

Lohengrin

1996

Saturday, September 28, 1996 7:00 PM

Tuesday, October 1, 1996 7:00 PM

Friday, October 4, 1996 7:00 PM

Sunday, October 6, 1996 1:00 PM

Wednesday, October 9, 1996 7:00 PM

Saturday, October 12, 1996 7:00 PM

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SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

1996-97 SEASON

LOHENGRIN



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

Lohengrin

1996-97 Season
Vol. 74, No. 4

FEATURES

10 Woman of the Future, or Silly Goose? by Andrew Porter

Along with pertinent facts regarding Wagner's *Lohengrin*, the author provides a closer look at the opera's central characters, particularly that of Elsa of Brabant.

34 Hungarians—in the Netherlands? by Malcolm Mosher, Jr.

While separating historical *Lohengrin* facts from myth and fiction, the writer provides a fascinating look at 10th-century Europe.

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COVER

O'Keefe, Georgia, 1887-1886
Lake George (formerly *Reflection Seascape*), 1922

Oil on canvas; 16¼ x 22 in.
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
Gift of Charlotte Mack

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*San Francisco Opera debut

(continued on page 6)

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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, Condly, 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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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
Civic Auditorium
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Woman of the Future, or Silly Goose?

STROHMEYER

MUSINGS ABOUT LOHENGRIN

Astrid Varnay as Elsa in San Francisco Opera's 1946 presentation of *Lohengrin*. Seated behind her is Margaret Harshaw (Ortrud); standing next to Harshaw is George Czaplicki (Telramund).

By ANDREW PORTER

IF THE TITLE STRIKES YOU AS ODD, let me put it another way: "Was Elsa right, or wrong, to pop the fatal question?" That's a question that exercised Wagner himself and has exercised generations of prima donnas who have sung Elsa. The first Elsa at the Met—in their inaugural season, in 1883—was the Swedish soprano Christine Nilsson. She sang the opera in Italian. So did Emma Albani, the Canadian soprano who was Covent Garden's first Elsa, in 1875.

The first Bayreuth Elsa, in 1894, was the Maine-born soprano Lillian Nordica. Cosima Wagner had engaged her on the recommendation of Hans Richter, who had heard her at Covent Garden. There was some pre-

liminary German grumbling at the engagement of an American for this most Nordic of heroines, but—helped perhaps by her name—Nordica had a great success. (The *Lohengrin*, incidentally, was Belgian, Ernest van Dyck, and the Ortrud was English, Marie Brema.) At a Wahnfried reception given by Cosima Wagner, the young American prima donna shyly approached the great Lilli Lehmann, in admiration, and said "May I come to see you, Mme Lehmann?" Lehmann turned and in tones that chilled the room said, "I'm not taking any *pupils* this season!"

Emma Albani and Lillian Nordica, by all accounts, sang the role with great beauty

and lyricism, attentive to the utterance of the words—in the spirit and with the vocal accomplishment that George Bernard Shaw praised when, after hearing Adelina Patti sing Elisabeth's Prayer in the Albert Hall, in 1894, he wrote that she "attacks the air with the single aim of making it sound as beautiful as possible, and, this being precisely what Wagner's own musical aim was, she goes straight to the right phrasing, the right vocal touch, and the right turn of every musical figure, thus making her German rivals not only appear in comparison clumsy as singers, but actually obtuse as to Wagner's meaning." He went on to observe that if a Wagner phrase is sung as beautifully as

Andrew Porter, for twenty years music critic of The New Yorker, now writes for Opera and the London Observer. Five volumes of his New Yorker reviews have been published, and his translations of The Ring, Tristan, and Parsifal have been widely performed.

possible, "it simply cannot take the wrong expression"; and that if Patti were to choose to undertake Isolde, then, though she might introduce "Home, Sweet Home" into the first act, and "The Last Rose of Summer" into the second, "the public might yet learn a good deal about Isolde from her that they would never learn from the illustrious band of German Wagner heroines who are queens at Bayreuth, but who cannot sing a *gruppetto* for all that."

Later that year, Shaw was one of those who heard Nordica's Elsa at Bayreuth. And in his review he wrote: "The moment she began, the sound of real singing so enchanted the Germans that it set them all singing too; we all shouted for joy." I want to stay with Shaw a moment longer. His remark that if Wagner is sung as beautifully as possible "it simply cannot take the wrong expression" invites us to stop fretting and let the music speak for itself. But, reviewing that first Bayreuth *Lohengrin*, with Nordica, he also wrote:

It must never be forgotten, in judging the Lohengrin drama, that Wagner himself was perplexed about the ending, tried more than one version of it, and finally, after the work was out of his hands for good, saw that the real flaw in the story is that Elsa is perfectly right in refusing to keep the monstrous condition imposed on her by Lohengrin, and that the drama, in representing her as a weak woman who breaks her word and fails in her duty, is perfectly wrong.

The opera *Lohengrin* has a historical background: King Henry the Fowler's visit to Antwerp in 932 AD to enlist Brabantine allies in his forthcoming war with Hungary, since the nine-year truce with that country was coming to an end. Wagner took trouble over the historical details of costumes, of settings, of behavior, of which armies would have horses and which wouldn't. That's the background; and it's not an unimportant, merely picturesque and Meyerbeerian historical background, since one subject of the opera is the arrival of a supernatural force into a solidly and realistically portrayed real world. (For that reason, wholly fairytale presentations of the opera, such as the Rhapsody in Blue that Wieland Wagner so memorably presented in Bayreuth, can't do full justice to the work, though they can be marvelously, memorably revealing of important aspects.)

In the foreground there are two or three linked dramas. One is of human relations, about a woman's unquestioning faith in her husband, and the undermining of that faith by another woman who has established an

unnatural dominance over *her* husband. Another is the legend of the knight who comes to the rescue of a damsel in distress: Perseus and Andromeda; St. George and the dragon-threatened princess. And the third is the tragedy of the supernatural being and the human being who fall in love—a tragedy sometimes averted, though not in *Lohengrin*, even if for a while Wagner considered a possible happy ending.

The last theme, of course, is recurrent in Wagner. His first opera, *Die Feen* (*The Fairies*)—an influence on Strauss's *Frau ohne Schatten*—tells of the supernatural Ada who agrees to marry the mortal king Arindal . . . on condition that he never ask about her identity. He does ask . . . but after various tribulations love is triumphant, and Arindal leaves with Ada to reign in the fairy world. Similarly, Wagner did consider—but not for long—allowing Elsa and Lohengrin to leave together at the end in the magic boat, sublimated as crown prince and crown princess of Montsalvat. In *The Flying Dutchman*, the lovers are a supernatural male and a mortal woman, and the close is not a tragedy but—if the stage director follows the composer's directions—an apotheosis with Senta and the redeemed Dutchman ascending together into a radiant sky. *Tannhäuser* opens with a mortal poet in the arms of an immortal goddess, recalling Ulysses in the cave of Calypso.

Lohengrin might be called the definitive treatment of the theme; but we mustn't forget, later, the doomed love between the god-fathered heroine Brünnhilde and the human hero Siegfried. (Admittedly, Siegfried is semi-divine by ancestry; his grandfather—he had only one—is a god; his grandmother—again, only one, a mortal woman. But the dramatic point is that he's a human hero achieving what gods are forbidden to do.) Finally, there's the encounter of the human Parsifal with the enchantress Kundry and with the supernatural kingdom of the Grail, into which at last he is drawn . . . to become in time Lohengrin's father!

Into this nexus of incompatible loves across barriers of birth and caste, we can draw the story of the Little Mermaid, of Dvořák's *Rusalka*, of *Swan Lake*, of Stravinsky's *The Fairy's Kiss*. And, by extension, they can be regarded as mythical paradigms of the real-life Prince and the Showgirl stories; Princess and the Swineherd stories; and the stories of the patrician and the prostitute: Verdi's *La Traviata*, Massenet's *Sapho*, Puccini's *La Rondine*. In another way, they can also be linked with the myths about the creative artist (or anyone, for that matter) striving for some unattainable ideal . . . But now I'm falling into the danger of generalizing, of lumping too many things together into the same box—a danger that Wagner, with specific reference to *Lohengrin*, warned against.

Myths can mean many things, we know, and symbols can signify many things, but they do have *some* limits of applicability. *Lohengrin* is more than an allegory of Wagner the genius married to Minna Planer, tied to a wife who doesn't understand him, and from whom he expects unquestioning devotion. (Cosima was still well in the future.) And it's still more than an allegory of Wagner the artist immensely superior to, and of a different nature from, all those around him, yet yearning in some way to become part of the world of common men. (Though I wouldn't deny that some elements along those lines played a part in its making.) *Lohengrin*, however, is more ➤

San Francisco Opera's first production of *Lohengrin* took place in 1931. Between acts, most of the principals dutifully lined up for the photographer backstage: (L. to r.) Friedrich Schorr (Telramund), Maria Müller (Elsa), Gotthelf Pistor (Lohengrin), Louis D'Angelo (King), and Arnold Gabor (Herald.)





PETERS

Our *Lohengrin* titular hero in 1965 was Jess Thomas, shown here holding a sword over the downed Telramund of Chester Ludgin.

specifically linked to those versions of the basic myth in which happiness, despite differences of origin and nature, *can* be possible...provided some condition is fulfilled. Trouble is, it's nearly always an impossible condition. It's the story of *Die Feen*, as I remarked. It's the story of Cupid and Psyche, of Jupiter and Semele, of *Die schöne Melusine*. The Semele story has its second woman, the Ortrud figure, instilling doubt in the heroine's mind. The motivations are different, of course: Juno is jealous of her husband's new mistress, young and pretty, and contrives her downfall, whereas Ortrud isn't hot for Lohengrin but merely jealous of Elsa's happiness and political success, and ambitious to place her own husband and herself upon the throne of Brabant. But as instigators of action leading to the dénouement, they play similarly dynamic roles—[Ortrud being] the jealous mezzo-soprano who, like Princess Eboli or Amneris, precipitates the tragedy.

Here I throw in two little asides. First, Wagner considered Ortrud a dramatic-soprano role—like Fricka, like Venus in *Tannhäuser*, like Kundry—and it's only in fairly modern times that it's become a mezzo near-monopoly. (The greatest Ortrud I've heard was Astrid Varnay, a great Brünnhilde and Isolde.) Second, a reminder that most decisions are made for more than one reason. Wagner claimed that Ortrud was all

Traviata and *Otello* without one. But, once the idea of adding Ortrud had occurred to him, he must have realized on some level that, besides being an enrichment of the myth, she was a most useful theatrical and dramatic element that would contribute to the opera's success. Wagner broke happily with the conventions when the work demanded it; like Verdi, he was happy to employ them when they *also* served his higher artistic purpose.

Die Meistersinger and *Lohengrin* were almost simultaneously conceived, one summer at Marienbad, though their births were separated by many years. In 1845 Wagner, music director at the Dresden Opera, had finished *Tannhäuser*, and preparations were in hand for its performance. He went to Marienbad for a holiday, and as holiday reading he took along Wolfram von Eschenbach's epic poem *Parzival* (Wolfram von Eschenbach, you remember, is an actual character in *Tannhäuser*). In the closing pages of *Parzival* he found, briefly told, the story of *Parzival*'s son Lohengrin. Years earlier, in Paris, he had come across the subject, and, he said, "a whole new world opened out before me, though I could not yet see the form in which to cast this *Lohengrin*." His doctor had ordered him to rest while he took the spa cure. Instead, at Marienbad "there suddenly sprang up before my eyes a *Lohengrin* complete in every detail of dra-

WOMAN OF THE FUTURE?

his own invention, and so—if we look at the traditional *Lohengrin* material in the old poems—she was. But she does have that precedent in the Semele legend; and from a practical and musical point of view she rounds out the traditional cast of five in a romantic grand opera: soprano, mezzo (or, if you like, darker and deeper soprano), tenor, baritone, and bass—as in *Tannhäuser*, in Weber's *Euryanthe*, in Verdi's *Trovatore*, *Don Carlos*, and *Aida*. I'm not suggesting that this is the *main* reason for the addition of Ortrud to the story. Wagner composed *The Flying Dutchman* without a second leading woman; and Verdi composed *La*

matic form, in particular the saga of the swan, which forms so significant a feature of a whole complex of myths." He'd been told to rest. Well, he thought, maybe thinking about a *comic* opera will help me to keep my mind off *Lohengrin*; and so he planned *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* and sketched out its libretto. No sooner was that done than *Lohengrin* came back at full strength. He went off to the baths one day, and then, in the words of his autobiography:

The moment I got into my bath at noon, I felt an overwhelming desire to write out *Lohengrin*; and this longing so overcame me that I couldn't wait the prescribed hour for the bath, but when only a few minutes had elapsed, jumped out and, barely giving myself time to dress, ran home to write out what I had in mind. I repeated this for several days until the complete sketch of *Lohengrin* was on paper.

Assertions in Wagner's autobiography tend nowadays to be taken with a grain of salt unless there is confirmatory evidence. Wagner, like Verdi, was a born dramatist who had an imaginative way of tidying and ordering and heightening his memories, remembering things as they ought to have been rather than as they actually were. They should not be dismissed on that account, however, for in matters of art a creator's what-we-might-call "poetic truths" may tell us as much about a work as strict historical accuracy can. Wagner's doctor gave him up as a bad case. Back in Dresden, the composer brought *Tannhäuser* to performance and then versified his *Lohengrin* prose sketch, and read it to a group of friends, among them Robert Schumann. Then he began composition. The full score was completed in April of 1848; later that year, in the Dresden theater, Wagner conducted the first-act finale in concert form. In 1849, he was exiled for political activity during the Dresden Revolution, and he settled in Switzerland, where he began to think about and then compose *The Ring*. *Lohengrin* was given its first performance in Weimar, under Liszt, in 1850. (It was hardly a grand performance; the orchestra numbered only 34!) Wagner, still banned from Germany, couldn't attend but, in correspondence with Liszt and with friends who attended the performance and wrote to him about it, he began to formulate some ideas about the opera and, particularly, about Elsa and her fatal curiosity to which, while composing the work, he had given perhaps unconscious expression.

The question of the ending had come up before. Hermann Franck, one of those present at the 1845 reading of the libretto, had ➤



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THOSE WHO APPRECIATE QUALITY ENJOY IT RESPONSIBLY.

thought that this ending, the abandonment of Elsa, was too cruel; he wanted Lohengrin to die. Wagner countered with another suggestion: "I sought a means by which Elsa could go off with Lohengrin, paying some sort of penance that would mean her withdrawal from the world." He rejected that idea, but he did try to throw some of the blame on Lohengrin, by returning to a notion sketched in the first prose draft. There it says: "Whoever is dedicated to the service of the Grail must forswear the love of woman: the King alone is permitted to take a wife." So Wagner added to his poem:

When first I saw you on that river bank
I felt my heart at once ablaze with love,
Deflected from the chaste service of
the Grail;
So now I must for ever make atonement,
Because I turned from God, and longed
for you.

In other words, although Lohengrin should indeed have come to Elsa's defense, having done so he shouldn't have married her! But then Wagner omitted those lines,

Singing the first Ortrud of her career, Leonie Rysanek electrified our *Lohengrin* performances in 1982.



SCHERL

and dropped that idea when he came to compose the opera. His written thoughts about *Lohengrin* found their fullest expression in 1851, after the Weimar premiere, in that long, important document *A Communication to My Friends*. The Flying Dutchman and Tannhäuser, he wrote, had each felt yearning for union with a woman who loves and admires and understands him. (Wagner himself, as I remarked earlier, was still married to the less than satisfactory Minna; she was with him on that Marienbad holiday.) Elsa now crowned a line of earlier heroines. There's been Senta, "the woman for whom the Flying Dutchman yearned, from out the ocean of his misery," and then Elisabeth, "the woman who, star-like, showed to Tannhäuser the way that led from the hot passions of the Venusberg up to Heaven"; and now there was Elsa, "the woman who drew Lohengrin from sunny heights to the depths of Earth's warm breast." And Wagner devotes a page of rhapsody to Elsa:

She is the Unconscious, the Undeliberate, the antithesis of Lohengrin's conscious, deliberate manhood. The nature of Woman came to ever clearer understanding in my inner mind. I succeeded in so completely transferring myself to this female principle that I came to an entire agreement with its utterance by my loving Elsa. I grew to find her so justified in the final outburst of her jealousy that from this very outburst I learned first to understand the purely-human element of love; and I suffered deep and actual grief—often welling over into tears—as I saw the tragic necessity of the parting. This woman who with clear foreknowledge rushes on to her doom, at Love's imperative behest, this woman who wakes from the thrill of worship into the full reality of Love, and by her destruction reveals its essence to him who had not yet fathomed it, this glorious woman before whom Lohengrin must vanish, because his nature was not able to understand her . . . I had found her now: Elsa the woman, previously understood by me, and understood at last . . . She made me a Revolutionary at one blow. She was the Spirit of the People, for whose re-

deeming hand I too, as man and as artist, had been yearning.

I think that answers our question, sort of; but perhaps a little more should be added. When I put these notions to a friend, she said, "All very well, but Elsa must have been something of a silly goose in the first place to agree to the monstrous condition Lohengrin imposes." Well, I replied, certain things in opera happen because they happen, because without them there'd be no opera. If Elsa had answered, "You must be joking, I could never agree to that," the opera would end at Act I. More seriously: she is hardly behaving in a rational way at this point. Dreamy at the best of times, she's now seen her most important dream come true: the savior knight in shining armor, imagined in a vision, has materialized before her; in a daze, she's ready to agree to just about anything. One might even say that in such circumstances Lohengrin takes unfair advantage of her; and that in Act II Ortrud helps to bring her to her senses.

I mentioned some famous Elsas of the past. Another most relevant is Olive Fremstad, a great Isolde and Brünnhilde (also a famous Fricka, Brangäne, and Venus), who first sang Elsa at the Met in 1909 and made her Met farewell in that role in 1915. She sang the role 27 times, but, in the words of her amanuensis, companion, and adorer Mary Watkins Cushing (whose *The Rainbow Bridge* is a classic of prima-donna life intimately observed), she was "rather out of sympathy with the weak and insipid character of the Duchess of Brabant." And so:

She battled tirelessly against the popular conception of the part that was so foreign to her own nature, and through an alchemy of mind and imagination actually succeeded in transmuting the weakness into a kind of strength. She created thereby an entirely new Elsa, poetically symbolic and enormously fascinating, especially to the women in the audience. Conscience-stricken housewives saw their own misdeeds reflected in the tragic implications of Elsa's curiosity, and doubtless made secret vows never again to look through their husbands' pockets or ask whiningly why their men had stayed so late at the office. Fremstad's Elsa received something at her hands which Wagner himself neglected to give this most colorless of his heroines. She became imbued with a kind of fiery tenderness and dignity which ennobled and made poignant the sufferings she seemed to have brought upon herself.

(continued on page 29)



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CAST

(in order of appearance)

The King's Herald David Okerlund†

Heinrich der Vogler Jan-Hendrik Rootering

Friedrich von Telramund Tom Fox

Ortrud Elizabeth Connell

Elsa von Brabant Karita Mattila

Lohengrin Ben Heppner
Chris Merritt (10/6, 12)

Nobles of Brabant Benoît Boutet
Stuart Skelton†
John Autry†
John Relyea†

Gottfried von Brabant John Melis

Saxon and Brabantian nobles, bridesmaids, pages, attendants

†1996 Adler Fellow

TIME AND PLACE: Early 10th-century Antwerp

ACT I

On the banks of the river Scheldt

INTERMISSION

ACT II

Scene 1 The courtyard of the palace

Scene 2 The front of the church

INTERMISSION

ACT III

Scene 1 The bridal chamber of the palace

Scene 2 On the banks of the river Scheldt

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TUESDAY, OCTOBER 1 AT 7:00
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 4 AT 7:00
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 6 AT 1:00
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 9 AT 7:00
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12 AT 7:00

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

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

SYNOPSIS

Lohengrin

ACT I

King Heinrich of Germany, in Antwerp to raise an army, calls on the Brabantian noble, Telramund, to explain why the country is wracked by strife. Telramund claims that his ward Elsa has murdered her brother Gottfried, the heir of Brabant. Convinced of Elsa's guilt, Telramund has given up his claim to her hand and married Ortrud. Elsa is summoned to defend herself and tells of a dream she has had of a knight who will be her champion and whom she will marry. Twice the herald calls on the knight to appear, but only after Elsa has added her prayer does Lohengrin arrive. He bids a sad farewell to the swan which has accompanied him and announces that he has come to vindicate Elsa and to be her husband — but that he will depart if ever Elsa should ask him his name or place of origin. Elsa agrees to these conditions. To establish her innocence, Lohengrin engages Telramund in single combat and emerges victorious.

ACT II

Scene 1—Telramund broods on his defeat at the hands of Lohengrin and blames Ortrud for ensnaring him in her plot. Ortrud defends herself and convinces Telramund that Lohengrin won the battle through sorcery. When Elsa appears, Ortrud appeals to her pagan gods for help. As Elsa offers her friendship and forgiveness, Ortrud begins to sow the seeds of doubt in the mind of the bride.

Scene 2—Joyful preparations are made for the wedding. As Elsa prepares to enter the cathedral with her bridal procession, Ortrud halts the festivities, claiming that the “nameless knight” is an impostor. Telramund accuses Lohengrin of sorcery. Elsa assures her champion of her faith, but the poison of doubt has begun its work. King Heinrich leads the couple into the cathedral.

ACT III

Scene 1—In their bridal chamber, as Lohengrin and Elsa declare their love for each other, Elsa's anxiety heightens. Seized by a growing need to know his identity, she begs him to reveal his name and origin. Suddenly Telramund and his henchmen invade the chamber, intending to kill Lohengrin. Telramund is slain by Lohengrin. Sadly leaving Elsa in the care of her attendants, Lohengrin orders the nobles to bear Telramund's body to the King and tells Elsa that he will meet her there to answer her questions.

Scene 2—As King Heinrich gathers the armies to prepare for the coming battle, Telramund's body is brought before him. When Elsa arrives, distraught and unable to speak, Lohengrin reveals Telramund's treachery. He declares that he is Lohengrin, son of Parsifal. As one of the sinless warriors who guard the Holy Grail, it is his duty to go forth into the world to defend those who are beset by evil. He announces that he was sent to be Elsa's champion and to restore the rightful ruler of Brabant to his throne. Elsa's promise having been broken, he must now return the guardianship of the Grail. Predicting victory for the King's forces, Lohengrin bids Elsa a sorrowful farewell as the swan which brought him again nears the shore. Ortrud rushes in declaring that the swan is in actuality Elsa's brother, Gottfried, on whom she has placed a spell. She rejoices over Elsa's betrayal of Lohengrin, the one man who could have broken the spell. Lohengrin prays and the swan vanishes; in its place stands Gottfried.

The performance of September 28th is sponsored by Fireman's Fund.

The performance of October 1st is designated in honor of
Mr. William W. Godward's membership in the Triple Gold Circle.

The performance of October 4th is designated in honor of
Harry J. Wagner's generous gift to San Francisco Opera's Pooled Income Fund.

The performance of October 12th is designated in honor of Annette Campbell-White
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Gerard Howland, *Civic Auditorium Project Designer*

Lohengrin

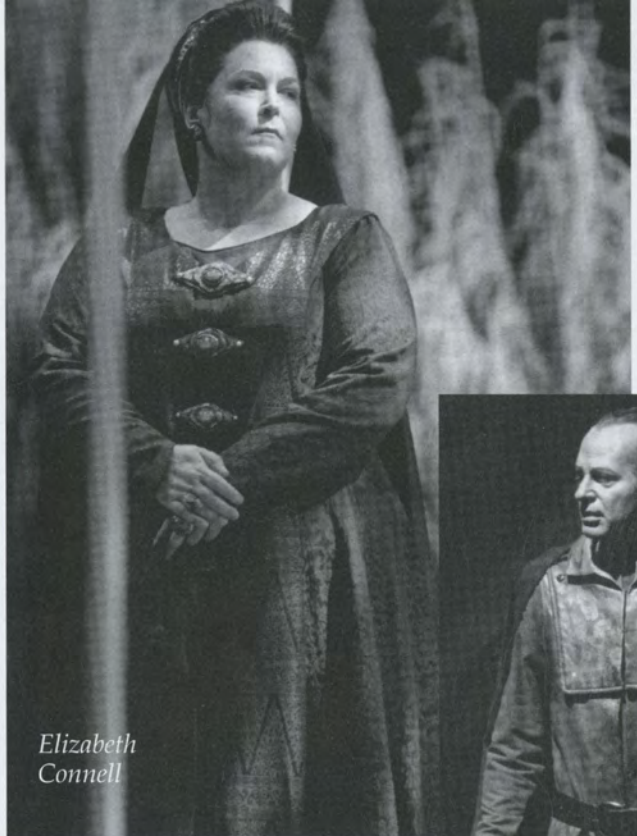
Photos taken in rehearsal by Marty Sohl



Act II Wedding Procession



Karita Mattila



*Elizabeth
Connell*



Tom Fox

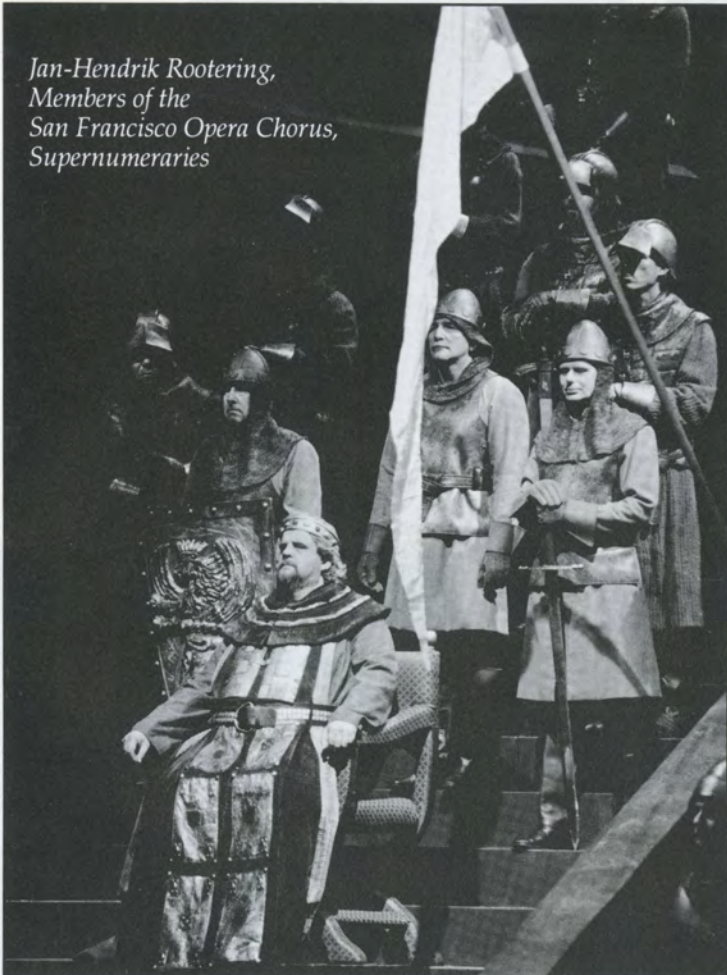


*John
Cassini*

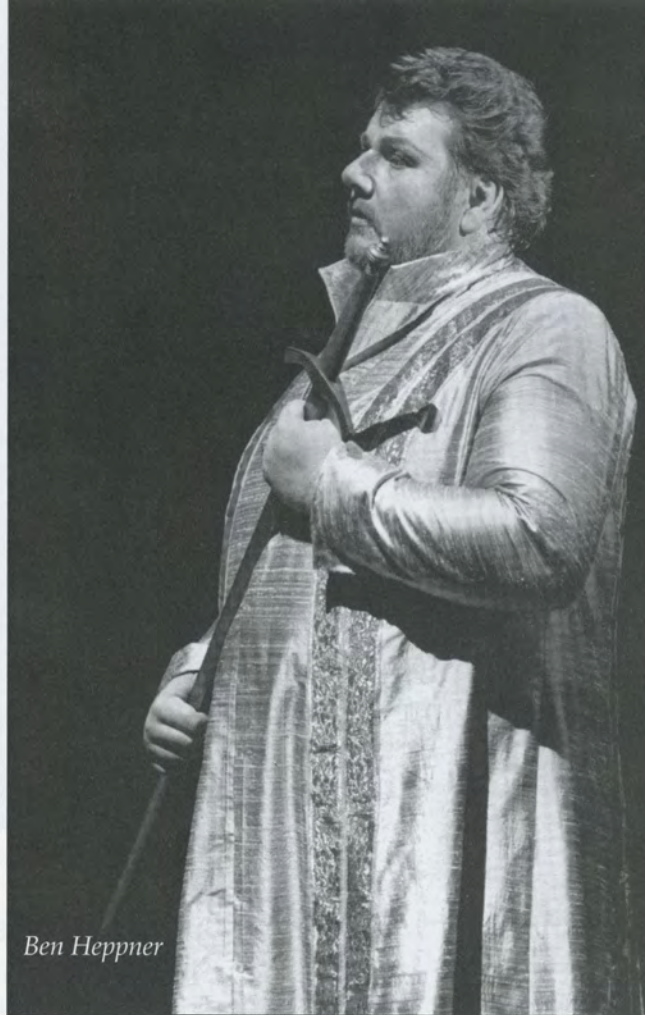
David Okerlund, Men of the San Francisco Opera Chorus



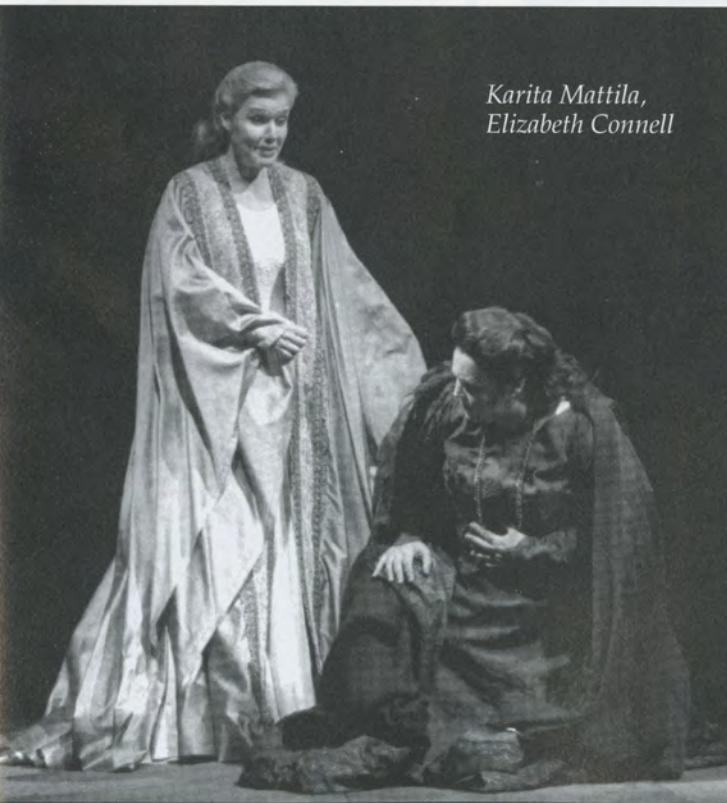
*Jan-Hendrik Rootering,
Members of the
San Francisco Opera Chorus,
Supernumeraries*



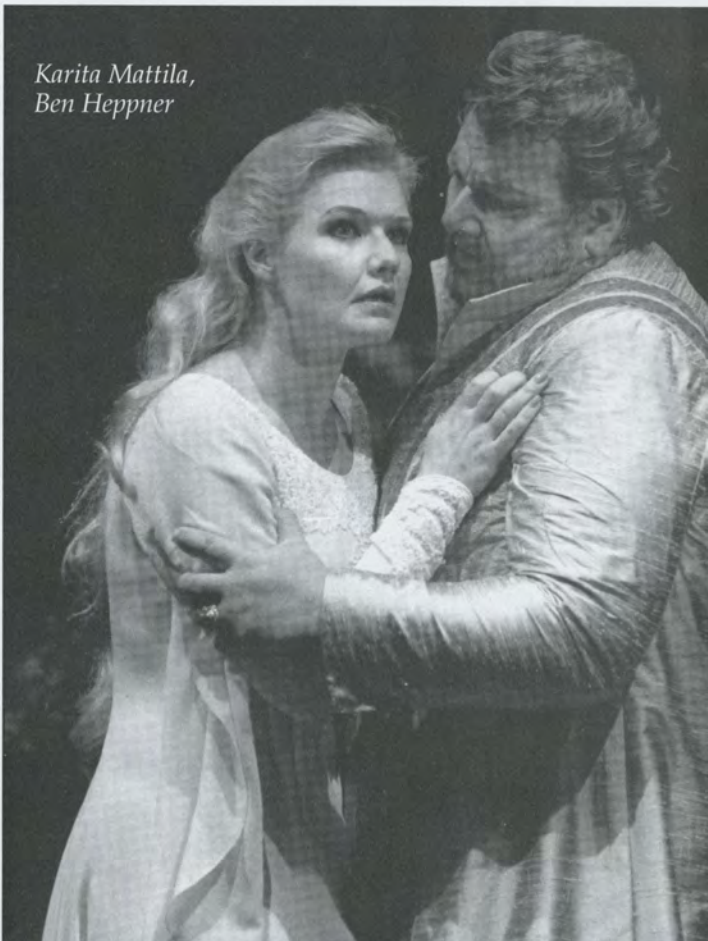
Ben Heppner



*Karita Mattila,
Elizabeth Connell*

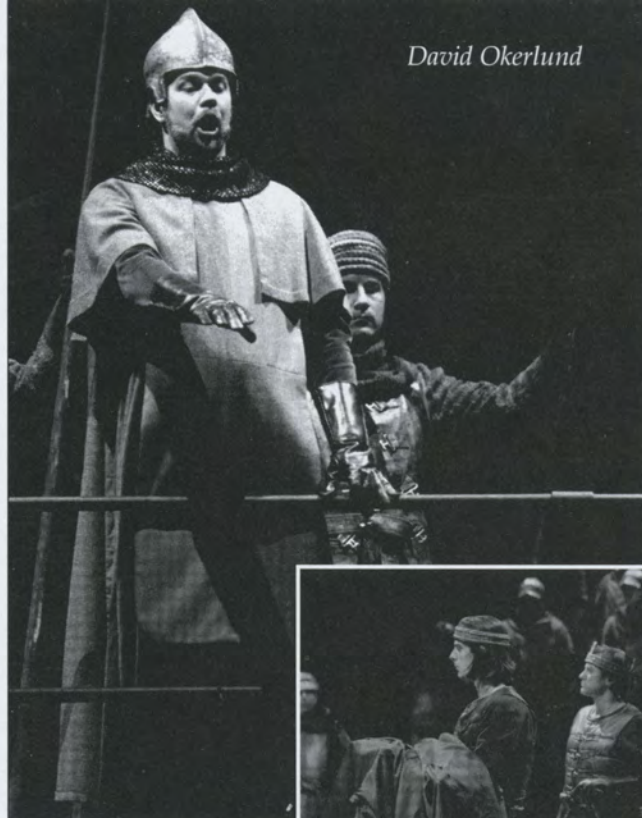


*Karita Mattila,
Ben Heppner*





Karita Mattila, Act III



David Okerlund



*L. to r.:
John Relyea,
Benoît Boutet,
John Autry,
Stuart Skelton*

Act II: Soloists, Men and Women of the San Francisco Opera Chorus



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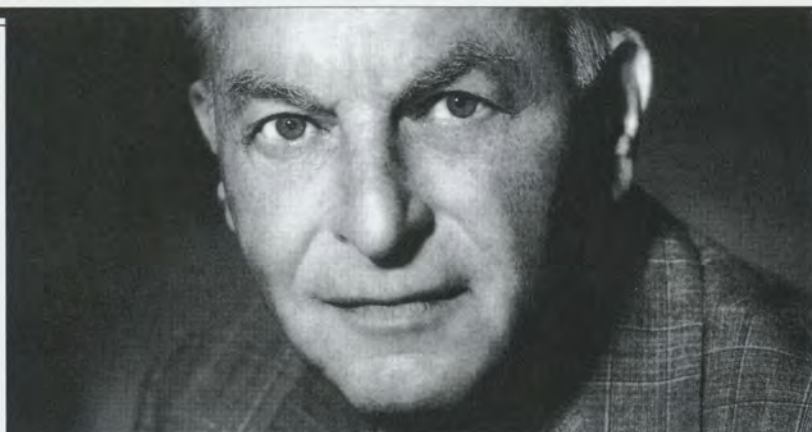
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WOMAN OF THE FUTURE?

(continued from p. 14)

There we have, mingled, a fiery artist's instinctively Wagnerian, transcendent approach to the role, together with an assessment of that approach made by one who evidently subscribed to the silly-geese view widely held at the time.

Finally: Wagner's own insistence, not only in regard to *Lohengrin*, that the only way to judge a work of music-drama is to experience it in the theater. Its meaning—its manifold meanings—cannot be discovered in the abstract. Composer and poet—in his case composer-poet—do their best. The consequent work of the conductor, the stage director, the scenic designer, the orchestra is very important. But in the last resort everything depends on the singers—on what, by their singing and their acting, they convey to an audience's understanding. On that note, I leave it to this evening's performers to answer the difficult questions about Elsa. ♦

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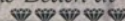
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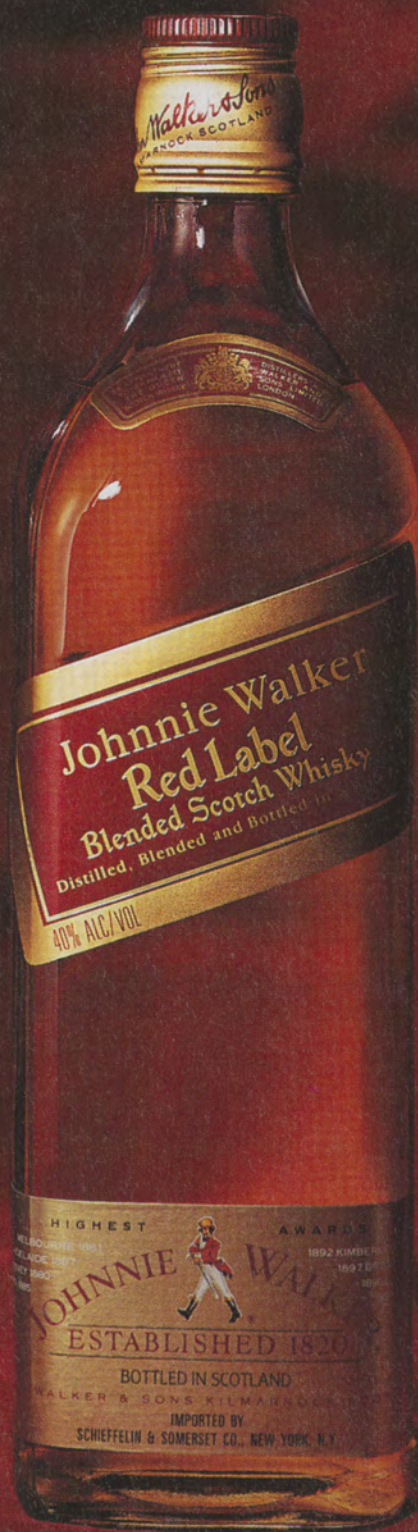
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HUNGARIANS, *in the Netherlands?*

Standing in the midst of members of the San Francisco Opera Chorus in 1946 are baritone Mack Harrell as the Royal Herald and Nicola Moscona as King Heinrich.

By MALCOLM MOSHER, JR.

WHEN I FIRST BECAME ACQUAINTED with Wagner's *Lohengrin* several decades ago, I was largely in the dark about tenth-century European history, and I was intrigued by a number of questions. Was there a historical basis for the references to Henry the Fowler and his wars against the Danes and Hungarians? In fact, what were Hungarians doing in Germany and could they really have posed such a threat to that area now known as the Netherlands? Was Christianity still struggling against paganism at so late a date in that area? Let us delve into that age, and acquaint ourselves with a variety of informa-

tion about the history of that era that will enhance our understanding of Wagner's opera.

With respect to the first question, we should start by briefly falling back to the eighth century. In 768, the Frankish king Charlemagne unified France and most of the western and central German tribes under his central authority. He also brought Christianity to these German tribes, who at least accepted it in name, if not always in practice.

After the death of Charlemagne in 814, the empire was tenuously maintained by his immediate successors. Toward the end

of the century, however, weak emperors could no longer hold absolute control over the German tribes. Although the emperor was still nominally recognized, Germany returned to the ancient feudal system of government that had been suppressed by Charlemagne, wherein each of the main tribes formed its own duchy. The tribal leader held the title of Duke, although in reality he ruled as a virtual king in his realm. The chief duchies were Saxony, Thuringia, Lorraine, Franconia, Bohemia, Swabia, and Bavaria.

With no unity among themselves and with virtually no central authority, these ►

Malcom Mosher, Jr. is an historian, lecturer and writer, and a software designer for Tandem Computers, Inc.

the book

A large, ornate chair is the central focus, completely covered in a dense layer of numerous butterflies of various species and colors, including orange, yellow, blue, and white. The chair is set on a lush green lawn. Above the chair, a single butterfly is captured in flight against a soft, out-of-focus background.

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The late David Ward was San Francisco Opera's King Heinrich in 1982.

those of the Huns. They advanced to the attack in waves of groups, with each group releasing its arrows and then riding around to the rear while the next group advanced. Fighting at close quarters was avoided; the javelins were used mostly for destroying what was left of the opposing army. With the German armies consisting of only foot soldiers, it is not difficult to see why the Magyars were victorious and feared. Their waves of mounted bowmen could easily destroy an opposing force without engaging in hand-to-hand combat, at which the Germans were more adept.

The curious similarities between the Huns and Magyars entail more than just a common home base of Hungary, their tactics, and weapons. The Huns under Attila were turned back from Rome only by a large monetary bribe that involved Pope Leo as an emissary. The above description of the Magyars came from the pen of a Byzantine Emperor named Leo (VI), who had to bribe the Magyars outside the walls of Constantinople. Indeed, during this era, the Roman Church was

In 924, the Magyars pillaged much of eastern Saxony, and routed the German army at the Lechfeld, near Augsburg in the duchy of Franconia. By a stroke of fortune, however, a Magyar prince of high rank was captured. Henry thereupon negotiated a truce with the Magyars, whereby Henry returned the captive prince to his people and pledged to pay a large tribute each year. For nine years, he paid the tribute and the Magyars honored their part of the truce by not touching Saxony and Thuringia—the two duchies under the direct rule of Henry. The other duchies, however, were still regarded as fair game, and these territories were still subjected to occasional raids.

Over the course of the nine-year truce, Henry first fortified much of northern Saxony and Thuringia, which had consisted of unfortified villages and hamlets that were easy prey for the enemy. Secondly, he reorganized the armies of Saxony and Thuringia, building up a large cavalry that eventually became the main force of his army and that would enable him to meet the Magyars on a more equal footing. Thirdly, he retrained his foot soldiers in different modes of combat so they could be more effective against a mounted enemy. ➤

The Telramund couple at the San Francisco Opera in 1989: Eva Randova as Ortrud and Sergei Leiferkus as Friedrich von Telramund. Leiferkus, in addition to performing the role for the first time in his career, was also marking his American opera debut.

individual duchies fell prey to marauding Danes from the north, Slavic tribes to the east, and a new racial group to the south-east—the savage Magyars.

In 895, the Magyars, under the semi-mythical King Arpad, swept into Hungary from the eastern steppes. From here, they raided the Slavs to north, the Germans to the northwest, and, by 906, completely conquered the surrounding Bulgarians, Serbs and Croats. In only a decade, they had become the terror of Europe.

Interestingly, the last time a group had aroused such fear throughout Europe was some four centuries earlier, when the Huns under Rua and Attila had set up their capital in the same region where the Magyars settled. Under Attila, who was dubbed the "Scourge of God" in the Roman empire, the Huns pillaged and raided all of Europe. Having come from the steppes, they were formidable horsemen whose primary weapon was the bow.

The Magyars were strikingly similar in many respects. They were regarded as the scourge of Europe—the same term that had been used to describe Attila. Trained at riding since infancy, they fought with the bow and javelin, and their tactics were very similar to

ruled by a succession of popes also named Leo (V, VI, and VII).

At the same time when the Magyars menaced from the east, the Danes came down from the north and seized part of northern Saxony. In an attempt to unite against common foes, Otto, the Duke of Saxony, advised the other dukes to elect Conrad, the Duke of Franconia, as king of the German tribes in 911. Some accepted Conrad, while others rejected him. Even among those who accepted him, Conrad was little more than a nominal king. Without unity and a national army organized under a single head, the Magyars continued to ravage the central and eastern duchies virtually unchecked.

Before dying in December of 919, Conrad suggested that Henry, the Duke of Saxony, be elected as his successor to the throne. Legend has it that when the nobles sent to inform Henry of his election to kingship found him, he was out laying snares for fowl—hence his name, Henry the Fowler, as in *Lohengrin*.



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Hermann Becht, our Telramund in 1982, is surrounded by the four Brabantian nobles: Robert Tate, Jeffrey Thomas, Gregory Stapp and Carl Glaum.

While he held no real authority over the other great duchies, he encouraged them to follow suit. Before attempting to use this new army against the Magyars, however, he first tested them against the Slavs to the east, bringing those territories between the Elbe and Oder in eastern Germany under his rule, as well as the recalcitrant Duke of Bohemia.

The stage was now set for confrontation. He ceased his annual payment to the Magyars in 933, whereupon the latter predictably invaded the duchy of Thuringia. Henry did not challenge them at the outset. Knowing that an invading army consisting of cavalry would move faster than their supply carts could keep up, he waited for the Magyars to run low on supplies and be forced to split up in order to find provisions. When the Magyars eventually did divide into two forces, Henry's army surprised the smaller of the two, completely destroying it, and then immediately set after the other force. In a violent struggle on March 15th, the main Magyar force was broken and scattered.

The importance of these two battles cannot be understated. For one, Henry's army is regarded by historians as the first truly national German force, and that force may very well have included men from the region around Antwerp. Indeed, the appeal

by Henry for soldiers to fight against the Hungarians in Wagner's *Lohengrin* could have some historical basis.

While the Magyars never attacked Henry again, they remained a major threat to the rest of Europe. Like the Huns before them, they invaded the Byzantine empire and camped outside the walls of Constantinople before being paid an enormous sum to leave. Again like the Huns, they invaded Italy next. The situation had become such that, in 955, Henry's son Otto the Great called them the enemies of God and humanity, and expelled their ambassadors, thereby instigating the final conflict. The Magyars once again invaded Germany, where the decisive battle was fought again on the Lechfeld, near Augsburg in the duchy of Franconia, the scene of the Magyar victory in 923. In an intense and pitched battle during which the Germans suffered significant losses, the Magyar army was utterly destroyed. Only seven were said to have survived and these were allegedly made slaves upon their return home. The outcome of this battle was instrumental to the civilizing of Hungary. Having lost the flower of their might and now threatened from without, the Magyars quickly adhered to the political expectations of their western neighbors and adopted western Christianity.

Much of the above was woven into the 13th century epic poem *Lohengrin* and carried over into Wagner's opera. In King Henry's opening narrative, we learn that he has just broken the nine-year truce, during which time he fortified towns and trained soldiers for the defense of Germany. Henry is accompanied to Brabant by nobles from Saxony and Thuringia—the two duchies over which the historical Henry did indeed hold absolute rule. In the opera, Friedrich, Count of Telramund, is joined by four Brabantian conspirators who are opposed to taking part in Henry's war. It could certainly be historically accurate that some from the area of Brabant balked at joining King Henry's enterprise for the same reason expressed by the four conspirators. No evidence indicates that the Magyars invaded the region of Brabant, and some short-sighted locals may well have questioned risking life and limb for a cause they thought did not affect them. Given the mobility of the Magyar cavalry, however, there is no question that, if they had not been beaten back by Henry, they would have invaded all the western duchies sooner or later.

Other aspects of the *Lohengrin* legend that are carried over into Wagner's opera, however, are historically inaccurate. The

continued on page 50

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NOV. 9M, 12, 15, 17, 20, 23, 26, 1996

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Giacomo Puccini

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Vaness, Leech, Diaz
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JAN. 29, FEB. 1M, 4, 7, 12, 15, 18, 1997

TRISTAN UND ISOLDE

Richard Wagner

Armstrong, Hockney, Schuler & Behle, Henschel,
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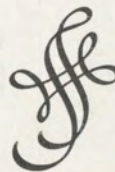
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PRE-PERFORMANCE LECTURES

The popular Pre-Performance Lectures are held at the Bill Graham Civic Auditorium (location to be announced) 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:

Prince Igor (Civic)

Sept. 10—7 p.m.
Sept. 15—1 p.m.
Sept. 21—7 p.m.

Hamlet (Orpheum)

Sept. 17—6:30 p.m.
Sept. 27—6:30 p.m.
Sept. 29—12:30 p.m.

Lohengrin (Civic)

Oct. 1—6 p.m.
Oct. 4—6 p.m.
Oct. 9—6 p.m.

Il Barbiere di Siviglia (Orpheum)

Oct. 11—7 p.m.
Oct. 19—7 p.m.
Oct. 24—7 p.m.

Carmen (Civic)

Oct. 22—6:30 p.m.
Oct. 25—6:30 p.m.
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)

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Feb. 21—6:30 p.m.

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Sept. 5	Prince Igor
Sept. 11	Hamlet
Nov. 4	Harvey Milk
Jan. 17	Salome

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD — PREVIEWES

Speakers: *Prince Igor*: Richard Taruskin; *Hamlet*: Hugh Macdonald; *Lohengrin*: Perry Lorenzo; *Carmen*: Robert Glick; *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

Sept. 4	Prince Igor
Sept. 9	Hamlet
Sept. 23	Lohengrin
Oct. 14	Carmen
Nov. 4	Harvey Milk
Nov. 11	Les 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

Sept. 4	Prince Igor
Sept. 11	Hamlet
Sept. 25	Lohengrin
Oct. 16	Carmen
Nov. 6	Harvey Milk
Nov. 13	Les 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

Sept. 3	Prince Igor
Sept. 10	Hamlet
Sept. 24	Lohengrin
Oct. 15	Carmen
Nov. 5	Harvey Milk
Nov. 12	Les Contes d'Hoffmann

SONOMA COUNTY

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

Sept. 5	Prince Igor
Sept. 12	Hamlet
Sept. 26	Lohengrin
Oct. 17	Carmen
Nov. 4	Harvey Milk
Nov. 14	Les 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

Sept. 3	Prince Igor
Sept. 10	Hamlet
Sept. 24	Lohengrin
Oct. 15	Carmen
Nov. 5	Harvey Milk
Nov. 12	Les 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

Sept. 5	Prince Igor
Sept. 11	Hamlet
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

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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

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Sept. 9	Hamlet
Sept. 23	Lohengrin
Oct. 7	Il Barbiere di Siviglia
Oct. 14	Carmen
Nov. 4	Harvey Milk
Nov. 11	Les Contes d'Hoffmann
Dec. 2	Hansel and Gretel
Jan. 13	Salome
Feb. 3	Aida
Feb. 10	Season Review



KARITA MATTILA

Karita Mattila, singing her first Elsa in *Lohengrin*, made her acclaimed 1989 San Francisco Opera debut as Ilia in *Idomeneo* and was seen here in 1993 as Eva in *Die Meistersinger*. The Finnish-born soprano, the first-ever winner of the 1983 "Singer of the World" competition in Cardiff, currently enjoys a career which encompasses opera, concert, recital and recording engagements on an international level. She made her 1983 Covent Garden debut as Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte* and has since returned to the Royal Opera as Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte*, Agathe in *Der Freischütz*, the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* (also on a 1992 tour of Japan), Musetta in *La Bohème* and Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*. Operatic performances elsewhere have included Donna Elvira, Eva, Musetta and Lisa in *The Queen of Spades* at the Metropolitan Opera; Pamina and Elvira at the Chicago Lyric Opera; Fiordiligi, Elvira and Tatyana in *Eugene Onegin* at the Hamburg State Opera; Elvira, Schubert's *Fierrabras* and Rosalinde in *Die Fledermaus* at the Vienna State Opera; Amelia in *Simon Boccanegra* at the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires; and her first Chrysothemis in *Elektra* at the Salzburg Easter Festival. In the current season, Miss Mattila has sung Fiordiligi at the Aix-en-Provence Festival, Elisabeth in *Don Carlos* both at Covent Garden and the Châtelet in Paris, and Chrysothemis in Florence. Her many recordings include *Così fan tutte*, *Don Giovanni*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Bruckner's *Te Deum* and Mass in F, Schubert's *Fierrabras* and Mass in E, Schumann's *Faust Scenes*, Strauss's *Drei Hymnen*, and two solo discs. As an accomplished recitalist, she has performed in Brussels, Barcelona, Geneva, Paris, Vienna, Berlin, Istanbul, London and throughout Finland. Future opera engagements include Elsa in Paris and London, Elisabeth in *Don Carlo* in Nice and Lyon, Chrysothemis at Covent Garden, and the title role of *The Merry Widow* at the Bastille in Paris.



ELIZABETH CONNELL

Elizabeth Connell, Ortrud in *Lohengrin*, made her 1987 San Francisco Opera debut as Leonore in *Fidelio* and returned to sing her first Odabella in the Company's 1991 production of *Attila*. A leading interpreter of the dramatic soprano roles of Beethoven, Strauss and Wagner, she made her debut in 1972 at the Wexford Festival as Varvara in *Katya Kabanova*. She then sang with the Australian and English National Operas before making her Covent Garden debut with *I Lombardi*. In 1980 she made her Bayreuth debut as Ortrud and has since taken part in a television recording of this production. Her performances have won her world-wide acclaim with a nomination for the Australian Drama Critics' Award for *Fidelio* and a similar success as Senta in *Der Fliegende Holländer* in Japan with Seiji Ozawa. Miss Connell has received accolades for her performances of Isolde in *Tristan und Isolde*, Abigail in *Nabucco*, and Ortrud. Performances during the current season have included a new production of *Tristan und Isolde* at the English National Opera; *Nabucco* in Melbourne, Sydney, Verona, and São Paulo; *Die Walküre* (Brünnhilde) in Santiago, Chile; and *Peter Grimes* (Ellen Orford) with the Australian Opera. Recent concert performances have included Beethoven's Ninth Symphony led by Claudio Abbado in London, the *Missa Solemnis* under Carlo Maria Giulini in Florence, Mahler's Eighth Symphony (Maazel, Sinopoli, Boulez), and the Verdi Requiem at both the Vienna Musikverein and in London's St. Paul's Cathedral. She has also given recitals in London, Milan, Geneva and Sydney. Her recordings include *Guillaume Tell*, *Poliuto*, *Lohengrin*, *I Due Foscari*, Schreker's *Die Gezeichneten*, Verdi's Requiem, Mahler's Eighth Symphony, Mendelssohn's Second Symphony, Schoenberg's *Gurrelieder* and a disc of Schubert lieder.

ARTIST PROFILES



BEN HEPPNER

Ben Heppner sings the title role of *Lohengrin*, the part in which he made his successful 1989 San Francisco Opera debut. He was seen most recently with the Company in 1993, when he portrayed Walther von Stolzing in *Die Meistersinger* and Tito in Mozart's *La Clemenza di Tito*. The acclaimed Canadian tenor first came to international attention as a 1988 Metropolitan Opera Auditions finalist and as winner of the first Birgit Nilsson Prize awarded by New Sweden '88. He has since enjoyed a flourishing career in the world's foremost opera houses and concert halls. He has performed at, among others, Milan's La Scala, the Metropolitan Opera, Salzburg Festival, Royal Opera at Covent Garden, Vienna State Opera, Bavarian State Opera, Zurich Opera, Netherlands Opera, Grand Théâtre de Genève, Opéra de Lyon, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Seattle Opera, Santa Fe Opera and Canadian Opera Company. Roles sung with these companies include Florestan in *Fidelio*, the title roles of *Idomeneo* and *Peter Grimes*, the Prince in *Rusalka*, Erik in *Der Fliegende Holländer*, Bacchus in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Laca in *Jentifa*, Huon in *Oberon*, as well as Walther, Lohengrin and Tito. He created the title role in the world premiere of William Bolcom's *McTeague* for the Chicago Lyric Opera as well. Engagements during the 1995-96 season included concert performances of *Die Meistersinger* with the Chicago Symphony and *Fidelio* at the Opéra de Lyon; his first performances of Canio in *Pagliacci* for the Canadian Opera Company; *The Queen of Spades* (Gherman) and *Die Meistersinger* at the Met; the title part of *Andrea Chénier* (role debut) at Seattle Opera; *Ariadne auf Naxos* and *Andrea Chénier* with the Metropolitan Opera on tour to Frankfurt; and a return to the Salzburg Festival this summer for a new staging of *Fidelio*. Heppner can be heard on recordings of *Lohengrin*, *Die Meistersinger*, *Oberon*, *Turandot* (Calaf), *Hérodiade* (Jean), Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*, and a solo disc of opera arias. Forthcoming releases include *Fidelio*, *Der Fliegende Holländer*, Mahler's Eighth Symphony, and his second recording of *Die Meistersinger*.

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ARTIST PROFILES



CHRIS MERRITT

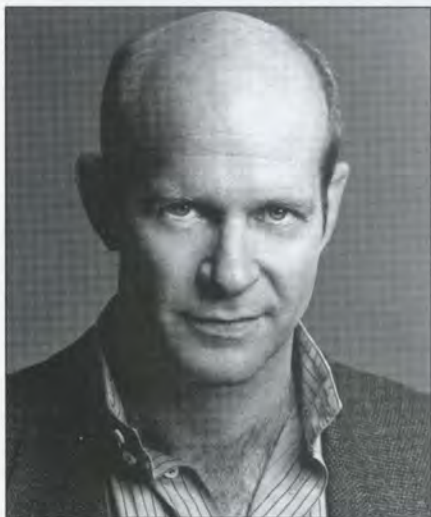
World-renowned tenor **Chris Merritt** sings his first performances of the title role of *Lohengrin*. He made his debut with San Francisco Opera in 1988 as Erisso in the U.S. premiere of *Maometto II*, and has since returned to portray Arnold in *Guillaume Tell* (1992), Arrigo in the 1993 season-opening *I Vespri Siciliani*, and the title role of Rossini's *Otello* in 1994. A native of Oklahoma City, he has become one of the most versatile artists in the world of opera, performing with the Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Los Angeles Music Center Opera, Milan's La Scala, Vienna State Opera, Paris Opera and Opera Bastille, Royal Opera at Covent Garden, Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona, Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires, and many others. He is also a prolific recitalist, in addition to appearing in concert with the world's great orchestras. His television appearances include the 1990 Richard Tucker Gala and the 1992 Rossini Bicentennial Gala, both held in New York's Avery Fisher Hall and presented as part of the "Live from Lincoln Center" and "Great Performances" series, and he was featured in conversation and performance on CBS's "Nightwatch." His highly acclaimed recital at the Johns Hopkins University was broadcast nationwide over NPR in 1994. The tenor has produced a variety of recordings and videos for over 10 labels. Of particular note are releases of Rossini's *Guglielmo Tell* and Verdi's *I Vespri Siciliani* under the baton of Riccardo Muti, as well as a solo recital disc, *The Heroic Bel Canto Tenor*, with arias by Donizetti and Rossini. Recent operatic assignments include *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* in Santiago, Chile; Aron in a new production of Schoenberg's *Moses und Aron* under the baton of Pierre Boulez for the Netherlands Opera (recorded and recently released on CD); the title role of *Idomeneo* for the Frankfurt Opera; the title role of Dvořák's *Dimitrij* for the Munich Opera; as well as Sir Huon in *Oberon* and *Moses und Aron* at this summer's Salzburg Festival.



JAN-HENDRIK ROOTERING

Jan-Hendrik Rootering, who made his 1993 San Francisco Opera debut as Pogner in *Die Meistersinger*, returns to sing another of his Wagnerian signature roles, King Heinrich in *Lohengrin*. The German-born bass began his career in the corporate business world of air cargo and was in his late 20s when he began to study voice with his father (tenor Hendrikus Rootering) and at the Hamburg Music School. Since his professional debut in 1980 as Colline in *La Bohème*, he has been sought by opera houses in Munich, Vienna, Berlin, Amsterdam, Geneva, Hamburg, London's Covent Garden, New York's Metropolitan Opera (debut, Landgraf Hermann in *Tannhäuser*), Chicago's Lyric Opera (debut, Landgraf), and Milan's La Scala (Pogner). His repertoire also includes roles such as Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte*, Don Basilio in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, the Commendatore in *Don Giovanni*, King Philip in *Don Carlo*, Prince Gremin in *Eugene Onegin*, Baron Ochs in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Padre Guardiano in *La Forza del Destino*, as well as the leading bass parts in Wagner's operas (he recently performed his first Hans Sachs in *Die Meistersinger* in Amsterdam). In addition to his operatic appearances, Rootering has been praised for his performances in concert and recital. Recordings include *Luisa Miller* conducted by James Levine, *Don Giovanni* led by Riccardo Muti, the award-winning Met *Rheingold*, *La Fanciulla del West* with Leonard Slatkin, *Turandot*, the Mozart Requiem, Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* and Ninth Symphony (the latter led by Leonard Bernstein and internationally televised on the occasion of the removal of the Berlin Wall), discs of lieder by Strauss, Schubert, Wolf, Schumann and Loewe, and a recently-released recording of *Lohengrin*. Holder of the prestigious title of Bavarian Kammersänger, he was appointed Professor at Munich's "Hochschule für Musik" in 1994.

ARTIST PROFILES



TOM FOX

Baritone **Tom Fox**, Friedrich von Telramund in *Lohengrin*, made his acclaimed 1990 Company debut as Alberich in *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, and has since appeared here as Ryuji Tsukazaki in the U.S. premiere of *Das Verratene Meer* and Orest in *Elektra* (1991), as well as Jokanaan in *Salome* and Jaroslav Prus in *The Makropulos Case* (1993). The native of Cincinnati was a resident member of Cincinnati Opera from 1976 to 1980. He was engaged the following year as principal guest artist at the Frankfurt Opera where his roles included Amonasro in *Aida*, Pizarro in *Fidelio*, Klingsor in *Parsifal*, Nick Shadow in *The Rake's Progress*, Escamillo in *Carmen*, Orest in *Elektra*, and Alberich. Since leaving Frankfurt, he has sung in many of the world's leading opera houses. In addition to his San Francisco Opera engagements, he has appeared at the Metropolitan Opera and with the companies of Chicago, Washington, D.C., San Diego, Pittsburgh, Toronto, Munich, Berlin, Paris, Montpellier, Milan (La Scala), Rome, Bologna, Turin and Brussels, among others. Roles in these houses included Scarpia in *Tosca*, Iago in *Otello*, Kurwenal in *Tristan und Isolde*, the title roles of *Eugene Onegin* and *Der Fliegende Holländer*, in addition to Alberich, Telramund, Pizarro, Prus, Orest and Jokanaan. In South America, he has been applauded as Iago at the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires, Escamillo in Caracas, and most recently as Wotan (role debut) in the *Ring* cycle in Santiago, Chile. Fox made his Salzburg Festival debut last year as the Animal Trainer/Acrobat in *Lulu* and returned to Salzburg this summer as Pizarro in a new staging of *Fidelio* led by Georg Solti.

David Okerlund is featured in several roles with the Company this season, including the King's Herald in *Lohengrin*, Moralès in *Carmen*, and Eisenstein in *Die Fledermaus*. He made his bow with San Francisco Opera last fall, portraying Baron Douphol in *La Traviata*, Dandini in the student matinee presentation of *La Cenerentola*, and the Bonze in *Madama Butterfly*. Assignments for the 1995-96 Adler Fellow earlier this year included a Schwabacher Debut Recital, Schaubard in *La Bohème*, and the role of The Lodger in the Opera Center's '96 Showcase presentation of *The Aspern Papers*. A native



DAVID OKERLUND

of Kearney, Nebraska, the young artist earned a master's degree in vocal/opera performance from the Kansas City Conservatory of Music at the University of Missouri, later receiving apprenticeships from the Des Moines Metro Opera and the Lyric Opera of Kansas where he sang many leading baritone roles. A 1993-94 member of the Merola Opera Program, his Opera Center credits include Falke in *Die Fledermaus* and the title role of *Don Giovanni*, roles he performed both for the Merola Program and for Western Opera Theater's national tours. Recent appearances include Donner in Arizona Opera's production of *Das Rheingold*, Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte* for Opera Carolina and Piedmont Opera Theater, Britten's *War Requiem* and Orff's *Carmine Burana* with the San Mateo Masterworks Chorale, as well as two assignments he performed as part of the 1995 United Nations 50th anniversary celebration: the role of the Bonze in the Opéra de Lyon's production of *Madama Butterfly*, and soloist in the Company's U.N. Concert. Future plans include the title role of *Don Giovanni* and Silvio in *Pagliacci* at the Lyric Opera of Kansas City, as well as Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly* to inaugurate the New National Theatre of Tokyo.

Tenor **Benoît Boutet**, who portrays Laërte in *Hamlet* and a Noble of Brabant in *Lohengrin*, made his 1989 San Francisco Opera debut as Fenton in the Family Performance of *Falstaff*. Equally at home in opera, oratorio or pops concerts, the former member of the Canadian Opera Company Ensemble frequently appears in mainstage productions with the company. Most recently, he has been seen in Toronto as Vanya Kudryash in *Katya Kabanova*, Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni*, Andres in *Wozzeck*, Vašek in *The Bartered Bride*, and in the title role of the world premiere of *Mario and the Magician*. Additional Canadian performances include the Chevalier in *Dialogues des Carmélites* with the Edmonton, Manitoba and Montreal Operas, Narraboth in *Salome* with Vancouver Opera, and Nadir in *Les Pêcheurs de Perles* at Manitoba Opera. His debut in France with L'Opéra de Normandie as Polynis in the world premiere of Charles Chaynes's *Jocaste* led to frequent appearances with many European opera compa-



BENOÎT BOUTET

nies. Recent engagements include Lysander in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with Opéra de Lyon, Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte* with Opéra-Comique and Opéra de Lyon, and the Chevalier in *Dialogues* with Opéra de Rennes. Concert performances have included Berlioz's *Roméo et Juliette* with the Calgary Philharmonic, L'Enfance du Christ with the Vancouver Symphony, Mozart's Requiem with the Quebec Symphony, Vancouver Chamber Choir, and Calgary Philharmonic, and *Salome* (Narraboth) with the Bournemouth Symphony. Boutet has also performed with many prominent U.S. orchestras including those of Chicago, Philadelphia, Houston and Cincinnati, as well as at several U.S. Festivals (Meadowbrook, Ravinia, Riverbend).



STUART SKELTON

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

ARTIST PROFILES



JOHN AUTRY

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.

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* 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.



JOHN RELYEA

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 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*.

Donald Runnicles, Music Director of San Francisco Opera since 1992, is highly regarded as one of the finest conductors active today, with a distinguished series of international triumphs to his credit. Born in Edinburgh, he began his career in Germany, where he rose from répétiteur in Mannheim in 1980 to General Music Director of Städtische Bühnen in Freiburg in 1989. During this period, he assisted at the Bayreuth Wagner Festival and began conducting in guest appearances throughout Europe. In Great Britain, his opera debut took place at the 1991 Glyndebourne Festival (*Don Giovanni*). Since 1992, he has appeared regularly at the Edinburgh Festival, conducting the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and the Royal Scottish National Orchestra. In 1994, he opened the Festival with a highly acclaimed performance of Mahler's Eighth Symphony and returned to this year's 50th Festival with performances of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and Britten's *War Requiem*. His North Ameri-



DONALD RUNNICLES

can debut was in 1988, when he led the Metropolitan Opera's *Lulu* on five hours' notice, while his San Francisco Opera debut occurred in 1990 with highly acclaimed performances of two cycles of Wagner's *Ring*. Additional SFO credits include *Guillaume Tell*, *Boris Godunov*, *Fidelio*, *Don Carlo*, *Salome*, televised productions of *Capriccio* and *Turandot*, *Die Meistersinger*, *La Clemenza di Tito*, *Macbeth*, *Tannhäuser*, the world premiere of Conrad Susa/Philip Littell's *The Dangerous Liaisons* (telecast nationally on "Great Performances"), the North American premiere of Tippett's *King Priam*, last summer's concert performance of Gluck's *Orphée et Eurydice*, as well as the 1995 Fall Season presentations of *Madama Butterfly*, *Die Walküre*, and the new staging of *Don Giovanni*. During the Company's 1996-97 season, he is on the podium for new productions of *Lohengrin*, *Carmen* and *Aida*, as well as for the West Coast premiere of *Harvey Milk*. Elsewhere, he has led opera productions at the Bayreuth Festival, Vienna State Opera, Bavarian State Opera, Hamburg State Opera, Royal Opera Copenhagen, Zurich Opera, Netherlands Opera and the Vienna Volksoper. His 1996 schedule featured his debut at the Salzburg Festival (*Don Giovanni*), a debut at the Bastille Opera (*Salome*), and return engagements to the Metropolitan Opera (*Salome*), Vienna State Opera (*Otello* and the *Ring*), and Berlin Opera (*Der Rosenkavalier*). Symphonically, Maestro Runnicles has led the Orchestre de Paris, Israel Philharmonic, Bavarian Radio Symphony, Berlin State Opera Orchestra, Vienna Symphony, Rotterdam Philharmonic and London Symphony Orchestra. In North America, he has conducted the symphony orchestras of Chicago, San Francisco, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, Seattle and Toronto. He made his debut earlier this year with the Cleveland Orchestra and New World Symphony. The maestro's first commercial recording, Humperdinck's *Hänsel und Gretel*, has received critical acclaim, as has his recording (with the Company's Orchestra and Chorus) of *Orphée et Eurydice*. In 1995, Runnicles was recognized for his achievements by the University of Edinburgh, from which he received an honorary doctorate of music.

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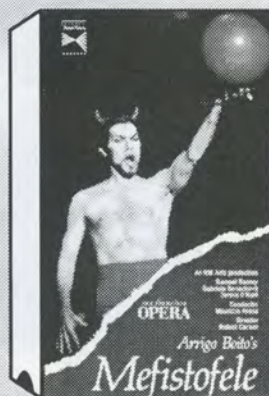
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LAURIE FELDMAN

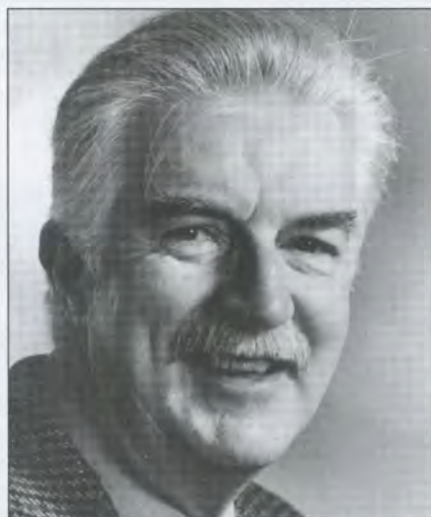
Laurie Feldman directs the Company's new production of *Lohengrin*. Her most recent engagements this season include her debut at Miami's Florida Grand Opera with a new production of *Un Ballo in Maschera* and *Falstaff* at Wolf Trap. In 1994 she directed the Company's premiere presentation of Rossini's *Otello*, and last year directed both *Die Walküre* and *Rusalka* here. She made her 1990 San Francisco Opera directorial debut with *Das Rheingold* and *Götterdämmerung*. Additionally, she directed the student matinee production of *La Fille du Régiment* in 1993 and *Falstaff* for the Merola Opera Program the same year. She has also directed *Der Fliegende Holländer* for Calgary Opera, *The Tales of Hoffmann* and *Eugene Onegin* for the Canadian Opera Company, and *La Traviata* for Santa Fe Opera. Additional credits include engagements with the Metropolitan Opera, Dallas Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Los Angeles Music Center Opera, as well as in Munich, Cologne and Reykjavik.

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



ZACK BROWN

Saint Joan won nominations for Tony and Drama Desk awards, respectively. Classical dance designs include *Gaité 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*.



PETER J. HALL

Peter J. Hall's costume designs were first seen at San Francisco Opera during the 1977 season in productions of *Aida* and *I Puritani*. A native of Great Britain, he began working with Franco Zeffirelli in 1958 when he designed the costumes for the director's Old Vic production of *Romeo and Juliet*. He came to the U.S. in 1960 and worked with Zeffirelli on several productions for the Dallas Opera, where he was resident designer for many seasons. Hall made his 1972 Metropolitan Opera debut as costume designer for a new production of *Otello* and has



THOMAS J. MUNN

since designed costumes for Met stagings of *La Forza del Destino*, *Boris Godunov* and *Lohengrin*, among others. He has also designed operatic productions for Milan's La Scala, Royal Opera at Covent Garden, the Lyric Opera of Chicago, and Spoleto Festival. Not limited to opera, his designs have also been seen at the American Ballet Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, London's National Theatre, Mark Taper Forum, on Broadway and in film. Recent credits include costume designs for *La Bohème* and *Stiffelio* at the Los Angeles Music Center Opera, *Aida* at San Diego Opera, and for Arizona Opera's new staging of Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen*.

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.

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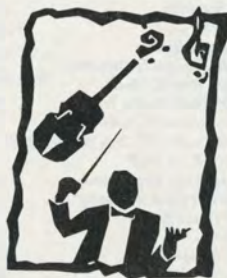
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(continued from p. 38)

duchy of Brabant, for example, did not exist at the time of Henry the Fowler. Antwerp and the other towns in the region belonged to the duchy of Lower Lorraine. The duchy of Brabant, whose dukedom is sought by Telramund in the opera, did not come into existence until 1190, over 250 years after the Magyar wars. How could this be so mistaken in the legend of Lohengrin and the opera? The explanation for this is not too difficult to determine. The first written references to the Lohengrin legend appear in the final part of the medieval epic poem *Parzival* by Wolfram von Eschenbach, a work that was started in 1198 and finished around 1212. An unknown German poet who admired the work of Eschenbach took the story presented in these final lines of *Parzival* and developed it into a major epic poem of his own between 1280 and 1290—*Lohengrin*. Since Antwerp was the primary location for this Lohengrin legend, and the main city in Brabant in the 13th century, the unknown poet simply assumed that duchy of Brabant had existed back in the time of Henry the Fowler.

Another anachronism involves King Henry's reference to the Danes. In his call to arms in Act I of the opera, he states that he needs men to help him defeat the Hungarians just as he beat back the Danes. Indeed, Telramund reminds Henry that he himself was instrumental in helping the king defeat the Danes. In reality, it was not until after he had defeated the Magyars in 933 that Henry could even think about retaking the lands previously seized by the Danes.

In Act I of *Lohengrin*, Friedrich relates to Henry how he rejected the hand of Elsa for that of Ortrud, daughter of Radbod, Friesland's prince. Later, in the second act, when Telramund rebukes Ortrud for leading him astray, we learn that she had prophesied that the ancient line of Frisian princes, from which Radbod was descended, would flourish anew under him.

Radbod was indeed an historical figure and more than a mere prince. He was the king of the Frisians, but not in the era immediately preceding that of Henry the Fowler. Radbod was king from the late 680s to 719, when Friesland was a large independent kingdom. Thus, we have another huge anachronism. Was our poet completely ignorant of the historical events that took place several centuries earlier, or might he have ignored the discrepancies for a specific purpose?

Friesland at the time of Radbod comprised all the lowlands of the northern Netherlands as well as the area around the Zuider Zee, and this area had long been untouched by Christianity until the reign

HUNGARIANS?

of Radbod's predecessor, King Adgild, who allowed the Englishman Wilfrid of York to preach. The latter had some success, but Radbod was violently opposed to Christianity and, when he mounted the throne, he did his best to eradicate it completely from his realm. He was also the last of the powerful Frisian kings. It seems quite probable that, through oral traditions, he was still well known during the 13th century both for his military prowess—he had defeated none other than Charles Martel at Cologne—and for his anti-Christian stance.

Two significant issues form the main drama between Ortrud and Elsa, and ultimately that between Lohengrin and Telramund—the right of succession and the struggle of good over evil, which here takes the form of Christianity over the heathen Wotan, Freia, and the other Teutonic gods. I suspect that the unknown poet responsible for the Lohengrin epic cleverly made Ortrud the daughter of Radbod, in spite of the anachronism, first in order to emphasize her claim to the right of succession. As the one-time princess of the now dead King Radbod, she has every reason for wanting to regain the rank and status now held by Elsa. It is she who pushes Telramund to denounce Elsa and thereby make his claim to the Dukedom of Brabant.

Secondly, I suspect that the unknown poet also wove Radbod into the story in order to illustrate the basis of Ortrud's evil character with as few words as possible. Those familiar with the name of Radbod would have immediately recognized that, as the daughter of a man known for his hatred of Christianity, she too would be vehemently anti-Christian. Thus, the great anachronism of placing Radbod in the tenth century was a brilliant literary liberty whereby the poet provided key background information to contrast the evil of the pagan Ortrud against the Christian purity of Lohengrin and Elsa.

While Wagner's *Lohengrin* contains fictional and semi-mythical characters, it also involves actual historical characters and events, even if they were not all associated with the same era. The setting of the poem and the opera in the year 934 provides a dramatic subplot of great national crisis, for which Henry regards first Telramund, then Lohengrin, and finally Elsa's missing brother Godfrey as the key players who will help him defeat the invading Hungarians. Religion and power provide the basis for the main plot: good versus evil. The invocation of the name Radbod, while perhaps obscure to most operagoers, unmistakably colors the character of Ortrud by providing key background information for her behavior and her objectives. ♦

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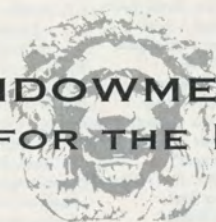
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Shuttle Bus Service. The Opera and Municipal Railway have arranged for buses to take patrons from many Civic Center restaurants directly to the theater. Two MUNI buses operate along a route that includes stops at the Performing Arts Garage (360 Grove St.) and (depending on the performance) either the Civic Auditorium or the Orpheum Theatre. Stops are made in 15-minute intervals at the following restaurants: Hayes Street Grill (324 Hayes), Ivy's (398 Hayes), Backstage Restaurant (687 McAllister), Act IV (at Inn at the Opera, 33 Fulton), Vivande (670 Golden Gate Ave.), Max's Opera Cafe (601 Van Ness Ave.), and Stars (555 Golden Gate Ave.). Service begins 90 minutes before a performance

and resumes at curtain time, with shuttle buses retracing the same route (for up to one hour) to the restaurants and the Performing Arts Garage. The shuttle system is scheduled throughout September and will be reviewed each month according to public response.

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, MasterCard). 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.

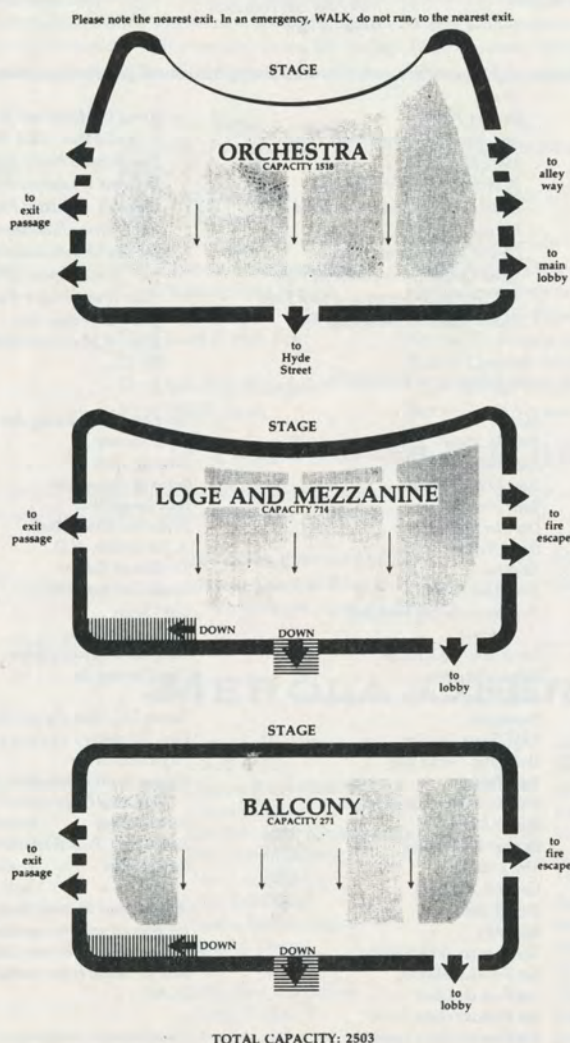
No cameras, tape recorders or cellular phones are permitted in the Orpheum Theatre and the Civic Auditorium.

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.

Orpheum Theatre

Under the direction of Carole Shorenstein Hays and The Messrs. Nederlander



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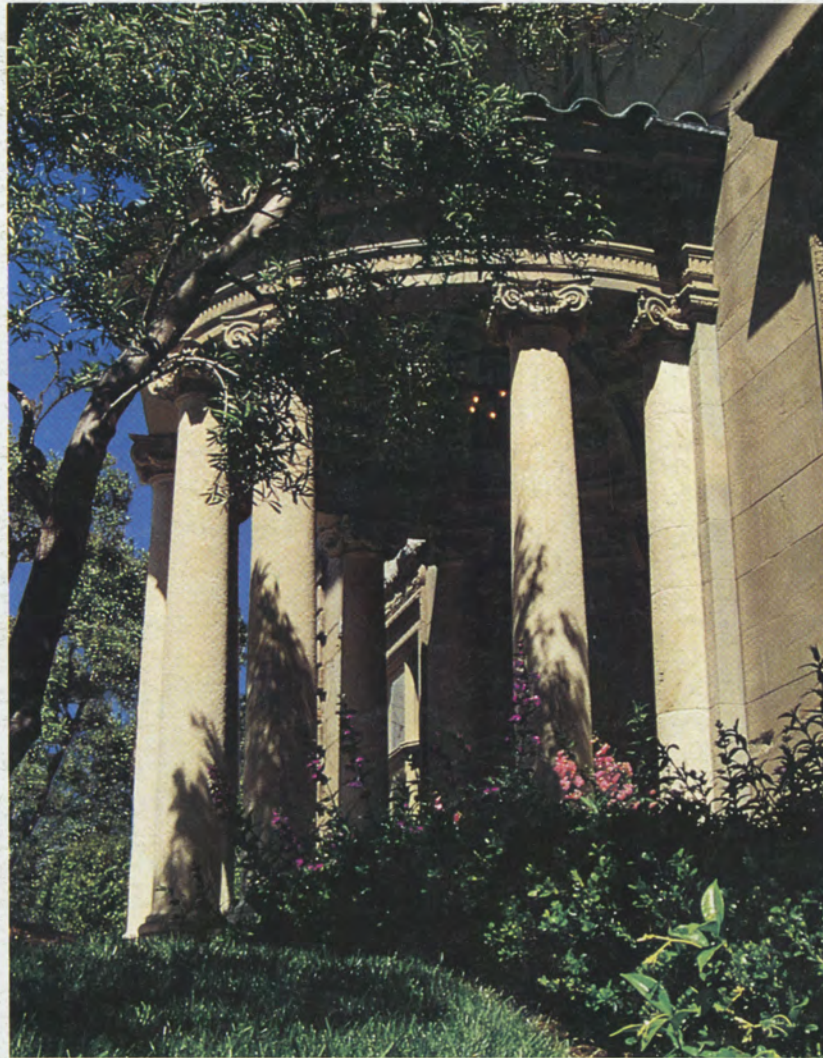
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San Francisco Opera

October 9, 1996 at 7 p.m.

The title role in this performance of *Lohengrin* will be sung by Thomas Sunnegårdh in his United States opera debut.



Tenor **Thomas Sunnegårdh**, a native of Stockholm, performs regularly with the Stockholm Royal Opera, where he made his debut in the title role of *Albert Herring* in 1982. Subsequent performances there in past seasons include the title roles in both Nørgaard's *Siddharta* and Maxwell Davies's *Taverner*, Riccardo in *Un Ballo in Maschera*, and Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte*. After critically acclaimed 1989 performances in Stockholm singing his first *Lohengrin*, he has sung the role throughout Europe and the Far East — in Stuttgart, Düsseldorf, Berlin, Frankfurt, Naples, Toulouse, Moscow and Tokyo, among others. Additional highlights include Erik in *Der Fliegende Holländer* and Florestan in *Fidelio* at Covent Garden, Walther von Stolzing in *Die Meistersinger* at the Bavarian State Opera, and the title role of *Parsifal* in Antwerp and Copenhagen. Engagements during the 1995-96 season have included *Der Fliegende Holländer* at the Cologne Opera and in Stuttgart, as well as Paul in Korngold's *Die Tote Stadt* with the Stockholm Opera. Among the tenor's recent concert engagements are the Emperor in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* with the Stockholm Philharmonic, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with the Berlin Symphony Orchestra, and Schumann's *Der Rose Pilgerfahrt* with the Accademia di Santa Cecilia in Rome. Sunnegårdh can be heard as Froh in a recording of *Das Rheingold* with the Cleveland Orchestra led by Christoph von Dohnányi.

