Opera.



JOHN RELYEA performs roles in *Hamlet*, *Lohengrin*, *Harvey Milk*, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* and *Salome*. A 1996 Adler Fellow, he recently made his San Francisco Opera debut as Colline in *La Bohème* and appeared as Barelli in the Opera Center's Showcase '96 production of *The Aspern Papers*. The artist made his 1991 operatic debut in *Die Zauberflöte* with Opera Atelier of Toronto (the bass-baritone's native city), and subsequently appeared as the Police Sergeant in *The Pirates of Penzance* with Vancouver Opera. At the age of 24, he has already been a featured soloist with many of Canada's major symphony orchestras including the Toronto Symphony, Orchestre Symphonique de Québec, National Arts Centre Orchestra in Ottawa, and the Calgary Philharmonic. As a member of the 1995 Merola Opera Program, Relyea portrayed Bartolo in *Le Nozze di Figaro* (the role he also sang on Western

ARTIST PROFILES

Opera Theater's national tour) and was the recipient of the prestigious Schwabacher Family Award at the Grand Finals Concert. He recently completed his bachelor of music degree at Philadelphia's Curtis Institute of Music, where he performed roles in *Die Fledermaus*, *Le Nozze di Figaro* and *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*.



STEVEN MERCURIO, conductor, led the new production of *La Bohème* for the Company this past summer. He is currently music director of the Spoleto Festival in Italy, where he has conducted, among others, Menotti's *Goya*, Puccini's *Il Trittico*, Berg's *Wozzeck*, and Shostakovich's *The Nose*. He has led 12 productions at the Opera Company of Philadelphia (where he was principal conductor for four seasons), including *Rusalka*, *Cavalleria Rusticana*/Pagliacci, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Turandot* (with his own edition of the closing duet and finale), *Rigoletto*, *Eugene Onegin* and Menotti's *The Saint of Bleeker Street*. Among other highlights are the recently televised Richard Tucker Foundation Gala; Zemlinsky's *The Birthday of the Infanta* at the Spoleto Festival USA (U.S. premiere) and the Rome Opera (Italian premiere); *Andrea Chénier* with Seattle Opera; *Turandot* and *La Cenerentola* for Washington Opera; Barber's *Vanessa* for the Dallas Opera; *Ermione* in Brussels; *La Bohème*, *Otello* and *La Traviata* for Opera Pacific; *Tosca* with Michigan Opera Theatre; *Un Ballo in Maschera* at Pittsburgh Opera; a new staging of *La Traviata* for the Bonn Staatsoper; and *La Traviata* for his San Francisco Opera debut last fall. Additionally, he has led concerts with the Minnesota Orchestra, Monte Carlo Opera Orchestra, Stockholm Chamber Orchestra, the Royal Philharmonic of Flanders, Netherlands Radio Orchestra, Sacramento Symphony, and the Brooklyn Philharmonic, where he was associate conductor for three seasons under Lukas Foss. As a composer, his repertoire includes songs, chamber works, and pieces for large orchestra. Mercurio's composition, *For Lost Loved Ones*, was given its 1991 world premiere by Zubin Mehta and the New York Philharmonic. Recordings include *Goya* and the best-selling *Voices of Light*, a new oratorio composed by Richard Einhorn.



CHRISTOPHER ALDEN, the stage director of *Harvey Milk* and *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, has enjoyed a long and successful association with San Francisco Opera. He began his directing career with Western Opera Theater's 1975 production of *The Tales of Hoffmann*, subsequently staging a WOT *L'Elisir d'Amore*, the acclaimed U.S. premieres of Reimann's *The Ghost Sonata* for the Opera Center and Henze's *Das Verratene Meer* for the main Company, the West Coast premiere of Argento's *The Aspern Papers* for the Opera Center, the 1993 season-opening production of *I Vespri Siciliani*, and last fall's revival

of *La Cenerentola*. Alden has staged productions for the New York City Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Seattle Opera, Wolf Trap, Santa Fe Opera, Washington Opera, Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Dallas Opera, Los Angeles Music Center Opera, Basel Opera, the Opéra-Comique in Paris, New Israeli Opera, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the London Sinfonietta, Michigan Opera Theater, Opera Omaha, Connecticut Grand Opera, Fort Worth Opera, the American Music Theater Festival, New York Shakespeare Festival, Opera Memphis and Opera at the Academy, among others. Recent highlights include a new staging of *Turandot* for Welsh National Opera, Scottish Opera and English National Opera, *Boris Godunov* and *The Turk in Italy* for Long Beach Opera, a new production of *Idomeneo* in Geneva, *Der Fliegende Holländer* for the Canadian Opera Company, *Cavalleria Rusticana*/Pagliacci and *Madama Butterfly* for the New Israeli Opera, as well as the world premiere of *Harvey Milk* for Houston Grand Opera and New York City Opera. Upcoming engagements include *L'Italiana in Algeri* for Glimmerglass Opera and New York City Opera, *La Traviata* for the New Israeli Opera, and the premiere of Stewart Wallace and Michael Korie's *Hopper's Wife* in New York City and Long Beach.



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

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



MARIA BJØRNSON was born in Paris of Norwegian/Rumanian parentage and studied at London's Central School of Design. After creating her first designs for Glasgow's Citizens' Theatre, she has designed for numerous theaters including Dublin's Abbey Theatre, The Place in London, and the Royal Shakespeare Company at Stratford-upon-Avon (*Hamlet*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Tempest*, *Measure for Measure*, and Congreve's *The Way of the World*). Her first design work for the opera stage was with Scottish Opera, where her credits include *Die Zauberflöte*, *Die Meistersinger*,

and the acclaimed Janáček cycle (co-produced with Welsh National Opera). Her designs for *The Cunning Little Vixen* can be seen on the BBC-TV recording. Her work has also been seen at the English National Opera (*The Queen of Spades*, *Die Walküre*, *Carmen*), Royal Opera at Covent Garden (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, *Der Rosenkavalier*), Netherlands Opera, Australian Opera, Geneva Opera, Houston Grand Opera and the Komische Oper in Berlin. Recent assignments have included designs for *Mahagonny* (Maggio Musicale Festival), *Così fan tutte* (Glyndebourne Festival), *The Blue Angel* (Royal Shakespeare Company), and new productions of *Katya Kabanova* and *The Sleeping Beauty* for both the Royal Opera and Royal Ballet at Covent Garden. Miss Bjørnson's work has received many honors including the Gold Medal from the Prague Biennale. Her most recent design awards have been for Andrew Lloyd Webber's *The Phantom of the Opera* and Stephen Sondheim's *Follies*.

ARTIST PROFILES



ZACK BROWN designed the sets and costumes for *Prince Igor*, the settings for *Lohengrin*, and selected principal costumes for *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*. He made his 1979 San Francisco Opera debut with the sets and costumes for *La Gioconda*. That nationally telecast, Emmy-award-winning production was repeated on the stage of the War Memorial in 1983 and '88. Additional Company credits have been *Le Nozze di Figaro* ('82, '86, '91), *La Forza del Destino* ('92), and Rossini's *Otello* ('94). As resident designer for the Washington Opera, Brown has created the sets and costumes for over 40 productions, including *La Bohème*, *Un*

Ballo in Maschera, *The Merry Widow* and D'Albert's *Tiefland*. He has also created designs for, among other companies, the Metropolitan Opera (*Rigoletto*), Houston Grand Opera, Santa Fe Opera, New York City Opera, Wolf Trap, and the Hamburg Staatsoper. On Broadway, Brown designed scenery and costumes for the Tony-award-winning revival of *On Your Toes*. Among his 14 productions for New York's Circle in the Square Theater, his scenery for Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* and his costumes for *Saint Joan* won nominations for Tony and Drama Desk awards, respectively. Classical dance designs include *Gaîté Parisienne* and *Jardin aux Lilas* for the American Ballet Theatre and a full evening of Ravel, *Trilogy*, for the Hamburg Ballet. In addition, his costume designs were seen in a five-part television mini-series of O'Neill's *Mourning Becomes Electra*. Much of his work is seen regularly at the Arena Stage in Washington, D.C., including *Of Thee I Sing*, *Candide*, *Twelfth Night* and *On the Town*.



Lighting Director and Design Consultant for San Francisco Opera since 1976, **THOMAS J. MUNN** created the lighting for *Prince Igor*, *Lohengrin*, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, *Die Fledermaus*, *Salome* and *Aida*. He has designed the lighting and special effects for more than 155 productions for the Company, including the recent *La Bohème* and last fall's stagings of *Ruslan and Lyudmila*, *La Traviata*, *Madama Butterfly*, *La Cenerentola*, *Faust* and *Die Walküre*. As scenic adviser, he has designed scenery for SFO productions of *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, *Roberto Devereux*, *Pelléas et Mélisande*, *Billy Budd*, *Nabucco*, *Don Giovanni* and *Christophe Colomb*. In addition to his work for the San Francisco Opera, Munn has designed scenery and lighting for Broadway, Off-Broadway, regional theater, ballet, industrials and films. His television and video credits include San Francisco Opera productions of *La Gioconda*, *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, Netherlands Opera and Hartford Ballet. 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." He continues to serve as consultant/designer of the War Memorial's new renovated and computerized lighting system.

Remembering Prentis Cobb Hale 1910–1996

On February 16th, the San Francisco Opera Association lost one of its most prominent and long-standing members. Prentis Cobb Hale, whose family can trace support of the Company all the way back to its inception, served as Vice President of the Association beginning in 1955, President from 1967 to 1970, and Member of the Executive Committee from 1971 to 1996. In addition, his input was valued on the Boards of the San Francisco Symphony, American Red Cross, San Francisco Museum of Art, Institute of Philosophical Research, California State Chamber of Commerce, and the Tax Foundation. He was also on the Board of Trustees of the War Memorial of San Francisco.

A familiar figure on opening night as well as subsequent performances, he was a prominent member of the City's social set, belonging to over a dozen clubs. His business career included directorships of nine major corporations.

He will be sorely missed by all members of the San Francisco Opera family.



Prentis and Denise Hale attending San Francisco Opera's Opening Night in 1992.

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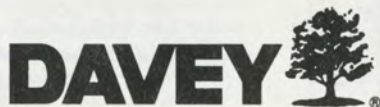


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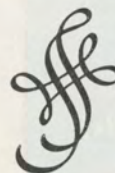
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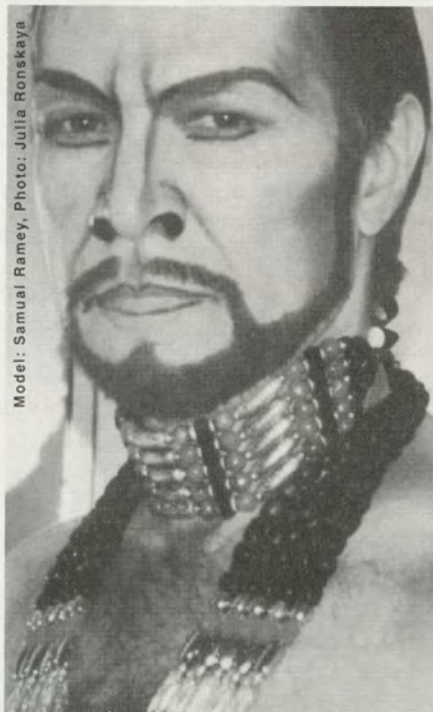
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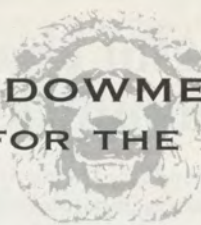
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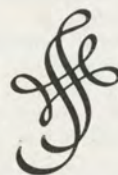
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Although space limitations do not allow us to list all our generous supporters, we wish to acknowledge and pay tribute to the many individuals who helped meet our annual budget needs through gifts under \$1,500.

For information on becoming a Merola member, please call 415/565-3235.

SERVICES

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. Phone charge: (415) 864-3330, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Saturday (VISA, American Express, Master Card). Orpheum Theatre and Civic Auditorium Box Offices: Open two hours before each performance through the first intermission.

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

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

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

For **Lost and Found** information, please inquire at the theater's check-room.

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

Wheelchair accessible restrooms, public telephones and drinking fountains are located on all floors of the Civic Auditorium except the third floor, which is not for public use.

The Orpheum Theatre is equipped with a **Sennheiser Infrared Listening System** by Sound Associates, Inc. Patrons may obtain personal headsets with individual volume controls in the main lobby.

For the safety and comfort of our audience, all large **parcels, backpacks, luggage, etc., must be checked** at the Civic Auditorium and Orpheum Theatre cloak-rooms.

Opera glasses are available in the lobby.

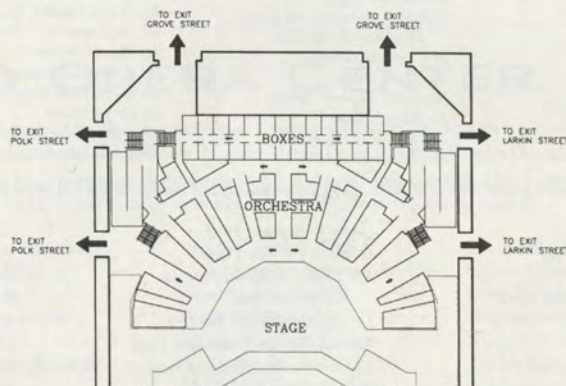
No cameras, tape recorders or cellular phones are permitted in the Orpheum Theatre and the Civic Auditorium.

Children of any age attending a performance must have a ticket.

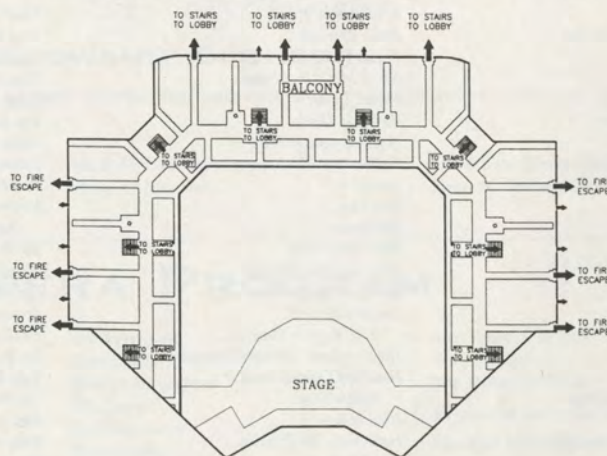
Patrons, Attention Please! Fire Notice: There are sufficient exits in these buildings to accommodate the entire audience. The exit indicated by the lighted "EXIT" sign nearest your seat is the shortest route to the street. (Refer to Diagrams.) In case of fire, please do not run—walk through that exit.

San Francisco Opera - Bill Graham Civic Auditorium

Ground Floor



Balcony



Please note the nearest exit. In an emergency, WALK, do not run, to the nearest exit.

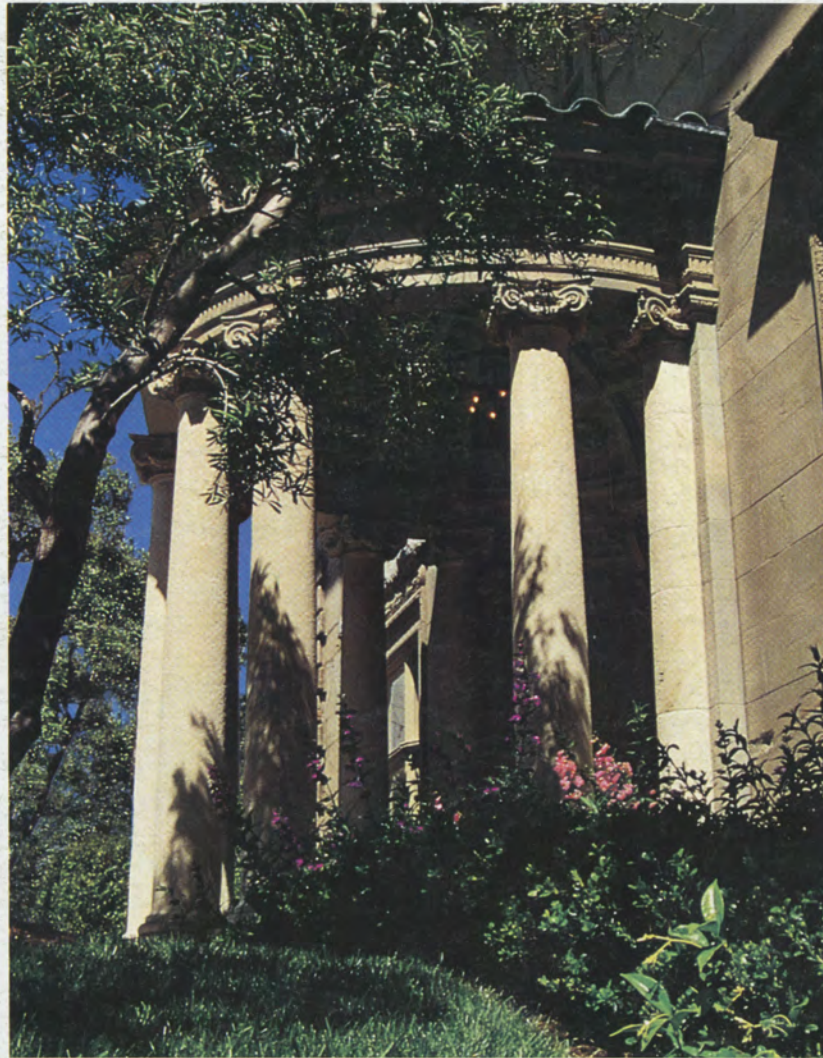


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REJOICE WE BELIEVE WE SING WE CELEBRATE
WE DECK THE HALLS WE HOPE WE GIVE WE LOVE
WE ADORE WE ACCENTUATE **WE SPARKLE** WE
PERSONALIZE WE SHARE WE CAPTIVATE WE
EMBRACE WE HAVE WE HOLD WE DELIGHT WE
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