

Prince Igor
(Knyaz Igor)

1996-1997

Friday, September 6, 1996 6:30 PM
Tuesday, September 10, 1996 8:00 PM
Friday, September 13, 1996 8:00 PM
Sunday, September 15, 1996 2:00 PM
Wednesday, September 18, 1996 7:30 PM
Saturday, September 21, 1996 8:00 PM
Wednesday, September 25, 1996 7:30 PM

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SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

1996-97 SEASON

PRINCE IGOR



Князь Игорь

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

Prince Igor

1996-97 Season
Vol. 74, No. 2

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The author traces the curious genesis of Alexander Borodin's magnum opus, which came into being with a lot of help from the composer's friends.
- 34** *So Here We Are . . .* by Jake Heggie
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*San Francisco Opera debut

(continued on page 6)

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REPERTOIRE • 1996-97 SEASON

Opening Night

San Francisco Opera premiere

PRINCE IGOR

Borodin

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

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

San Francisco Opera premiere

HAMLET

Thomas

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

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

New production

LOHENGRIN

Wagner

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

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

IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA

Rossini

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

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

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

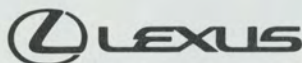
Borodina, Mills, Dillard, Foland†;
Cura*, Fink*, Skinner, Okerlund†,
Autry†, Skelton†
Runnicles;
Mansouri/Yeargan/Bosquet/Morgan/Whitfield
Civic Auditorium
Oct. 22, 25, 27, 30; Nov. 2, 5, 8

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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HARVEY MILK **Wallace/Korie**

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

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

New production

LES CONTES D'HOFFMANN Offenbach

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

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

DIE FLEDERMAUS

Strauss, J. Jr.

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

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

PRINCE ORLOFSKY'S MASQUERADE BALL

Civic Auditorium
Dec. 31

New production

SALOME

Strauss, R.

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

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

New production

AIDA

Verdi

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

Runnicles;
Williams/Skalicki/Casey/Byrd*/Munn
Civic Auditorium
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PRINCE IGOR, BORODIN, AND FRIENDS...

By
RICHARD TARUSKIN



ALEXANDER BORODIN (1833-87) was without a doubt the greatest chemist who ever composed music, and the greatest composer who ever ran a chem lab. During his lifetime the chemist was the more important person. He was a close friend of Dmitri Mendeleev (yes, the periodic-table-of-elements Mendeleev), read scientific papers in Heidelberg, Brussels and Paris, published a treatise on aldehydes, was a full professor at the St. Petersburg Medico-Surgical Academy at the age of thirty-one, and was given his own laboratory the next year. A monument to the chemist Borodin still stands in St. Petersburg, honoring him as the co-founder and -director, in 1872, of the first Russian medical course for women. It makes no mention of his musical hobby.

It was the hobby, however, that won him immortality. Never having enough time for it, he used to warn his friends playfully

never to greet him with the usual Russian salutation, "Zdrastvuyte," which means "be healthy!" When healthy, he had to work; it was only when sick in bed that he could compose. The wished-for sick time increased as his demanding double life went on. At fifty-one he nearly succumbed to an attack of cholera, the disease that would kill Tchaikovsky a few years later. Two years later, at fifty-three, he suffered a sudden, fatal heart attack while attending a fancy dress ball.

At the time of his catastrophic demise, the composer Borodin was not at all well known. He had published only three major works—a symphony, a string quartet, and a tiny tone poem—in addition to half a dozen songs and a handful of insignificant piano pieces (a few of them published at his dotting family's expense when he was sixteen). A second symphony and a second string quartet had been composed and performed,

but not published. (Now they are both standard repertory pieces.) His magnum opus, however, the gargantuan opera on which the Sunday composer had been laboring fitfully for the last eighteen years of his life, was only a pile of sketches, contradictory scenarios, and separate numbers in various stages of completion, some of them in multiple versions.

His composer friends, especially the three surviving fellow members of the circle now generally known as the "Mighty Five," knew that this opera was a work of genius in the making, but there was no way that it could be staged, or even completed according to the composer's specifications, since there was no single consistent plan to which all the surviving material could be related—material that was at once wanting and redundant. Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, the only surviving "Fiver" who was really a full-time composer, undertook the task of

Richard Taruskin is Professor of Music at the University of California, Berkeley. He has contributed more than 160 articles on Russian subjects to the New Grove Dictionary of Opera and is the author of two books: Mussorgsky: Eight Essays and an Epilogue (Princeton University Press) and the just-published Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions (University of California Press).

making a performing version—a task that required not only a speculative ordering of the existing material but a good deal of supplementary creative work to plug holes. Rimsky-Korsakov enlisted a former pupil to aid him in the task: Alexander Glazunov, a prodigy then twenty-one years of age but already the composer of two symphonies, a dozen other orchestral pieces, three string quartets and a raft of piano pieces and songs. Glazunov had been a special favorite of Borodin's during the latter's last five years, possessed a phenomenal musical memory, and approached the job with a combination of reverence and tremendous energy. The final product, therefore, the splendidly melodious and colorful opera that was published in full score in Leipzig in 1889, and first performed at St. Petersburg's Maryinsky Theater in 1890, was almost as much Glazunov's as Borodin's, and far more Glazunov's than Rimsky-Korsakov's. Curiously enough, Glazunov, though he wrote several ballets for the Maryinsky, never went on after this marvelous start to write an opera all his own.

Of the twenty-nine separate numbers in the published score of *Prince Igor*, only nine and one-half were completed and fully scored by Borodin. A few of these, especially the two bass arias in Act II (one for the title character, the other for his antagonist Khan Konchak) had been performed in concert during the composer's lifetime, especially by the leading basso of the Maryinsky, one Fyodor Stravinsky, whose third son was born immediately after his father had enjoyed a triumph with Igor's aria, and was given the character's name. Rimsky-Korsakov confined himself to orchestrating what Borodin had completed in piano-vocal score. It fell to Glazunov to do the really creative part of the work.

In particular, he had to compose virtually the whole third act (1252 measures of music) on the basis of sometimes very fragmentary sketches. And what is more (although he did not quite admit this at the time), the young Glazunov actually composed the very popular Overture to the opera from scratch. So as not to compromise the Overture's standing in the eyes of the public, Glazunov claimed that Borodin had played the Overture to him on several occasions, and that he had written it down from memory. But the Russian musicologist Yevgeniy Levashov, working on a new version of the opera in the 1970s, discovered notations in Glazunov's hand on Borodin's manuscripts: "This will do for a first theme," or "good for a second theme," and so on.

The most decisive point against regarding the standard performing version of the opera as authentic or definitive is one that neither Rimsky nor Glazunov ever divulged

during their lifetimes. When the Soviet musicologist Pavel Lamm inventoried and copied the manuscripts that Borodin had left behind, he discovered that Rimsky and Glazunov had pruned away some 1787 bars of music, the equivalent of a long act, amounting to almost one fifth of the total that Borodin had composed. Thus, the Borodin-Rimsky-Glazunov opera called *Prince Igor*, although it was published within two years of the composer's death, has been successfully performed for more than a hundred years, and has become an opera-house standard, is only one of any number of versions that could have been assembled from the material Borodin left behind. It is the work of greatly talented musicians and is fully entitled to its esteem, but it is not in any sense an authentic text. There is no telling what Borodin would have made of the opera had he lived to complete it. One can no more guess what he would have composed to fill the holes than guess what he would have chosen to include or omit from among the existing fragments. All editorial guesses, where the actual musical text of the opera is concerned, are thus condemned to be second guesses. Unlike the case of Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov*, another opera that has been second-guessed by Rimsky-Korsakov (and by many others as well), there is no authentic version to return to, no definitive text to reconstruct.

One thing is certain, however: the opera as Borodin planned it, and as his executors completed it, was a triumphant celebration of Russian imperialism. The project began as the brain-child of Vladimir Stasov, a St. Petersburg librarian and arts journalist who served the composers of the Mighty Five as an indefatigable confidant, idea man, and public tribune. At the composer's request, but at the librarian's own choice, Stasov fashioned a scenario from the twelfth-century epic, *The Song of the Host of Igor*, Russia's earliest literary classic. The poem describes a Russian princeling's ill-fated campaign against the Polovtsi, a nomadic Turkic tribe that was interfering with trade routes to the south. Suitably idealized and "heroicized," the *Song* seemed to Stasov to answer to all of Borodin's poetic and musical strengths: "broad epic themes, national character, the most diversified dramatis personae, the Orient in all its varied manifestations."

In short, the opera was to be another *Ruslan and Lyudmila*. Like Glinka's opera it would be a romantic riot of exotic and archaic tints, the only significant difference being one of tone: earnestly nationalistic, as befitted its time and place, rather than innocently "magical." Also like *Ruslan* (and like *A Life for the Tsar*, Glinka's first opera and the

Prince Igor:

A Note from the Director

Through its performing history and ever since its 1890 completion, Borodin's *Prince Igor* has hardly had two identical performing versions. This is partly due to the fact that the opera was left unfinished at the composer's death, and partly because different productions were putting a different stress on the strong nationalistic strain that permeates the work. Since the ideal of Russian nationhood was extremely strong in the late nineteenth-century Russia, the time when Borodin was working on *Prince Igor*, it is no surprise that it became a vital part of his magnum opus; no surprise that countless past productions have always stressed that particular aspect of the piece.

In preparing the current San Francisco Opera production of *Prince Igor*, we have followed this tradition, in hopes the production will show the work's contemporary relevance. We (Maestro Anissimov, designer Zack Brown and myself) have taken a work that is divided into four acts with a prologue and an epilogue, and shaped it into two parts. The first part is focused on the world of Igor and Putivl, the city he is constructing. The second shows the world of his rival, the Polovtsian Khan Konchak. In a brief epilogue, we return to the now ruined city of Putivl. In order to achieve this progression, we have made some cuts and re-orderings, mostly in the traditional Acts III, IV and V.

Our aim was to draw attention to the cyclical nature of Russian history, and the way that country seems to suffer destruction, even willful destruction, only to start building once again from the beginning. This was as true in the twelfth century as well as the late nineteenth, and it certainly applies to the Russia of our days.

—Francesca Zambello

Opposite page: Illustration for *The Song of the Host of Igor* by Ivan Gavrilovich Blinov (1872-1944). Inset: Alexander Porfirievich Borodin (1833-1887.)

Fyodor Chaliapin's first encounter with *Prince Igor* came in St. Petersburg in 1896, when he sang the role of Prince Galitsky. He returned to that character several times during his extraordinary career, both at home and abroad, and eventually added Khan Konchak to his repertoire as well, even performing both parts during the same evening. Left: Chaliapin as Khan Konchak in Europe in 1930, and right, as Prince Galitsky at Moscow's Bolshoi Opera in 1910.



classic of all Russian classics), it would derive its dramatic rhythm from an opposition of national musical idioms: rigorously Russian vs. exotically alien. In *A Life for the Tsar* (as in *Boris Godunov*) the opposition had been Russian (Orthodox and upright) vs. Polish (Catholic and decadent). In *Ruslan* and *Prince Igor* the "other" was promiscuously "oriental." The Russian element in *Igor* is based rather strictly on melodic turns abstracted from epic ballads (bilinī) and "historical" folk songs. The oriental element ranges far and wide, from Arabian to Turkic to Finno-Ugric vernacular musics.

Stasov sketched out the scenario during a soirée at the home of Glinka's sister, Lyudmila Shestakova, on an April evening in 1869. Three symmetrically disposed acts were planned. The first portrays the social disintegration of Igor's domain in his absence. The second treats Igor and his son in captivity, corresponding roughly to the two middle acts of the opera as posthumously completed. The third act is again set in Putivl, Igor's homestead, and there is an epilogue, with no counterpart in the eventual opera, set two years later at the wedding of Igor's son Vladimir and the Polovtsian princess Konchakovna.

This epilogue, a transparent derivation from the joyous wedding finale in *Ruslan* without precedent either in the *Song of the Host of Igor* or in history, epitomizes the opera's "orientalist" ideology. While in captivity Igor angrily rejects the Khan's offer of his daughter's hand to Vladimir, a marriage that would in effect have made Igor's son a Polovtsian. Yet he rejoices at home in the same marriage when it "annexes" the Khan's daughter as a Russian and a Christian. Another embodiment of the same double standard is the egregious Ovlur, the Polovtsian turncoat who arranges Igor's escape—a "good Indian" straight out of Fenimore Cooper. In the *Song* Ovlur was but

an unidentified name in a list. In Stasov's scenario he was the half-Polovtsian retainer to Igor's wife Yaroslavna. In the eventual opera Ovlur's connection with Yaroslavna is severed. He turns up in Act II as an apostate-*ex-machina*, exhorting Igor to break the bonds of chivalry for the sake of Russian "honor," an honor that would remain undefiled by his deed because true honor can exist only between Christians.

Thus *Prince Igor* finally made overt the pervasive subtext to 19th-century Russian essays in orientalism: the racially and religiously justified endorsement of Russia's militaristic expansion to the east. For all during the opera's protracted gestation, its plot was being uncannily re-enacted in real life. Russia was just then competing avidly with Great Britain in what Rudyard Kipling dubbed "the Great Game," a long drawn-out imperialist war in Central Asia against a Muslim Holy League led by the Khan of Bokhara. Like most of educated Russia, especially its Europeanized intelligentsia, Stasov and Borodin enthusiastically ratified this war, which only came to an end in the 1980s with the Soviet debacle in Afghanistan (unless the current hostilities in Chechnya represent a new flare-up). "We go with trust in God for our faith, our Russia, our people," the operatic Igor anachronistically proclaims, very much in the spirit of Alexander II, the reigning tsar, whose oriental campaigns were explicitly celebrated in Borodin's "musical picture" *In Central Asia* (1880).

In the end the clear lines of Stasov's scenario were obscured by Borodin's irrepressible musical fantasy. Over the long years of the opera's begetting he sketched musical numbers as they occurred to him, whether or not they had a place in the original plan, and even when they contradicted it. Often, his inspiration lay in the operas his friends were writing, and in other projects of his own. Thus Skula and Yeroshka, the pair of carousing fiddlers in Act I, were quite ingeniously modeled on Varlaam and Missail, the pair of carousing monks in the first act of *Boris Godunov*: this is reflected not only in their behavior but in the music they sing, cast in a typically Mussorgskian brand of melodically heightened recitative.

On the other hand, the role of Igor was considerably amplified as work went on, his music being subjected to numerous revisions that ultimately turned him into a much more heroically "operatic" figure than he had been in the scenario. Igor's big Act II aria was thoroughly rewritten quite late in the composing process, turning it from a leitmotif-laden declamation into a full-blown aria, based on melodies originally composed for an abortive project called *Mlada*, on which four of the Fivers had collaborated around 1870 (and which Rimsky-Korsakov alone would finish two decades later, after Borodin and Mussorgsky were both dead). Again there is a parallel—an uncanny parallel encompassing every aspect of the number—with *Boris Godunov*, in which Mussorgsky had rewritten ►



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The cast of the 1890 premiere of *Prince Igor* in St. Petersburg included Grigory Ugrinovich and Fyodor Stravinsky (right) as Yeroshka and Skula.

a declamatory aria for the title character in Act II into a lyrical high point, drawing for the purpose on a discarded project of his own called *Salammbô*.

It was because of this haphazard accumulation and recasting of separate numbers that Borodin's sketches were in such chaotic shape when he died, why the composer's posthumous collaborators had to proceed as speculatively and as creatively as they did, and why the shape of the opera as speculatively completed is so odd. The only act in the opera that Borodin may plausibly be said to have completed more or less according to Stasov's plan—though even it had to be retouched, pruned, and plugged aplenty—was the second, and it can therefore serve as a model of his approach to opera.

That approach differed significantly from that of his more rebellious colleagues like Mussorgsky, and in some ways was downright old-fashioned for its time. Even César Cui, his brother-Fiver who dabbled not only in composition but in music criticism, had to admit in print that Borodin's operatic ideals were outmoded, or as Cui diplomatically put it, "perhaps not those of the present day." As Borodin himself put it, not diplomatically but rather obstinately in a letter to a singer acquaintance:

The purely recitative style has always gone against my grain and my character. I am drawn to singing, to cantilena, and not to recitative, although, to judge by the reactions of those who

know, I am not too bad at the latter. Moreover, I am drawn to forms that are more closed, more rounded, more ample . . . In my opinion, in the opera itself, just as in the sets, petty forms, details, tiny craft should have no place; everything must be painted in broad strokes, clearly, vividly and as practicably as possible, both for the voices and for the orchestra. The voices must be in the foreground, the orchestra in the background.

The man practiced what he preached. Act II of *Prince Igor* proceeds just as Borodin said an opera should, in broad strokes and closed numbers, with what in a nineteenth-century composer seems an almost defiant disregard for the claims and criteria of the contemporary spoken drama. The act is framed by decorative "oriental" numbers that set the scene and supply the routine choreographic diversion endemic to grand-operaic second acts. The subplot, the romance of Igor's son Vladimir and his captor's daughter Konchakovna, is given a risibly redundant exposition: lengthy da capo cavatinas for each (Konchakovna's accompanied by the chorus, being a virtual replay of the act's decorative opening), separated by a pair of tiny choral numbers that serve to bring Ovlur furtively on stage, and followed by a duet, longer than the two cavatinas combined, that is cast in an equally stereotyped format and contains just about the most hackneyed verbal text in all of operatic duetdom ("Lov'st thou?"—"Love I?"—"Lov'st thou me?"—"Love I thee!").

Having sung, the lovers scamper off, almost as if in a baroque opera, to make way for the title character, who enters to sing his aria of remorse and longing, the opera's centerpiece. This, the largest of all the musical structures in *Prince Igor*, is once again in da capo form, but with the reprise modified to produce a climax. Igor's aria is followed, after a brief *scena*, by another extended aria for another bass soloist, his captor Khan Konchak, who, like Igor, enters for no other purpose than to sing, and having sung moves on. The only real dramatic confrontation in the act takes place during the little *scena* between the bass arias, when Ovlur steps out of the shadows to propose escape to Igor. Otherwise the act is a classic "concert in costume," one large vocal number following (but hardly motivated by) another.

The second act of *Prince Igor* would no doubt be just as silly as this description has made it seem were it not that every single number in it is a musical masterpiece. Borodin's exotic idiom, though it followed and

enlarged upon the examples of Glinka and of Balakirev, the guiding spirit of The Five, and though it to some extent incorporated source tunes culled from books, was nevertheless an intensely personal yet flexible style. Of all Borodinesque idioms it is the one that is most instantly identifiable as his, and it proved adaptable to a great range of emotional expression.

At its most Glinka-esque (or "Ruslanesque"), Borodin's "orientalism" emphasizes sinuous chromatic passes between the degrees of the diatonic scale over long-held, sultry and slow-moving bass notes. At full sensual strength, the chromatic passes grow into whole chromatic scales, accompanied by suitably slithery harmonies. The result is the supreme musical expression of *nega*, the lushly voluptuous languor of the Orient as viewed through European eyes. (That it was taken as the essential and influential Borodin trait can be seen from the way both Russian and French composers pastiched it, most explicitly in Ravel's little piano encore called "À la manière de Borodine.")

More *nega* is evoked by the tessitura of Konchakovna's throaty contralto, unexpected and even startling in an ingenue role. Her part had been invented by Stasov out of a single line in the *Song of the Host of Igor*, when the two Khans, Gzak and Konchak, briefly consider "entailing the falconet," that is Vladimir, "by means of a fair maiden." When her voice coils all around and eventually beneath his as the love duet reaches its steaming climax, the effect is dazzlingly outlandish, redeeming the insipid verbal text. The famous concluding Polovtsian Dances (broken up in this production into two sets) marked an epoch for French musicians when Diaghilev introduced them to Paris in 1909.

The present production of *Prince Igor* is in fact very much in the spirit of Diaghilev, who regarded the works he presented to his audiences not as museum relics to be ritually adored but as lively contemporary experiences. His famous 1908 production of *Boris Godunov* was, famously, a version of the opera Mussorgsky himself might not have recognized, but nevertheless the one that finally won the opera its world repertory status. *Prince Igor*, which ever since its first production has hovered on the fringes of the repertory for the sake of its wonderful music (and despite its severe textual and dramaturgical problems), seems ripe for a treatment that will make it seem less a period piece and more a contemporary experience.

Thus the two-act version presented in San Francisco. The portion before the intermission corresponds fairly exactly to Borodin's, Rimsky's and Glazunov's Prologue

(continued on page 29)



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Libretto by the composer, after a scenario by Stasov, based on a 12th-century Russian epic "Song of the Army of Prince Igor"

Князь Игорь

Prince Igor (in Russian)

Conductor
Alexander Anissimov

Production
Francesca Zambello

Designer
Zack Brown

Lighting Designer
Thomas J. Munn

Sound Designer
Roger Gans

Chorus Director
Ian Robertson

Choreographer
Alphonse Poulin

Musical Preparation
Susanna Lemberskaya
Bryndon Hassman
Peter Grunberg
Ian Robertson
Svetlana Gorzhevskaya

Supertitles
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FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 13 AT 8:00
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 15 AT 2:00

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 18 AT 7:30
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 21 AT 8:00
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25 AT 7:30

CAST

(in order of appearance)

Igor Svyatoslavich, Prince of Seversk Sergei Leiferkus

Galitsky, Prince of Galich,
brother of Princess Yaroslavna Jeffrey Wells

Vladimir Igorevich, Igor's son by his first marriage Mark Baker

Musicians { Skula Vladimir Ognovenko
Yeroshka Konstantin Pluzhnikov
Gary Rideout (9/10, 13, 15, 21)

Yaroslavna, Igor's second wife Lauren Flanigan*

Yaroslavna's Nurse Catherine Cook

Konchakovna, daughter of Khan Konchak Elena Zarembo

Ovlur, a Christian Polovtsian Dennis Petersen

Konchak, Polovtsian Khan Paata Burchuladze*

Russian princes and princesses, elders, Russian warriors, maidens, crowd;
Polovtsian khans, girlfriends of Konchakovna, slave girls of Khan Konchak,
Russian prisoners, Polovtsian guards

Solo dancers: Badri Esatia*, Teimuraz Koridze*

Corps de ballet

*San Francisco Opera debut

SETTING: The Russian city of Putivl;
a Polovtsian encampment on the Russian steppes

PART I

PROLOGUE A public square in the city of Putivl, Russia

Scene 1 The court of Prince Vladimir Galitsky

Scene 2 Yaroslavna's quarters in Igor's palace

Scene 3 The city walls of Putivl

INTERMISSION

PART II

Scene 1 A Polovtsian encampment

Scene 2 The city walls of Putivl

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

SYNOPSIS

Prince Igor

PART I

Prologue—*A public square in the city of Putivl, Russia.* Igor Svyatoslavich, Prince of Seversk, is about to set out with his army against a marauding Tartar tribe, the Polovtsi, who threaten the city. The patriotic demonstrations are marred by an evil omen, an eclipse of the sun. Igor's wife Yaroslavna and the people implore him to abandon the campaign, but the call of honor and duty is too strong. He leaves his wife in the care of her brother, Prince Galitsky. Igor leads his troops and his son, Vladimir, off to battle as the populace praises him and the glories of Russia.

Scene 1—*The court of Prince Vladimir Galitsky.* Six months have passed. The ambitious Galitsky, in Igor's absence, has seized the power to govern Putivl and watch over the Princess Yaroslavna. Led by the rowdy musicians Skula and Yeroshka, two deserters from Igor's army, Galitsky's friends sing a joyous song of praise to him and recount how he had a maiden abducted for his pleasure. Galitsky, popular because of his easy-going, profligate ways, has become lost in dreams of power and announces his philosophy: if he were master of Putivl the Russian people would lead lives of pleasure. Some women enter to protest the young girl's abduction but Galitsky refuses their appeal. All turn their attention to wine and toast Galitsky, whom they would like to see assume Prince Igor's crown.

Scene 2—*Yaroslavna's quarters in Igor's palace.* Yaroslavna, yearning for Igor, is plagued by bad dreams. Her nurse announces the arrival of the women, who complain of Galitsky's behavior and ask Yaroslavna to help rescue their unfortunate companion. Galitsky unexpectedly arrives and attempts to laugh off his sister's reproaches, but finally agrees to release the abducted maiden. After he leaves, the Council of the Court comes to Yaroslavna with an account of the disasters which have befallen Igor: he has been defeated, he and his son Vladimir are prisoners, and the enemy is marching on Putivl.

Scene 3—*The city walls of Putivl.* An alarm sounds as the populace hastens to defend the city against the Polovtsian attack.

PART II

Scene 1—*A Polovtsian encampment.* Konchakovna, daughter of Igor's enemy, the Khan Konchak, has fallen in love with the captive Vladimir and longs for a secret tryst with him. As Russian prisoners pass by on their way back from forced labor, Konchakovna bids her women give them refreshments. The prisoners give thanks and move on. The Tartar patrol, with the Christian Polovtsian, Ovlur, among them, make their rounds. Ovlur furtively remains on guard alone as all depart. Vladimir, in love with Konchakovna, expresses his romantic feelings. The Khan's daughter approaches and tells Vladimir that she is confident her father will not oppose their marriage. But Vladimir is sure Igor will not even consider giving his approval to a match with the daughter of his enemy. They leave as Igor enters, filled with longing for freedom, for his homeland, and for Yaroslavna. Ovlur seizes the moment and offers to help Igor escape. The Prince refuses to consider such a dishonorable course, however much he may be tempted. Ovlur leaves as Khan Konchak enters. With great magnanimity, the Khan offers to grant Igor's freedom in return for a pledge of non-aggression and even suggests they become allies. Igor firmly refuses all of this, causing Konchak's admiration. The Khan gives orders that slaves be brought in to perform for their entertainment—and even offers Igor his pick of the maidens. The Polovtsi dance and drink themselves into a stupor. It is Ovlur's chance. He settles the details of the escape with Igor and Vladimir and arranges to meet them with the horses he has waiting on the other side of the river. But Konchakovna has learned of the escape and reproaches Vladimir—not at the treachery which is planned but that he is leaving without her. She pleads that the voice of love should be heard as well as that of duty. Vladimir is undecided, but Igor hears what Konchakovna is suggesting and opposes his will to Konchakovna's. In desperation, the Khan's daughter rouses the camp. Igor escapes, but Vladimir is left behind in the hands of the Polovtsi, who assemble and prepare themselves to march on Putivl.

Scene 2—*The city walls of Putivl.* Yaroslavna laments her fate and that of her husband. Her mood of despair is broken when she sees two horsemen riding toward the city, one of them dressed like a prince, the other evidently a Polovtsian. As Igor and Ovlur draw nearer, Yaroslavna recognizes her husband and there is an ecstatic reunion. But Yaroslavna still broods over the devastation around her. Her laments are accompanied by the sorrowful song of the passing Russian peasants, who mourn for their devastated, scorched country—a lament in which dark despair is mixed with faint hope.

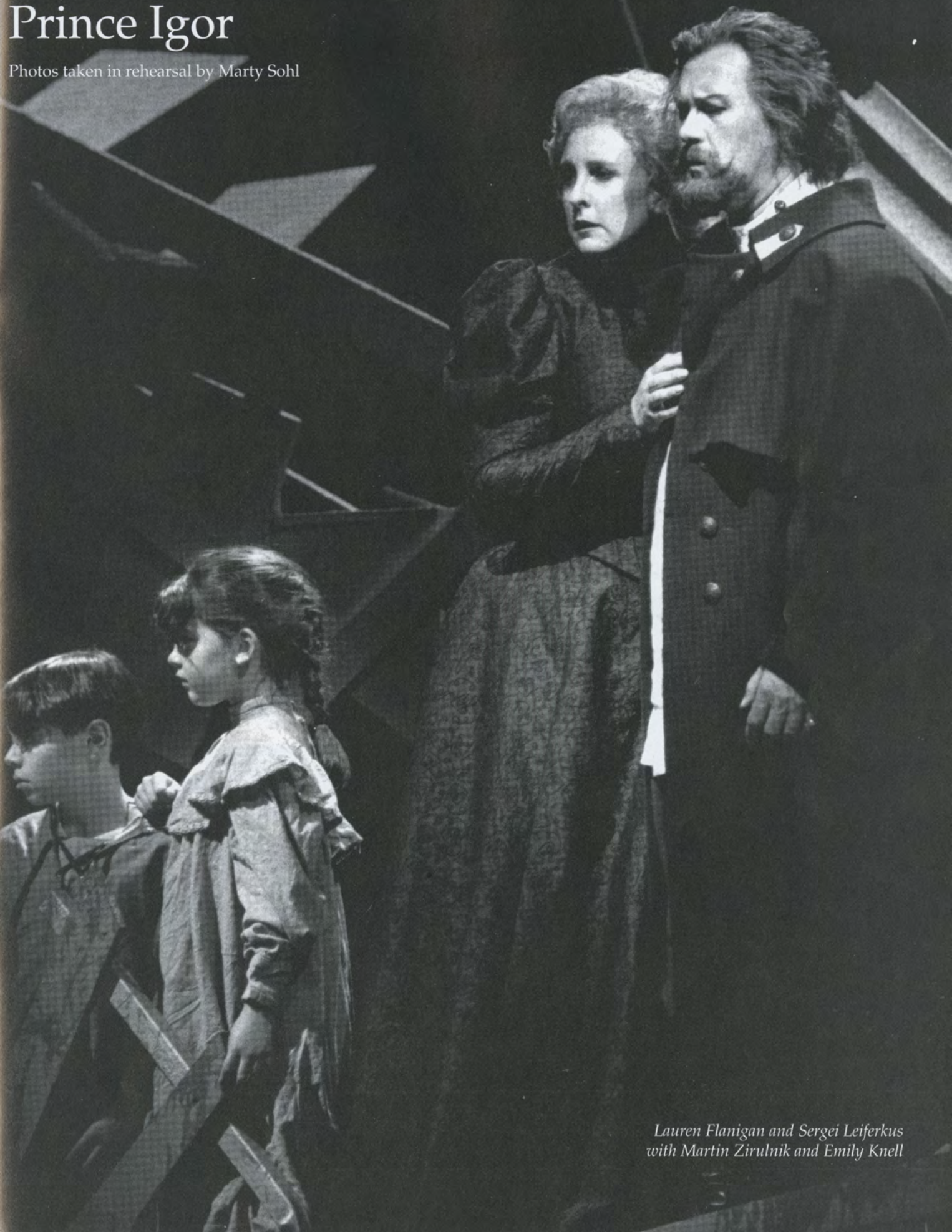
The performance of September 6th is designated in honor of Mr. and Mrs. John M. Bryan's membership in the Triple Gold Circle.

The performance of September 18th is sponsored by Sun Microsystems.

Gerard Howland, Civic Auditorium Project Designer

Prince Igor

Photos taken in rehearsal by Marty Sohl



*Lauren Flanigan and Sergei Leiferkus
with Martin Zirulnik and Emily Knell*



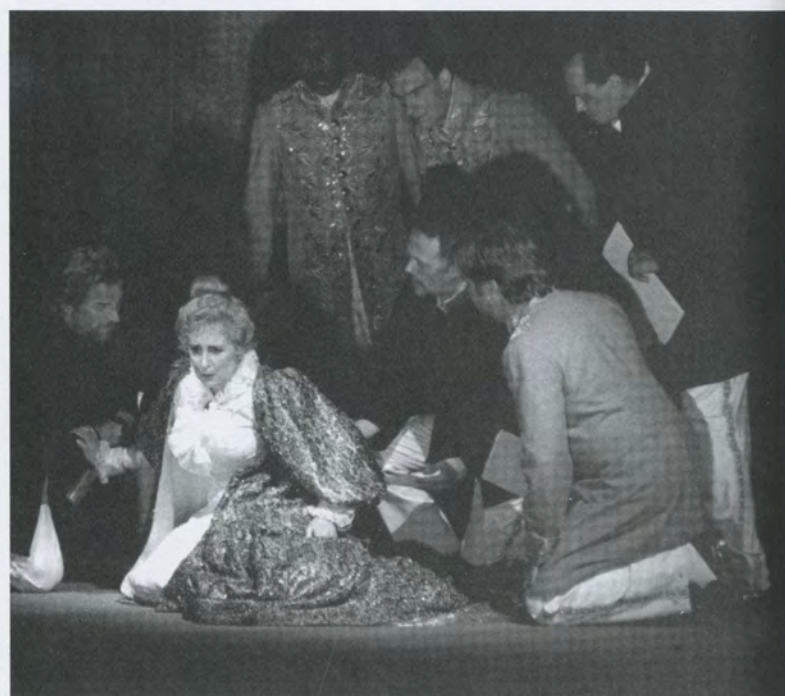
*Paata
Burchuladze*



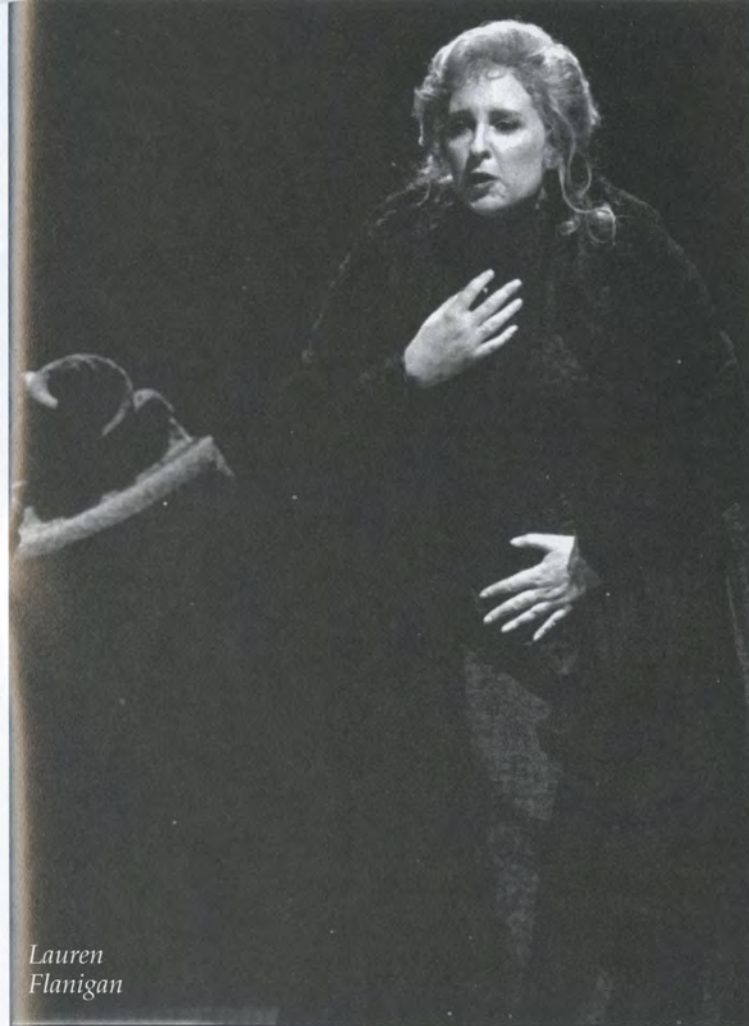
*Elena Zarembo,
Women of the San Francisco Opera Chorus*



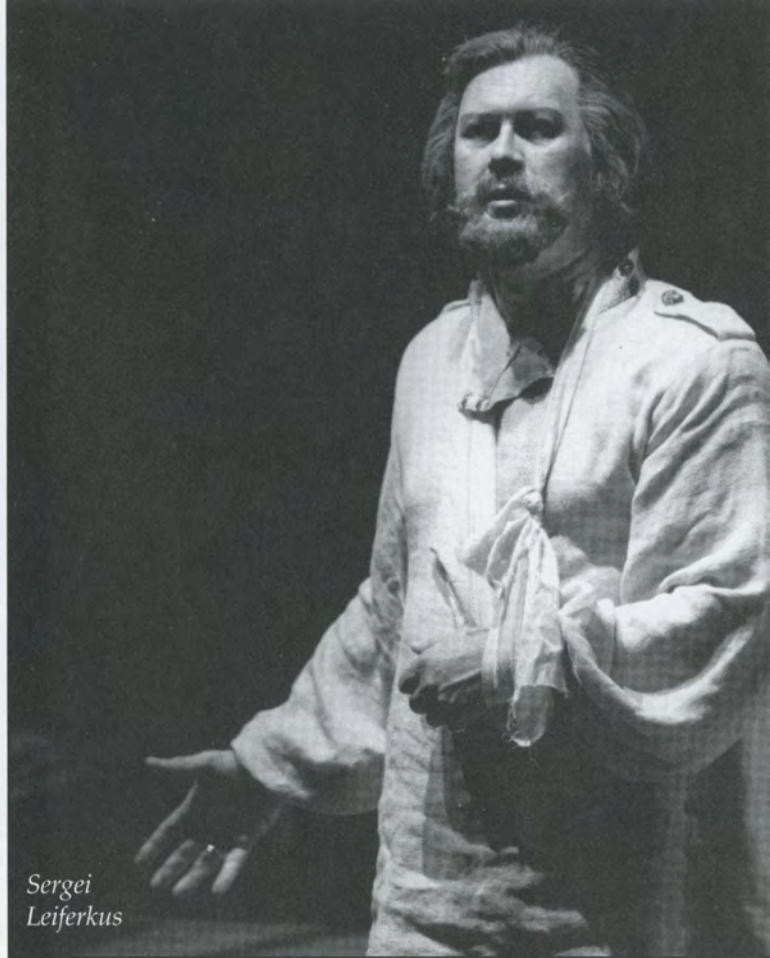
Jeffrey Wells



*Lauren Flanigan,
Men of the San Francisco Opera Chorus*

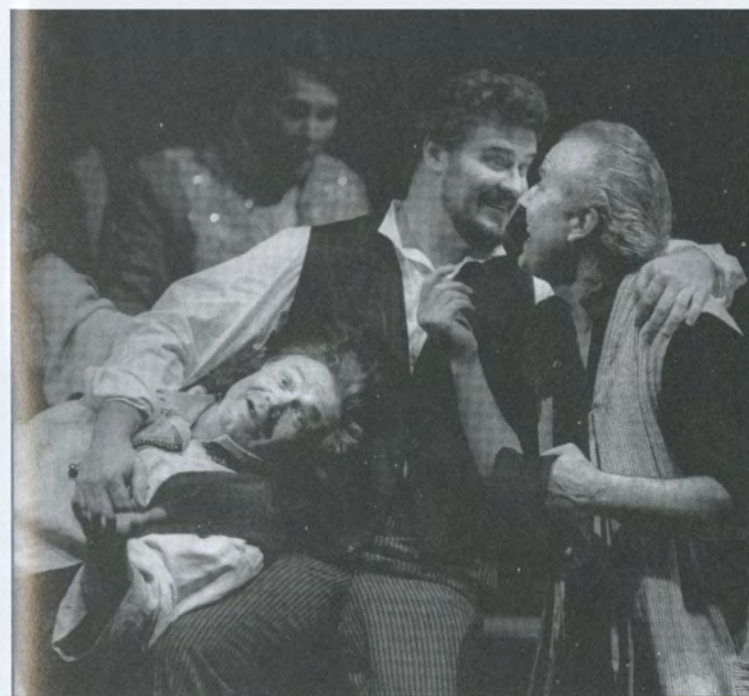


Lauren
Flanigan

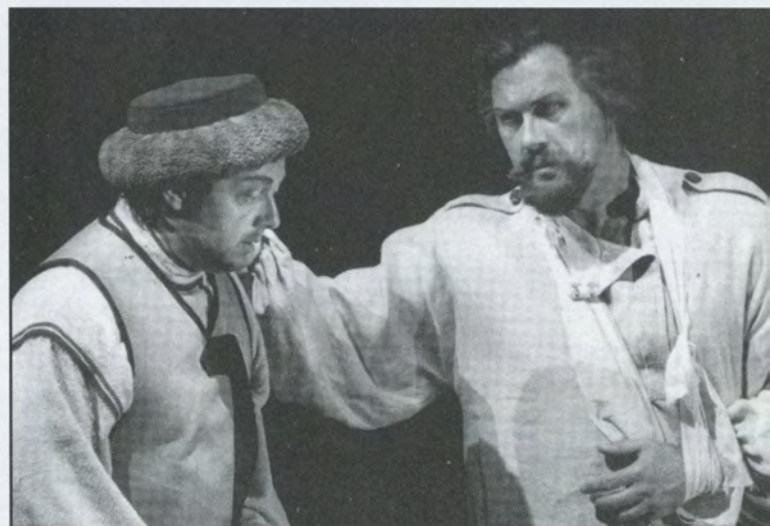


Sergei
Leiferkus

Right: Mark Baker, Elena Zarembo
Below right: Dennis Petersen, Sergei Leiferkus



(L. to r.) Konstantin Pluzhnikov, Jeffrey Wells,
Vladimir Ognovenko

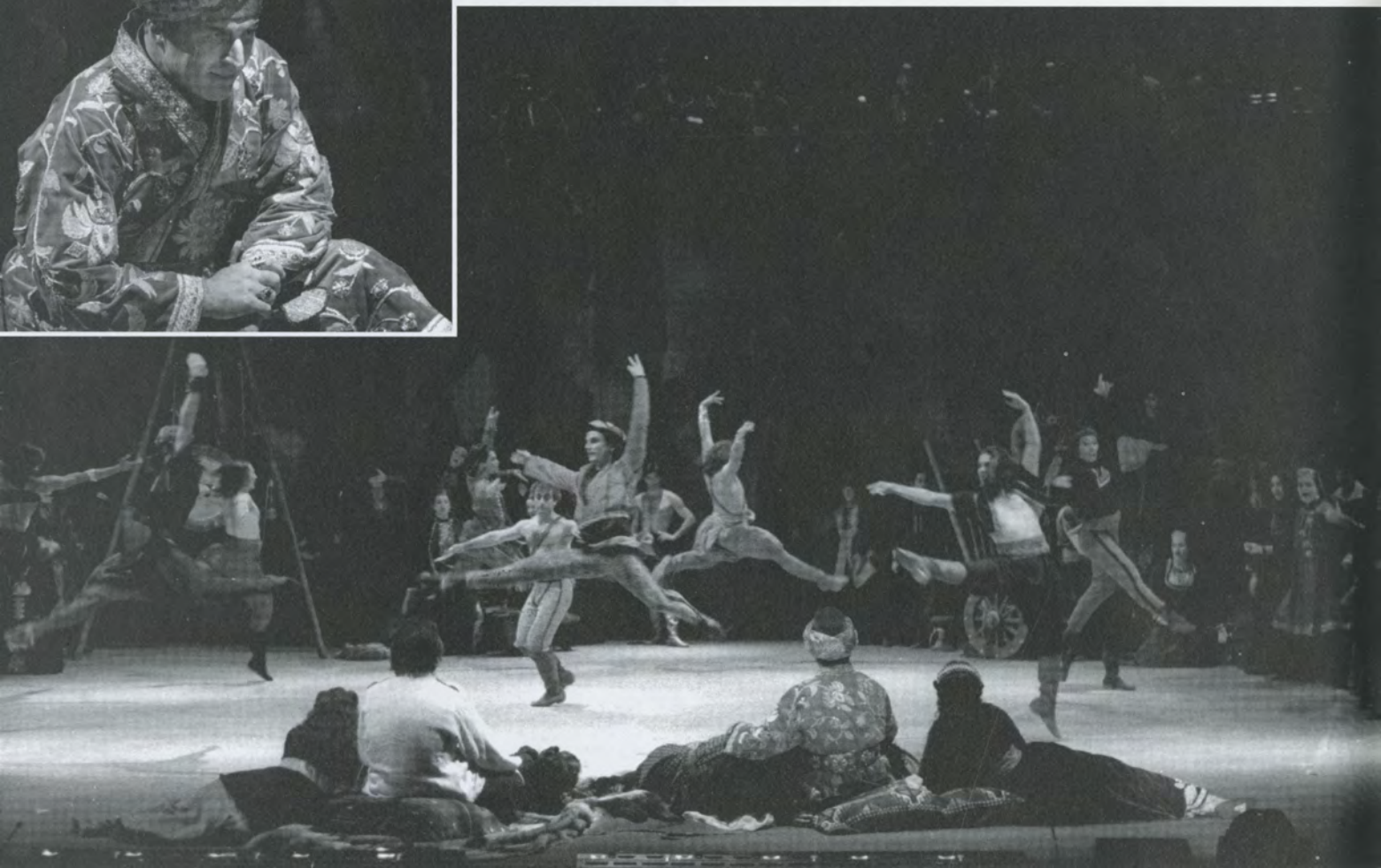




Part I: Principals, San Francisco Opera Chorus and Supernumeraries. (Inset) Lauren Flanigan, Sergei Leiferkus



Part II: Principals, Corps de Ballet, San Francisco Opera Chorus and Supernumeraries. (Inset) Paata Burchuladze



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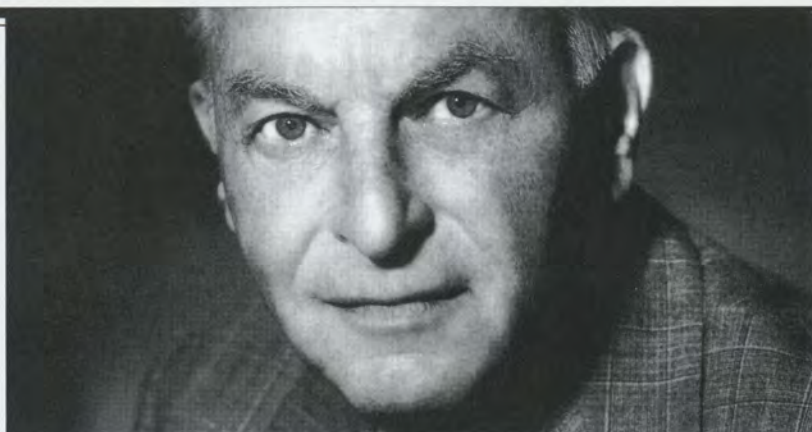
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BORODIN

(continued from p. 14)

and Act I. After the intermission comes a radical telescoping of the same trio's Acts II, III and IV. Even so, no one will think the opera short; the two halves are a generous ninety minutes each. Borodin's second act is kept pretty much as described above, except for the omission of the opening girls' chorus and dance and the (temporary) omission of the final portion of the Polovtsian Dances. Act III, mainly by Glazunov, is pared down to the final trio and the escape, after which the Polovtsian Dances are concluded.

The "original" Act IV is the one that is most radically reshaped. Its final pair of numbers, including a comic scene for the fiddlers and a concluding, somewhat incongruous triumphal chorus, are dropped, and the poignant chorus of villagers, which in the Rimsky/Glazunov version precedes Igor's return, is placed last, so that the opera ends, like Borodin's sketches, on an inconclusive note, even a somber one. ♦

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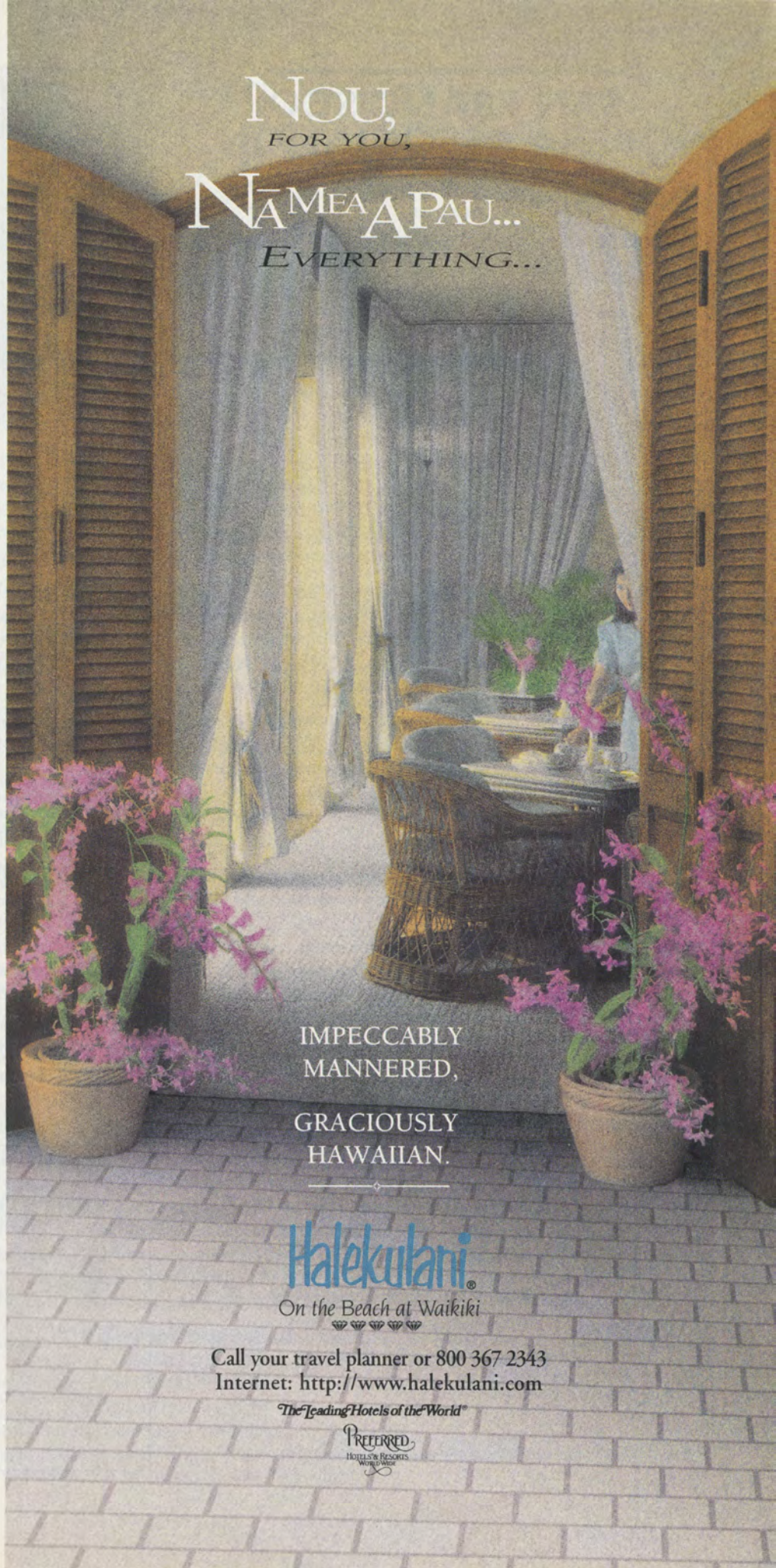
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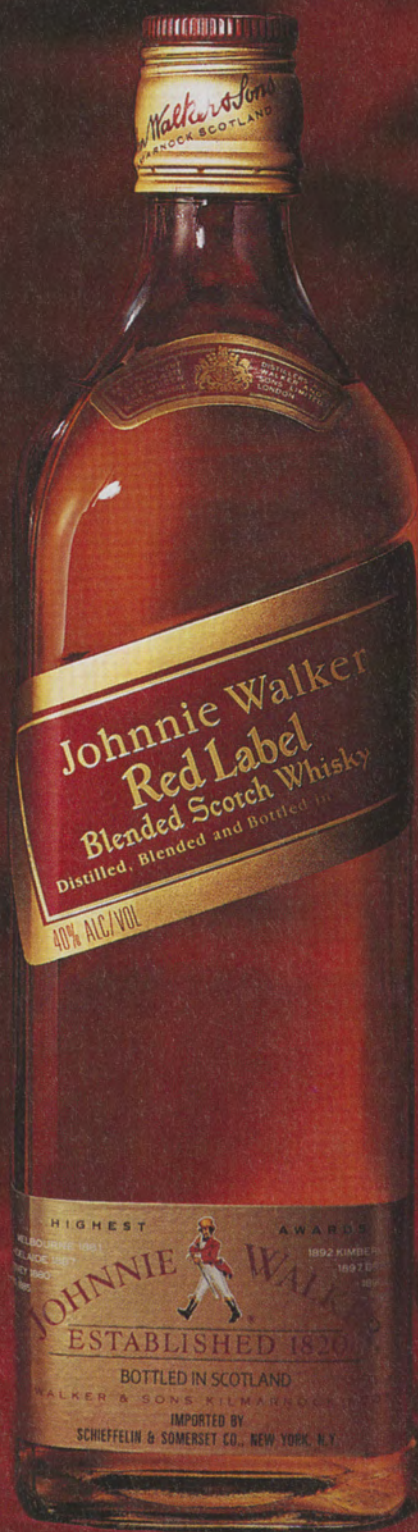
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So Here We Are . . .



General Director Lotfi Mansouri (holding microphone) led the cast of *Rusalka* and members of the Company in a group bow following the final performance of the 1995 Fall Season at the War Memorial Opera House, December 10.

Keeping up to date with San Francisco Opera since the move out of the Opera House

By JAKE HEGGIE

PAT YOURSELF ON THE BACK, O steadfast operagoer. You've made the journey! And right along with our friends Prince Igor, Hamlet, Lohengrin, Carmen, Hoffmann, Salome and the rest of the family, you've arrived: San Francisco Opera at Bill Graham Civic Auditorium and the Orpheum Theatre. By now you may have strolled about the theater, checked out the crowd and the space, looked for familiar faces, located the vitals (concessions, restrooms, and, of course, the Opera Shop), found the way to your seat and settled in for the performance. It's a new experience for everybody—exciting, unsettling, fun, strange—and how you actually got to your seat (from the Opera's perspective),

although a fascinating story, may be more than you want to know. You see, the universe may have started with a big bang a few billion years ago; cultural seasons may strive to start with a bang on opening night; but by a twist of fate, San Francisco Opera's 1996/97 Season inadvertently started with a bang seven years ago—with the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake. Count on Mother Nature to tell you when it's time to sit up and take notice.

In the years since the quake, devoted operagoers have sat patiently in the patched-up Opera House, with its cracked walls, fading gold fixtures, torn seats, and a vast net spanning the domed ceiling and chandelier. For seven seasons, they've witnessed wonderful performances on a stage that is imbued with loving memories and rich with history, knowing that a brief parting

was imminent. It was heartening last season to see audience members looking around the Opera House with nostalgia—touching a banister or an armrest with affection, gazing up at the graceful curves of the balcony and the beautiful proscenium. Each person found a special way to say a temporary farewell so that the long-overdue renovation could take place. (Subterranean construction work had actually started in July of 1995 to create the 10,000 square-foot basement expansion.)

It was December 10 of last year: a performance of *Rusalka* with the superb Renée Fleming in the title role and Sir Charles Mackerras conducting. Miss Fleming walked slowly and gracefully across a magical lake into the pale moonlight, then turned and raised her eyes and one hand to the sky. The radiant music of Dvořák's haunting score ►

Jake Heggie is an award-winning composer and associate manager of public relations at San Francisco Opera.

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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faded, and the enormous gold curtain fell on the last performance of the 1995 Fall Season—the last opera performance in that magnificent house until September of 1997. It was everything that opera should be: dramatic, emotional and breathtaking. The audience burst into cheers, and when the curtain went up, the cast was joined by scores of Company members in hard hats, led by the San Francisco Opera General Director Lotfi Mansouri for a Company bow.

That afternoon performance had been broadcast live throughout the Bay Area, and during the bow, Mansouri invited the audience and all friends of the Opera to an open house celebration with complimentary champagne, chocolates and desserts: "A toast to new beginnings!" It was a time for reflection and for looking ahead. There were free posters and entertainment throughout the lobbies as hundreds of opera fans filed through, including at least one staunch opera lover who had attended the opening of the War Memorial Opera House in 1932.

Eight days later, the entire Company was moved out of the Opera House to new quarters on Market Street overlooking United Nations Plaza. After January 1, another big move took place, when the crew for Morse Diesel Construction entered the Opera House as the new residents. The renovation began by removing the Orchestra level seats, curtains, wiring, lights . . . everything. The marble and stone masonry was then carefully shielded with protective plywood and plastic, and then it was down to the business at hand: major seismic retrofitting and extensive improvements throughout the building. Many of these will be apparent to you. But all of them, visible and not-so-visible, will serve to improve your comfort, security and enjoyment.

Gifts and pledges to the Opera House renovation campaign (which was launched in June of 1995) reached \$21 million this past June. The call for extra support and assis-

tance from the community was made last year, and the response has been magnanimous, with many members of the Opera family increasing their normal donations and making pledges for the Opera's own three-year campaign. In March, the Committee to Restore the Opera House (CROH) received a \$1 million challenge grant from The Kresge Foundation. "This grant is an enthusiastic endorsement from one of the country's most respected funders for one of San Francisco's most important civic projects," remarked CROH Co-Chair George Hume. "And since this generous gift is a challenge grant, it provides a powerful message to help us stimulate support from the broader public."

Now within the last quarter of its final goal of \$28 million, CROH has launched an all-out effort to complete fundraising in order to meet the challenge deadline of February 1, 1997. The committee has created a variety of naming opportunities for donors, including public areas, dressing rooms, rehearsal spaces—even the auditorium.

When the Opera staff returned from brief vacations in January, it was a whole new ballgame. The transition that they went through at the beginning of the year is the one you are experiencing now. New locations, new travel routes, new timetables. But even in opera, the show must go on, and so it does. The computers still clicked on, the phones all worked, and creative teams went into high gear to prepare for the run of *La Bohème* at the Orpheum Theatre and the extended 1996/97 Season at the Civic and the Orpheum.

The first performance of the year was on January 27—a Schwabacher Debut Recital by soprano Alison Buchanan, a 1996 Adler Fellow of the San Francisco Opera Center. And believe it or not, the recital series had moved, too! The prestigious concerts are now held at Old First Church in association with Old First Concerts. Additional recitals on the prestigious series featured tenor

Robert Breault (March 24), and mezzo-soprano Zheng Cao with baritone David Okerlund (April 21). The fourth recital by soprano Kristin Clayton was postponed and rescheduled for January 17 of next year. In March, singers from the Opera Center traveled to the Pacific islands of Guam



Soprano Patricia Racette and tenor Marcello Giordani singing the love duet of Act I of *La Bohème* in the Company's new production at the Orpheum Theatre, performed 24 times by four casts throughout the month of June.

and Saipan for the 10th year of the Pacific Rim Cultural Exchange, performing in benefit and educational concerts. The entire roster of Adler Fellows performed at the annual Merola Opera Program benefit on March 22. The sold-out event, titled "Voices of Spring," featured legendary bass-baritone Giorgio Tozzi as the guest of honor.

In April, Lotfi Mansouri announced the next exciting episode in his "Pacific Visions" program: A new opera by composer André Previn and librettist Philip Littell based upon Tennessee Williams's Pulitzer Prize-winning play, *A Streetcar Named Desire*. The opera will receive its premiere during the 1998 Fall Season at the Opera House with soprano Sylvia McNair as Blanche and baritone Rodney Gilfry as Stanley. Colin Graham, who directed San Francisco Opera's 1994 world premiere production of *The Dangerous Liaisons*, and this season's Company premiere of *Hamlet*, will direct. Mansouri initiated Pacific Visions in 1992 as a special program to commission new operas and perform unusual works, including that season's production of *The Death of Klinghoffer*. This season's West Coast premiere of *Harvey Milk* at the Orpheum is also part of this program—with San Francisco Opera ►



San Francisco Opera announced that it has commissioned an opera based upon Tennessee Williams's *A Streetcar Named Desire*. The creative team for the work—librettist Philip Littell, director Colin Graham, composer André Previn and Opera General Director Lotfi Mansouri—gathered in front of one of San Francisco's famed streetcars to mark the occasion.

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San Francisco Opera's 75th anniversary season will open in September of 1997 with Puccini's *Tosca*. The lavish sets from Armando Agnini's 1932 production (Act 2 is pictured) will be recreated by Thierry Bosquet.

serving as one of three co-commissioners of that work (with Houston Grand Opera and New York City Opera).

Also in April, the Adler Fellows jumped into education programs at schools throughout San Francisco and the Bay Area. The popular *Interactive Opera!* program for elementary schoolchildren was featured in a special broadcast on KRON Channel 4, and a new program, "*How do I love thee? . . . Let me check the time,*" designed by Education Director Sandra Bernhard, was performed for high school students.

During this period, the Opera announced the appointment of a new team to the helm of the Opera Center: Richard Harrell was named director, and Susan Webb was named the new music director. (The previous director, Christopher Hahn, had announced his resignation early in the month to become artistic administrator of Los Angeles Music Center Opera; Mikael Eliassen had elected to leave the post of music director due to extraordinary demands on his international teaching and performing schedule.) Harrell and Webb came from New York: Harrell was administrative director of the Juilliard Opera Center and Department of Vocal Arts; and Webb had been for 10 years an assistant conductor at the Metropolitan Opera, following a similar period of years with San Francisco Opera.

The young singers of the Opera Center then embarked on a Mediterranean opera cruise aboard the *Vistafjord* in May, entertaining for donors and opera fans from around the world. While they were gone, and while the Opera's general director, managing director and artistic administrator were at the OPERA America Conference (where San Francisco Opera was being praised for its outstanding Website), a

frightening call came to the Opera's new headquarters: "The Opera House is on fire." It was May 2. Gasps of disbelief and visions of the devastating fires at the Liceu in Barcelona and La Fenice in Venice raced through the imagination. It was true. As staff members ran toward the beautiful Beaux Arts building, smoke could be seen pouring from the top floors. Fortunately, our magnificent fire department responded immediately and the four-alarm fire was extinguished within an hour.

The damage was not nearly as severe as it could have been, but several of the center boxes were destroyed. It was a shocking reminder of the fragile nature of the arts, and the significance of the Opera House. Another wakeup call from Mother Nature. The damage from the fire, covered by the contractor's insurance, has not significantly delayed the renovation work, and all are optimistic that the project will be completed on time.

No sooner had the Adler Fellows returned from the cruise, than it was time for another marvelous education program, *Opera Inside Out*. This year, the Opera Guild joined forces with the Opera Center to present this unique program at the Orpheum Theatre. Thousands of young students, seniors and people from throughout the community attended. It was initiated in 1994 at the Opera House especially for students. But this year, the performances were opened to the public. *Opera Inside Out* features a brief guided tour through the backstage goings-on at the Opera. Dr. Kip Cranna, San Francisco Opera's musical administrator, hosted the adventure, which included lighting demonstrations, technical demonstrations (including a snowstorm on stage!), plus interviews with members of the props and scenery departments, a singer, the conduc-

tor and more. The audiences watched the construction of San Francisco Opera's new production of *La Bohème*, and then were treated to a full performance of Act 2 from Puccini's great opera. Adler Fellows sang the principal roles with Chorus Director Ian Robertson conducting the Opera Orchestra and Chorus.

Those performances were the buildup to San Francisco Opera's featured production of the summer: 24 performances of *La Bohème* in what the Company called a "Broadway-style" run at the Orpheum Theatre. It was a way to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the world's most popular opera, and it was the best way for audiences to first experience San Francisco Opera in one of its new homes. This was the Company's inaugural production at the 2,400-seat Orpheum—a theater most widely known as a showplace for Broadway-type productions—and it held the potential to introduce opera to a whole new audience.

The orchestra pit had been expanded to accommodate the full San Francisco Opera Orchestra, and a new production had been created by set designer Michael Yeargan and director Mark Lamos with costumes by Walter Mahoney and lighting by Thomas J. Munn. Sponsored by the Ann & Gordon Getty Foundation, this *La Bohème* was specifically designed to feature the best elements of great opera—exceptional young voices, Puccini's great score performed by the Opera Orchestra and Chorus, acclaimed international conductors—combined with some of the more attractive elements of a Broadway production, including multiple performances (7-8 times per week), and lower ticket prices (nearly half of regular season prices). Multiple casts of some of the world's finest young singers alternated in the performances: there were five sopranos to sing Mimi, four Rodolfos, three Musettas, four Marcellos and so on. Three conductors alternated on the podium: Steven Mercurio, Marco Armiliato (in his Company debut) and Ian Robertson.

The production opened on June 7 and the word was out immediately: *La Bohème* was a hit! *San Francisco Chronicle* columnist Herb Caen wrote that "this is a 10 on a scale of 10 . . . If God's in His heaven and listening in our direction, the hot ticket in town from now through June 30 will be that operatic warhorse *La Bohème* . . ." Across the board, the acclaim was extraordinary. By the end of the run, more than 45,000 people had attended the performances and more than \$2 million in tickets had been sold. It was a new attendance record for a single opera production in the Company's 74-year history.

continued on page 50

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1996-97 SEASON

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

TOSCA

Giacomo Puccini

Litton, Judge, Harlan, Gunter, da Costa
Vaness, Leech, Diaz
Revival of L.A. Opera production

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

TRISTAN UND ISOLDE

Richard Wagner

Armstrong, Hockney, Schuler & Behle, Henschel,
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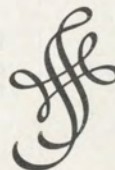
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The popular Pre-Performance Lectures are held at the Bill Graham Civic Auditorium (location to be announced) and in the orchestra section of the Orpheum Theatre. Guest speakers will provide insights and information about the opera and the composer. 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)

Feb. 8—7 p.m.
Feb. 11—7 p.m.
Feb. 21—6:30 p.m.

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Information: (415) 565-6432

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

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD — PREVIEWS

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

SAN FRANCISCO CITY COLLEGE PREVIEWS

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

SAN FRANCISCO CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC EXTENSION DIVISION

Oct. 14 - Nov. 4, 7:30-9:30 p.m.
Great Operatic Comedies: Rossini, Mozart, and Beaumarchais
Series of four Monday classes, held by Paul Thomason. San Francisco Conservatory of Music, 1201 Ortega St., San Francisco. Information: (415) 759-3446

OPERA EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL PREVIEW SERIES

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

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

ARTIST PROFILES



LAUREN FLANIGAN

In her San Francisco Opera debut, **Lauren Flanigan** sings her first Yaroslavna in *Prince Igor*. The American soprano joined the roster of the Metropolitan Opera and the New York City Opera during the 1990-91 season and scored successes in both theaters as Musetta in *La Bohème* and in the world premiere of Corigliano's *The Ghosts of Versailles* at the Met. She gained world-wide attention and critical acclaim at both houses during the 1993-94 season, first creating the title role in the world premiere of Weisgall's *Esther* at New York City Opera and then at the Met as Giselda in Verdi's *I Lombardi*, a production that was nationally broadcast in the U.S. and taped for national television and videocassette. The versatile artist has sung a wide variety of roles throughout the U.S. and abroad: Abigaille in *Nabucco* for her debut at Milan's La Scala; Ursula in *Mathis der Maler* at NYCO; the title role of *Rusalka* for the Met and in Washington, D.C.; Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* in Seattle, Philadelphia, Dublin, Ireland, and for the Glimmerglass Opera; Giselda in Frankfurt with the Met on tour; Violetta in *La Traviata* in Seattle, Philadelphia and Omaha; the North American premieres of *The Vanishing Bridegroom* (Opera Theatre of St. Louis) and *The White Rose* (Opera Omaha's Avant-Garde Fall Festival); and the Governess in Mark Lamos's acclaimed production of *The Turn of the Screw* for Seattle and Glimmerglass Operas. (The San Francisco native began her stage career at the age of 13 singing Flora in the Company's Western Opera Theater production of Britten's opera.) Concert appearances include Strauss's "Four Last Songs" under Raymond Leppard, "The Cabildo" and "Songs of Amy Beach" with Ransom Wilson (also recorded), as well as performances with the Houston Symphony, Mostly Mozart Festival, L'Opéra Français de New York and New Jersey Pro Arte Chorale. Upcoming engagements include *Nabucco* at the Teatro San Carlo in Naples, *Macbeth* in Cologne, *Turn of the Screw*, *The Seven Deadly Sins* and *Esther* at NYCO, Hanson's *Merry Mount* with the Seattle Symphony, and Schubert's *Fierrabras* with the American Symphony Orchestra at Carnegie Hall.



ELENA ZAREMBA

Elena Zarembo, who sings the role of Konchakovna in *Prince Igor*, made her 1991 San Francisco Opera debut as Hélène Bezukhova in the Company premiere of *War and Peace* and was seen here last fall in the trouser role of Ratmir in *Ruslan and Lyudmila*. Born in Moscow, she attended the Gnesin State Music Institute and, while still a student, was invited to be a soloist at the Bolshoi Theatre, where she appeared in such operas as *Boris Godunov*, *Prince Igor*, *Eugene Onegin*, *The Queen of Spades*, *Iolanta*, *A Life for the Tsar*, *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Das Rheingold*. She has also performed with the Bolshoi company abroad in Paris, Japan, South Korea, Germany, and at La Scala in Milan and the Metropolitan Opera. Since her highly acclaimed 1990 debut at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, as Konchakovna, the mezzo-soprano has appeared at the Paris Opera, Vienna State Opera, Salzburg Easter and Summer Festivals, and the Arena di Verona. She has been particularly praised for her appearances in the title role of *Carmen*, which she has performed at the Bregenz Festival, Bavarian State Opera, Arena di Verona, Royal Opera, and in Birmingham, Dortmund and Gothenburg. Miss Zarembo's 1995-96 season included *Un Ballo in Maschera* in Brussels, Marfa in *Khovanshchina* in Brussels and Hamburg, Fenena in *Nabucco* at Covent Garden, as well as *Carmen* in Munich, Brussels, Vienna, Paris, and at the Arena di Verona. Her artistry has been documented on videocassettes or audio recordings of *Prince Igor*, *A Life for the Tsar*, *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, *Boris Godunov*, *Das Rheingold*, *Un Ballo in Maschera*, and Mussorgsky's cantata *Joshua*.



CATHERINE COOK

In her fifth season with San Francisco Opera, **Catherine Cook** sings the roles of the Nurse in *Prince Igor* and Berta in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*. The mezzo-soprano made her 1991 Company debut in *War and Peace* and *Elektra*, and subsequently performed here in *Boris Godunov* and *Christophe Colomb* (1992), as well as in *The Makropulos Case* and the student matinee presentation of *La Fille du Régiment* (1993). Last fall, she performed in San Francisco Opera productions of *Ruslan and Lyudmila* (Naina), *Faust* (Marthe), and *Die Walküre* (Rossweisse). A 1990 Merola Opera Program participant and 1991-92 Adler Fellow, her Opera Center credits include the title role of *Ariodante*, Meg Page in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and a highly acclaimed Schwabacher Debut Recital. A native of Chicago, the artist made her 1994 Lyric Opera of Chicago debut as the Innkeeper in *Boris Godunov*, followed by Berta in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, a role which was the vehicle for her 1995 Portland Opera debut as well. Most recently, Miss Cook returned to Portland for Marcellina in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, performed Mrs. Lovett in *Sweeney Todd* at Wichita Opera Theatre; and made her Alice Tully Hall debut in Poulenc's *Les Mamelles de Tirésias* with L'Opéra Français de New York. Future plans include *Peter Grimes* and *Le Nozze di Figaro* at Chicago Lyric Opera, and a debut with Los Angeles Music Center Opera in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*.

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ARTIST PROFILES



SERGEI LEIFERKUS

Performing the title role in the Company premiere of *Prince Igor*, baritone **Sergei Leiferkus** returns to the site of his U.S. opera debut, which took place here in 1989 in the role of Telramund in *Lohengrin*. His most recent San Francisco Opera appearances were as Rangoni in the 1992 staging of *Boris Godunov* and Ruprecht in the 1994 production of *The Fiery Angel*. Born and raised in Leningrad, the artist studied at the Leningrad Conservatory of Music. Since his western debut with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra under Kurt Masur, he has appeared with major opera companies and symphony orchestras throughout the world. These include the Royal Opera at Covent Garden, Vienna State Opera, Paris Opera Bastille, Milan's La Scala, Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires, Kirov Opera, Berlin State Opera, and the Metropolitan Opera; the London Symphony, Boston Symphony, New York Philharmonic and the Philadelphia Orchestra under such conductors as Claudio Abbado, Bernard Haitink, Zubin Mehta, Seiji Ozawa and Georg Solti. The baritone's operatic repertoire includes the title roles of *Eugene Onegin*, *Mazeppa*, *Don Giovanni*, *Prince Igor* and *Nabucco*; Pizarro in *Fidelio*, Amonasro in *Aida*, Don Carlo in *La Forza del Destino*, Baron Scarpia in *Tosca*, Méphistophélès in *La Damnation de Faust*, Escamillo in *Carmen*, Iago in *Otello*, Count Tomsy in *The Queen of Spades*, and over 30 others. His most recent engagements include *The Queen of Spades* at the Glyndebourne Festival, *Carmen* at the Met, *Andrea Chénier* at the Chicago Lyric Opera, *Tosca* at Houston Grand Opera, *Don Giovanni* in Dallas, and *Fidelio* at the Bregenz Festival. Leiferkus has made an impressive number of audio and video recordings and gives recitals across Europe and North America. He is a frequent guest at the festivals of Edinburgh, Salzburg and Glyndebourne, as well as many of the most prestigious international music halls.

Paata Burchuladze makes his first San Francisco Opera appearance as Khan Konchak in *Prince Igor*. The eminent Georgian bass is known throughout the world for his many recordings and performances at the leading opera houses. After winning first prize in the 1982 Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow, he quickly



PAATA BURCHULADZE

came to the attention of the musical world. Soon after his 1984 debut at Covent Garden as Ramfis in *Aida*, he made his debut at Milan's La Scala, where he has performed numerous times in such operas as *Macbeth* (Banquo), *Nabucco* (Zaccaria), *I Lombardi* (Pagano), and *Aida* (Ramfis). Additional appearances at Covent Garden have included *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, (Basilio), *Boris Godunov* (title role), *The Fiery Angel* (Inquisitor), and *Prince Igor* (Konchak). He is also a regular guest artist at the Vienna State Opera, where he has been praised for his performances as Boris Godunov and as Prince Ivan Khovansky in *Khovanshchina*. Additional appearances include *Turandot* at the Arena di Verona, *Nabucco* as part of La Scala's tour to Japan, *Don Giovanni* at the Salzburg Festival and, in the U.S., performances at the Metropolitan Opera and the Opera Company of Philadelphia. Recent assignments include *The Fiery Angel* and *Aida* at Covent Garden, *Don Carlos* (Philip II) in Santiago, Chile, *Aida* at the Orange Festival, and the title role of *Boris Godunov* at the Munich Opera Festival and in Tel Aviv. He also has a busy schedule on the concert platform and regularly performs in recital at the world's major musical centers. In addition to many opera recordings, both audio and video, Burchuladze has numerous solo album recitals to his credit.

Tenor **Mark Baker**, Vladimir Igorevich in *Prince Igor*, made his 1990 San Francisco Opera debut as Froh in *Das Rheingold*, and has since appeared with the Company as Grigory/Dimitri in *Boris Godunov* (1992) and Narraboth in *Salome* (1993). Born in Oklahoma and raised in Florida, he first came to national attention as a winner of the 1986 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and made his Met debut during the 1986-87 season in *Roméo et Juliette*. Subsequent Met assignments since then include *Das Rheingold*, *Salome*, *Der Fliegende Holländer*, *Khovanshchina*, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, *Macbeth*, *Boris Godunov*, *Parsifal*, *Fidelio* and *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*. Other notable performances include *Fidelio* at the Glyndebourne Festival; *Der Fliegende Holländer* with Opéra de Lyon, Santa Fe Opera, Calgary Opera, Washington Opera and at Catania's Teatro Bellini;



MARK BAKER

Wozzeck at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Berlin Staatsoper, Paris Châtelet, Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires, Italy's Spoleto Festival, and with the Israel Philharmonic; *Salome* at Santa Fe Opera, Spoleto Festival U.S.A., and Minnesota Opera; as well as *Die Walküre* (Siegfried, role debut) in Santiago, Chile. His most recent appearances include *Der Fliegende Holländer* with the Netherlands Opera, *Carmen* and *Elektra* with the Dallas Opera, *Salome* at the Met and the Bastille in Paris, *Susannah* at Houston Grand Opera, and *Parsifal* with Opéra de Nantes. Baker has recorded *Das Rheingold* under the baton of James Levine, *Wozzeck*, and filmed *Jenifa* for TVS in England. He is a graduate of Indiana University where he received his bachelor's degree in Vocal Performance, as well as a master's degree in Counseling and Counseling Education.



JEFFREY WELLS

Jeffrey Wells sings his first Prince Galitsky in the Company premiere of *Prince Igor*. The American artist's debut season with San Francisco Opera was during the 1992 Rossini Festival when he sang the roles of Walter Fürst in *Guillaume Tell* and Fenicio in *Ermione*. He was

seen with the Company in 1994 as Ferrando in *Il Trovatore* (the role which served as his 1988 Metropolitan Opera debut), and appeared here last fall as Ruslan in *Ruslan and Lyudmila*. The bass-baritone has sung virtually all of the major bel canto roles of Bellini, Donizetti and Rossini throughout Europe and North America. His recordings include Mendelssohn's *Die Erste Walpurgisnacht*, the role of Antony in the award-winning *Antony and Cleopatra*, and Bal-dassare in the original French version of *La Favorite*. He recently scored successes with roles new to his repertoire: Claggart in *Billy Budd* at the Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Méphistophélès in *Faust* at Opera Pacific, and Escamillo in *Carmen* at the Bonn Opera. Additional recent highlights include debuts with the Opéra de Paris/Bastille and with Opéra de Genève as Lorenzo in *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*, the title role of *Don Giovanni* in Detroit, Méphistophélès in Washington, D.C., Timur in concert performances of *Turandot* with the Cleveland Orchestra, Colline in *La Bohème* at Houston Grand Opera, as well as a return to the Met for his sixth season as Capulet in *Roméo et Juliette* and as Escamillo. Future engagements include Theseus in a new staging of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Escamillo in a new production of *Carmen* at the Met, and Capulet at the Lyric Opera of Chicago.



VLADIMIR OGNOVENKO

Vladimir Ognovenko portrays Skula in the Company premiere of *Prince Igor*. The bass made his U.S. opera debut as Old Prince Nicolai Bolkonsky and Matveyev in San Francisco Opera's 1991 production of *War and Peace*, and has subsequently appeared here as Varlaam in *Boris Godunov* (1992) and as Ruslan and Farlaf in last fall's production of *Ruslan and Lyudmila*. A graduate of the Ural Conservatory, the artist was engaged at the opera theaters of Krasnoyarsk and Sverdlovsk between 1970 and 1984. He joined Leningrad's Maly Theater in 1984 and, in 1989, became a soloist with the Kirov Opera. His repertoire encompasses Boris and Varlaam in *Boris Godunov*, Méphistophélès in *Faust*, Ivan the Terrible in *The Maid of Pskov*, The Viking Guest and Duda in *Sadko*, Burundai in *The Legend of the Invisible City of Kitezh*, Don Basilio in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Galitsky and

ARTIST PROFILES

Skula in *Prince Igor*, The General in *The Gambler*, Philip II in *Don Carlo*, and Prince Gremin in *Eugene Onegin*. In recent seasons, he has made debuts at the Chicago Lyric Opera (*Boris Godunov*) and the Metropolitan Opera (*Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*). Earlier this year, he portrayed Prince Ivan Khovansky in a new staging of *Khovanshchina* under the baton of Rostropovich at Moscow's Bolshoi Theater. His recordings include *Boris Godunov* (Varlaam), *The Fiery Angel* (The Inquisitor), *Sadko* (Viking Guest), and *Prince Igor* (Galitsky). Ognovenko has made guest appearances in Bulgaria, Italy, Scotland, Germany, Israel, France and Greece. He was awarded the title of "Artist of Merit" by the former Soviet Union's Russian Republic.



KONSTANTIN PLUZHNIKOV

Russian tenor Konstantin Pluzhnikov, Yeroshka in *Prince Igor*, studied at the Leningrad Conservatory and joined the roster of the Maly Opera in 1969. In 1971, he became a member of the Kirov Opera and has been a leading principal artist there ever since. Winner of the 1968 Glinka All-Russia vocal competition, he also excelled at the 1970 Bucharest International Competition and the 1972 Geneva International Competition. A native of Batumi in the Georgian Republic, he has performed extensively abroad, both in opera and concert, and has thus far been heard in France, Italy, Germany, Spain, Scotland (Edinburgh Festival), Finland, Israel, Austria, Holland, Japan and the United States. (He made his 1994 San Francisco Opera debut as Mephistopheles in *The Fiery Angel*.) Pluzhnikov's repertoire includes Herod in *Salome*, Lensky in *Eugene Onegin*, Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Ernesto in *Don Pasquale*, Alfredo in *La Traviata*, the Duke in *Rigoletto*, Count Almaviva in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, the title roles of *Faust*, *Lohengrin*, *Sadko* and *Don Carlos*, the Simpleton in *Boris Godunov*, the Scrivener in *Khovanshchina*, Afanasy in *The Fair at Sorochinsk*, and Grishka in Rimsky-Korsakov's *The Legend of the Invisible City of Kitezh*. The tenor has made over 30 recordings, and with the Kirov Opera alone he can be heard as Mephistopheles in *The Fiery Angel*, Golitsin and the Scrivener in *Khovanshchina*, and Yeroshka in *Prince Igor*.

ARTIST PROFILES



GARY RIDEOUT

In his fifth season with the Company, Canadian tenor **Gary Rideout** sings the role of Yeroshka in *Prince Igor*. Since his 1989 San Francisco Opera debut in *Lulu*, he has appeared here as Borsa in *Rigoletto* and Dr. Blind in *Die Fledermaus* (1990); Count Hauk-Sendorf in *The Makropulos Case* and Balthasar Zorn in *Die Meistersinger* (1993); as well as Heinrich in *Tannhäuser* (1994). Formerly a Resident Artist with the Canadian Opera Company of Toronto, he has appeared with that company in numerous productions. Elsewhere, he has sung the roles of Rodolfo in *La Bohème* and Bacchus in *Ariadne auf Naxos* for Opera East, and Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* for Calgary Opera. His concert engagements throughout Canada include performances with the Toronto Symphony, Victoria Symphony, Symphony Nova Scotia, and the Ukrainian Millennium Choir. The versatile artist, who received degrees from Michigan State University, York University in Toronto, and the University of Toronto, also performs in musicals, cabaret, film, and legitimate theater.

Tenor **Dennis Petersen**, who portrays Ovlur in *Prince Igor*, has been applauded in a variety of operatic roles, as well as for his appearances in concerts, recitals and oratorio performances. Since his 1985 San Francisco Opera debut, the 1984 Merola Opera Program graduate has appeared here in nine seasons and over 18 productions. Roles sung for the Company include Pang in *Turandot*, Vogelgesang in *Die Meistersinger*, Chekalinsky in *The Queen of Spades*, Don Basilio in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, the Marquis in *Lulu*, Pisandro in *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria*, Spoletta in *Tosca* and, last fall, Harvey in *Anna Bolena* and Goro in *Madama Butterfly*. Elsewhere, his recent operatic appearances included his first season with the Metropolitan Opera in *Peter Grimes* and *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*; Mime in *Das Rheingold*, Missail in *Boris Godunov* and L'Incredibile in *Andrea Chénier* at the Lyric Opera of Chicago; the Dancing Master in *Ariadne auf Naxos* with Florida Grand Opera; *Der Fliegende Holländer* with Minnesota Opera; *The Queen of Spades* with the Boston Symphony; *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Tannhäuser* and *Fidelio* with New Orleans Opera; in addition to *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* and Donizetti's *Il Duca d'Alba* at the Spo-



DENNIS PETERSEN

letto Festivals in the U.S. and Italy. Petersen has also recently been featured in concert with the Phoenix Symphony Orchestra, Calgary Philharmonic, New York Choral Society, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, and New Jersey Symphony. Future engagements include Monostatos in *Die Zauberflöte* at the Minnesota Opera, and Mime in *Das Rheingold* at the Metropolitan Opera.



ALEXANDER ANISSIMOV

Currently Conductor-in-Chief of the Byelorussian National Grand Opera and Principal Guest Conductor of Dublin's Irish National Symphony Orchestra, **Alexander Anissimov** began his conducting career more than 20 years ago in St. Petersburg, having studied at both the Moscow and St. Petersburg Conservatories. His repertoire now encompasses over 40 operas and ballets. 1980 marked his debut in Perm with the first-ever U.S.S.R. production of Prokofiev's *The Fiery Angel*. During his tenure as Perm's opera and ballet Conductor-in-Chief, he took part in the staging of 10 new productions, including *Khovanshchina*, *Spartacus*, *Eugene Onegin*, *The Queen of Spades* and Prokofiev's two-evening version of *War and Peace*. (As assistant to Valery Gergiev, Anissimov made his 1991

U.S. opera debut leading a performance of this work for San Francisco Opera.) He has regularly appeared as guest conductor at, among others, the Kirov Opera of St. Petersburg, Moscow's Bolshoi Theatre, and the opera houses in Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia and Moldavia. Performances during the 1995-96 season include *Boris Godunov* at La Fenice in Venice, Rubinstein's *The Demon* at the Wexford Festival (available on CD), where he has been a regular guest conductor, *Eugene Onegin* at the Paris Bastille Opera, *Prince Igor* for the Marseilles Opera, and Rimsky-Korsakov's *The Tale of Tsar Saltan* in Florence.



FRANCESCA ZAMBELLO

One of opera's most celebrated directors, **Francesca Zambello** stages the Company premiere of *Prince Igor*. The American artist began her career with San Francisco Opera in 1983 directing the Family Matinee performances of *La Traviata*, and has returned to the Company to stage *La Voix humaine* (summer, 1986), *Faust* (fall, '86), and *La Bohème* (1988). An innovator in the system of Supertitles, she has written over 15 English translations for San Francisco Opera productions, including all four operas of the Ring cycle (1985, '90). Since her 1986 European debut with *Beatrice di Tenda* at La Fenice in Venice, she has staged opera and theater for major companies throughout the world. Recent projects include the world premieres of *Emmeline* and *Modern Painters* for Santa Fe Opera; the Olivier Award-winning productions of *Khovanshchina* at the English National Opera and *Billy Budd* for the Royal Opera House at Covent Garden and the Paris Bastille Opera; *Tannhäuser* for the Royal Danish Opera; the world premiere of Philip Glass's *Orphée* at Harvard's American Repertory Theater; *Lucia di Lammermoor* at the Metropolitan Opera; the world premiere of Alexander Goehr's *Arianna* at Covent Garden; *Benvenuto Cellini* for the Grand Théâtre de Genève; and *Les Troyens* in Los Angeles. She is represented on video and television with numerous productions including *La Traviata* from Orange, *War and Peace* from Seattle, *La Bohème* from San Francisco, *Billy Budd* from Geneva and *Street Scene* (awarded the Nombre d'Or prize) for German TV WDR. Future plans include the world premiere of Daniel Catán's *Florencia en el Amazonas* for

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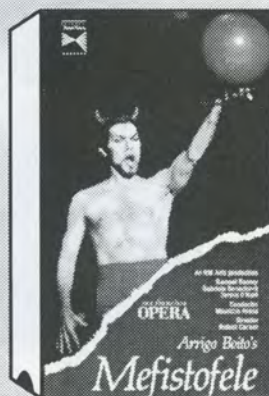
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ARTIST PROFILES

Houston Grand Opera, *Die Meistersinger* in Copenhagen, *Turandot* and a world premiere based on Flaubert's novel *Salammbô* for the Bastille (where she was recently honored with the Grand Prix de Théâtre), *Tristan und Isolde* for Seattle Opera, *Otello* to open the Munich Summer Festival at the Bayerische Staatsoper, *Boris Godunov* for the ENO and *Cavalleria Rusticana/Pagliacci* for Covent Garden.



ZACK BROWN

Zack Brown designed the sets and costumes for *Prince Igor*, the settings for *Lohengrin*, and selected principal costumes for *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*. He made his 1979 San Francisco Opera debut with the sets and costumes for *La Gioconda*. That nationally telecast, Emmy-award-winning production was repeated on the stage of the War Memorial in 1983 and '88. Additional Company credits have been *Le Nozze di Figaro* ('82, '86, '91), *La Forza del Destino* ('92), and Rossini's *Otello* ('94). As resident designer for the Washington Opera, Brown has created the sets and costumes for over 40 productions, including *La Bohème*, *Un Ballo in Maschera*, *The Merry Widow* and D'Albert's *Tiefland*. He has also created designs for, among other companies, the Metropolitan Opera (*Rigoletto*), Houston Grand Opera, Santa Fe Opera, New York City Opera, Wolf Trap, and the Hamburg Staatsoper. On Broadway, Brown designed scenery and costumes for the Tony-award-winning revival of *On Your Toes*. Among his 14 productions for New York's Circle in the Square Theater, his scenery for Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* and his costumes for *Saint Joan* won nominations for Tony and Drama Desk awards, respectively. Classical dance designs include *Gaîté Parisienne* and *Jardin aux Lilas* for the American Ballet Theatre and a full evening of Ravel, *Trilogy*, for the Hamburg Ballet. In addition, his costume designs were seen in a five-part television mini-series of O'Neill's *Mourning Becomes Electra*. Much of his work is seen regularly at the Arena Stage in Washington, D.C., including *Of Thee I Sing*, *Candide*, *Twelfth Night* and *On the Town*.



ALPHONSE POULIN

Choreographer **Alphonse Poulin**, a native of Maine, started his professional dance career with the Boston Ballet (where he danced for nine years), and continued with engagements at São Paulo's Municipal Theater Ballet, Lisbon National Ballet, Munich State Theater, and Berlin's Theater des Westens. In 1981, he was engaged as ballet master and teacher at the Ballet of the Grand Théâtre du Genève, a position he currently holds. He also served as head of the School of Dance at Geneva's Conservatory of Music. Operas he has choreographed at the Grand Théâtre include *The Merry Widow*, *La Périochole*, *Lulu*, *Eugene Onegin*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *The Love for Three Oranges*, *Ariane et Barbe-Bleue*, *L'Italiana in Algeri*, *I Quattro Rusteghi*, *Carmen*, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, *Roméo et Juliette*, and *Mefistofele*. Additional credits elsewhere include *Mefistofele* (San Francisco Opera, 1989 U.S. opera debut; Chicago Lyric Opera; Houston Grand Opera; Washington Opera), *Faust* (Vienna State Opera), *La Rondine* (Opera North), as well as *La Traviata*, *Aida* and *Rigoletto* (Chorégies d'Orange). Poulin also currently works as guest ballet master for the Netherlands Dance Theater, National Ballet of Madrid, Batsheva Dance Company, Cullberg Ballet, and the Gulbenkian Ballet.



THOMAS J. MUNN

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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SO HERE WE ARE ...

(continued from p. 38)

"Our 'Broadway-style' run of *La Bohème* was a resounding success artistically and fiscally," commented General Director Lotfi Mansouri. "Night after night during this three-week run, the Orpheum Theatre was filled with young audiences and many people who had never attended an opera. This was exactly what we had hoped to achieve: to introduce opera to new audiences. We are already discussing plans for an extended run of another opera next summer."

During the June run of *La Bohème*, San Francisco Opera held its Annual Meeting at Civic Auditorium and announced that it had closed a third consecutive year in the black. Topping the good news was a \$13 million increase in net assets for the 1996 fiscal year (which closed on January 31, 1996). "We finished a remarkably good year artistically and financially," remarked Opera Association President William W. Godward. "Our annual fundraising has been most heartening and our audience response the best ever, with more than \$19.5 million in ticket sales. These figures highlight the generosity of our patrons, whose support and enthusiasm are essential to this Company's success."

When Mansouri wrapped up his report on the artistic achievements of the past year, he added a surprise announcement: "I'm pleased to confirm all of the rumors by officially announcing that we will reopen the magnificent War Memorial Opera House in 1997 with Puccini's *Tosca*. It was the opera chosen by Gaetano Merola [the Company's founder and first general director] to inaugurate the Opera House in October of 1932." Designer Thierry Bosquet will recreate the sets for *Tosca* from that magnificent production by Armando Agnini. The French designer also oversaw the re-creation of the spectacular 1904 *Ruslan and Lyudmila* production which was seen here last season. "We are anticipating an equally lavish realization," added Mansouri.

The casts for *La Bohème* had included several current and former Adler Fellows, many of whom are now singing at opera houses internationally. In July, the 1996 Adler Fellows performed the West Coast premiere of Dominick Argento's *The Aspern Papers* at yet another new location for the Opera: the Center for the Arts, Yerba Buena Gardens. The new production was directed by Christopher Alden with sets and costumes by Carol Bailey. Susan Webb, the Opera Center's music director designate (she assumed her duties on August 1), was the conductor for this passionate work, leading the San Francisco Opera Orchestra in four extraordinary performances.

The young hopefuls for future places in the Adler Fellowship program—the partici-

SO HERE WE ARE . . .

pants of the 1996 Merola Opera Program—arrived from 14 countries on June 7, the first day of *La Bohème*. Through their 10-week residency, the gifted young singers performed operas at Sigmund Stern Grove (*The Elixir of Love*, directed by Graziella Sciutti and conducted by Ian Robertson) and Villa Montalvo (*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, directed by John Copley and conducted by Robert Dean), a concert with the San Francisco Opera Orchestra at Yerba Buena Gardens called "Opera in the Gardens," and the Grand Finale concert with members of the Opera Orchestra at Davies Symphony Hall. They also participated in classes with master teachers who included the legendary French opera singer Régine Crespin, director John Copley, Lotfi Mansouri, Marlena Malas, Craig Rutenberg and Mikael Eliassen.

As you read this, many of those young Merola artists are now performing *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* on the 30th Western Opera Theater (WOT) national tour. This program was begun in 1967 with assistance from the first National Endowment for the Arts touring grant. During those 30 years, the WOT tour has presented 38 operas in more than 1,700 performances. WOT tours have reached more than two million people in 46 states and in March of 1987, WOT became the first American opera company to tour the People's Republic of China. And through subsequent tours of China and Japan, WOT has become the most active opera company in the Pacific Rim.

Throughout July and August, the Opera's new environment for the performances at Civic Auditorium was loaded in piece by piece, and built in time for technical rehearsals to prepare for the opening production of *Prince Igor*. Literally, years of creative planning with experts from many fields came to fruition in a few short weeks.

So here we are. Waiting for the downbeat—eager for a new season of opera.

By no means does all of this tell you how you got to your seat tonight, but it does tell you know that San Francisco Opera has not stood idly by—one move just leads to the next. And to keep things lively, the Company has added five holiday performances (December 26-29) of *Die Fledermaus* to its regular calendar, and a New Year's Eve Gala called "Prince Orlofsky's Masked Ball." More than anything, this unusual season allows the Company to demonstrate—and you to see—just what a tremendous art form opera really is, adaptable to many spaces and many visions.

All of this because Mother Nature decided to give us a shaking seven years ago. So we'll listen to Mama and take care of business. But for now, let's enjoy opera. ♦

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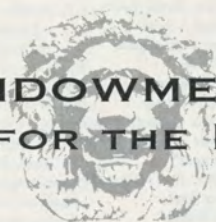
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For information on becoming a Merola member, please call 415/565-3235.

SERVICES

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.

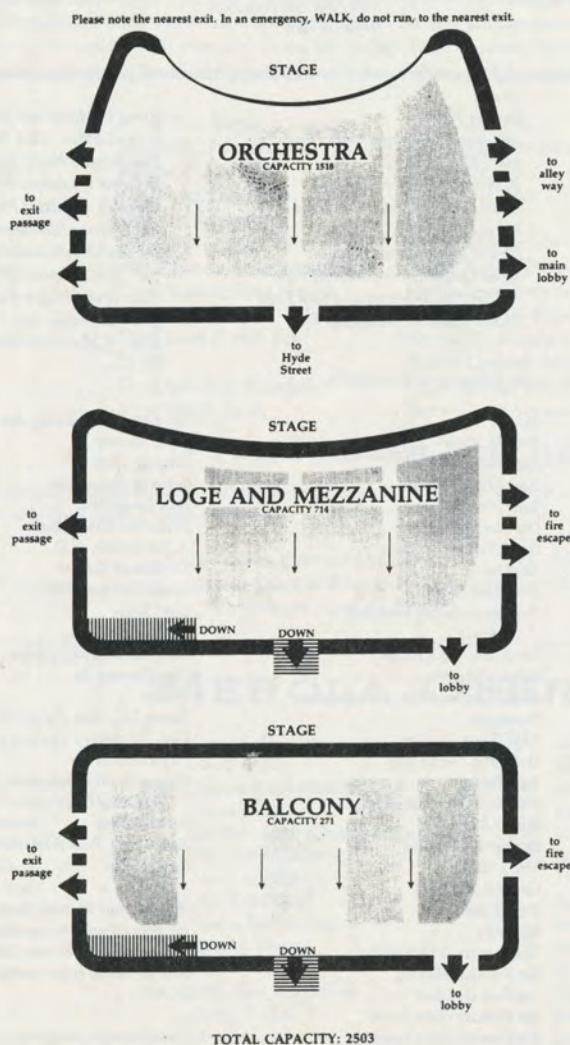
No cameras, tape recorders or cellular phones are permitted in the Orpheum Theatre and the Civic Auditorium.

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.

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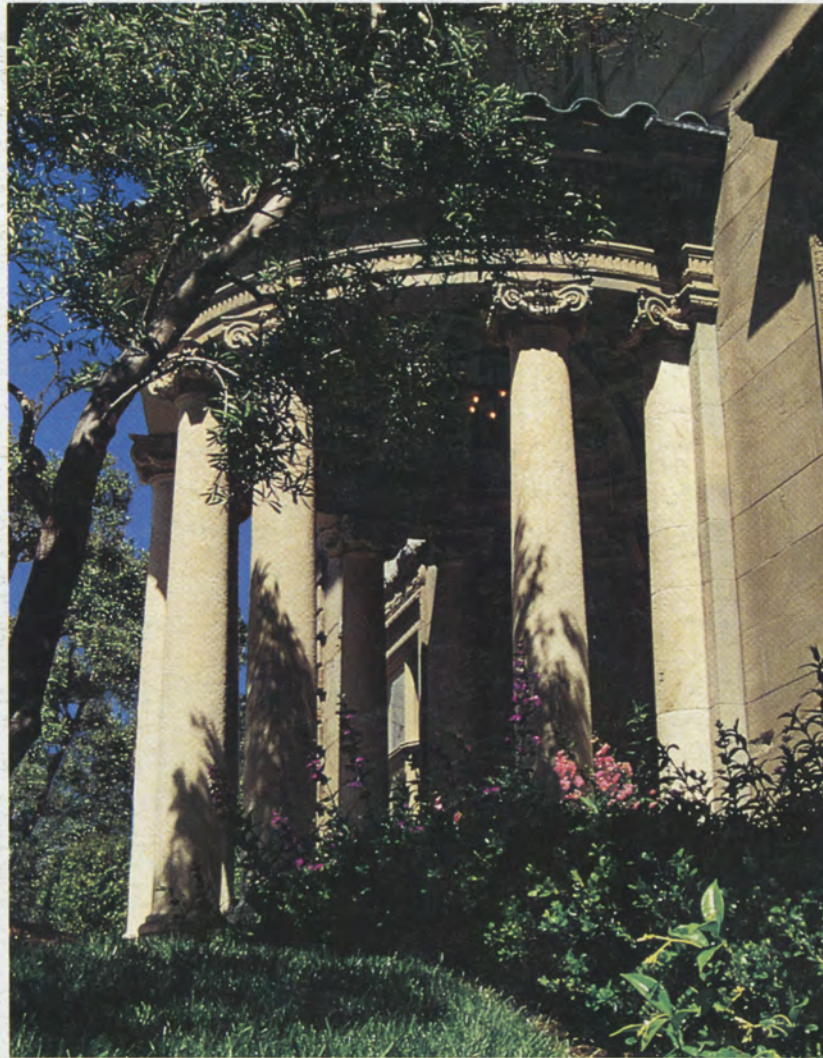
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