

Carmen

1997-1998

Sunday, June 14, 1998 2:00 PM
Wednesday, June 17, 1998 7:30 PM
Saturday, June 20, 1998 7:30 PM
Wednesday, June 24, 1998 7:30 PM
Saturday, June 27, 1998 7:30 PM
Tuesday, June 30, 1998 7:30 PM
Thursday, July 2, 1998 7:30 PM

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SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

SUMMER 1998

CARMEN



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A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND PRESIDENT, SAN FRANCISCO OPERA ASSOCIATION



On behalf of the San Francisco Opera Association, we are pleased to welcome you to our *Femmes Fatales* Festival. We spent the past two summers in different venues, presenting *La Bohème* at the Orpheum Theatre and *Madama Butterfly* at the Golden Gate Theatre. In doing so, we gained a significant number of new audience members, with approximately 25,000 first-time opera-goers at the *Bohème* run and more than 24,000 at *Butterfly*. Indeed, our opera family has grown, and we hope to continue the trend by offering you new and innovative approaches to opera while maintaining the high standards that you expect from San Francisco Opera. Right now, it is a delight to be able to welcome our summer audience to the War Memorial Opera House.

Although the Company's financial position continues to be strong, ticket prices cover only half of our production costs. Today, more than ever, support of individuals, foundations and corporations is vital to the existence of San Francisco Opera. We acknowledge with great appreciation the generosity of Mrs. Paul L. Wattis, Chevron and Madeleine Haas Russell for helping us to present our *Femmes Fatales* Festival.

Just around the corner is our 76th season, which has been expanded to 10 operas and includes the world premiere of *A Streetcar Named Desire*, a San Francisco Opera commission. An extraordinary season awaits us, and we look forward to seeing you there.

REID W. DENNIS
CHAIRMAN

WILLIAM W. GODWARD
PRESIDENT

A MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL DIRECTOR



The *femme fatale* has been celebrated in opera for hundreds of years, and our *Femmes Fatales* Festival offers you a brilliant sampler of great opera. From the exquisite, 17th-century baroque lyricism of Monteverdi's *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, to the beloved romanticism of Bizet's *Carmen* and the provocative, 20th-century music of Berg's *Lulu*, you will embark on a musical adventure through time, led by the marvelous conductors Ralf Weikert, Patrick Summers and Alberto Maria Giuri.

Our *femmes fatales* live in vibrant worlds of drama and intrigue, each brought to life in our summer productions. A fascinating new virtual reality film sequence and new costumes by the celebrated fashion designer Bob Mackie enhance our acclaimed 1989 production of *Lulu*. The elegant grandeur of ancient Rome is re-created by Robert Perdziola in *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*. Our massive and very popular production of *Carmen*, created for our season at Bill Graham Civic Auditorium, has been refitted for the War Memorial Opera House stage.

As for singers, we'll encounter a superb group of international artists, with some in exciting debuts: Frederica von Stade performing her first Countess Geschwitz in *Lulu*; countertenor David Daniels, mezzo Lorraine Hunt and tenor Barry Banks taking Company bows in *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*; and soprano Andrea Dankova making her U.S. opera debut in *Carmen*.

The power of the *femme fatale* is a force to behold—enjoy the excitement!

LOTFI MANSOURI
GENERAL DIRECTOR

LONDON

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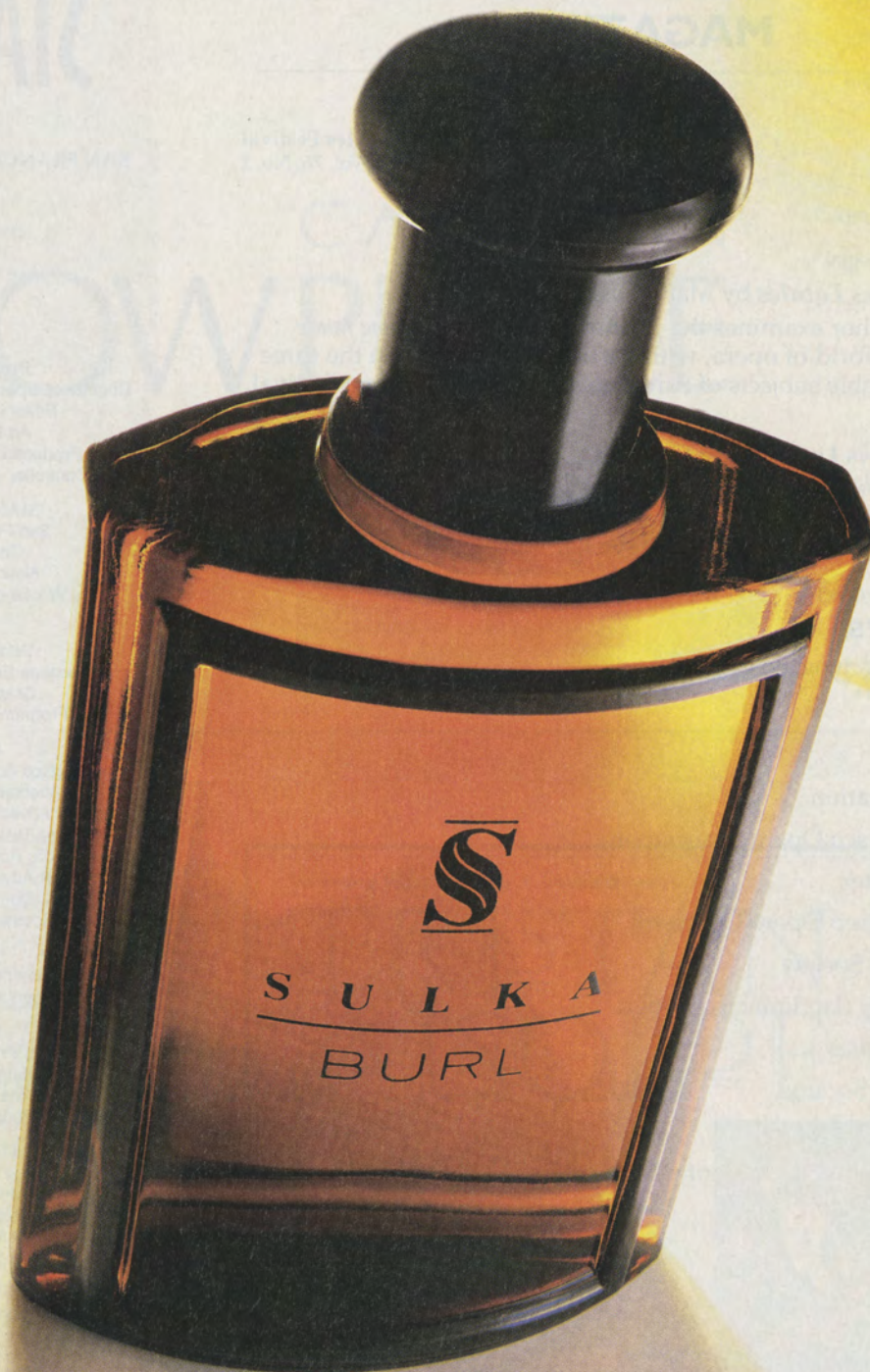
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SAN FRANCISCO OPERA MAGAZINE

Carmen

Femmes Fatales Festival
Vol. 76, No. 3

FEATURES

- 18 The Enduring Charms of Carmen** by Christopher Hunt
How *Carmen*, initially a failure, became one of the most popular operas of all time.
- 28 It All Started With Merola**
San Francisco Opera's Merola Opera Program trains young opera professionals with the help of some extraordinary friends and supporters.

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COVER

Sargent, John Singer (1856-1925)
La Carmencita, 1890
Oil on canvas, 90 x 54½ in.

Musée d'Orsay, Paris
Photo: Lauros-Giraudon

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All performances in the War Memorial Opera House

Turandot

Schnaut, Vassileva*(9/11, 17, 20)/
Dankova; Margison, Ellero D'Artegna
Rizzi/Bruce/Hockney/Falconer/Munn
Sept. 11, 17, 20, 22, 25, 30; 10/3
Co-owned with Lyric Opera of Chicago

Arabella

Watson, Mills, Forst;
Grundheber*, Kuebler, McIntyre*,
Schmeckenbecher*
Runnicles/Edwards*/Rice*/Whitfield
Sept. 12, 15, 18, 24, 27; Oct. 1, 4
Production from the Royal Opera House at
Covent Garden

World Premiere

A Streetcar Named Desire

Based on the play by
Tennessee Williams
Fleming, Futral*; Gilfry, Griffey
Previn*/Graham/Yeargan/Munn
Sept. 19, 23, 26, 29

Glanville**, Futral/Kriha Dye (10/11);
Gilfry/Okerlund (10/11),
J.H.Morris*

Summers/Graham/Yeargan/Munn
Oct. 2, 4, 8, 11

Project funded, in part, by Mrs. Paul L. Wattis,
the Carol Franc Buck Foundation, Arthur
Andersen, and the National Endowment
for the Arts.

Tristan und Isolde

Huffstodt, Urmana**; Schmidt, Fox,
von Halem
Runnicles/Hampe/Pagano/Munn
Production co-owned with Washington Opera
Production sponsored by the L.J. and Mary C.
Skaggs Foundation
Oct. 10, 14, 18, 21, 26, 30; 11/6

Puccini

R. Strauss

Previn Littell

Manon

Swenson; Hadley, Gilfry, Vernhes**,
Sénéchal, Otey*
Rudel/Copley/Mitchell/Walker/
Arhelger
Oct. 15, 17, 20, 23, 25, 29; 11/1

New Production

Don Carlo

Rautio*/Mesheriakova* (Nov. 14),
Hatziano*; Larin, Michaels-Moore,
Morris, von Halem, Hagen*, Lord
Joel/Sagi*/Brown/Munn
Oct. 24, 27, 31; 11/5, 8, 11, 14

Massenet

Verdi

Company Premiere

Betrothal in a Monastery Prokofiev
Netrebko, Diadkova;
Pluzhnikov, Bezubenkov
Gergiev/Noseda* (12/3, 6, 10)
Pazi*/Kozhenkova*/Androsov*/
Munn
Nov. 23, 25, 27, 28; Dec. 3, 6, 10
Production from the Kirov Opera, St. Petersburg

Turandot

Stottler*, Amsellem*; Bogachov*,
Palatchi*
Armiliato/Bruce*/Hockney/Falconer/
Munn
Nov. 29; Dec. 1, 4, 9, 12

Madama Butterfly

Valayre/Kabatu*, Cao/White;
Lima/Cornelison*, Okerlund
Villaume*/Daniels/Yeargan/
Strawbridge

** United States opera debut
* San Francisco Opera debut
† 1998-99 Adler Fellow

All performances are in the original
language with English Supertitles.

Repertoire, casts and dates are subject
to change.

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Norma

Vaness, Antonacci; Sylvester,
Silvestrelli*
Summers/Sinclair*/Varona/Whitfield
Nov. 7, 10, 15, 18, 21, 24, 28

Bellini

Peter Grimes

Riedel, Powell, Cook; Moser*, Held,
Baerg, Lord, Del Carlo
Runnicles/Copley/Toms/Perdziola/
Munn
Nov. 17, 22; Dec. 2, 5, 8, 11, 13

Britten

Joined the company at 22.

Made V.P. at 26.

Senior V.P. at 29.

Survived 307 management retreats.

Removed 289 knives from back.

Braved 31,836 cups of office coffee.

Raised three kids (two successfully).

Drank 936 bottles of Maalox®.

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Opera in four acts by GEORGES BIZET
Text by HENRI MEILHAC and LUDOVIC HALÉVY
Based on the novella by PROSPER MÉRIMÉE

Carmen

(in French)

Conductor

Patrick Summers

Production

Lotfi Mansouri

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Sandra Bernhard

Set Designer

Michael Yeargan

Principal Costumes Designer

Thierry Bosquet

Costume Design Coordinator

Walter Mahoney

Lighting Designer

Thomas J. Munn

Chorus Director

Ian Robertson

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Adelle Eslinger

John Churchwell

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Jonathan Khuner

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First performance:

Paris, March 3, 1875

First San Francisco Opera

performance: October 1, 1927

SUNDAY, JUNE 14 AT 2:00

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 17 AT 7:30

SATURDAY, JUNE 20 AT 7:30

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 24 AT 7:30

SATURDAY, JUNE 27 AT 7:30

TUESDAY, JUNE 30 AT 7:30

THURSDAY, JULY 2 AT 7:30

CAST

(in order of appearance)

Moralès John Robert Autry

Micaëla Andrea Dankova**
Nicolle Foland (7/2)

Don José Walter Fraccaro
Carl Tanner* (7/2)

Zuniga John Relyea

Carmen Denyce Graves (6/14, 27, 30)
Elena Zarembo (6/17, 20, 24)
Irina Mishura* (7/2)

Frasquita Nicolle Foland
Tammy Jenkins*† (7/2)

Mercédès Mary Phillips

Le Dancaire Armando Gama*†

Le Remendado Matthew Lord

Escamillo Jeffrey Wells
Mark S. Doss (7/2)

Solo Dancer Lawrence Pech

Soldiers, townspeople, children, cigarette girls, Gypsies

**U.S. opera debut *San Francisco Opera debut †1998-99 Adler Fellow

TIME AND PLACE: 19th century; Seville, Spain

ACT I A street in Seville

INTERMISSION

ACT II Lillas Pastia's tavern

INTERMISSION

ACT III In the mountains

ACT IV Outside the arena

*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 forty-five minutes.*

SYNOPSIS

Carmen

ACT I

At a village square in Seville, Micaëla, who is looking for her beloved, Corporal Don José, is told to come back later. Soon, the change of the guard arrives, José among them. The bell at the cigarette factory signals a break and the women employed there, including Carmen, enter the square. Flirting with the men, she sings a habanera, often directing her words at José. Carmen throws him a flower, just as the bell rings again and she and the others go back to work. Micaëla returns, bringing José news of his mother. There is a disturbance in the cigarette factory, and the women rush out, accusing Carmen of assaulting Manuelita with a knife. Captain Zuniga orders José to arrest Carmen, then he leaves. Carmen flirts with José in a seguidilla, hinting at a rendezvous at Lillas Pastia's tavern. José loosens the ropes which bind her wrists, so she would be able to break free. The captain re-enters, followed by the soldiers. Carmen is to be taken to jail, he says. However, she runs away and José is arrested for letting her escape.

ACT II

A month later, at Lillas Pastia's tavern, Carmen entertains Gypsies and smugglers with a song, in which she is joined by her friends Frasquita and Mercédès. The famous bullfighter Escamillo enters and is soon smitten with Carmen. She is impressed by him, but her mind is still on José, who, she hears, has been released from jail. After the inn closes, Carmen tells her smuggler friends, Dancaire and Remendado, that she cannot join their latest escapade because she is in love. They suggest that she invite José to join them, and she promises to do so. When José arrives, she dances for him. A bugle is heard, signaling that he must go back to the barracks. She teases him for wanting to leave, whereupon he produces the withered flower she threw to him the first day they met

and confesses his love for her. Carmen suggests that he join the smugglers, but he cannot bear the idea of becoming a deserter. Zuniga appears at the inn and makes advances to Carmen, provoking José to attack him. Carmen calls for help, the Gypsies rush in and lead Zuniga away, leaving José no choice but to join the smugglers.

ACT III

The smugglers are gathering in the mountains, Carmen and José among them. José is unhappy with the outlaws' way of life, but cannot leave Carmen, who is by now rather uninterested. He swears never to let her go. Frasquita and Mercédès start telling their fortunes from cards and soon Carmen does the same. The two girls find riches and men in their cards, but Carmen finds only death. The Gypsies move on, and Micaëla appears, still looking for José. She hides when a shot rings out, fired by José at an approaching stranger. It is Escamillo, who has come to see Carmen. The two men start to fight, but are separated by the Gypsies. Micaëla is led in and she begs José to return to his dying mother. He leaves with her, warning Carmen that they will meet again.

ACT IV

A crowd by the bullring in Seville awaits the procession into the arena. After the participants in the corrida pass, Escamillo enters, with Carmen on his arm. They sing of their love and he enters the arena. Frasquita and Mercédès warn Carmen that José is lurking nearby, but she pays no attention. José appears, confronts Carmen, and begs her to return to him. She throws away the ring he gave her and starts for the bullring, but is overtaken by José who stabs her. The crowd turns from the arena to find the dead woman and the heartbroken José.

The performance of June 17th is sponsored by Altman & Cronin Benefit Consultants.

The performance of June 24th is sponsored by Euro RSCG DSW Partners.

Additional Performers

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Rachel Jacobs
Vanessa Lammers
Justine Lerchting
Catherine Lombardi
Stephanie A. Moy
Cynthia Nie
Erica Reder
Alison Stumpf
Natalie Zuckerman

Eli Anders
Cole Armstrong
Michael Bannett
Jeffrey Bryant
Thomas Buran
Nathan Calixto
Nicholas Chacon

Ryan Cheung
Jonathan Chin
Alex Dorey
Benjamin Farber
Nathaniel Farber
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Daniel Hwang
Ryan Irwin
George Kharabadze
Michael Kimura
Nachi Mehta
Antonio Regis
Jacen Rivera
Alex Rose
Alejandro Sanchez
Matthew Spellberg
Forrest Stone
John Thorn
Denver Wade
Aaron Yoffe
Justin Yu

CHILDREN'S CHORUSES

San Francisco Girls Chorus
— June Wiley, *Director*
San Francisco Boys Chorus
— Ian Robertson, *Director*

SUPERNUMERARIES

Traude Albert
Susan Alden
Pat Beresford
Karen Goodwyn
Leah Hall
Nancy Huie
Joan Kwansa
Jane Murray
Dorothy Papo
Deborah Rawlinson
Valentina Simi

Kimberly Thompson
Mimi Timberlake
Susan Weiss

Trey Alonso
Jessie Amoroso
Mel Bachmeier
Keith Bartel
Steve Bauman
John Beck
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Jim Dyvad
Les Fram
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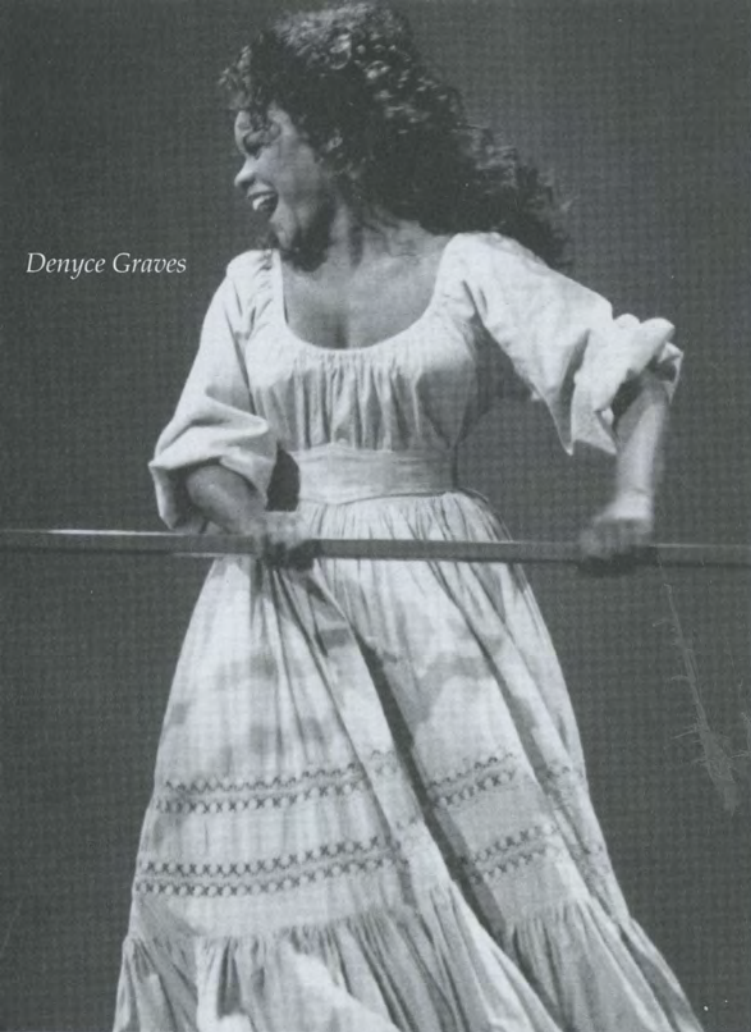
Carmen

Photos taken in rehearsal by Marty Sohl
except as noted

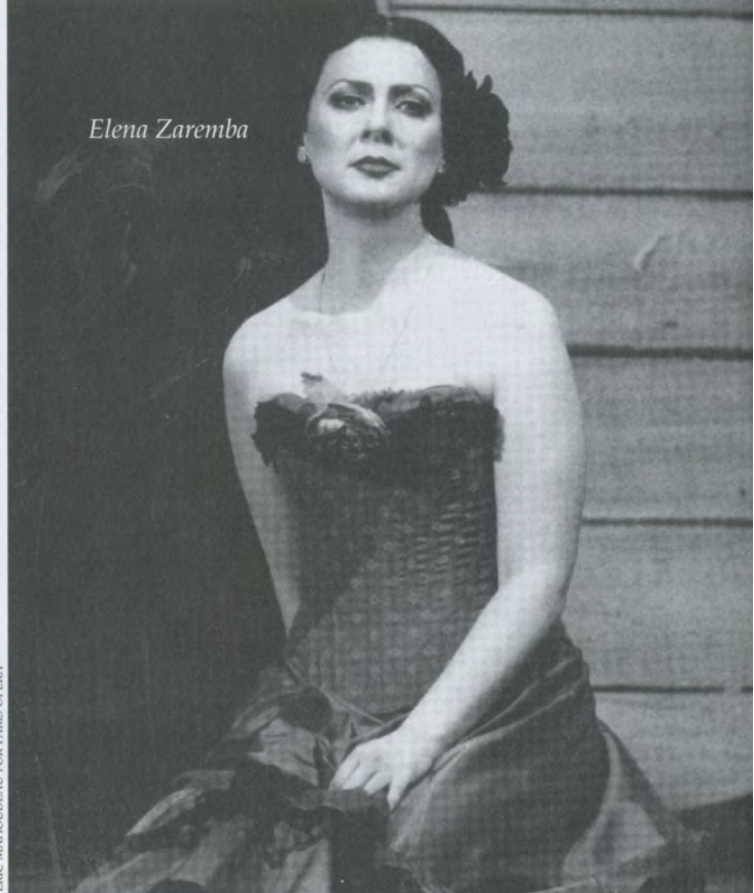


Walter Fraccaro, Denyce Graves

Denyce Graves



Elena Zaremba



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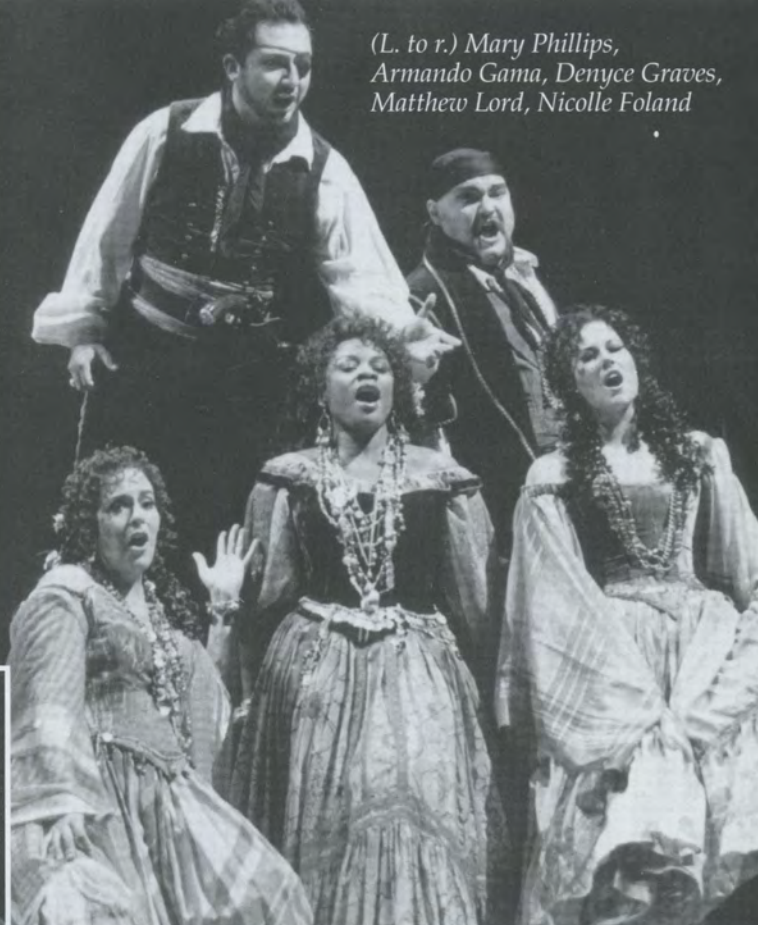


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Mary Phillips, Jeffrey Wells,
Nicolle Foland



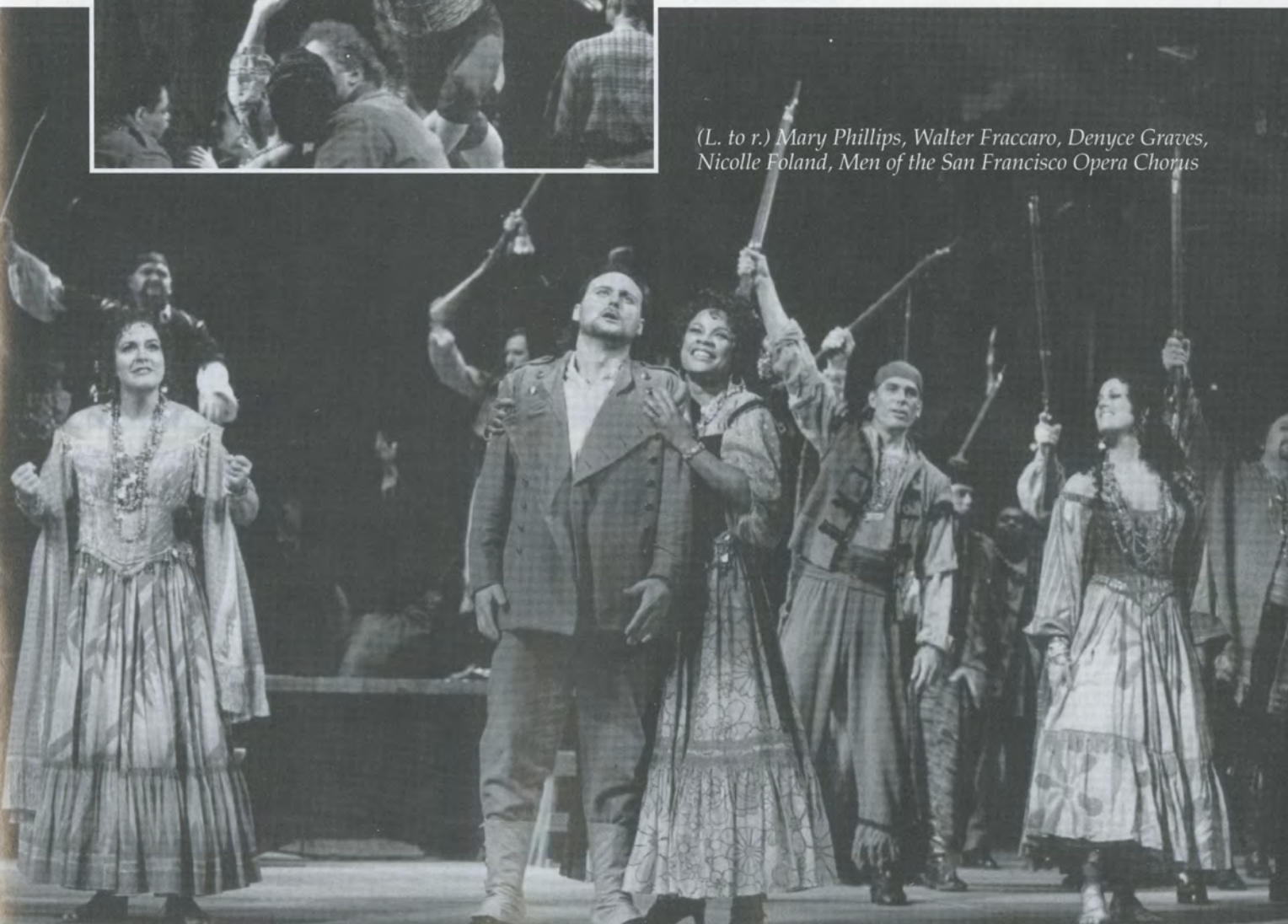
(L. to r.) Mary Phillips,
Armando Gama, Denyce Graves,
Matthew Lord, Nicolle Foland

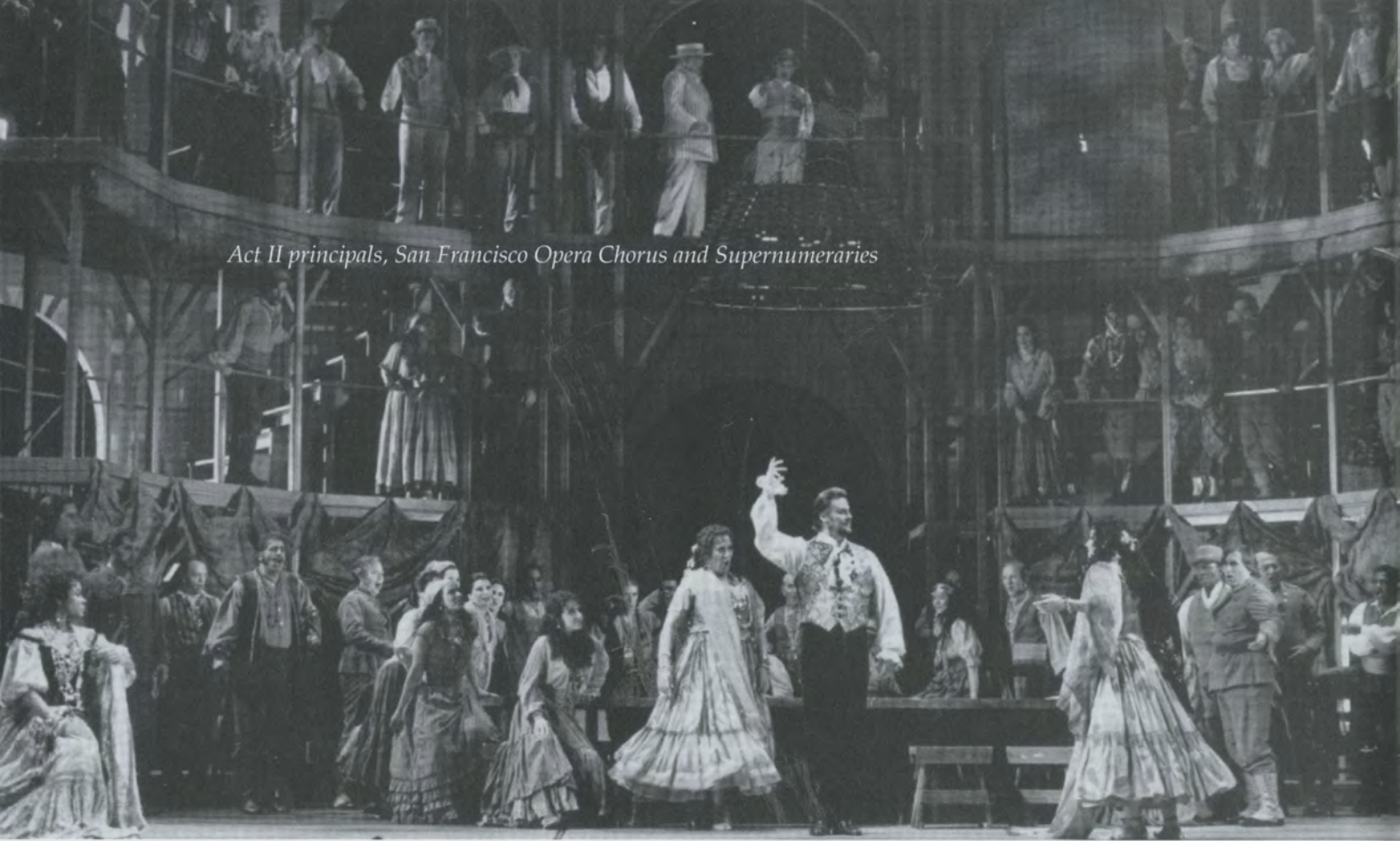


Lawrence Pech



(L. to r.) Mary Phillips, Walter Fraccaro, Denyce Graves,
Nicolle Foland, Men of the San Francisco Opera Chorus





Act II principals, San Francisco Opera Chorus and Supernumeraries



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(continued on page 16)

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The 4th Annual Los Angeles Opera Gala September 9th to 13th with Sherwin Sloan

One of the great opera programs. Includes Plácido Domingo and Jennifer Larmore in *Carmen*; Ramon Vargas and Paula Rasmussen in *Werther*; full day at the wonderful new Getty Museum; a play to be announced; evening at Sherwin's home under the Hollywood sign, after performance parties and much more. Last year's group had two after performance parties with the cast of each opera and Plácido Domingo attended an exclusive private dinner with group members. Four very memorable days in Los Angeles at a stunning hotel with water court.

Cecilia Bartoli at the Met Spectacular Autumn & Opera at the Metropolitan Opera and New York City Opera November 2nd to 9th with Sherwin Sloan

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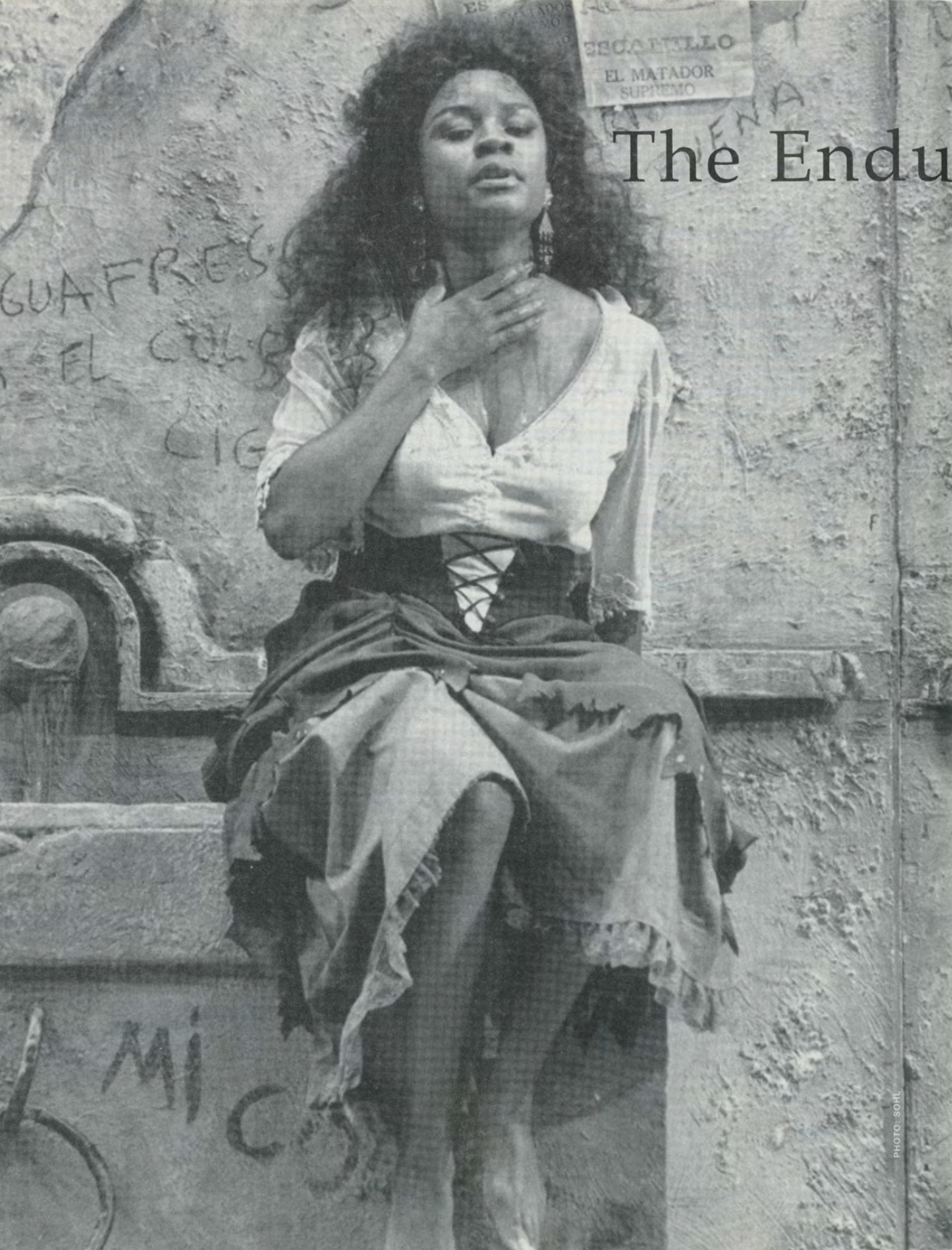
Christmas & Opera in Prague, Bratislava and Vienna December 12th to 26th with Sherwin Sloan

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The Endu

ring Charms of *Carmen*

By CHRISTOPHER HUNT

Carmen was Georges Bizet's last opera. He died, aged 37, three months after the premiere at the Opéra-Comique in Paris in 1875. Although *Carmen* is probably the most popular of all operas, it was a fiasco at the outset. Up to that time no work given at the Opéra-Comique had ended with a violent death on stage. It was a "family" theater, and although Paris in the 1870s was no haven of morality, the reaction of press and public alike to the presence on the Opéra-Comique stage of what were regarded as thieves, murderers, and prostitutes, was one of shocked disapproval. Only later, and after many revisions, only a few of which originated with the dying composer, did *Carmen* take its place in the international repertoire.

It was in fact not in Paris but in Vienna, and then in a significantly different version, that *Carmen* first triumphed. For the Vienna production, which took place later in the same year—1875—as the original Paris premiere, Bizet's friend Ernest Guiraud revised the whole work, writing fully-composed orchestral recitatives in place of the original spoken dialogue, recomposing several sections, and making a number of substantial new cuts. It was in this form, acceptable now to the theaters where grand opera (which acknowledged no spoken dialogue) was performed, that *Carmen* secured its world success. Yet the original version has a dramatic immediacy absent from the smoother recitative version, and in recent years, inspired particularly by the publication of a controversial scholarly edition by the German musicologist Fritz Oeser, the dialogue version has been performed more and more often. And this even despite the difficulty of finding actor-singers who are not uncomfortable with spoken French.

It is not, however, a simple problem of deciding between two versions, one original and one altered. Bizet himself

Many *Carmens* have sashayed across the San Francisco Opera stage since 1923. Here are four of the more recent ones: (top, right) Jean Madeira in 1960; (middle) Regina Resnik in 1964; (bottom) Olga Borodina in 1996; and (left) Denyce Graves in 1991.

Christopher Hunt is living in Frankfurt-am-Main in Germany where he was until the end of 1997 Director of the Alte Oper.

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In 1961, the first season of the newly-formed Spring Opera of San Francisco included *Carmen* and introduced a couple of youngsters to our audiences: James King as Don José and Marilyn Horne in the title role.

made changes and cuts during rehearsals and after the first few performances. Some cuts were made for dramatic reasons, some were forced on him by adverse criticism, recalcitrant singers, or worried managements. There is no single original form, and Oeser's edition, which has been used as the basis for the 1981, 1983, 1984 and 1991 performances in San Francisco, has come under a good deal of critical attack.

The origins of the *Carmen* story are fairly well known and authenticated. Bizet's two librettists, Henri Meilhac (later known particularly for the libretto to Massenet's *Manon*) and as the author of the original stage play on which *The Merry Widow* was based), and Ludovic Halévy, nephew of the eponymous composer, drew their material from two main sources: the more important of these was a novella entitled *Carmen*, published in 1845 by the French writer Prosper Mérimée, whose travels in Spain and Catalonia had given him a lively interest in Gypsies. The second was a poem by Pushkin, *The Gypsies*, which was translated from the Russian by the same Prosper Mérimée, some years after *Carmen*. Like the novella, Pushkin's poem told of a tragic fugitive who loves a faithless Gypsy girl.

Mérimée's *Carmen*, one of the first great novellas in the French language, is told in the first person, with an introduction setting the story in its context and with a curious semi-scholarly postscript on Gypsy folklore.

The narrative is told by a bandit, who has killed a fellow Basque in a duel and been forced to leave his home country. Although the ending of Mérimée's story differs from that of the opera, the essence of the opera's plot is already there. Meilhac and Halévy, however, made significant changes. Several characters were given new names; the role of the Toreador was greatly expanded; and an entirely new character was introduced in the peasant girl Micaëla, who gave Bizet the lyrical counterpart to *Carmen*'s dramatic virility necessary for musical balance.

The Gypsies on whom Mérimée based his creation of La Carmencita are believed first to have appeared in Europe at the end of the fourteenth century. Their origins are buried obscurely in the Byzantine world from which they roamed westward across Europe. At the time they were thought to have originated in Egypt, hence their name. Modern scholarship places their origin in central India. But, whatever their roots, they remained nomadic, harried and persecuted, especially outside Spain. Northern European farmers dreaded the arrival of colorful nomads who liked to live free off their crops and livestock; villagers in their cottages resented roving caravan-dwellers without fixed homes; educationalists detested the Gypsy's scorn for normal schools; and in our century, dictators have exterminated Gypsies along with Jews, homosexuals, and other supposed offenders against settled

social systems and bourgeois Christian morality. It was a similar outraged morality that turned *Carmen*'s premiere audience into hysterical opposition as they came to see that the interesting new figures on the Opéra-Comique stage were not the safe and charming miscreants of the safe and charming repertoire they were used to.

It was only in the 19th-century literature that Gypsies began to assume the romantic image we now associate with them. The change was largely due to the writings of the Englishman George Borrow, whose *Lavengro* and *Romany Rye* were the cornerstones of later Gypsy imagery. Borrow, like Mérimée after him, traveled in Spain and Portugal and immersed himself in the life of the Gypsies of the Iberian peninsula; there are plentiful echoes of that immersion in Mérimée's writing and they survived in the libretto for the opera. Bizet, however, never went to Spain, and in the age before recordings he would have known little about Spanish music. Although *Carmen* is popularly thought to epitomize Spain and its music, it is more French than it is Spanish. Some of the rhythms of *Carmen*, and perhaps a couple of the melodies, did originate in Spain, though one of the best known, the Habanera, comes not from Spain but from Havana, and had its origins (as Bizet acknowledged) in a simple chromatic folksong by the Cuban composer Sebastián Yradier. By slight alterations of harmony and rhythm, and one or two note changes, Bizet transformed the simple original into a magical song that perfectly exemplifies the character of his Gypsy heroine. The Habanera almost never happened, for Bizet wrote a dozen versions of an opening song for his first *Carmen*, Célestine Galli-Marié, all of which she rejected. It was only during rehearsals that Bizet hastily rewrote Yradier's melody and incorporated it into his score.

By one of those strange coincidences that seem to go with operatic history, on the night Bizet died in the French countryside, far from Paris, Célestine Galli-Marié collapsed unconscious in the middle of a *Carmen* performance at the Opéra-Comique. She had been obsessed throughout the evening with the feeling that something was seriously wrong. It was later established that she had fainted at precisely the moment of Bizet's death, of which she could have known nothing.

It was an extraordinary era for the arts in Paris. Bizet's experience with *Carmen* was not unique. The opera's originality, its disastrous initial reception, and its subsequent popularity, have precise parallels in the work of the painters who were just then being named Impressionists. *Carmen* was

(continued on page 26)

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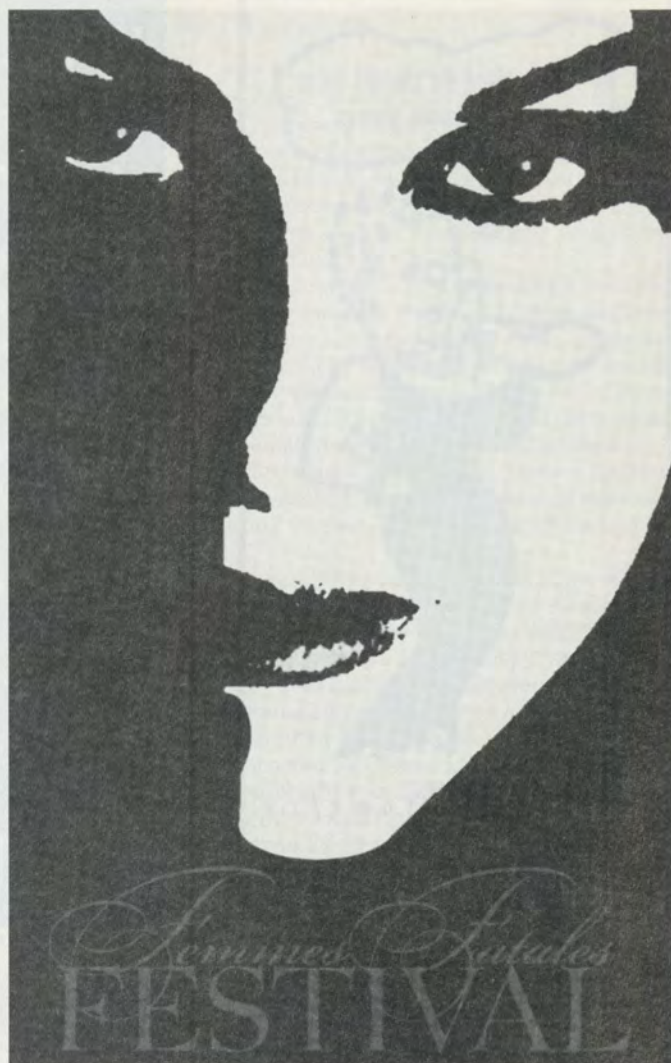
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Lulu (speaker, Paul Thomason)—June 9, 19, 23

Carmen (speaker, Marvin Tartak)—June 17, 20, 27, 30

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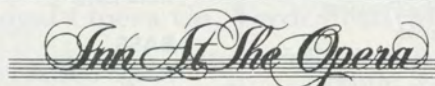
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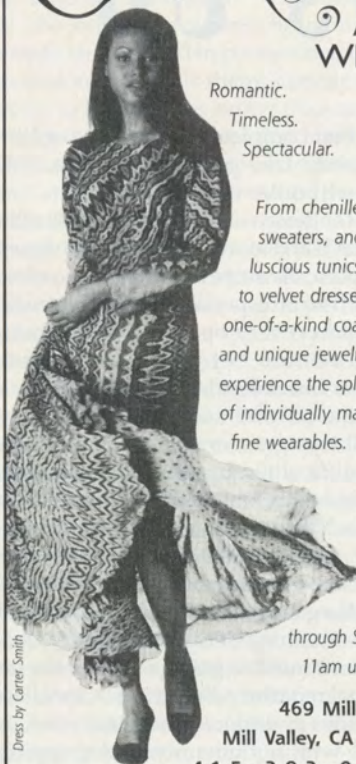
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COGAN

(continued from p. 20)

written in 1874 and first performed on March 3rd, 1875. The first Impressionist exhibition, the *Salon des Refusés*, was in 1874, and the name *Peintres Impressionnistes* was first accepted by the painters themselves at the second such Salon the year following *Carmen's* premiere.

The names of those composers and literary figures known to have attended that premiere are a reminder of the artistic ferment that characterized Parisian life of the period: Gounod, Ambroise Thomas, Delibes, Offenbach, Massenet, D'Indy, Alphonse Daudet, Alexandre Dumas *fils*. It was the era of the Goncourt brothers and their revealing *Journal*; of Zola's sensual and sensational "Realist" novels; of Rimbaud, Renan, Flaubert, and Verlaine; the period of that adventurous pair of proto-surrealist novels, Lautréamont's *Chants de Maldoror* and Huysman's *Au Rebours*; the time in which Manet, Cézanne, Renoir, Degas, Pissarro, Boudin, Sisley and Berthe Morisot were first becoming known. In the year in which Realism became the new martial cry of literary Paris, Bizet produced the first, and perhaps the most complete, example of French opera to which the same term could properly be applied.

Bizet himself was a musician of natural talents so startling that he bears comparison

as a child prodigy with Mendelssohn and Mozart. Like Mozart, he was an outstandingly gifted pianist. The story is told of his being taken, as a young student in Italy on a *Prix de Rome* scholarship, to one of Liszt's salons. During the evening, Liszt played one of his latest compositions, of customary difficulty, remarking that he thought only two pianists in the world could perform it, himself and Hans von Bülow. Gounod, who had taken the young Bizet to the salon, suggested that his protégé might be another. Bizet thereupon played the most difficult section of the piece faultlessly from memory, later adding the entire composition, although he had heard it only once when Liszt himself played it.

Oddly, Bizet wrote very little original piano music, and what little he did write has been criticized for its essentially orchestral qualities. This may well be a reflection of Bizet's circumstances: for the greater part of his career, as his own music failed to win acceptance, he earned his living working each day on arranging other peoples' orchestral and operatic works for piano. In the days before the invention of the radio and phonograph, it was through such arrangements, the best of which came from Liszt, that most people got to know the existing repertory.

Despite the admiration of Liszt and the support of Gounod, his professor at the

Paris Conservatoire, and the friendship of other musicians, Bizet failed to gain commercial success in his lifetime. He began work on some 28 theater pieces, but many of them remained unfinished and although seven were staged, none had much acclaim. An early one-act operetta, *Dr. Miracle*, written when he was 19 and still studying at the Conservatoire, won a competition organized by Offenbach, but it brought no ensuing fame. A remarkably skilled and enchanting Symphony in C major, written when he was 17, remained unplayed and forgotten among his manuscripts until its rediscovery in 1935. Berlioz, in his last published article, praised *Les Pêcheurs de Perles* at the opera's premiere in 1863, but the public was less enthusiastic. Critical approval three years later for *La Jolie Fille de Perth* still brought no warmer public response. By now Bizet was thirty and had begun to despair of ever achieving success; more and more of his time was given over to musical hack-work, piano arrangements and teaching. His private life, once filled with numerous more-or-less scandalous liaisons with women ranging from his mother's housekeeper to the fantastic adventuress Céleste Mogador, changed to settled domesticity after 1869 when he married Geneviève Halévy, daughter of his former teacher of composition at the Conservatoire; but the change brought with it no greater public success.

Work after work was refused by the Paris theaters, or failed when brought to the stage, among them the highly original *Djamileh*, whose exquisite craftsmanship was later much admired by Mahler. As so often in operatic history, a great part of the responsibility for a string of operatic failures lay with the inadequacy of the libretti. When finally a first-class libretto did appear in *Carmen*, Bizet's gifts were fully developed and his imagination triumphantly met the challenge. It was a tragic irony that the throat ailment which had increasingly plagued him since his student days now took a final deadly turn; though the initial reception of *Carmen* in Paris certainly seemed to confirm the pattern of failure to which the dying composer had become ever more depressingly accustomed, this time the failure was to be short-lived. It still took eight more years before Paris acknowledged the genius of the work which was recognized elsewhere almost at once as what it has remained ever since, the finest of all opéras comiques.

The very success of *Carmen* has militated against it. Overfamiliarity has blunted our ability to appreciate Bizet's originality. Beneath the familiar and deceptively simple surface of *Carmen* lie masterly and complex compositional techniques. The harmonies are often those which are more regularly associated with the impressionistic composers, and even with the atonalists who followed Debussy; Bizet's harmonic audacity always, however, serves a precisely calculated dramatic purpose. The melodies, too, reflect—on levels that range from extreme subtlety to deliberate banality—exactly the atmosphere Bizet wanted to portray; and the folksong elements and Spanish idioms are nevertheless wholly true to Bizet's own individual nature. The orchestral scoring is of an extraordinary delicacy and coloristic variety, frequently foreshadowing Mahler in the use of chamber-music forces within the orchestra and the reservation of the full force only for climactic moments where the orchestra plays its own role in the drama. Bizet's contrapuntal skill is so perfectly at the command of his dramatic needs that its technical perfection in *Carmen* passes almost without notice.

Carmen is a masterpiece in which music and drama are wedded with a concision

that parallels Mozart. Unlike Mozart, Bizet (who died at much the same early age as the Salzburg master) had only begun to achieve professional maturity when he died. Yet in *Carmen* he left a score that so miraculously combines dramatic use of varied material with the highest compositional skill that on the basis of this one opera he deserves to be ranked with the greatest opera composers. Nietzsche, perhaps somewhat overreacting to the contemporary forces of Wagnerism, was nevertheless right in praising the score of *Carmen* as extravagantly as he did: there is indeed not one note out of place, not one that could be removed, nor any need to add more. Yet Bizet died, supposedly heartbroken at *Carmen*'s reception in Paris, without knowing that his masterpiece would ever be anything but a failure.

The Paris press had been savage. The indignity of defeat in the Franco-Prussian War five years earlier, and the horrors of the Days of the Commune which followed, had produced a violent puritan reaction in Paris. Offenbach, the popular darling of the previous decade, was virtually ostracized. Bizet's librettists, Meilhac and Halévy, also wrote for Offenbach, and no doubt that hindered the acceptance of *Carmen*. Both the "immorality" of *Carmen* and the music's originality which we now fail to notice came in for the critics' devastating attentions. "The orchestra," wrote *Le Monde Illustré*, "was perpetually babbling and saying interminable things that were not needed." So much for the conciseness we now admire. Achille de Lauzières in *La Patrie* went further: "the music is written for a small coterie who alone pretend to understand him . . . Let an author once become fouled in the social sewer, and he is forced to descend to the lowest levels for his models . . . [*Carmen* is] a savage; half Gypsy, half Andalusian; sensual, sacrilegious, without shame . . . a true prostitute of the gutter and the street corner." But it was the principal critic of *Le Siècle*, the most important of the contemporary papers, who best revealed the extent to which Bizet's contemporaries were shocked by *Carmen*'s subject matter in addition to being fundamentally opposed to Wagner's "Music of the Future," which they believed Bizet to be fatally contaminated with: "Friends of uninhibited Spanish licence must have been highly pleased. Andalusians whose breasts are sun-

burnt, the sort of women to be found only in the lowest cabarets of Seville . . . a madhouse of castanets, of leers à la Congreve, of provocative hip-swingings, of knifings distributed impartially among both sexes . . . To preserve the morality and the actions of the impressionable soldiers and bullfighters who surround this 'lady,' she should be straitjacketed and cooled off with a pitcher of water over her head. The pathological condition of this unfortunate woman, devoted without cessation to the flames of the flesh . . . is more likely to interest the solicitude of medical men than to interest the decent audience who come to the Opéra-Comique with their wives and children.

" . . . fed on the enharmonic succulences of the seekers of the music of the future, Bizet has fed his soul on this diet . . . dangerous dissonances cannot portray the uterine madness of Mlle. Carmen . . . [the music] lacks novelty and . . . distinction. There is no plan, no unity in its style . . . it is neither dramatic nor scenic." There is a familiar ring to M. Comettant's ill-disguised prurient prejudices, and it is fair to stress that within a few years the French critics reversed their opinions. But for Bizet it was the culmination of a lifetime of misunderstanding. ♦

JONES



Since his 1959 debut, Jon Vickers portrayed *Carmen*'s Don José in four San Francisco Opera seasons. (Opposite) Left to right, in a scene from 1959's Act II: Lucine Amara as Micaëla, Gloria Lane in the title role, and Jon Vickers as Don José. (Right) In 1966, Jon Vickers is seen in a photo taken from the wings during the Act IV confrontation with Grace Bumbry's Carmen.

It All Started With Merola

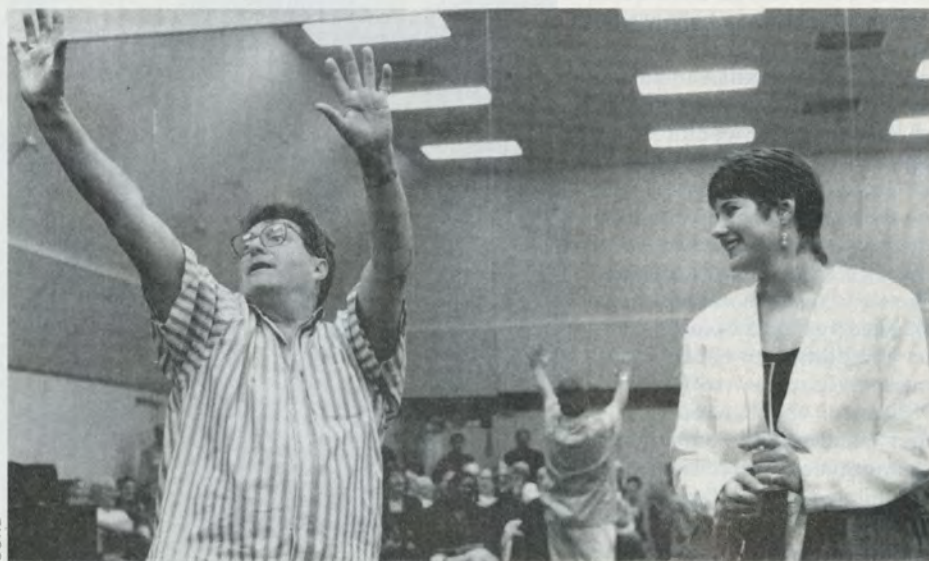


PICKER



CUNNINGHAM

Images from past Merola Opera Program master classes: (top) Hans Hotter talks to Patricia Racette in 1990; (middle) Leontyne Price explains a phrase in 1986; John Copley makes a point to Nicolle Foland in 1995.



SOHL

At first, from the Gold Rush on, San Francisco was host to numerous traveling troupes which arrived, set up shop, performed, then left. Occasional local groups performed as well. A gregarious Neapolitan, Gaetano Merola, founder and first General Director of San Francisco Opera, changed all that. He brought the world of opera to the City by the Bay, established it, tended it and nourished it. His passion and vision for the art form was perhaps only surpassed by his characteristic diligence and boundless energy, all of which combined in making San Francisco Opera a place where the great singers of the world would come year after year. A year after his 1953 death, the Merola Fund was created, first as an audition fund, and then, in 1957, as the Merola Opera Program. The original purpose of the program—aptly named in honor of Maestro Merola and his legacy—has never wavered: to discover, nurture and train the very best young operatic talent and to provide unique career opportunities to the next generation of opera's stars. The program grew. From its modest beginnings, it developed into a pioneering entity which each year hosted an impressive roster of people who came here in order to pass on their knowledge to the young performers, affectionately nicknamed "Merolini." That list includes, among many others, Kurt Herbert Adler, John Copley, Régine Crespin, Colin Graham, Thomas Hampson, Hans Hotter, Lotfi Mansouri, Leontyne Price, Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, Graziella Sciutti, Elisabeth Söderström and Jess Thomas. The knowledge gained by learning from seasoned professionals such as these is beyond measure.

The current year marks the 42nd annual Merola Opera Program, and the faculty roster will include a living legend, the celebrated soprano Dame Joan Sutherland, San Francisco Opera General Director Lotfi Mansouri and Music Director Donald Runnicles, pianist Warren Jones, conductor (and former Opera Center Music Director) Patrick Summers and Opera Center Director Richard Harrell. These mentors will be on hand to provide instruction and motivation to the young singers and coaches in the Program. Fascinating master classes will be held throughout the 10-week program, at which not only the young performers will gain invaluable experience: Merola Opera Program supporters in attendance at several of these events will receive what can only be termed as a unique way to observe

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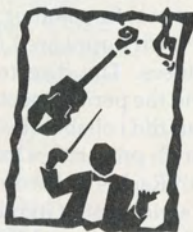
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Joan Sutherland's previous association with the San Francisco Opera Center included membership in a 1992 audition committee for the Center's "Pacific Voices" program. Seen during a meeting in Sydney, she was joined by other committee members: (left to right) S.F. Opera General Director Emeritus Terence A. McEwen; former Director of the San Francisco Opera Center Christine Bullin; conductor Patrick Summers (at that time San Francisco Opera Center's music director); Dame Joan Sutherland; and San Francisco Opera General Director Lotfi Mansouri.

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MEROLA AT STERN GROVE

July 12, 2pm

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Sung in English

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MEROLA AT MEADOWOOD NAPA VALLEY

July 14

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5:30pm Pre-concert events

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MEROLA AT MONTALVO

August 7, 8, 9, 7pm

Verdi's *LA TRAVIATA*

Sung in Italian with English Supertitles*

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MEROLA GRAND FINALE

August 16, 2pm

Davies Symphony Hall

An afternoon concert of arias and ensembles by the exciting young artists of the 1998 Merola Opera Program, conducted by Ian Robertson. Post-performance reception with the artists immediately following in the Veterans Building Green Room. *Tickets are \$20-30; Reception tickets: \$25.*

For ticket and reception information, please call (415) 864-6000 AFTER JULY 20.

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American mezzo-soprano **DENYCE GRAVES** has been acclaimed internationally for her portrayal of the title role of *Carmen* as well as that of Dalila in *Samson et Dalila*. She has appeared as Carmen in major opera houses around the world including those of San Francisco (1991 debut), Vienna, London, Paris, Berlin, Munich, Geneva, Verona, Washington, D.C., and Houston, among others. She opened the Metropolitan Opera's 1997-98 season with *Carmen* and also sang the role of Baba the Turk in the

Met's new staging of *The Rake's Progress*. Returning to the Met earlier this year, the artist appeared in a new production of *Samson et Dalila* opposite Plácido Domingo. Her current season is also marked by her first solo recital tour, with performances throughout the U.S. and Canada. In recent seasons the native of our nation's capital has sung concert performances of *Samson et Dalila* with the Chicago Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, Minnesota Orchestra and Washington Concert Opera. Additional highlights include the High Priestess in *La Vestale* and Giulietta in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* for Milan's La Scala; Charlotte in *Werther* in Genoa; Cuniza in Verdi's *Oberto* at Covent Garden; Adalgisa in *Norma* at the Zurich Opera; and Dora-bella in *Così fan tutte* with the Opera Company of Philadelphia. A popular concert soloist, she has appeared with numerous ensembles including the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Atlanta Symphony, City of Birmingham Symphony, Israel Philharmonic, and National Symphony Orchestra. Her television appearances include "Denyce Graves—A Cathedral Christmas," the award-winning BBC Covent Garden special "The House," an Emmy award-winning profile on *60 Minutes*, and "An Evening at the Pops" PBS presentation. Among her recordings are a new CD of spirituals, a recital album of French arias, a solo disk of Christmas music, and four full-length operas. Denyce Graves has won a number of significant awards, including the Grand Prize in the Concours de Chant de Paris, the Grand Prix Lyrique in the Monte Carlo Vocal Competition, a Jacobson Study Grant from the Richard Tucker Music Foundation, and the prestigious Marian Anderson Award.



Since her 1991 San Francisco Opera debut as Hélène Bezukhova in *War and Peace*, **ELENA ZAREMBA** has appeared with the Company in the trouser role of Ratmir in *Ruslan and Lyudmila* (1995), and as Konchakova in *Prince Igor* (1996) and Maddalena in *Rigoletto* (1997). In the five years since she came upon the international scene, the mezzo's command of the principal roles in the Russian repertoire is supported by her interpretation of such Verdian and Wagnerian roles as Azucena in *Il Trovatore*, Ulrica in *Un Ballo in Maschera* and Erda in the *Ring* cycle. Her appearances in San Francisco, at Milan's La Scala and with the Bolshoi Opera at the Metropolitan Opera have received critical acclaim and have led to engagements at such theaters as the Vienna State Opera, Bastille Opera, the Bregenz, Edinburgh and Salzburg Festivals, and with such ensembles as the Berlin Philharmonic, London Symphony Orchestra, and the Cleveland Orchestra. She has been particularly praised for her appearances in the title role of *Carmen*, which she has performed at such theaters as the Opéra Bastille, Bavarian State Opera, Arena di Verona, Royal Opera at Covent Garden, and in Birmingham, Dortmund and Gothenburg. Zarembo's 1997-98 season has included *Alexander Nevsky* with the London Philharmonic; Verdi's *Requiem* with the Pittsburgh Symphony; *Carmen* in Hamburg and Bilbao; her staged debut in the role of Dalila for New Israeli Opera's *Samson et Dalila*; *Eugene Onegin* for

the Paris Opéra/Bastille; and a concert of works by Prokofiev and Shostakovich in Brussels. She makes her Metropolitan Opera debut next year. 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*, Rimsky-Korsakov's *Christmas Eve*, Mussorgsky's cantata *Joshua*, and a Shostakovich song cycle. Born in Moscow, Zarembo attended the Gnessin State Music Institute and, while still a student, was invited to be a soloist by the Bolshoi Theatre, where she sang roles in many of the prominent Russian operas, as well as parts such as Lola in *Cavalleria Rusticana* and Maddalena in *Rigoletto*.



In a short period of time, mezzo-soprano **IRINA MISHURA** has established herself as one of the most important new artists on the operatic and concert scene. Born in Krasnodar, she earned a doctorate in vocal arts from the famed Gnessin Music Institute. Her earliest performances were with the Moldovan State Opera, where she sang the title role of *Carmen*, Amneris in *Aida*, Azucena in *Il Trovatore*, Adalgisa in *Norma*, Princess Eboli in *Don Carlo*, as well as leading mezzo roles in *Boris Godunov*, *Khovanshchina*, *Queen of*

Spades and *Eugene Onegin*. During this time she also performed at the opera houses of Antwerp, Brussels and Liège. Mishura immigrated to the U.S. in 1992 and was soon engaged by Neemi Järvi to sing Tchaikovsky's *The Snow Maiden* in performances and for a recording with the Detroit Symphony. Her debut with the Los Angeles Philharmonic under Valery Gergiev soon followed. In recent seasons the mezzo has been acclaimed as Carmen (Michigan Opera Theater, Cincinnati Opera), Azucena (Florida Grand Opera), Amneris (Dallas Opera, MOT), and Dalila in *Samson et Dalila* (New Israeli Opera). This season she sings Dalila for Cincinnati Opera and Toledo Opera; Carmen for Baltimore Opera; and Azucena for New Orleans Opera. In concert, Mishura appears with the Israel Philharmonic under the direction of Zubin Mehta. An acclaimed recitalist, she specializes in the song repertoire of the Russian masters and has been heard extensively in Russia and North America.



Soprano **ANDREA DANKOVA**, a native of Slovakia, studied at the Conservatory in Zilina and continued at Bratislava's Academy of Music, where she received a diploma in 1994. After winning several competitions, scholarships and prizes, she made her 1994 debut as Mimì in a new production of *La Bohème* with Bratislava's Slovakian National Theater. Engagements during the 1996-97 season included Elena in *Mefistofele*, Mařenka in *The Bartered Bride* and *Bohème* in Bratislava; *Carmen* (Micaëla) in Venice; *Bohème* in Prague and Lyon; and Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass* with the London Symphony and Bavarian Radio Orchestra under Myung-Whun Chung. Among her most recent assignments are concert performances of *Carmen* in Japan with the forces of the Opéra de Lyon; *Bohème* in Tokyo with the Slovakian National Theatre; a debut at Bologna's Teatro Comunale as Liù in *Turandot*; and *Simon Boccanegra* (Amelia Grimaldi), also in Bologna. In the future Dankova will sing Desdemona in *Otello* and *Carmen* with Colin Davis and the London Symphony, and will be seen in *Turandot* at San Francisco Opera and at the Châtelet in Paris.

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NICOLLE FOLAND, who recently completed her second year as an Opera Center Adler Fellow, won international praise for her performance as Musetta in San Francisco Opera's 1996 production of *La*

Bohème and was applauded last summer as Kate Pinkerton in the Company's new staging of *Madama Butterfly*. Most recently, she scored successes for the Company last season as Tatyana in a performance of *Eugene Onegin* and as the Countess in the January presentation of *Le Nozze di Figaro*, as well as for the Festival Opera of Walnut Creek in the title role of *La Traviata*. She was named the recipient of a 1997 ARIA Foundation Award, a prestigious prize given annually to only three promising singers selected by silent jury. The soprano made her Company debut in 1995 as Kate Pinkerton, also performing that season in stagings of *La Cenerentola* (Clorinda), *Die Walküre* (Gerhilde), and *Rusalka* (First Wood Nymph). During San Francisco Opera's 1996-97 season, she was seen in *Die Fledermaus* (Rosalinda), *Carmen* (Frasquita), *Aida* (High Priestess) and the West Coast premiere of *Harvey Milk* (First Arrival, Supervisor Silver). In addition, she appeared as soloist in a special concert with Plácido Domingo and recently made her San Francisco recital debut as part of the Opera Center's 1997 Schwabacher Debut Recital series. A veteran of two Merola Opera Programs and two Western Opera Theater national tours, Foland's Opera Center credits include Adele and Rosalinda in the 1993 production of *Die Fledermaus*; Donna Anna in the 1994 staging of *Don Giovanni*; and Tina in the 1996 Showcase production of Argento's *The Aspern Papers*. Earlier this season the soprano made her debut with Los Angeles Opera and with Seattle Opera, both in the role Musetta, and was seen as Micaëla in *Carmen* at Cincinnati Opera. Upcoming performances include Musetta in Bilbao. Foland, a native of Des Moines, received a master of music degree from the University of Northern Iowa.



1998-99 Adler Fellow **TAMMY JENKINS**, a native of Las Cruces, attended New Mexico State University. The soprano has performed in productions of *Tartuffe* (Marianne), *Amahl and the*

Night Visitors (the Mother), and *Carmen* (Micaëla). She has also appeared in concert presentations of Schubert's Mass in G and *Omnipotence* with Vos Vaqueros. Jenkins was a Metropolitan Opera Southwestern Regional Finalist in 1996 and she received an Encouragement Award from the Met Auditions in 1997. A Merola Opera Program participant last year, she sang the role of Frasquita in the summer staging of *Carmen*. She went on to repeat the role and also sing Micaëla in Western Opera Theater's national touring production. Her most recent engagements include a Schwabacher Debut Recital (with Adler Fellow colleagues) and the role of the First Priestess in the Opera Center's Showcase production of Gluck's *Iphigénie en Tauride*.



Since completing her master of music degree at Yale University, mezzo-soprano **MARY PHILLIPS** has begun a very promising career. Holding degrees in both music and theater from Rhode Island College,

and as a recipient of the Kennedy Center National Acting Award, the young American artist is equally comfortable in concert, recital, opera and musical theater. In past seasons she gave her first performances of the title role of *Carmen* with Connecticut Grand Opera, appeared with Bronx Opera in productions ranging from *The Yeomen of the Guard* (Phoebe Meryll) to *The Devil and Daniel Webster* (Mary Stone), and appeared in New York's Circle in the Square production of *Sweeney Todd*. As an orchestral soloist during the 1996-97 season, she performed the Hindemith Requiem with the Yale Philharmonic, Handel's *Messiah* with the Atlanta Symphony, Mendelssohn's *Elijah* with the Orchestra of St. Luke's (all performances led by Robert Shaw), and Schubert's Mass in A-Flat at the Berkshire Choral Festival. She also recently appeared in concert with the Opera Orchestra of New York (*Ernani*) and in Tenerife (Rossweisse in *Die Walküre*). Engagements during the 1997-98 season have

ARTIST PROFILES

included several debuts: with San Francisco Opera (Giovanna in *Rigoletto*); the Dallas Opera (Ceres in *The Tempest*); Mobile Opera (Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*); and Sarasota Opera (Siebel in *Faust*, Karolka in *Jenůfa*). On the concert platform this season Phillips performs Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with the Des Moines Symphony and the Alabama Symphony, as well as Mahler's Eighth Symphony (her first) with the Canterbury Choral Society.



Italian tenor **WALTER FRACCARO**, heard at San Francisco Opera in 1997 as Radames in *Aida*, has a repertoire that includes many of the Verdi leading roles as well as the more lyric Puccini roles. In 1993, he won Italy's Concorso di Vorrallo Valsesia, and was awarded the Jury Prize by Carlo Bergonzi. Soon after, at the the Concorso Internazionale di Canto Francisco Viñas in Barcelona, he won the Plácido Domingo Prize for best tenor and the Montserrat Caballé Prize for the best Verdi interpretation. He

opened Hamburg State Opera's 1997-98 season as Macduff in *Macbeth*, later returning there to sing Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* and Don José in *Carmen*. The season also includes *Un Ballo in Maschera* (Riccardo) at Palma de Mallorca, *Aida* (Radames) in Berlin and Luxor, as well as *Nabucco* (Ismalele) in Orange. During the 1996-97 season, the tenor made debuts at San Francisco Opera, the Metropolitan Opera (*Madama Butterfly*), and appeared at the Pittsburgh Opera as Faust in Boito's *Mefistofele*. Highlights from previous seasons include his debut at Barcelona's Liceu in *Nabucco*; *Aida* in Pittsburgh; *Tosca* (Cavaradossi) and *La Traviata* (Alfredo) at the Teatro Nacional de São Carlos in Lisbon; in addition to *La Bohème* (Rodolfo) in Marseilles. Among Fraccaro's future engagements are *Macbeth* in Hamburg, *Un Ballo in Maschera* in Dallas, *Aida* in Naples and Houston, as well as *Tosca* and *Bohème* in Vienna.



CARL TANNER, one of America's most promising young tenors, has been acclaimed in such roles as Rodolfo in *La Bohème*, Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* and Don José in *Carmen*. Recent operatic highlights include *Carmen* for Dallas Opera; *Tosca* (Cavaradossi) for Syracuse Opera; *Madama Butterfly* with Knoxville Opera; *La Bohème* with Vancouver Opera; his European debut as Radames in *Aida* at Norway's Bergen Festival; in addition to *Gianni Schicchi* (Rinuccio) and *Il Tabarro* (Luigi) for Saratoga Opera and Connecticut Grand Opera. Among his recent concert highlights are *Nixon in China* with the London Symphony, *Das Lied von der Erde* at Turin's Teatro Regio, as well as appearances with the Saint Louis Symphony, Japan's Kasugai Symphony, and at America's Spoleto Festival. Current and future assignments include *Roméo et Juliette* with Vancouver Opera, *Aida* for Syracuse Opera, concert performances of *Carmen* with the Atlanta Symphony, and *Tosca* for New York City Opera and Austin Lyric Opera. Tanner graduated from the Shenandoah Conservatory of Music and was an apprentice at Santa Fe Opera. He has won awards and grants from Opera Index, the Metropolitan Opera National Competition, International Society of Arts and Letters, and the Licia Albanese/Puccini Foundation.



Bass-baritone **JEFFREY WELLS'** 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 has subsequently appeared with the Company as Ferrando in *Il Trovatore* (1994), Ruslan in *Ruslan and Lyudmila* (1995), Prince Galitsky in *Prince Igor* (1996), and Gessler in *Guillaume Tell* (1997). The American artist 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 Baldassare 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, *Faust* 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 Metropolitan Opera to portray Theseus in a new staging of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Escamillo in a new production of *Carmen*. Among his future plans are *Aida* (the King) and *Rigoletto* (Sparafucile) for the Met, *Billy Budd* with the New Israeli Opera, in addition to *Roméo et Juliette* (Capulet) at the Lyric Opera of Chicago.



MARK S. DOSS has distinguished himself in a career devoted to both opera and concert. The bass opened the 1998-99 season in the title role of *Attila* with Washington Concert Opera, then went on to sing the role of Cinque in the world premiere of Anthony Davis's *Amistad* with the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Ferrando in New Orleans Opera's *Il Trovatore*, Amonasro in *Aida* for Minnesota Opera, Scarpia in *Tosca* for Cleveland Opera, and Frère Laurent in *Roméo et Juliette* at San Diego Opera. During the 1996-97 season he

sang Escamillo in *Carmen* at the Monnaie in Brussels, Scarpia with Boston Lyric Opera, Silva in Washington Concert Opera's *Ernani*, and the title role of *Le Nozze di Figaro* with Cleveland Opera. He was also recently heard in concert with the Alabama Symphony, Baltimore Symphony and Lansing Symphony. A 1993 Grammy Award winner for his participation in the recording of Handel's *Semele*, he is also a past first-place winner of the International Verdi Competition and recipient of the National Institute for Music Theatre's George London Opera Prize. Future engagements include *Carmen* in Chicago, Houston and Cleveland; *Samson et Dalila* (High Priest) and *Anna Bolena* (Henry VIII) at the Théâtre de Metz; and *Aida* in Houston. Doss made his 1990 San Francisco Opera debut as Sparafucile in *Rigoletto*.

ARTIST PROFILES



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ARMANDO GAMA, a 1998-99 Adler Fellow, received his graduate degree from the Academy of Vocal Arts in Philadelphia where his credits included Marcello in *La Bohème*. After graduating with a degree in physics from the Universidad Autónoma de Mexico, the baritone began his vocal studies in his hometown of Mexico City at the Universidad de Mexico City where he appeared in *Cambiale di Matrimonio* and *Faust*. He went on to sing Morales in *Carmen*, Belcore in *L'Elisir d'Amore*, Julian in *La Verbena de la Paloma* and, most recently, the Commendatore in *Don Juan Tenorio*. A 1997 Merola Opera Program participant, Gama sang the role of Alidoro in *La Cenerentola* and toured with Western Opera Theater in its production of *Carmen*, singing the parts of Escamillo, Le Dancaire and Morales. His most recent appearances include a joint performance (with Adler Fellow colleagues) as part of the Schwabacher Debut Recital series, and the role of Thoas in the Opera Center's 1998 Showcase production of *Iphigénie en Tauride*.



Tenor **MATTHEW LORD** has been recognized as a versatile artist with a repertoire ranging from 17th century compositions to contemporary works. The California native's debut season with San Francisco Opera

was in 1994, when he appeared in productions of *The Dangerous Liaisons*, *The Fiery Angel* and *Lucia di Lammermoor*. His engagements during the 1996-97 season included *Elektra* and *Salome* with the Canadian Opera Company; *Salome* for Houston Grand Opera; and Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte* for both Mississippi Opera and Knoxville Opera. Last summer he appeared in Conrad Susa's *Transformations* at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis and sang the role of Curley in Glimmerglass Opera's production of Carlisle Floyd's *Of Mice and Men*. Among his most recent engagements are *The Love For Three Oranges* with Portland Opera and *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* (Nerone) for Utah Opera. In past seasons Lord has performed with San Francisco Opera Center's Western Opera Theater, and at the Spoleto Festival, Dallas Opera, Tulsa Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago and Opera Delaware, among others. His concert ap-

pearances have included Hannibal Peterson's *African Portrait* with the Detroit Symphony as well as Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with the Juilliard Orchestra and Santa Fe Symphony. A member of the Juilliard Opera Center for two consecutive seasons, he was heard there as Judge Danforth in Robert Ward's *The Crucible* and in the title role of Vaughan Williams's *Hugh the Drover*. The tenor will be seen as Bob Boles in the Company's staging of *Peter Grimes* later this year.



JOHN ROBERT AUTRY received critical acclaim for his portrayal of Sharpless in San Francisco Opera's 1997 production of *Madama Butterfly*. Having recently completed his second year as an Adler Fellow, the baritone made his 1996 Company debut as Schaunard in *La Bohème*, returning for SFO's 1996-97 season to sing roles in *Hamlet*, *Lohengrin*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *Carmen*, *Harvey Milk* and *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*. Last season he was seen here in *Tosca*, *Rigoletto*, and *Guillaume Tell* (Leuthold). Additional credits include the role of the Father in the Opera Guild's holiday presentation of *Hansel and Gretel*, and Emperor Valentiniano in the West Coast premiere ('97 Showcase) of Handel's *Ezio*. In 1995, he made his New York City Opera debut as Figaro in that company's national touring production of *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*. Other engagements include Dr. Malatesta in *Don Pasquale* with Birmingham Opera Theater, Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly* with Shreveport Opera, Ping in *Turandot* with Palm Beach Opera, and debuts with Opera Pacific (Marcello in *La Bohème*) and Michigan Opera Theatre (Lescart in *Manon*). A 1994 National Winner in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, the native of Atlanta, Georgia, has also won awards at vocal competitions in Palm Beach, Birmingham and Mobile. Most recently, he was the recipient of career grants from the Shoshana Foundation, Opera Index and the Richard Tucker Foundation.

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1997-98 Adler Fellow **JOHN RELYEA** made his 1996 San Francisco Opera debut as Colline in *La Bohème* and went on to sing roles in *Hamlet*, *Lohengrin*, *Harvey Milk*, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* and *Salome* during the Company's 1996-97 season. He appeared on the stage of the War Memorial last season as Angelotti in *Tosca*, Melchthal in *Guillaume Tell* and Figaro in the January performances of *Le Nozze di Figaro*. A member of the 1995 Merola Opera Program, his Opera Center credits include a critically-acclaimed Schwabacher

Debut Recital, Barelli in the Opera Center's Showcase '96 production of *The Aspern Papers* and Varo in Handel's *Ezio* for the '97 Showcase. At the age of 26, the bass-baritone has already been engaged by many prominent symphony orchestras. During the 1997-98 season he made debuts with the San Francisco Symphony (title role of *Elijah*), Cleveland Orchestra (Bach's Mass in B-Minor), Philadelphia Orchestra (the Bach *Magnificat*), and Minnesota Orchestra (*Messiah*). Relyea will appear with the Cleveland Orchestra this summer in the Mozart Requiem and again with the San Francisco Symphony for Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. He made his debut at the Hollywood Bowl last summer as Zuniga in concert performances of *Carmen*, and has most recently appeared as soloist with the orchestras of Montreal, Toronto, Quebec and Calgary, and as Colline with Vancouver Opera and Melchthal with Washington Concert Opera. Highlights of next season include Rodolfo in *La Sonnambula* with the Opera Orchestra of New York, Basilio in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* with the Opera Company of Philadelphia, and multiple engagements with San Francisco Opera. Relyea studied with Galina Vishnevskaya and Tom Krause while at the Curtis Institute and continues to study with his father, renowned Canadian bass-baritone Gary Relyea. The young artist was recently honored with a prestigious ARIA award.



Choreographer/dancer **LAWRENCE PECH**, in his second year as San Francisco Opera's Ballet Master, staged the dances in last season's production of *Guillaume Tell* for his first Company assignment. A long-time favorite of dance critics nationwide, he received his formal training from American Ballet Theatre and was subsequently invited by Mikhail Baryshnikov to join the company in 1980. During his seven-year association with ABT, Pech worked with such choreographers as George Balanchine, Martha Graham,

Antony Tudor, Agnes de Mille, Jerome Robbins, Twyla Tharp and others; and danced with such luminaries as Baryshnikov, Natalia Makarova, Ivan Nagy, Cynthia Gregory, Fernando Bujones and many more. In 1986, Pech left American Ballet Theatre to join San Francisco Ballet, where he was promoted to principal dancer in 1989. Two years later, he was the subject of a KQED special entitled *Blue Lair*, a ballet about his battle with cancer. He co-founded Diablo Ballet in 1993, also serving as the artistic director of Diablo Valley's first year-round professional ballet company. The artist soon established his own company, the Lawrence Pech Dance Company, which has received praise from critics and audiences since its inception. In addition to his high-profile dance and choreography credits, Pech has taught at St. Mary's College, Pacific Ballet Academy, Marin Ballet, Marin Dance Theater, California Academy of the Performing Arts and Brady Street Dance Center. He is also an accomplished composer, having created compositions for a chamber ensemble, a three-movement piano solo and a 16-voice *a cappella* work.



PATRICK SUMMERS was recently appointed Music Adviser and Music Director Designate of the Houston Grand Opera. Long associated with San Francisco Opera, he served as Music Director of the Opera Center from 1990-1994 and made his Company conducting debut in 1990 with performances of *Die Fledermaus*. He has since led SFO productions of *Così fan tutte*, *La Traviata*, Rossini's *Ermione* (U.S. premiere) and *Otello*, *L'Elisir d'Amore*, *Tosca*, *La Bohème*, *La Fille du Régiment*, *La Cenerentola*, *Faust*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, as well as last season's new stag-

ing of *Rigoletto* and the revival of *Guillaume Tell*. He also led the Company's 1994 and '95 Opera in the Park concerts. Maestro Summers has numerous credits for the various programs of the Opera Center—Showcase presentations, Merola Opera Program productions, and Western Opera Theater tours. He has traveled extensively for the Center, leading performances of *Carmen* in Guam and Japan, *Tosca* in Shanghai, and *La Bohème* in Japan. Elsewhere, he has been applauded at Lisbon's Teatro Nacional São Carlos (*Tosca*, *Ariadne auf Naxos*), Wolf Trap Opera (*Giulio Cesare*), Rome Opera (*Manon Lescaut*), Calgary Opera (*Lucia di Lammermoor*, *La Cenerentola*), Opera Australia (*La Cenerentola*, *La Bohème*, *Lucrezia Borgia*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Werther*, *Iphigénie en Tauride*), Washington Opera (*La Finta Giardiniera*), Dallas Opera (*L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, *The Tempest*), Opéra de Bordeaux (*Don Pasquale*) and Seattle Opera (*Bohème*), among others. He also recently led concerts at London's Royal Festival Hall, Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris, the Deutsche Oper Berlin, and with the National Orchestre de l'Aquitaine in Bordeaux. A new recording with Summers leading the English Chamber Orchestra features Olga Borodina and Dmitri Hvorostovsky in a program of arias and duets. In the future, the maestro will lead *Norma* and performances of *A Streetcar Named Desire* for the Company; *Die Fledermaus* for his Metropolitan Opera debut; *Giulio Cesare* in Bordeaux; and Handel's *Rinaldo* for Opera Australia. He is also scheduled to conduct the world premiere of Jake Heggie's *Dead Man Walking* for San Francisco Opera during the 2000-2001 season. A native of Indiana, Summers graduated from the Indiana University School of Music.



With productions seen at opera houses throughout the world, **LOTFI MANSOURI**, San Francisco Opera's fourth general director since its founding (appointed in 1988), has been associated with the Company since 1963, at which time he directed six productions. By now, he has directed 62 productions for the Company and this summer stages the revival of his critically-acclaimed 1989 production of *Lulu*. Born in Iran, he attended college at UCLA and received U.S. citizenship before serving as resident stage

director at Zurich Opera from 1960 to 1966. In 1965, he started working simultaneously at the Geneva Opera, where he became head stage director in 1966 and stayed until 1976. During this period, he began fulfilling engagements as guest director at various houses throughout Italy and North America, including Chicago, Houston, Santa Fe, Philadelphia, San Diego, Dallas and both the Metropolitan and New York City Opera companies. In 1976, he was named general director of the Canadian Opera Company in Toronto, where he directed 30 new productions, 12 of them Canadian premieres. During his tenure at San Francisco Opera, numerous artists have made their U.S. operatic debuts, and five productions have been taped for telecast and videocassette (*Mefistofele*, *Orlando Furioso*, *Capriccio*, *Turandot* and *The Dangerous Liaisons*). Mansouri's 1979 production of *La Gioconda* was the Company's first to receive a live international telecast. Also during his tenure, the Company made its first commercial recordings: *Hérodiade*, *Orphée et Eurydice*, and *Harvey Milk*. He established the historic exchange with the Kirov Opera that has resulted in productions

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of *War and Peace*, *Boris Godunov*, *The Fiery Angel*, *Ruslan and Lyudmila* and *Eugene Onegin*. The exchange continues during our 1998-99 season with the Company premiere of *Betrothal in a Monastery*.



SANDRA BERNHARD, the stage director for *Carmen*, has previously directed San Francisco Opera's staged concert presentations of *Lucio Silla*, *Ermione* and *Daphne*, the student matinee performances of *L'Elisir d'Amore*, as well as *La Bohème* in 1993, the new main-stage production of *Lucia di Lammermoor* in 1994, and *Madama Butterfly* in 1995. A member of the Company since 1990, she has served as assistant director for over 20 productions here, and was recently appointed Education Consultant for the San Francisco

Opera Guild and Center. She was also director of the Merola Opera Program's Grand Finals for four years. In addition to her San Francisco Opera credits, she has mounted productions for Utah Opera (*La Traviata*), Baltimore Opera (*The Mother Of Us All*), Opera Pacific (*Bohème*), Portland Opera (*Don Giovanni*), Florida Grand Opera (*Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and *Rigoletto*), Virginia Opera (*The Medium*), and Opera Memphis (*Roméo et Juliette*), as well as her own works (*A Point of Departure*, *A Night in Berlin*, *Postage Due* and *Buffa Bus Stop*) in Chautauqua, Norfolk and Miami. A graduate of the University of Illinois, she has had teaching assignments at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, Cincinnati Conservatory of Music, Utah Opera, Greater Miami Opera, Virginia Opera, Chautauqua Opera, Sarasota Opera and Louisiana State University.



MICHAEL YEARGAN is a professor of stage design at the Yale School of Drama and the resident designer for the Yale Repertory Theatre, where he has designed more than 50 productions. Since his San Francisco Opera debut with the 1993 staging of *I Puritani*, his designs have been seen here in new productions of *La Bohème* (summer 1996), *Carmen* (1996-97), *Madama Butterfly* (summer 1997) and *Rigoletto* (1997-98). Yeargan's North American opera credits include designs for the Metropolitan Opera (*Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Otello*, *Così fan tutte*); Los Angeles Opera (*Stiffelio*, *Hänsel und Gretel*); Lyric Opera of Chicago (*Antony and Cleopatra*, *Susannah*); Dallas Opera (*Vanessa*, *Rigoletto*); San Diego Opera (*Aida*); Houston Grand Opera (*Carousel*); Virginia Opera (*Anna Bolena*, *Così fan tutte*, *Porgy and Bess*); and Glimmerglass Opera (*La Finta Giardiniera*, *Madama Butterfly*), among others. Internationally, he has designed productions for Welsh National Opera (*Beatrice and Benedict*, *Eugene Onegin*, *Norma*, *La Bohème*, *The Merry Widow*, *Cavalleria Rusticana*, *Pagliacci*); Covent Garden (*Stiffelio*, *Simon Boccanegra*, *Aida*, *Attila*); Scottish Opera (*La Forza del Destino*, *La Bohème*); Théâtre Musical de Paris (*Die Zauberflöte*); Frankfurt Opera (*Così fan tutte*) and the Australian Opera (*Werther*, *La Traviata*, *Rigoletto*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*). Yeargan has also designed New York productions of Terrence McNally's *Bad Habits* and *The Ritz*, and has worked extensively with the New York Shakespeare Festival, American Repertory Theatre and at London's West End. His designs will be seen during the Company's 1998-99 season in the world premiere production of *A Streetcar Named Desire* and in the revival of *Madama Butterfly*.



For San Francisco Opera's 75th Season, **THIERRY BOSQUET** re-created the designs for the new staging of *Tosca* (after the original 1932 designs by Armando Agnini) and created the costumes and sets for the new production of *Pelléas et Mélisande*. During our 1996-97 season he designed the principal costumes for *Aida* and *Carmen*, as well as the costumes for *Die Fledermaus*, the work which was the vehicle of his 1990 San Francisco Opera debut. Additional Company credits have been the sets (from the original Alfred Roller designs) for *Der Rosenkavalier* and the costumes for *Capriccio* (1993 Strauss Festival), the sets and costumes for 1995's *Ruslan and Lyudmila* (originally designed by Alexander Golovin and Konstantin Korovin for the 1904 Glinka Centennial and realized by Bosquet), and the costumes for *Don Giovanni*, also presented in '95. The Belgian designer received his training and diploma at the National School of Architecture, Art and Design in Brussels. Since 1959, he has created the sets and costumes for over 75 operas and ballets at the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie in Brussels. He has also designed the sets and costumes for over 50 operas, ballets and dramas produced in France, Italy, Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, Germany, Canada, South America, Australia and the United States. Works recently designed include Grétry's *Zémire et Azor* for the 30th Festival Dele Nazioni in Città di Castello; *Rigoletto* and *Otello* in Liège; *La Belle Hélène* for the Canadian Opera Company; *Capriccio* in Washington, D.C.; as well as *Werther*, *Die Zauberflöte*, *The Mikado* and *La Traviata* for the New York City Opera. In addition to his work in the theater, he was the designer of the Belgian film *La Chambre Rouge*, and is the subject of a film by Jean Antoine for Belgian television.



Lighting Director for San Francisco Opera since 1976, **THOMAS J. MUNN** has created the lighting and special effects for more than 160 productions for the Company. During our 1997-8 season he designed the lighting for the new productions of *Tosca* and *Pelléas et Mélisande* as well as for the revivals of *Elektra* and *Guillaume Tell*. As scenic adviser, he has designed scenery for SFO productions of *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, *Roberto Devereux*, *Pelléas et Mélisande* (1979), *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*. Assignments for other companies include work for the Dallas Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Washington Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Netherlands Opera and Hartford Ballet. Credits include lighting for Dallas Opera's productions of *Elektra* and *La Cenerentola*, scenery and lighting for Ballet Arizona's staging of *Copélia*, as well as art direction and lighting for the video "The Universe Story." He is the consultant/designer of the War Memorial's newly renovated and computerized lighting system.

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OPERA

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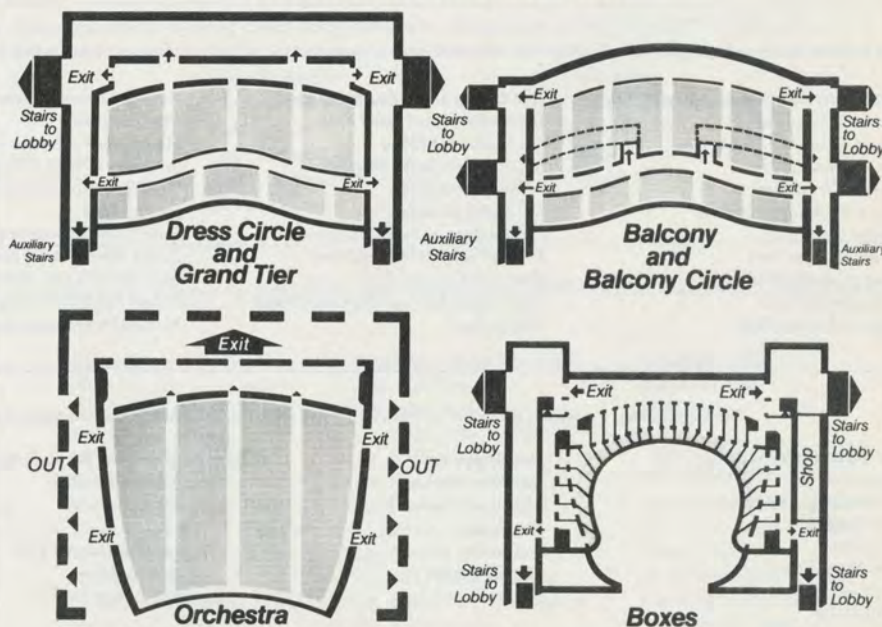
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