

Elektra

1997-1998

Saturday, October 18, 1997 8:00 PM

Thursday, October 23, 1997 7:30 PM

Sunday, October 26, 1997 1:00 PM

Friday, October 31, 1997 8:00 PM

Tuesday, November 4, 1997 8:00 PM

Saturday, November 8, 1997 8:00 PM

Thursday, November 13, 1997 7:30 PM

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75TH SEASON, 1997-98

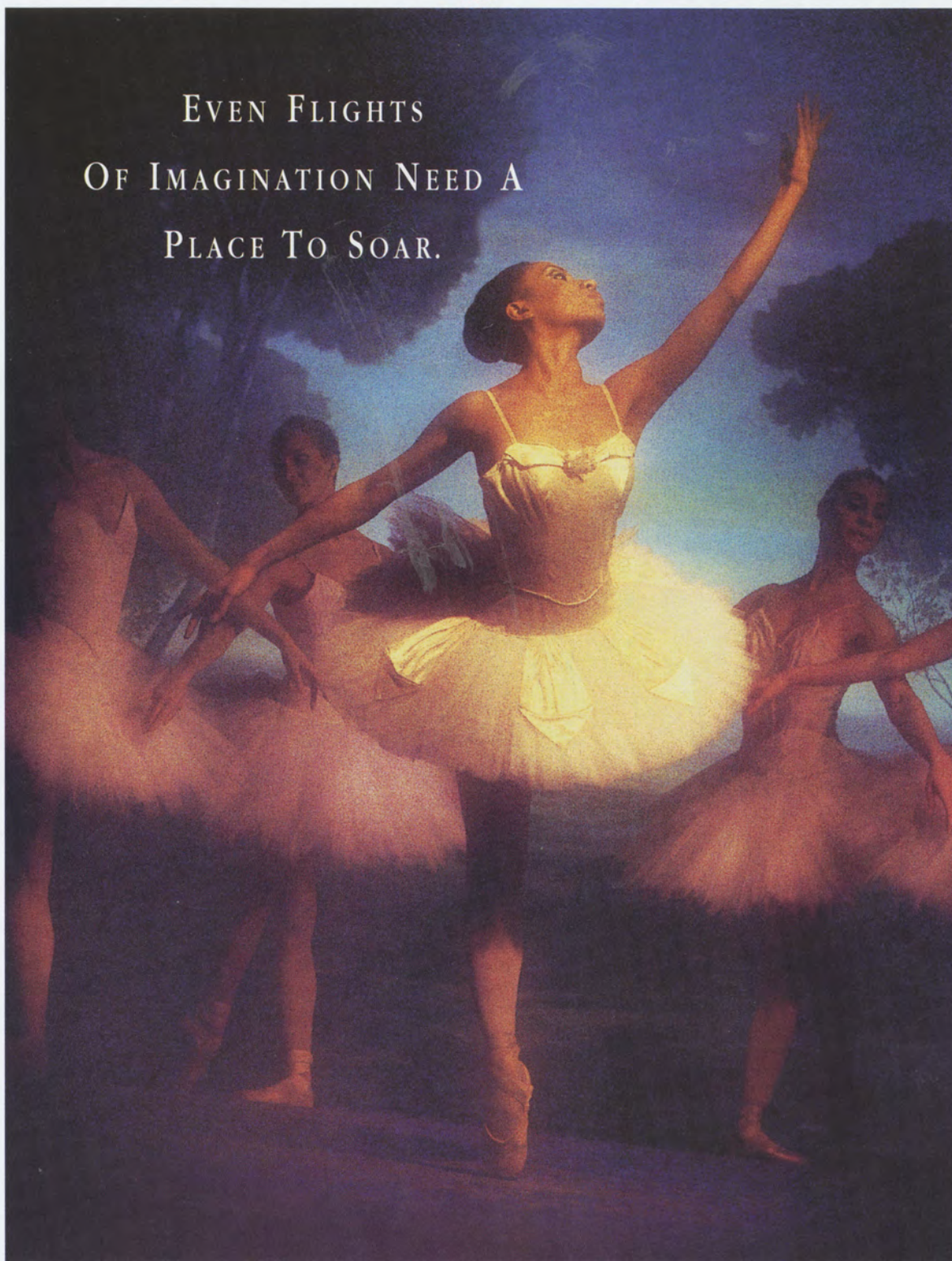
ELEKTRA



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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!

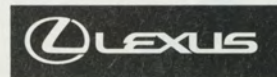
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SAN FRANCISCO OPERA MAGAZINE

Elektra

75th Season, 1997-98

Vol. 75, No. 7

FEATURES

- 10 Elektra and the Dance of Death** by Michael Kennedy
From Sophocles to Hofmannsthal to Strauss with a short side trip to Freud: the author provides a complete overview.
- 32 A Family Portrait: The House of Atreus** by Paul Thomason
The weird, shocking stories of goings-on in a mythical Greek family cursed by the gods.

DEPARTMENTS

- 6** Administration
- 14** Repertoire, 1997-98 Season
- 16** Artist Roster
- 18** San Francisco Opera Orchestra
- 21** Cast
- 22** Synopsis
- 28** San Francisco Opera Association
- 28** Series A Boxholders
- 30** 1997-98 Opera Previews
- 38** Medallion Society
- 43** Artist Profiles
- 55** Supporting San Francisco Opera
- 62** Bel Canto Society
- 63** Corporate Council
- 65** San Francisco Opera Center Supporters
- 68** Services

COVER

Douris (Greek, 5th-4th century B.C.)

Calliades (potter)

Eos carrying the corpse of his slain son (490-480 B.C.)
Ceramic dish; diameter 10 1/4 in.

Paris, Musée du Louvre

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(continued on page 8)

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ADVENTURE IN THE ARTS

Opera Tours

The Chaliapin Festival in St. Petersburg with Helsinki Opera January 28th to February 8th, 1998 with Sherwin Sloan

... join Sherwin for 3 days in Helsinki before going on to St. Petersburg and *Don Carlos*, a Concert of the Russian Imperial Andreev Orchestra with Galina Gorchakova, *The Rite of Spring* by Stravinsky, *Boris Godunov* and other performances to be announced. Then back to Helsinki for 2 relaxing days. Performances in Helsinki to be announced. There will be a special Gala Reception and much more.

Spectacular Spring & Opera at the Metropolitan Opera in New York & the New York City Opera from March 30th to April 7th, 1998 with Sherwin Sloan

... you are invited to join Sherwin for another wonderful Spring in New York with walks through Central Park to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Our hotel is on Central Park West and only 3 blocks to Lincoln Center. We will see 5 operas at the Metropolitan Opera: *Stiffelio* with Placido Domingo, *Romeo & Juliette*, *Lohengrin*, *Madama Butterfly* and *Die Meistersinger*. At New York City Opera both *Le Nozze di Figaro* and *Emmeline*. And play to be announced.

Opera & Museums in Washington D.C. with the Metropolitan Opera in New York March 27th to April 4th, 1998 with Sherwin Sloan

... you are invited to join Sherwin for 3 nights in Washington D.C. seeing *Don Giovanni* and *Dangerous Liaisons*, full-day private tour of the National Gallery, private tour of the Smithsonian Institution, visits to memorials. Then to New York by the Metroliner for *Stiffelio* with Domingo, *Romeo & Juliette*, *Lohengrin* and *Madama Butterfly*.

Prague Spring & Ten Operas with Spectacular Sightseeing May 11th to 22nd, 1998 with Herb Rowan

... you are invited to join Herb for an opera vacation in one of the most spectacular, beautiful and majestic towns in all of Europe. Prague has captured the imagination of those who dearly love both Baroque and Renaissance architecture, and especially opera which offers three superb opera houses. The State Opera and National Opera are two of the loveliest in all of Europe. Prague offers a wealth of sightseeing in churches, palaces, museums and castles in stunning settings. The performances: *La Traviata*, *Rusalka*, *Nabucco*, *Don Carlos*, *Rigoletto*, *Boris Godunov*, *Die Schopfung* (Haydn), *L'Elisir d'Amore*, *The Two Widows* by Smetana.

The Arizona Ring in the Mountainous Countryside of Northern Arizona at Flagstaff with Sherwin Sloan from May 31st to June 8th, 1998

The Arizona Opera is going to present a second consecutive Ring in the beautiful setting of Flagstaff. The scenic projections of Amy Shock which were so extraordinary last year, will again be used in this production. Includes best Orchestra Center seating. Welcome private dinner with Glynn Ross, General Director, a private coach trip to nearby Sedona with dinner and entertainment at a friend's home (a highlight from last year). Farewell Gala dinner. It will bring together many friends from previous Rings, and much more.

The White Nights Festival in St. Petersburg, The Hermitage & The Savonlinna Summer Opera Festival on a Lake in Finland with Sherwin Sloan June 22nd to July 9th, 1998 16 days

... you are invited to join Sherwin for the extraordinary Russian White Nights Festival in late June in St. Petersburg. The 1998 program has not been announced but will include 4 ballet programs including a full-evening Ballet Gala as only the Kirov Ballet can achieve. Two major operas and concerts ... and at the lake district of Savonlinna ... attending opera in the courtyard of this 13th century castle surrounded by the lake is quite a remarkable experience. *Tannhauser*, *Cavalleria Rusticana*, *Pagliacci*. Terrence McNally: Master Class. Opera in Mikelli to be announced.

Der Ring des Nibelungen in Adelaide, Australia November 15th to 30th, 1998 with Sherwin Sloan

... one of the great Ring events in the next several years, the demand & excitement for the Adelaide Ring is quite remarkable. You are invited to join Sherwin for this Ring to be performed in Adelaide, Australia. There will be visits to the wine region, Kangaroo Island and 4 full days in Sydney with two concerts at the Sydney Opera House, ballet and play by Shakespeare to be announced.

For a copy of the itineraries call

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(continued from page 6)

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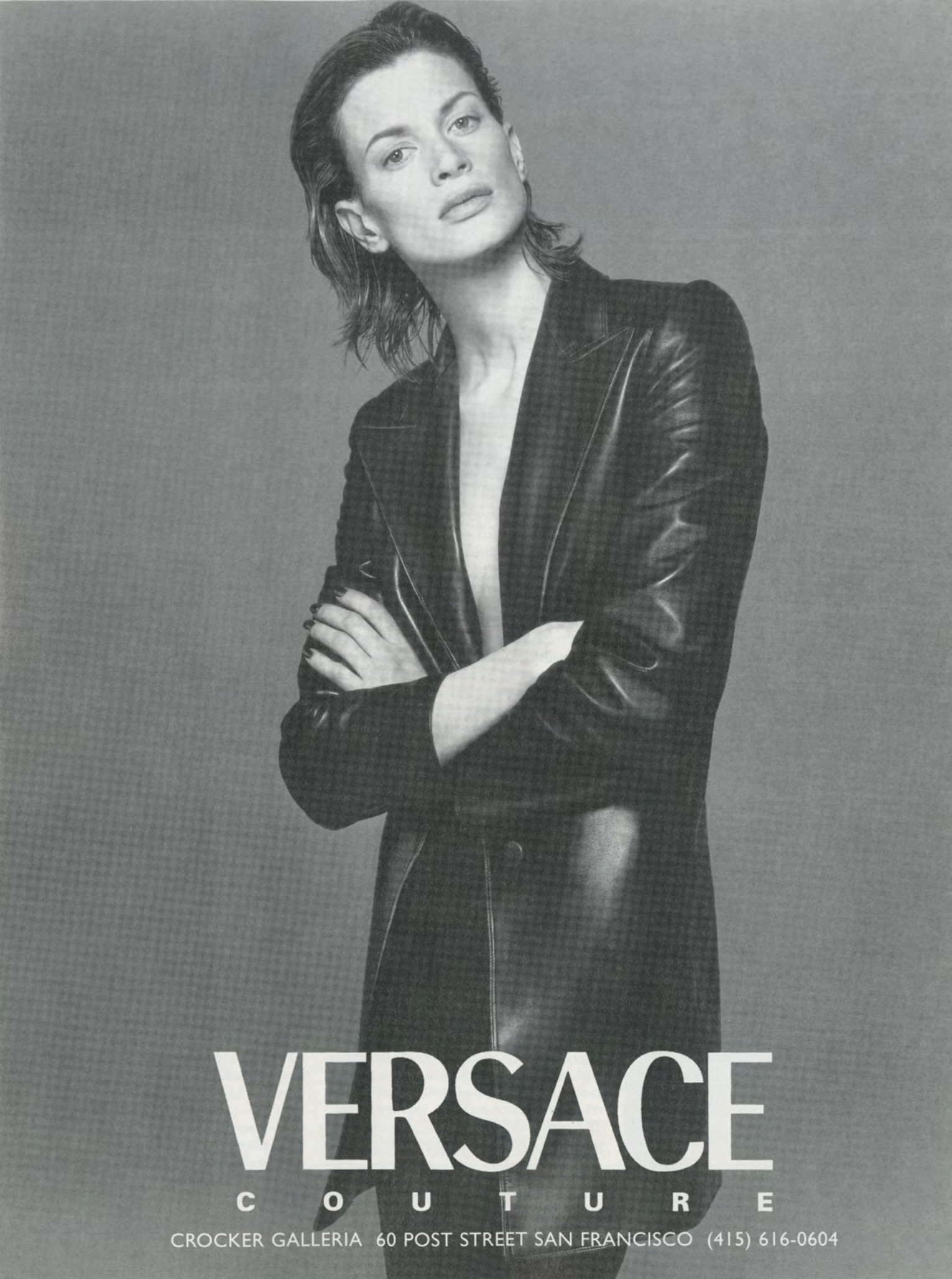
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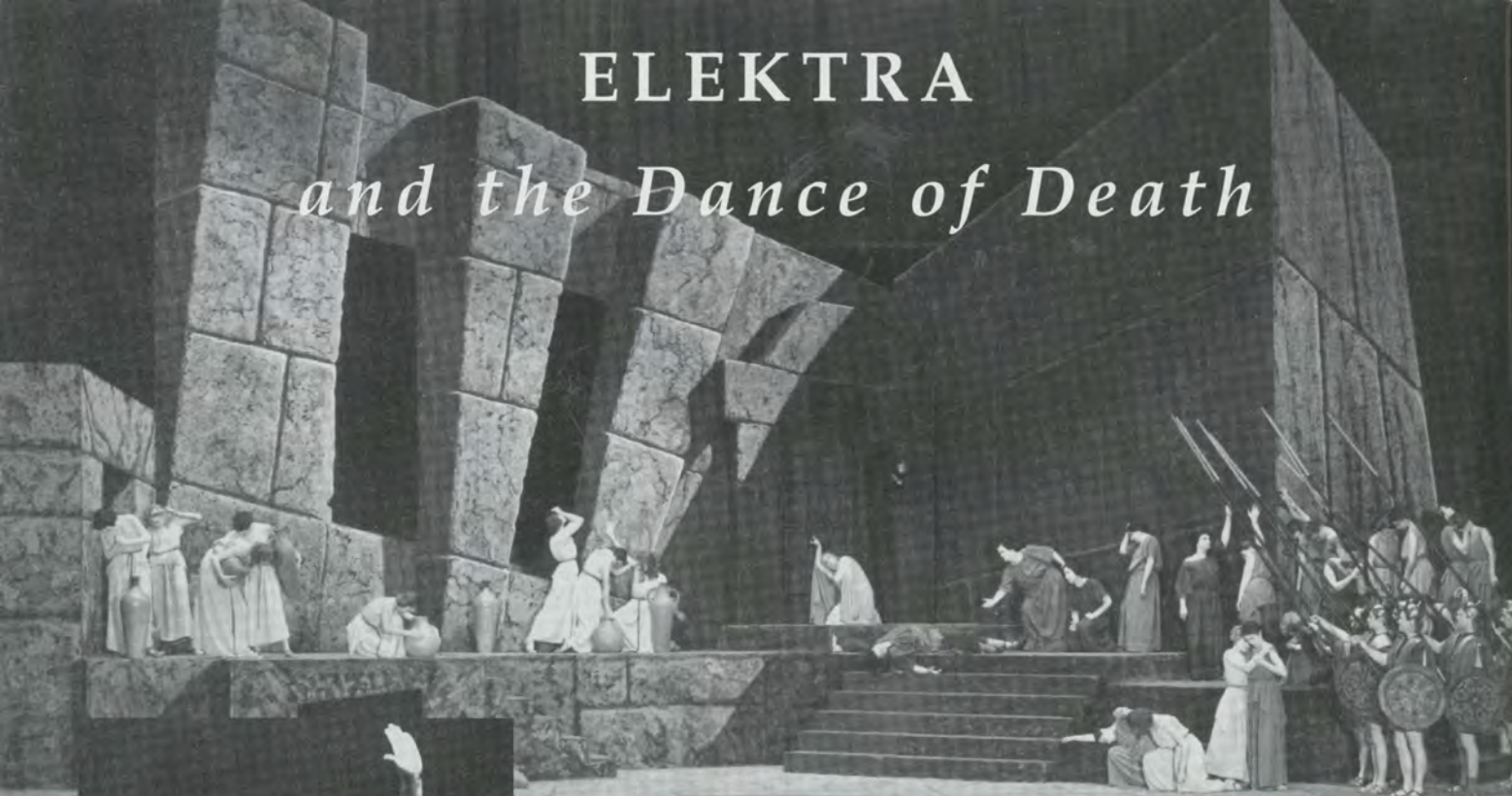
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ELEKTRA

and the Dance of Death



MORTON

ACHESON



By MICHAEL KENNEDY

Hugo von Hofmannsthal began to write his version of Sophocles's *Elektra* in 1901. It turned out to be a very Viennese *fin de siècle* piece of work, influenced by Nietzsche's dark view of ancient Greece, by Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams* (it is thought that Hofmannsthal did not read this book until 1904, but he knew of Freud's ideas) and by the obsession with the *femme fatale* which was in the air at that time—Wilde's *Salomé* and Sardou's *Tosca* in

literature, for example, Klimt's *Judith* and Corinth's *Salome* in painting. Hofmannsthal showed an Elektra living in squalor in the courtyard of the palace at Mycenae, planning a dreadful revenge on her mother Klytemnestra, Queen of Thebes. The queen had murdered her husband Agamemnon, Elektra's father, by killing him with an axe in his bath, and was now living with her fellow-conspirator Aegisthus. Elektra awaits, too, the return of her brother Orestes, who will "do the deed"—the murder of Klytemnestra and Aegisthus—with the axe she has buried in the ground. When Orestes comes, she forgets to give him the axe, but her feeling of triumph as the murders occur is so great that she dies, exhausted and spent, after her ritual dance.

Where does Freud come in? Repressed sexuality, for one example. Because of her sacrifice of everything to the desire to avenge Agamemnon, Elektra has killed her own sexual desires. "Do you think," she asks Orestes in the play but not in the opera, "when I rejoiced in my body that his sighs and groans did not penetrate to my bedside? The dead are jealous; and he sent me hate, hollow-eyed hate, as a bridegroom." Her sister Chrysothemis, on the other hand, who lives in the palace, yearns for marriage and children. She would like to forget everything from the past. "Forget?" Elektra retaliates. "I am not a beast, I cannot forget." The importance of dreams comes into the play, too. Klytemnestra asks Elektra if she

knows a remedy for the horrific nightmares which are destroying her. The sacrifice of a woman's life, your own, Elektra replies, and describes in hideous detail how Orestes will kill Klytemnestra. "Then you will dream no more, then I need dream no more."

Hofmannsthal's play had its premiere in Berlin on October 4, 1903. It was staged by the 30-year-old Max Reinhardt at the Kleines Theater with Gertrud Eysoldt as Elektra. Reinhardt was making his name as the most innovative and radical producer in Germany. In 1902 he had directed a German translation of Wilde's *Salomé* (which was written in French), also with Eysoldt. Richard Strauss, who was living in Berlin where since 1898 he had been conductor of the Court Opera, saw Wilde's play, which led him to compose the opera *Salomé*. It is not known exactly when he saw *Elektra*, but it was probably at one of three performances between October 12 and November 7, 1905, when the play was revived at the Deutsches Theater. Some time later Strauss and Hofmannsthal met and Strauss mentioned his intention of setting *Elektra* to music. On March 7, 1906, Hofmannsthal inquired if the composer was still interested. Strauss replied that he was "as keen as ever" and had already cut the play (by about a third) into shape for a libretto. But he thought he ought to wait a few years because the subject was so similar to *Salomé* and he needed to move further away from the style of that opera. Hofmannsthal, alarmed, protested that the

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

subjects were not at all similar: *Salome* was a "torrid mixture of purple and violet" while *Elektra* was "a mixture of dark and bright." Strauss was not convinced and suggested some other subjects. But Hofmannsthal was nothing if not persistent and arranged a meeting in Vienna in May of 1906 at which he persuaded Strauss to go ahead. On holiday in Marquartstein in Bavaria in June, Strauss began to sketch the work. By December, he had written enough to be able to play parts of it to Hofmannsthal, who wrote to a friend, "I think it will be very good."

Progress was slow during 1907. Strauss was a busy man. He had his duties at the Berlin Opera (60 operas a season), he traveled far and wide as a guest conductor of *Salome* and of his orchestral tone poems, and he was busy planning and supervising the building of the house at Garmisch in which he was to live for the rest of his life. By October 7, 1907, he had reached the Recognition Scene between Elektra and Orest and there he stopped. Like his friend Mahler, he never composed during the winter. Instead of creative work he undertook the "chore" of orchestrating *Elektra* as far as he had progressed. By Christmas Day he had scored up to Klytemnestra's entrance. Although the two men collaborated during composition of *Elektra*, it is not technically a collaboration. As will be seen, Hofmannsthal contributed some extra lines at Strauss's request, but the libretto is strictly the composer's work, a skillful reduction of the play. Before continuing with the history of the opera's composition, it is worthwhile looking in some detail at what Strauss did to the original play. He used his copy of the fifth edition, published in 1904, and, as was his custom, made musical annotations in the margin. These were either themes or indications of orchestration. His cuts were made for two main reasons: to speed up the action and condense it for musical purposes, and to simplify some of Hofmannsthal's psychological implications which he felt could not be put across to an opera audience. He also made one very significant change. Throughout the play, Hofmannsthal never uses the name of Agamemnon. He is an un-named presence: Elektra always refers to *Vater*. Strauss knew this would confuse an opera audience and ensures that in her first monologue Elektra names him six times—and the opera begins with the orchestra playing a fortissimo D-minor motif of four notes which obviously declares "A-ga-mem-non."

Strauss left the opening scene—a virtuoso "conversational" prologue which gives the audience the information they need—and Elektra's first monologue almost uncut. Four of the five serving maids describe

Elektra's behavior: how at the same hour each day she "wails for her father, making all the walls resound"; how, if they go too close to her, she spits at them and calls them flies and bluebottles; how she screams at them that she is nurturing a vulture in her body; and how a food-bowl is put out for her with the dogs; and how Aegisth strikes her. Only the fifth maid speaks up for her—"Is she not a king's daughter? . . . Not one of you is worthy to breathe the same air as she breathes"—and she is taken into the house and beaten up. Elektra appears alone, at the same hour of the day as Agamemnon was murdered. She describes his murder and how she, Chrysothemis and Orest, will avenge him. Then they will dance around his grave and over his murderers' bodies. "I will raise my knees high, step by step . . ." The sopranos who sing Elektra are thus faced by Strauss with a long and testing aria on their entrance, with no warming up in brief exchanges such as he allowed *Salome*. And, at the reference to the dancing, we hear for the first time the heavy waltz rhythm of the cathartic, trance-like dance which precedes Elektra's death in the final scene.

The next scene, between Elektra and Chrysothemis, was cut by half by Strauss. He fashioned it so that it concentrated on Chrysothemis, the dweller in the present, the "now," as opposed to Elektra's preoccupation with past and future. Chrysothemis has come to warn Elektra that "they" are planning to lock her away in a tower. Who are "they," Elektra asks. Do you mean the two women, "my mother and that other woman, that weakling Aegisth, who performs heroic deeds only in bed?" She advises her sister not to prowling around listening to what people are saying but to "sit at the door like me and wish for death and judgment to fall on her and on him." No, Chrysothemis says, she cannot live like that. She blames Elektra's hatred for their being kept in "this prison." She wants to have children, even by a peasant. She envies the maid-servants when she sees them pregnant. What

Opposite: San Francisco Opera's first *Elektra* took place in 1938. The photo shows the final tableau, with the protagonist dead, and the rest of the cast striking "Grecian" poses. (Inset) Janis Martin during Elektra's dance in our 1984 staging.

This page, top: Our 1938 production featured two remarkable singing actresses: Rose Pauly (left) in the title role, Kerstin Thorborg as Klytemnestra. The conductor was Fritz Reiner.

Interpreters of the role of Klytemnestra at the San Francisco Opera included two more exceptional ones: (middle) Regina Resnik, shown with the two confidantes (Louise Corsale and Sylvia Davis) in 1966; and (bottom) Irene Dalis, who portrayed the role in 1973.



is the point of living as she does—"our father is dead, our brother is not coming back." In the play, Elektra has much more to say. When Chrysothemis tells her that Klytemnestra has had a dream about Orestes, Elektra replies that it is she who sends this nightmare to her mother: "I visited this dream upon her." She then describes how Orestes will come and kill Klytemnestra with the axe. Strauss, with his flair for what would work best in opera, transferred this speech to the next scene, her confrontation with Klytemnestra, when she tells her mother directly it is she who sends her the bad dreams.

Klytemnestra is one of the juiciest roles Strauss created. It is short, but contraltos or mezzo-sopranos will ever be grateful to him for the chances it gives them to make audiences' flesh creep. However, it has to be said that the first singer of that role, Ernestine Schumann-Heink, disliked the opera. It was "a horrible din," she declared. "We were all mad women." Strauss thought she was miscast. Since then, though, memorable Klytemnestras have included Martha Mödl, Elisabeth Höngen, Regina Resnik, Jean Madeira, Astrid Varnay, Christa Ludwig, Brigitte Fassbaender, Helga Dernesch, Waltraud Meier, and Marjana Lipovšek. Quite apart from the music, which singing actress could resist the stage direction that describes the queen on her entrance?"—"in the dazzling torchlight her wan and bloated face seems more pale against her scarlet robes. She is leaning both on her confidante and on an ivory stick, encrusted with jewels . . . The queen is completely covered in precious stones and charms. Her arms are covered in bracelets, her fingers with rings. Her eyelids are exceptionally large and it seems to cause her considerable effort to keep them open." Strauss himself had something to say about

how the role should be enacted. This was written later in his life and in some degree contradicts the stage direction: "Klytemnestra should be shown not as a weather-beaten elderly witch but as a handsome, proud woman of about fifty whose disintegration is not a physical but a spiritual affair."

Hofmannsthal's Klytemnestra differs in several important respects from the same character in Sophocles. In the Greek play, her dream is not the major event it is in the Austrian. She believes that her murder of Agamemnon was justified: she was avenging the sacrificial slaying by Agamemnon of their first daughter, Iphigenia. She is not driven nearly mad by nightmares about her son Orestes but is genuinely upset by the (false) news of his death. Hofmannsthal converted her into a case-book study from Freud, a decadent woman who has deliberately shut out the memory of the murder of her husband. In the play, but not in the opera, she says: "First it was to come, then it was past—in between I did nothing." Strauss's cuts in this, the fourth scene, amount to about 40 per cent of Hofmannsthal's original. He reconstructs it so that it can become virtually a second monologue for Elektra into which he inserts her vision of Orest murdering Klytemnestra and Aegisth that, in the play, Elektra relates to Chrysothemis. To balance this insertion, Strauss cut 24 lines from Elektra's taunting of Klytemnestra where he no doubt felt that Hofmannsthal was justified in repeating himself but it would be difficult for a composer to do so. Throughout the opera, his aim was always to tauten the action and increase the tension.

In the opera, Klytemnestra's first encounter with Elektra is when she sees her through the palace windows and decides to talk to her in spite of advice to the contrary from her confidante and train-bearers. She rounds on them both for being no help to her in her sleepless nights. She tells Elektra of her dreams, but she knows dreams can be dispelled by the "proper rites" and Elektra, who is "clever and strong" in her head, "could tell what things would help me." She describes how, when she lies awake, "something crawls over me" and when she sleeps she dreams that "the marrow is melting in my bones." The music for this aria is the most extraordinary Strauss ever wrote, harmonically coming close to atonality. It is because of this passage that it has been said by Strauss's critics that he took fright at how

far he had progressed and thereafter settled for the sugar-and-spice of *Der Rosenkavalier* and the neo-classicism of *Ariadne aux Naxos*. This is nonsense. In the first place, Strauss was not systematically evolving towards an *avant-garde* style, as Schoenberg did. His style was flexible according to the expressive demands of the subjects he chose—and the more contrast there was (as in his *Lieder*), the better he liked it. So in *Elektra*, he found the gruesome music to illustrate Klytemnestra's nightmares just as he had found the appropriate music for the adventures of Till Eulenspiegel and Don Quixote and for Salome as she leans over the cistern to hear what is happening to Jokanaan. In many respects, *Salome* is a more progressive score than *Elektra*, which is structurally nearer to a number opera. The Klytemnestra music sounds atonal or whole-tone, but is in fact tonal, as an analysis of the chords can prove. By a paradox, the *avant-garde* is also conventional. Even before she describes her nightmare, the sensitive ear will notice several contrasting stylistic influences: anticipations of *Der Rosenkavalier*, echoes of *Das Rheingold*, even a bit of Delius-like chromaticism.

After Elektra's horrifying recital of how Klytemnestra will die, the scene ends with the queen cackling with laughter over a message her confidante has whispered to her. We learn what it is when Chrysothemis rushes in to tell Elektra that their brother Orest is dead—"killed and dragged along by his own horses." (When Agamemnon was killed, it should be explained, Orestes was a child. He was smuggled out of the palace and taken to Phocis, the area around Delphi, to be brought up by king Strophios. When he grew up, he consulted the oracle at Delphi and was told to avenge his father.

(continued on page 37)



JONES



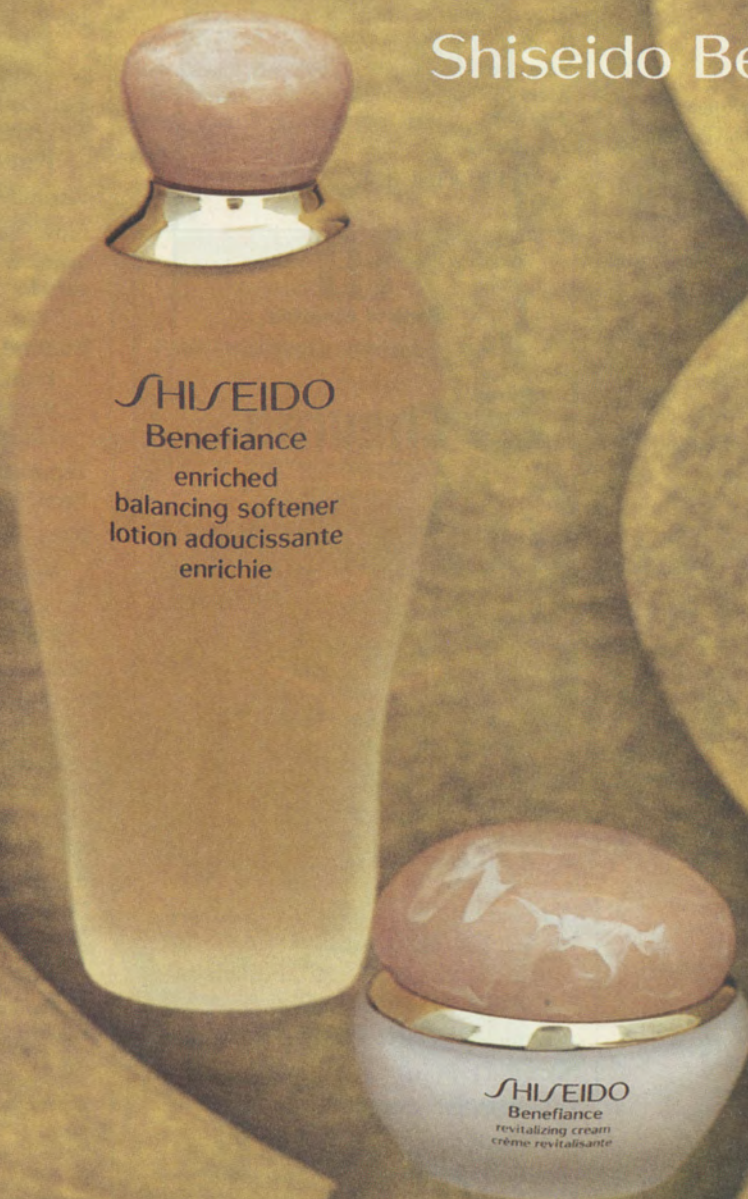
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Two outstanding artists from the British Isles portrayed the role of Elektra at the San Francisco Opera: (left) Amy Shuard in 1966, and (right) Gwyneth Jones in 1991.

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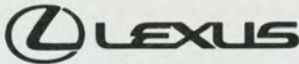
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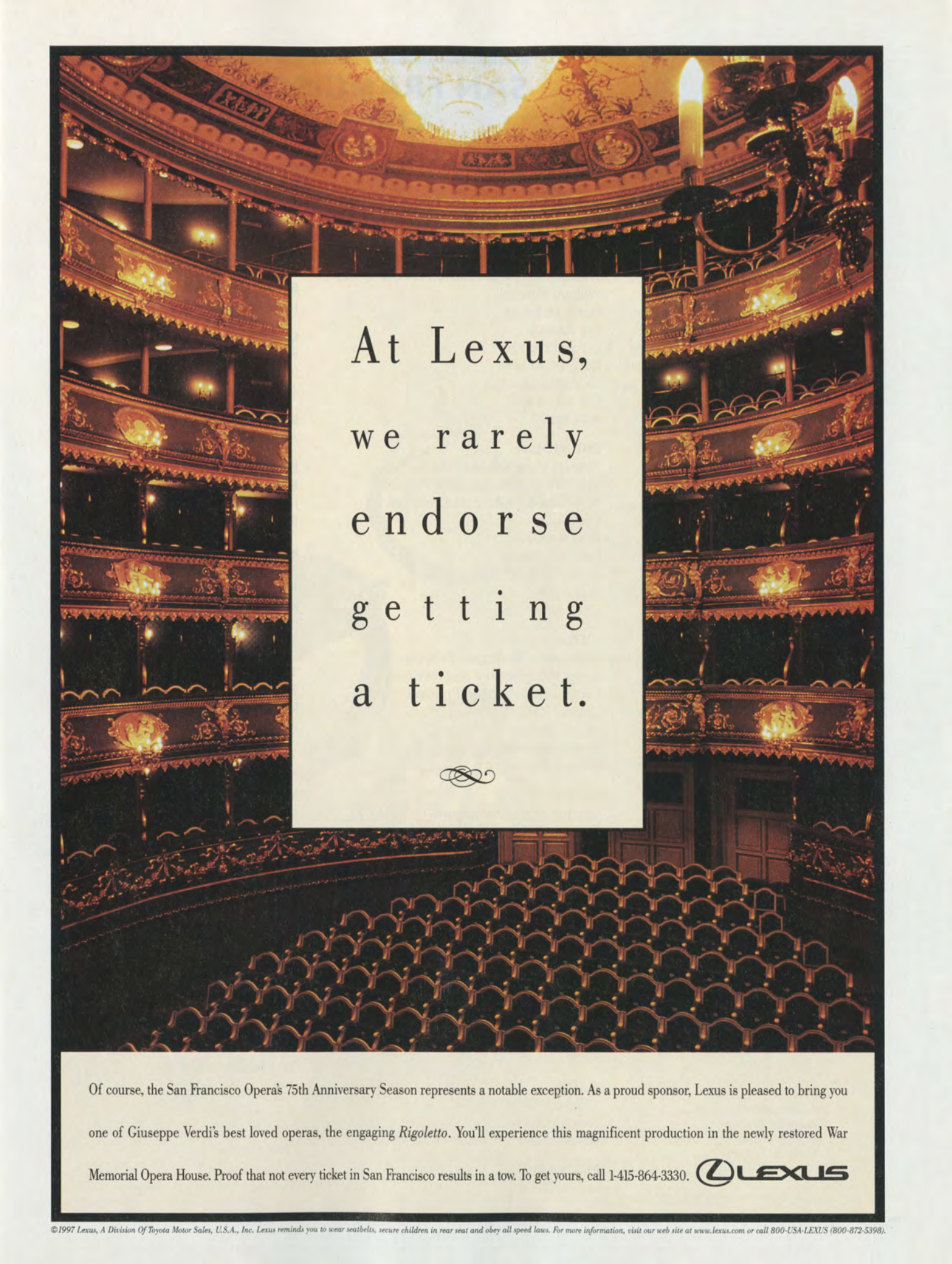
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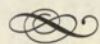
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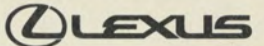
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Opera in one act by RICHARD STRAUSS

Text by HUGO VON HOFMANNSTHAL
Based on the play by SOPHOCLES

Elektra

(in German)

Conductor

Jiri Kout*

Production

Andrei Serban

Designer

Yannis Kokkos

Lighting Designer

Thomas J. Munn

Musical Preparation

Peter Grunberg

Marilyn Barnett

Bryndon Hassman

Susanna Lemberskaya

Philip Eisenberg

Prompter

Philip Eisenberg

Supertitles

Christopher Bergen

Assistant Stage Directors

Zoe Pappas

Darko Trešnjak*

Stage Manager

Theresa Ganley

This production of *Elektra*,
originally created for the
Grand Théâtre de Genève,
is owned by San Francisco Opera.

Ball python courtesy of
The Bone Room, Berkeley, CA

First performance:
Dresden, January 25, 1909

First San Francisco Opera
performance: October 24, 1938

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 18 AT 8:00

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 23 AT 7:30

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26 AT 1:00

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 31 AT 8:00

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 4 AT 8:00

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 8 AT 8:00

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 13 AT 7:30

1997–98 Season

CAST

(in order of appearance)

<i>First maidservant</i>	Jill Grove
<i>Second maidservant</i>	Zheng Cao
<i>Third maidservant</i>	Elizabeth Bishop
<i>Fourth maidservant</i>	Terri McKay*
<i>Fifth maidservant</i>	Christina Lamberti†
<i>Overseer of the servants</i>	Claudia Waite
<i>Elektra</i>	Elizabeth Connell
<i>Chrysothemis</i>	Frances Ginzer*
	Inga Nielsen* (11/4, 8, 13)
<i>Klytemnestra</i>	Jane Henschel* (10/18, 23, 26)
	Susan Shafer*
<i>Her confidante</i>	Nicolle Foland
<i>Her trainbearer</i>	Alison Buchanan†
<i>A young servant</i>	Jack Lawless*
<i>An old servant</i>	Bojan Knežević
<i>Orest</i>	Alan Held
<i>His tutor</i>	John Relyea†
<i>Aegisth</i>	John Mac Master

Slaves, guards

*San Francisco Opera debut †1997-98 Adler Fellow

PLACE AND TIME: Mycenae after the Trojan War

*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 one hour and fifty minutes without intermission.*

Elektra

In the inner courtyard of the royal palace of Mycenae, at nightfall, the maidservants who have come to draw water at the well exchange anxious remarks about Elektra's strange behavior since the death of her father Agamemnon: wandering around in the palace like a soul possessed, she avoids people's looks, uttering threats and barking with the dogs. Only the youngest of the maidservants expresses some pity for the unhappy princess. But it is exactly the time when, every day, drunk with hate, Elektra relives the murder of her father. Her cries rise up and are gradually transformed into wild joy at the idea of revenge. Blood must flow, the blood of Klytemnestra and the blood of Aegisth, her lover and accomplice in the murder of Agamemnon, the blood of the treacherous slaves and of the dogs and horses. She is sure that her brother Orest, in exile, and her sister Chrysothemis will help her to strike and all three will dance triumphantly around their father's tomb.

Chrysothemis arrives to warn her sister: Klytemnestra and Aegisth are plotting against her and are preparing to throw her into a dark cell. Chrysothemis urges Elektra to flee while there is still time, for she herself refuses to live only in the past and in the hope of revenge. Chrysothemis cannot endure the grim and suffocating palace; she wants to live as a normal woman, to marry and have children. Elektra though, inflexible and haughty, scornfully rejects such prudence and weakness. But Klytemnestra approaches and Chrysothemis runs away.

Adorned with jewels and amulets, but deathly pale and disfigured by the anguish within her, Klytemnestra appears like a mournful sleepwalker, followed by her attendants. Terrifying nightmares have her in their grip and she turns to her daughter Elektra for magic remedies which could free her from them. Elektra at first answers her mother in a strange and enigmatic fashion: she explains that the gods demand a sacrificial victim. But most of all she frightens her mother by showing that she knows the cause of Klytemnestra's fears: she is afraid of Orest, who was banished from the court by his mother's command, and who is rumored to be still alive. Klytemnestra is dismayed. Elektra lets herself be carried away by a frenzy of hatred and revenge which lift her into a sort of trance in which she predicts and describes the death awaiting her mother, struck down by the same axe which had murdered Agamemnon. Petrified with horror, the queen watches this savage tide which seizes her daughter. But suddenly

an attendant runs up and murmurs a few words into Klytemnestra's ear. Immediately, her expression changes and a triumphant laugh replaces the anguish: erect and horrifying, she turns her back on Elektra and goes into the palace.

Chrysothemis runs in and reveals the dismal news: Orest is dead. Elektra refuses to believe it, but a young servant comes to ask for a horse to go and inform Aegisth as quickly as possible. In a flash, Elektra decides that it is now up to her sister and herself to wreak revenge. But Chrysothemis, appalled, refuses to take part in her sister's project in spite of her threats and supplications, and she runs away. Elektra curses her and, seized by a savage resolve, decides to act alone.

Burrowing like an animal near the threshold of the palace where she had buried the axe with which her father was murdered, Elektra is interrupted by a stranger who asks to see Klytemnestra in order to confirm the death of Orest whom he had seen trampled to death by his own horses. In despair, Elektra tells her name to the stranger who then reveals to her that Orest is not really dead. Some old servants come and kiss the young man's hands and feet. The perplexed Elektra looks at him, until—finally recognizing him—she is possessed by joy. She then tells her brother, in a sort of ecstasy, the tale of her sufferings and her wait for vengeance. Orest tells her that he is ready to help her. The tutor who acted as his adopted father approaches the young man and tells him that the moment is favorable to act. The two men enter the palace.

Left alone in the shadows, Elektra is like a wild beast in its cage, torn by anguish because she had not been able to give her brother the axe. But her frightful vigil is suddenly shattered by the cries of Klytemnestra. Elektra calls to her brother to strike again. The terrified servants flee the palace. Aegisth appears. Trembling with joy, Elektra, a torch in her hand, leads him to the palace. A few minutes later he, too, is stabbed to death while Elektra calls out the name of Agamemnon.

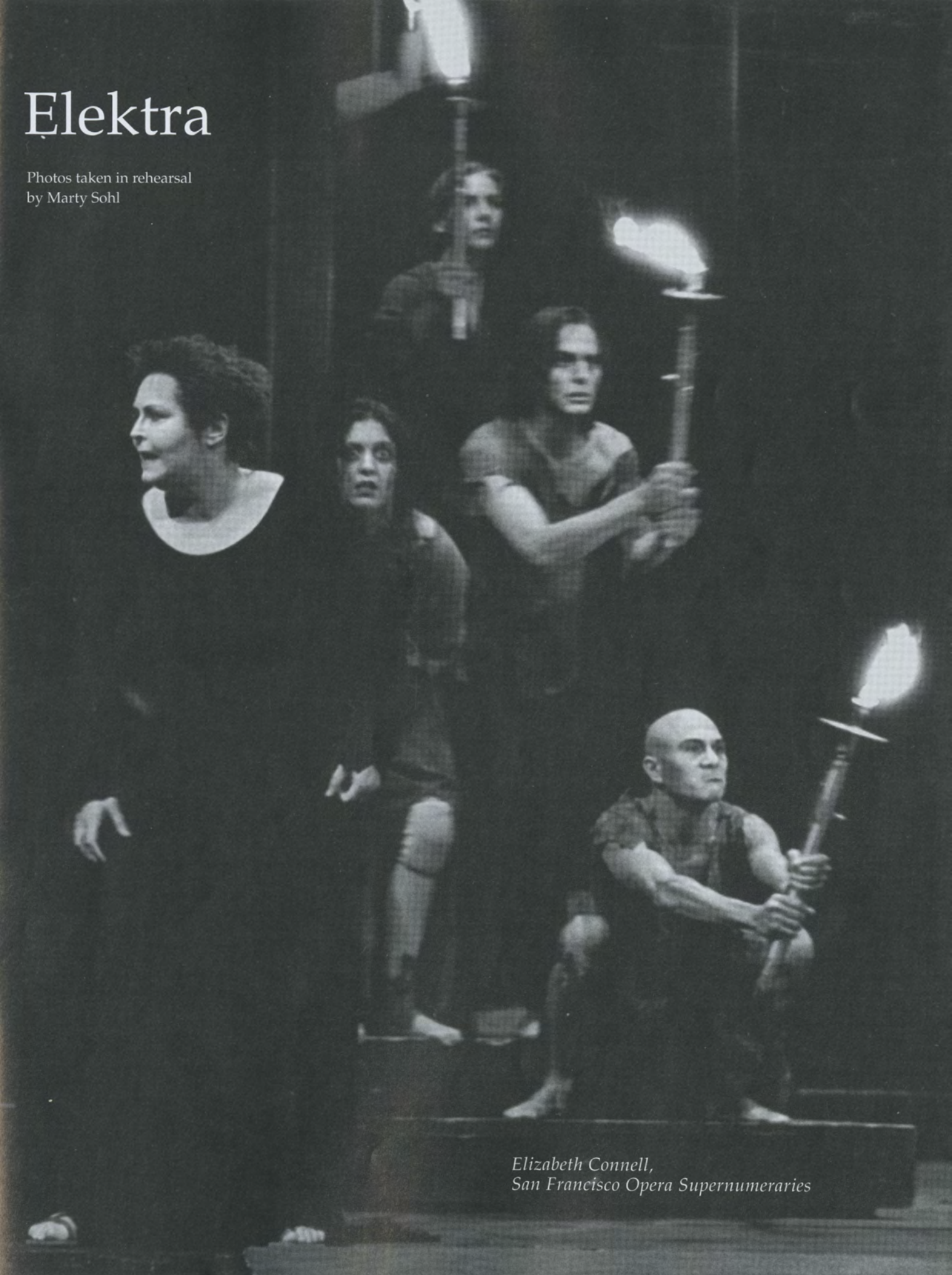
Chrysothemis appears with the palace servants to announce that vengeance has been done by Orest, who is then acclaimed by everyone. She gives thanks to the gods and turns to her sister. But Elektra, whose hate has driven her into a trance, starts to dance in an ecstatic state, and then collapses, dead. Chrysothemis rushes towards the palace calling loudly for her brother Orest, but he has been summoned to Athens to face trial for matricide.

The performance of October 18th is sponsored by Jurika & Voyles Investment Management.

The performance of November 4th is designated in honor of Mr. and Mrs. John Bryan's membership in the Triple Gold Circle.

Elektra

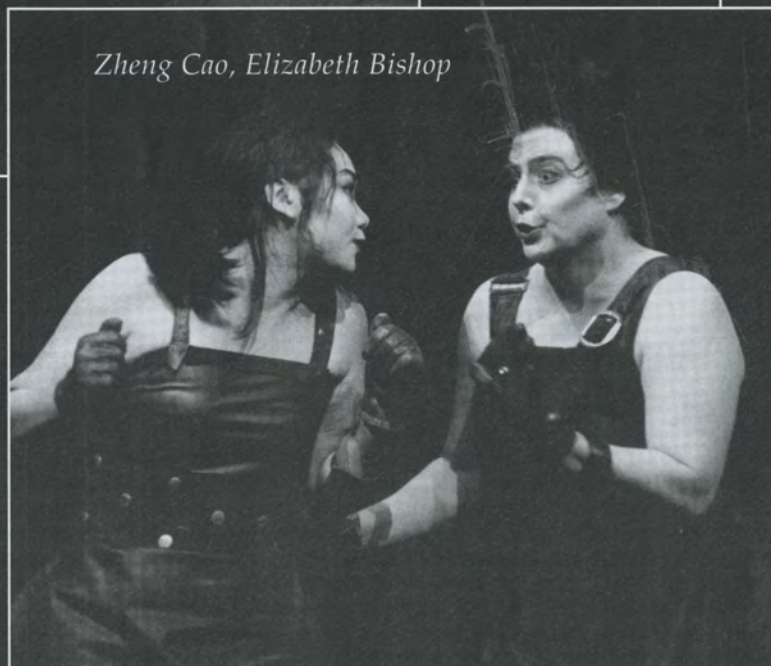
Photos taken in rehearsal
by Marty Sohl



*Elizabeth Connell,
San Francisco Opera Supernumeraries*



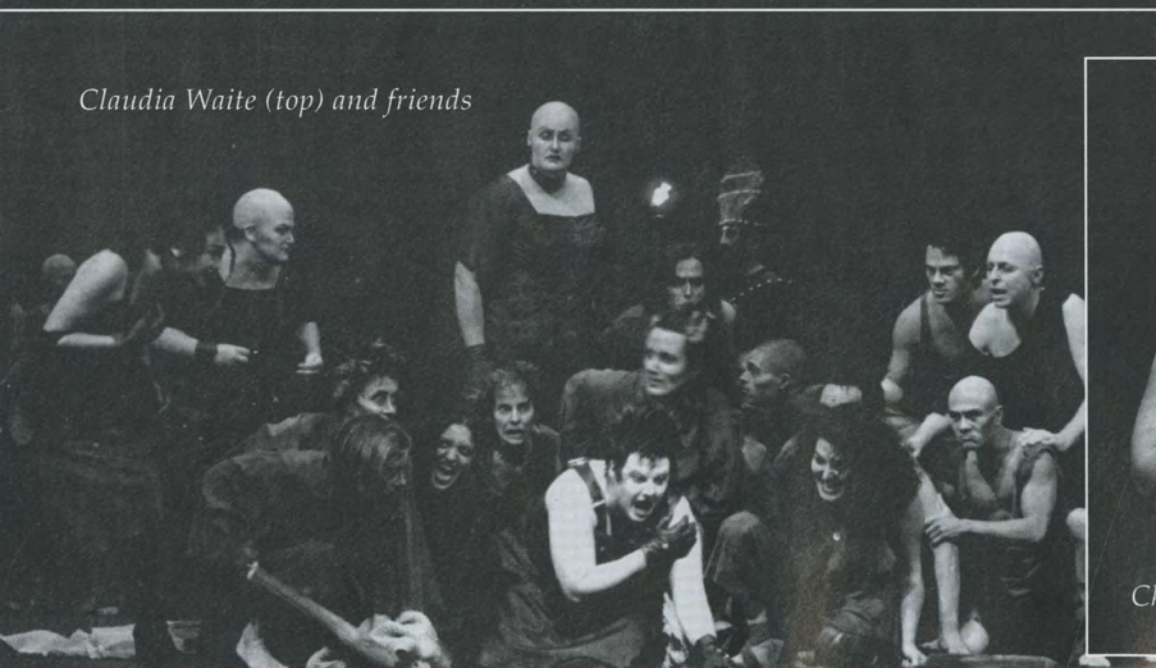
Jill Grove



Zheng Cao, Elizabeth Bishop



John Mac Master

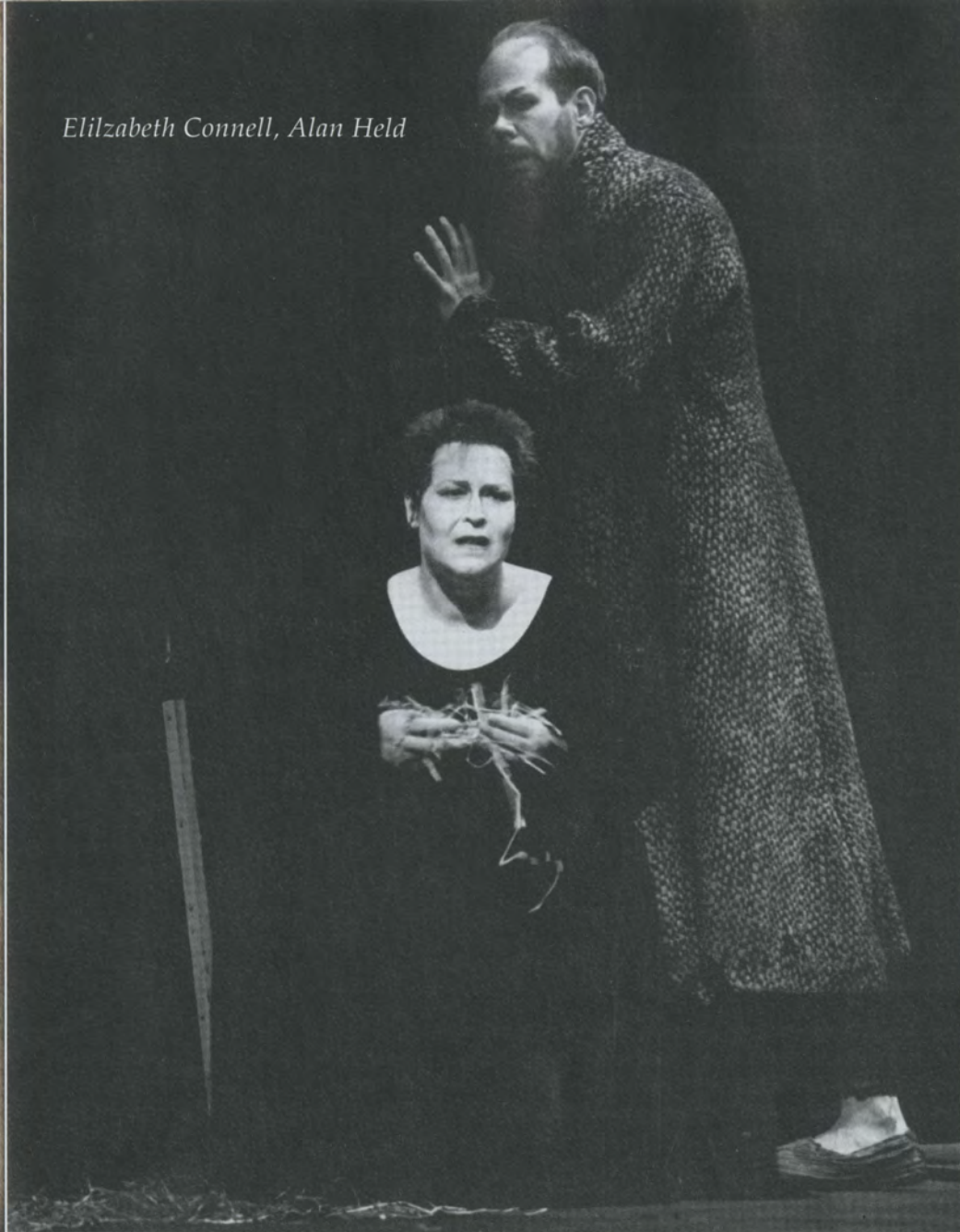


Claudia Waite (top) and friends

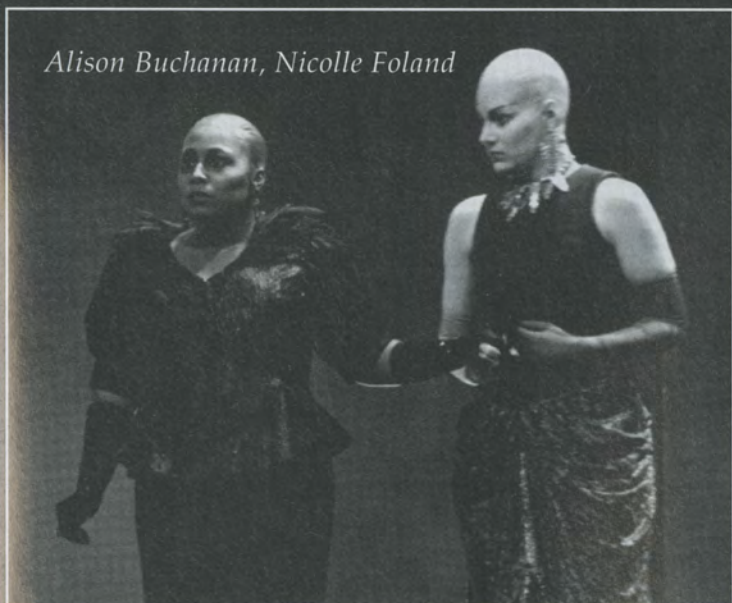


Christina Lamberti

Elizabeth Connell, Alan Held



Alison Buchanan, Nicolle Foland

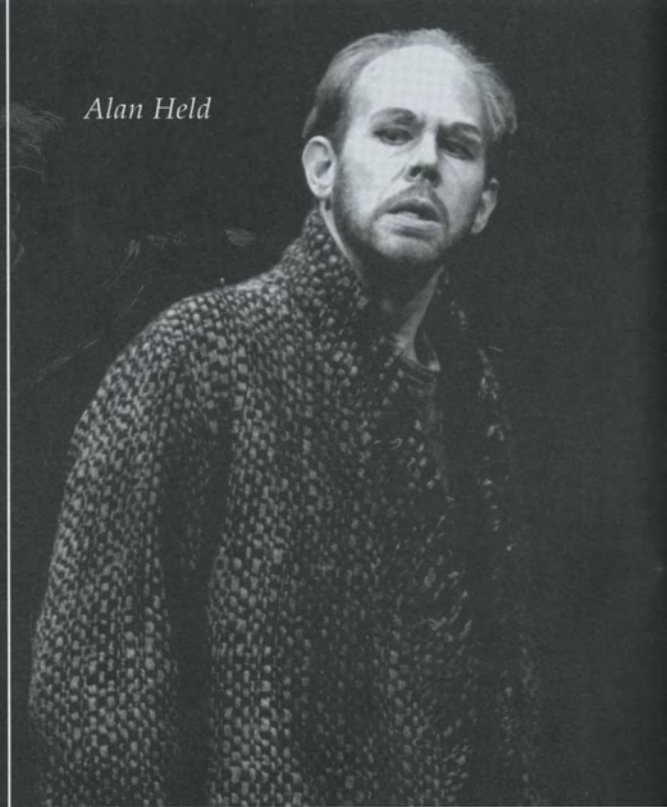


Elizabeth Connell, Frances Ginzer

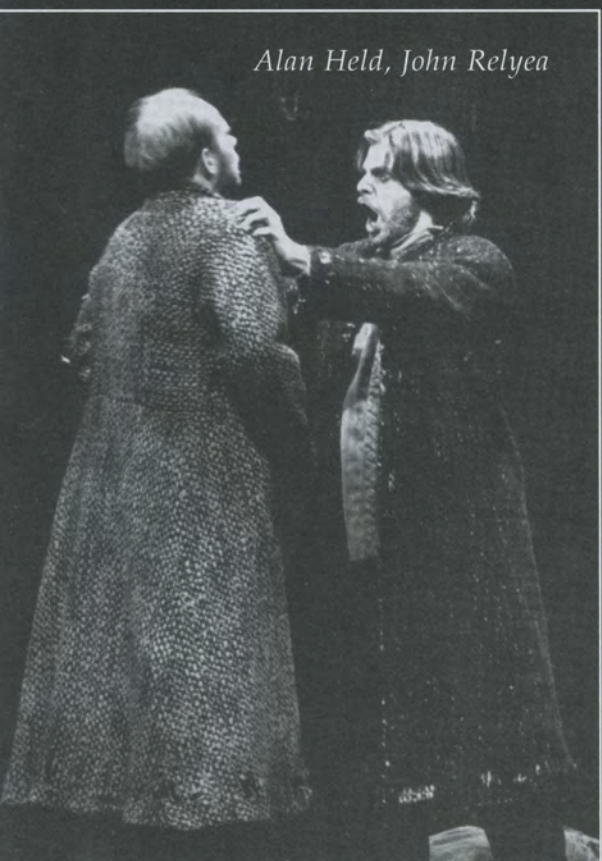




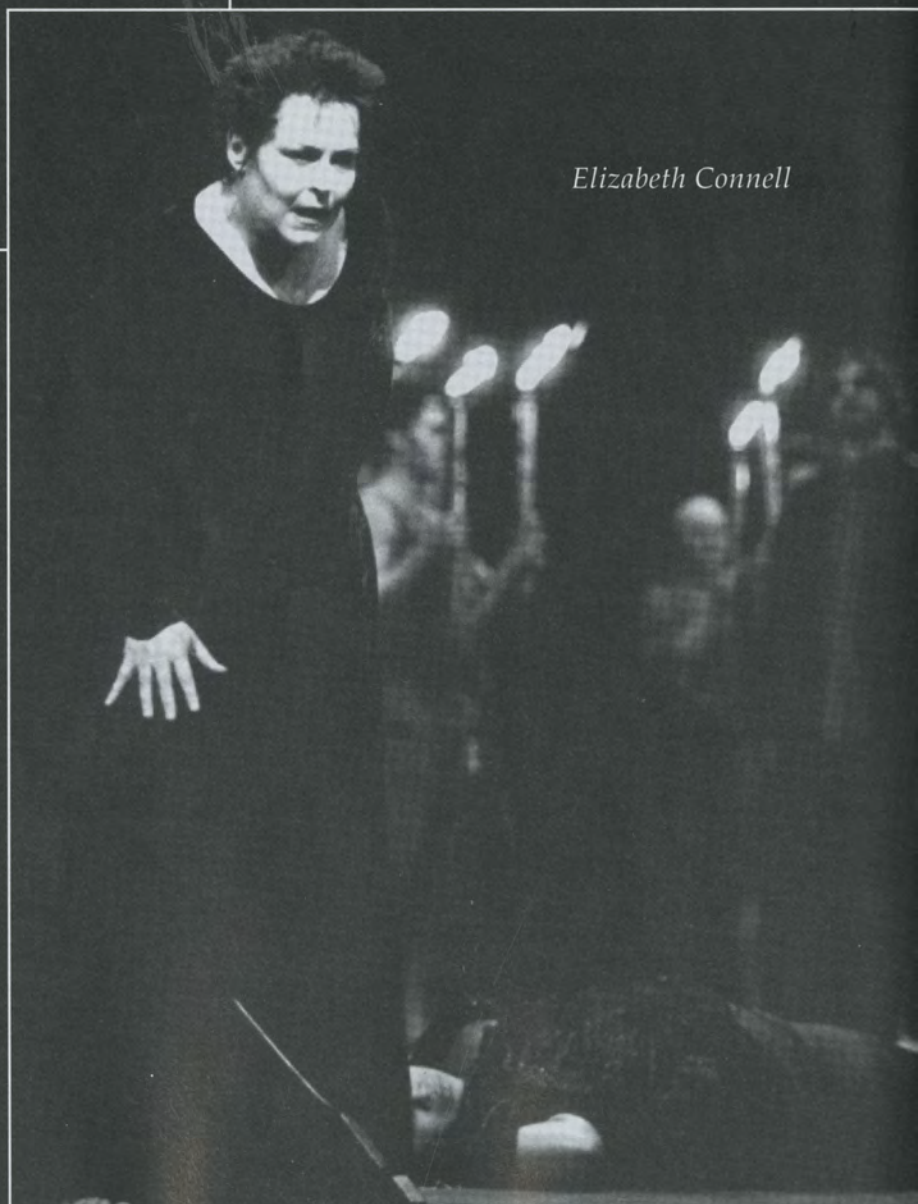
Elizabeth Connell



Alan Held



Alan Held, John Relyea



Elizabeth Connell



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

PRE-PERFORMANCE LECTURES

The popular pre-performance lectures will take place in the War Memorial Opera house one hour prior to curtain time and will last approximately one-half hour. Lectures feature noted scholars and artists and are presented free of charge to patrons with tickets to the corresponding performance. The lecture schedule is as follows:

Rigoletto—Oct. 1, 7; Dec. 4, 6

Der Fliegende Holländer—Oct. 8, 12, 17, 21, 25

Le Nozze di Figaro—Oct. 14, 22, 24; Nov. 1; Jan. 9, 11, 14, 17

Elektra—Oct. 23, 31; Nov. 4, 8, 13

Guillaume Tell—Nov. 7, 12, 15, 18, 21, 24

Pelléas et Mélisande—Nov. 14, 20, 23; Dec. 3

Eugene Onegin—Nov. 22, 25, 28; Dec. 2, 5

Tosca—Jan. 10, 13, 16

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD — INSIGHTS

Renowned artists and personalities from the world of opera share their insights and experiences during informal interviews. Complimentary to Guild members. \$5.00 to non-Guild members. All Opera Guild Insights will be held from 6 to 7 p.m. in Herbst Theatre, Veterans Building, 401 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco.

October 20	<i>Guillaume Tell</i>
November 7	<i>Pelléas et Mélisande</i>
November 17	<i>Eugene Onegin</i>

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD — PREVIEWS

Opera Guild Previews are scheduled in communities throughout the greater Bay Area by local Guild chapters (East Bay, Marin, San Francisco, Sonoma, South Peninsula and the San Jose Opera Guild). Previews are given by renowned musicologists who may feature recordings, slides and/or handouts to familiarize the audience with an opera from the current season.

TOPIC	SPEAKER
<i>Der Fliegende Holländer</i>	Simon Williams
<i>Elektra</i>	D.B. Greene
<i>Guillaume Tell</i>	Robert Glick
<i>Pelléas et Mélisande</i>	David A. Grayson
<i>Eugene Onegin</i>	Richard Taruskin

EAST BAY CHAPTER—SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD

Lectures held at 8:00 p.m., preceded by complimentary refreshments. Orinda Community Church, 10 Irwin Way, Orinda. Admission: \$8.50; Series: \$28.00. Reservations required. For reservations or information call, Annette Clute (510) 527-1846 or Silvia Lin (510) 838-9255.

Oct 15	<i>Elektra</i>
Nov 5	<i>Pelléas et Mélisande</i>
Nov 19	<i>Eugene Onegin</i>

MARIN CHAPTER—SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD

Lectures held at 8:00 p.m., preceded by complimentary refreshments. Mt. Tamalpais United Methodist Church, 410 Sycamore Avenue, Mill Valley. Admission: \$7.00 - adults, \$6.00 - students and seniors. Series: \$35.00 - adults, \$30.00 - students and seniors. For information call, Verna Parino (415) 388-6789.

Oct 13	<i>Elektra</i>
Oct 27	<i>Guillaume Tell</i>
Nov 3	<i>Pelléas et Mélisande</i>
Nov 17	<i>Eugene Onegin</i>

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD

Lectures held at 12:00 noon, Koret Auditorium, Lower Level, New Main Library, 100 Larkin Street, San Francisco. Admission: Free. For information call, David Clover (510) 652-3799.

Oct 15	<i>Elektra</i>
Oct 29	<i>Guillaume Tell</i>
Nov 5	<i>Pelléas et Mélisande</i>
Nov 19	<i>Eugene Onegin</i>

SAN JOSE OPERA GUILD

Lectures held at 10:00 a.m. (*) Followed by no-host luncheon (\$7.00). Los Gatos History Club, 123 Los Gatos Blvd., Los Gatos. Admission: \$7.00 (Free to San Jose Opera Guild members). For information call, Joy Hulme (408) 741-1331 or Margaret Boddy, (408) 354-7525.

Oct 16	<i>Elektra*</i>
Oct 30	<i>Guillaume Tell</i>
Nov 6	<i>Pelléas et Mélisande</i>
Nov 20	<i>Eugene Onegin*</i>

SONOMA CHAPTER—SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD

Held at various locations and times. For information call, Lotte Klugman (707) 938-2432 or Marsha Vas Dupre (707) 528-7146. Admission: \$8.00; Series: \$40.00 - Sonoma Chapter members, \$48.00 - non-members.

Oct 13	<i>Elektra</i>
Oct 29	<i>Guillaume Tell</i>
Nov 3	<i>Pelléas et Mélisande</i>
Nov 21	<i>Eugene Onegin</i>

SOUTH PENINSULA CHAPTER—SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD

Lectures held at 8:00 p.m., at Palo Alto Senior Center, 450 Bryant Street, Palo Alto. Admission: \$6.00 - adults, \$5.00 - students; Series: \$30.00 - adults, \$15.00 students. For information call, Ramona Rockway (415) 941-3890.

Oct 14	<i>Elektra</i>
Oct 28	<i>Guillaume Tell</i>
Nov 4	<i>Pelléas et Mélisande</i>
Nov 18	<i>Eugene Onegin</i>

The following is an additional list of lectures and previews that are available to the public.

MERRITT COLLEGE OPERA LECTURE SERIES

Held on Tuesday evenings in Room A-117, 7 to 10 p.m., Introduction to Opera (Music 13A) is based on the operas of the 1997-98 season. The College is at 12500 Campus Drive (off Redwood Road in the Oakland hills). Information: (510) 436-2430

ROBERT GOODHUE'S OPERA PREVIEWS

Held at the Holiday Inn, 480 Sutter St., San Francisco, mostly Monday evenings, 6:00-8:00 p.m. Information: (415) 956-1271

SAN FRANCISCO CITY COLLEGE PREVIEWS

A music course of opera previews will deal with all operas of the 1997-98 season. Taught by Marvin Tartak on Wednesday afternoons from 2 to 5 p.m., it takes place at the College, 50 Phelan Ave., Creative Arts Building, Room A-135 in San Francisco. Classes began August 20 and continue for 17 weeks. Information: (415) 239-3641

SAN FRANCISCO CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC EXTENSION DIVISION

Oct. 6 - Nov. 10, 7:30-9:30 p.m.
The Operas of Richard Strauss: Series of six Monday classes, held by Paul Thomason. San Francisco Conservatory of Music, 1201 Ortega St., San Francisco. Information: (415) 759-3429

OPERA EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL PREVIEW SERIES

Given by Michael Barclay, director of OEI. Lectures start at 7:30 p.m. at 400 Yale Ave (at Vassar) in the Kensington part of the Berkeley hills. Series began on Sept. 8; lectures are \$15 at the door. Information: (510) 526-5244

Oct. 6	<i>Pelléas et Mélisande</i>
Oct. 13	<i>Eugene Onegin</i>

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A Family Po

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By PAUL THOMASON

One of the most persistent ideas of Western civilization is also one that our American society finds uncomfortable: the idea that Fate can compel children to be punished for the mistakes of their parents and grandparents. We give lip service to the idea that everyone has an equal chance to make or break themselves, that each person is the master of his or her own destiny. ("I am the captain of my soul," as the poet wrote.) Our country was founded on the idea that each person was responsible for himself, that royalty, aristocracy, "good family" would not carry weight in this nation. Each person should begin life with a fresh slate, on which he was free to write as he wished.

Yet, at the same time, nothing quite stirs our hearts like a good multi-generational saga in which a noble family seems to be scorned by Fate, struggling under a curse which afflicts its members from generation to generation. Witness the fascination the public has (and has had) with the Kennedy family. Such tales have enthralled societies since before the birth of writing. In the fourth book of the Bible's Old Testament, written by the prophet Moses, we are told that God visits "the iniquity of the fathers

upon the children unto the third and fourth generation" (Numbers 14: 18).

The most ancient Greek myths often revolved around a scenario of a high-born man who falls from grace and thereby condemns his family to suffer woefully "unto the third and fourth generation." In fact, the characters who make up the riveting drama of Richard

Strauss's *Elektra* are, themselves, the third and fourth generation of a much larger family saga, one which was told in various forms by the Greek playwrights Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, and which also played a part in both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* of Homer. In fact, the story has such resonance and power even today, that twentieth-century playwrights Jean-Paul Sartre and Eugene O'Neill have retold it in our times.

The story began—as so many Greek myths do—with a son of the great god Zeus. The great-great grandfather of Elektra and her siblings was Tantalus, King of Lydia and the most honored of all the mortal sons of Zeus. Tantalus alone of all mortals was allowed to eat at the table of the gods, to taste the food which was kept from other humans. For some reason Tantalus killed his only son, Pelops, boiled him in a great cauldron, and then served him to the gods whom Tantalus had invited to dine with him. Why this atrocious act was committed has never been explained. Perhaps it was the ancient Greeks' way of acknowledging that sometimes even the most terrible deeds seem to have no explanation.

The gods, however, swiftly meted out a fitting punishment. Tantalus was condemned to Hades where he was forced to stand in a pool of cool, clear water underneath fruit

trees. But when Tantalus would stoop to drink the water, it would recede from him, only to rise again when he stood. Each time Tantalus reached for the ripe fruit above him, wind would blow the fruit beyond his grasp. For eternity, a thirsty, hungry Tantalus would be tormented by water and food always present, but always just out of reach.

The gods also restored to life Tantalus's son, Pelops. Unwittingly, the goddess Demeter had eaten a bit of the dish Tantalus had served, so the revived Pelops's shoulder was missing and was replaced by the gods with one made of ivory. Perhaps feeling Pelops had suffered enough, the gods allowed him—alone among Tantalus's descendants—to live happily. Using some horses given to him by Poseidon, Pelops even won the hand of the Princess Hippodamia of Arcadia in marriage by beating her father's horses in a chariot race.

However, Pelops's sister, Niobe, was condemned to see her happy, successful life destroyed by her own pride. She married Amphion, the King of Thebes and had seven sons and seven daughters (some versions say six and six), all of whom were comely, talented, and brave. But one day Niobe became filled with hubris, the overweening pride that had been her father's downfall, and she ordered the people of Thebes to worship her, rather than Leto, the mother of the gods Apollo and Artemis.

On Olympus, the gods heard Niobe's blasphemy. Apollo and Artemis flew to Thebes and shot dead all fourteen of Niobe's children while she watched. So great was her grief that she was changed into a stone statue that wept tears night and day.

Though Pelops's life was blessed, two of his sons, Atreus (the grandfather of Elektra and her siblings) and Thyestes inherited the evil curse of their grandfather Tantalus in full measure. According to some stories, Pelops loved his illegitimate son Chrysippus the best, which made his wife, Hippodamia, fear for her own children, including

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Portrait: House of Atreus

Atreus and Thyestes. She had Chrysippus killed and when Atreus and Thyestes were implicated in the crime, they fled to Mycenae where Thyestes fell in love with Atreus's wife, Aerope, and seduced her.

Atreus discovered what his brother had done, and in a move reminiscent of his grandfather, he secretly killed his brother's sons, had them boiled, and then invited Thyestes to dinner and served him his own sons. Unlike the gods, when faced with Tantalus's meal, Thyestes ate the food set before him. When he realized what he had done, a horrified Thyestes cursed both Atreus and Atreus's two sons, Agamemnon and Menelaus, who fled into exile.

(It is interesting that Richard Strauss wrote operas which have to do with both of these sons. Though Agamemnon is dead by the time *Elektra* takes place, the opera begins with four powerful chords in the orchestra symbolizing Agamemnon, and his spirit permeates the entire work. Agamemnon's brother, Menelaus, is a character—the principal tenor, in fact—in Strauss's later, and rarely performed opera, *Die Ägyptische Helena*.)

Today we remember Menelaus as the man who married Helen, the most beautiful woman in the world, the woman whose seduction and kidnapping by Paris caused the Trojan War. Hers was "the face that launched a thousand ships." And it was for her that Richard Strauss wrote one of his most voluptuous, erotic arias, "Zweite Brautnacht!" ("Second Bridal Night") which begins Act II of *Die Ägyptische Helena*. Once Helen had been returned to Menelaus, following the ten-year Trojan War, he, like his uncle Pelops, lived a rather fruitful, contented life—a life that could hardly be more different from the life that Fate dealt his brother, Agamemnon.

While in exile, Agamemnon had won Clytemnestra, the daughter of the King of Sparta, by violent means. It was Agamemnon, not Menelaus—Helen's husband—who led the Greek forces against Troy to rescue Helen. The huge Greek war fleet assembled at Aulis but could not sail against

Troy because of the wind. (Some stories say there was no wind, other versions say the wind was against them.) Agamemnon was told the goddess Artemis could only be appeased if he sacrificed his oldest daughter, Iphigenia, which he did.

Clytemnestra had little love for her husband Agamemnon even before he sacrificed their daughter's life. And during the ten years he was away at war, as constant reports of his unfaithfulness to her trickled back home, she became a lover of Aegisthus, Agamemnon's cousin and arch-rival. Aegisthus had been born to Agamemnon's uncle, Thyestes, after the terrible banquet at which Atreus served Thyestes his sons. Together, the lovers plotted to kill Agamemnon on his return from the Trojan War and to rule in his place.

When Agamemnon returned victorious from war—his ship alone of the Greek forces surviving a terrible storm—he brought with him his most recent mistress, Cassandra, daughter of the King of Troy. Clytemnestra publicly welcomed her husband, gave him a banquet, then slaughtered him with an axe. Cassandra was murdered as well, and Clytemnestra and Aegisthus seized the throne. In Clytemnestra's eyes, this horrible deed was not murder, but justifiable vengeance; she had killed the man who had murdered his own daughter.

Depending on which version of the story one reads, Clytemnestra and Agamemnon had either three or four children: the sacrificed Iphigenia, the son Orestes who was sent into exile, the daughter Electra (so familiar from Strauss's opera) and, according to Sophocles, a third



Opposite: Sophocles (496-406 B.C.) as portrayed in a contemporary bust. Capitoline Museum, Rome.

Above: Orestes slaying Aegisthus. Detail from a ceramic vase dating from the 5th century B.C.

Below: Rosalind Russell as Lavinia/Electra and Leo Genn as Adam Brant/Aegisthus in RKO's 1947 film of O'Neill's *Mourning Becomes Electra*. Others in the cast were: Michael Redgrave, (Oren/Orestes), Raymond Massey (Ezra/Agamemnon), Katina Paxinou (Christine/Clytemnestra) and Kirk Douglas (Lavinia's suitor; no equivalent in the opera).





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The murder of Agamemnon as imagined in the 1982 UNITEL film of the opera directed by Götz Friedrich.

daughter named Chrysothemis (also familiar from Strauss's setting of the tale).

When Orestes grew to manhood, he went to the Delphic oracle and was told he *must* avenge his father's murder. Not to do so would mean Orestes would be condemned to live forever as an outcast and a leper. As Edith Hamilton succinctly puts it in *Mythology*: "A most sacred obligation was bound up with a most atrocious crime. He who wanted to do only right was so placed that he must choose between two hideous wrongs. He must be a traitor to his father or he must be the murderer of his mother."

Knowing that whatever he did would be a sin against the gods in some way, Orestes returned home to avenge his father's death. In disguise, he met Electra (some versions poetically have the siblings meet at their father's grave), and, claiming to have news of Orestes's death, was admitted to the palace. When Orestes killed Aegisthus, Clytemnestra suddenly recognized her son and pleaded for her life. In the Aeschylus setting of the story she cried, "Wait, son, wait. My baby, soften towards this bosom where so many times you went to sleep, with little gums fumbling at the milk which sweetly made you grow."

When Orestes would not yield, Clytemnestra lamented, "Your heart, it seems, my son, is set on murdering a mother."

"You are the one, not I, who does the murdering," Orestes replied.

"Watch, then, for a mother's curse: it will hound you down."

"Or a father's if I let this go," Orestes said.

After the killing of Clytemnestra, Orestes must pay the price for his terrible deed, even though his actions were sanctioned by the gods and were justified—even dictated—by the laws of both gods and man. His punishment is to be hounded by the Furies, hideous spirits who torment him continuously. Consumed by guilt, and pursued by the Furies, Orestes flees from his home.

Once again, different versions of the story tell a slightly different tale. But all agree that Orestes is forced to endure a period of wandering in exile where he nearly loses his mind because of the unrelenting persecution by the Furies. Eventually the gods decided Orestes had suffered enough. He had never blamed the gods for his actions or the misery which had resulted from those actions, even though he had followed the gods' advice. Indeed, Orestes's suffering was caused by his freely admitting his own guilt.

The goddess Athena cajoled the Furies into abandoning their persecution of Orestes, and the once-vengeful spirits are transformed from "Furies" into "Eumenides," or benevolent spirits.

One version of the tale says that Orestes and his friend Pylades were told by the Delphic oracle they must sail to the land of the Taurians and take the image of Artemis from her temple and return it to Greece. The

two men were seized by the Taurians and taken to the temple to be sacrificed, but the chief priestess revealed herself to be none other than Iphigenia, Orestes's sister, believed to have been sacrificed by her father Agamemnon years earlier. Instead, the goddess Artemis had substituted a deer for Iphigenia and whisked her off to Tauris. Iphigenia, Orestes, and Pylades escape the Taurians and return to Greece where Iphigenia officiates at the marriage of Pylades and Electra.

This multi-generational saga of astounding crimes, guilt, fate, and eventual atonement and release has inspired numerous retellings through the centuries. In addition to two operas by Strauss, Gluck (*Iphigénie en Tauride* and *Iphigénie en Aulide*), Berlioz (*Les Troyens*), and Tippett (*King Priam*) have all dealt with aspects of the tale in one way or another.

Two 20th-century playwrights have used the story of the House of Atreus as the basis for masterpieces of their own. Eugene O'Neill's trilogy *Mourning Becomes Electra* (which, itself, was the basis of composer Marvin David Levy's 1967 opera of the same name) places the action in New England during 1865-1866. Ezra Mannon (Agamemnon), his wife Christine (Clytemnestra), her lover Adam Brant (Aegisthus), Lavinia (Electra) and Orin Mannon (Orestes) replay the same emotional and psychological situations as their ancient Greek counterparts—with some post-Freudian coloration.

But perhaps it is Jean-Paul Sartre's first play, *The Flies* (*Les Mouches*) which most helps modern audiences immediately come to grips with Orestes as a very contemporary hero. First produced in Paris during the Nazi occupation, *The Flies* tells the story of an initially effete, intellectual Orestes returning to his home town from exile. But during the course of the play he realizes, "I was like a man who's lost his shadow. And there was nothing left in heaven, no right or wrong, nor anyone to give me orders . . . I am doomed to have no other law but mine . . . For I am a man, and every man must find his own way . . . Human life begins on the far side of despair."

By accepting full responsibility for what he must do, solely because he knows, within himself, it is his task, Sartre's Orestes, like his namesake of centuries before, finds genuine inner freedom. And isn't the personal quest for that inner freedom the ultimate, and most satisfactory, task of every human being? ♦

ELEKTRA (continued from p. 12)

After doing so, he was pursued by the Furies and driven mad until he was saved by Apollo.)

The news of Orest's death, we discover, is a ruse, but Elektra's first reaction is to tell Chrysothemis that now the two of them must commit the murders. Chrysothemis is terrified and refuses. To a waltz rhythm (there are nearly as many waltzes in *Elektra* as there are in *Der Rosenkavalier*!) Elektra praises her sister's strength. "With my sad withered arms I embrace your body . . . I will sink my roots into you and infuse my will into your blood . . . Far more than a sister am I to you from this day forth." But all Chrysothemis wants is to work out a way of escape. The scene ends with her fleeing into the palace. Elektra knows she must act alone. She begins to dig for the axe and becomes aware of a man watching her. He tells her that he and another man (his tutor) have come to tell Klytemnestra the story of the death of Orest. When he sees the effect this has on Elektra, he inquires who she is. He deduces she must be "of the same blood as the two who died, Agamemnon and Orest." When she says she is Elektra, he reveals that Orest is not dead. "Then who are you?" she asks. At this moment four servants enter the courtyard and kneel before him. To a tremendous chord from the whole huge orchestra, Elektra cries out "Orest!"

The most lyrical music in the opera follows, and it was here that Strauss asked Hofmannsthal for eight more lines of text to sustain the mood. In cutting the play for his libretto, Strauss reduced to one reference (quoted early in this article) Hofmannsthal's emphasis on Elektra's confession that her desire for revenge has displaced her sexuality in favor of hatred. Her happiness at the thought of Orest "doing the deed"—a waltz again—is crowned when Orest and his tutor are invited into the palace to deliver their message. Klytemnestra's dying screams are heard as Aegisth returns from the fields. Elektra greets him and, taunting him, leads him toward the palace by torchlight to a waltz which is a very obvious anticipation of *Der Rosenkavalier*. As he screams "Can no one hear me?" from the palace window while being killed, Elektra replies "Agamemnon can hear you!" Chrysothemis runs from the palace describing the scene of carnage. Voices from within are calling "Orest!" "Can you not hear it?" Chrysothemis asks and Elektra replies "Can I not hear it? Not hear the music? It comes from me." From this point, the opera goes to its conclusion in a great

(continued on page 41)



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ELEKTRA (continued from p. 37)

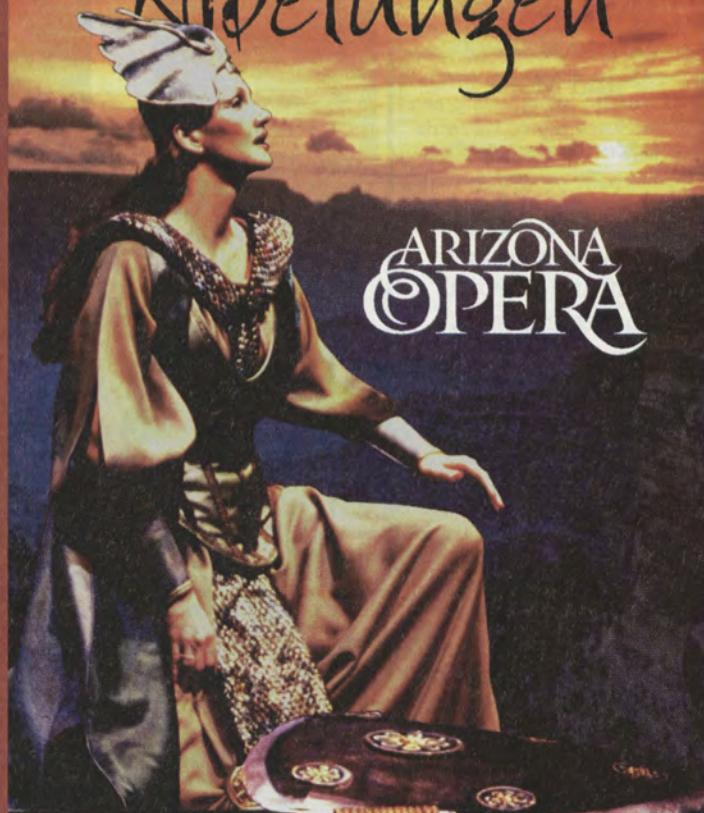
waltz-sequence as Elektra revels in her triumph. "I must lead the dance." It is her dance of death. At this point Strauss asked Hofmannsthal for some extra lines for a duet between the sisters as they exult together. But apart from Chrysothemis's cries of "Orest" as she hammers on the palace door, the orchestra has the last word for 39 measures, something Strauss did not emulate until *Daphne* thirty years later.

Today we no longer react to the music of this great opera with the expressions of horror that greeted it in 1909—"barbaric dissonance," "the nadir of ugliness," etc. But its power to grip us and rivet us to our seats with appalled fascination is undiminished. And we recognize the now familiar Strauss elements: three superb parts for women's voices, a fine baritone role and, above all, an orchestral score of astonishing virtuosity and brilliance. Much of the sound may be blood and iron, but there are also scherzo-like episodes when the texture becomes like chamber music—"fairy music by Mendelssohn," as Strauss said. The orchestra is the largest Strauss used in an opera; in these performances, 47 strings are balanced by over 40 woodwind and brass which include heckelphone, E-flat clarinet, two basset horns, eight horns (four doubling Wagner tubas), bass trumpet and contrabass trombone. The violins and violas are each divided into three sections, but six violas are asked to double on violin. Strings and horns are the prominent sound, but listen for the marvelous use of the Wagner tubas when Klytemnestra makes her entrance—they suggest a wounded animal. The whole of this article could have been devoted to the inspired scoring in this scene alone.

In a work lasting less than two hours, it is deplorable that the habit of making cuts in certain scenes has become a tradition. Strauss disapproved. He calculated the effects in *Elektra* exactly, and the structure is harmed by cuts. [None are made in these performances.] "Unity of structure," is what had attracted him to the play. He thought the opera showed an advance on *Salome* comparable with Wagner's progression to *Lohengrin* from *Tannhäuser*. Not all will agree, but in any case he told Hofmannsthal: "I have had enough of tragedy. Let's write a Mozart Opera." And, hey, presto, the libretto of *Der Rosenkavalier* began to evolve. But if we listen to *Elektra* carefully, we can hear that Strauss did not have to travel very far to enter the equally mythical world of mid-18th-century Vienna under the Empress Maria Theresia. Both operas, if the truth be told, belong to the Vienna of 1900. ♦

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- Opera News, October 1996

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ARTIST PROFILES



ELIZABETH CONNELL made her 1987 San Francisco Opera debut as Leonore in *Fidelio* and has since returned to the Company to sing her first Odabella in *Attila* (1991) as well as Ortrud in *Lohengrin* (1996). A leading interpreter of the dramatic soprano roles of Beethoven, Strauss and Wagner, she made her debut in 1972 at the Wexford Festival as Varvara in *Katya Kabanova*. She then sang with the Australian and English National Operas before making her Covent Garden debut with *I Lombardi*. In 1980 she made her Bayreuth debut as Ortrud

and has since taken part in a television recording of this production. Her performances have won her world-wide acclaim with a nomination for the Australian Drama Critics' Award for *Fidelio* and a similar success as Senta in *Der Fliegende Holländer* in Japan with Seiji Ozawa. Last season's engagements included a new production of *Tristan und Isolde* at the English National Opera; *Nabucco* in Melbourne, Sydney, Verona, and São Paulo; *Die Walküre* (Brünnhilde) in Santiago, Chile; and *Peter Grimes* (Ellen Orford) with the Australian Opera. Among her most recent appearances are *Fidelio* at the Berlin State Opera, *Fidelio*, *Der Fliegende Holländer*, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, and *Lohengrin* at the Vienna State Opera, *Lohengrin* at the Paris Bastille, and Leonora in Verdi's *Oberto* for the Royal Opera at Covent Garden. Recent concert performances have included Beethoven's Ninth Symphony led by Claudio Abbado in London, the *Missa Solemnis* under Carlo Maria Giulini in Florence, Mahler's Eighth Symphony (Maazel, Sinopoli, Boulez), and the Verdi Requiem at both the Vienna Musikverein and in London's St. Paul's Cathedral. She has also given recitals in London, Milan, Geneva, Johannesburg, and Sydney. Her recordings include *Guillaume Tell*, *Poliuto*, *Lohengrin*, *I Due Foscari*, Schreker's *Die Gezeichneten*, Verdi's Requiem, Mahler's Eighth Symphony, Mendelssohn's Second Symphony, Schoenberg's *Gurrelieder*, and a disc of Schubert lieder.



FRANCES GINZER is fast becoming one of Europe's most sought-after sopranos in the dramatic repertoire since her first performance of the title role of *Turandot* in 1993. Since then the young artist has added the roles of Senta in *Der Fliegende Holländer*, the title roles of *Tosca* and *La Gioconda*, as well as Elisabeth in *Tannhäuser* to her expanding repertoire. A native of Calgary, Alberta, Miss Ginzer achieved her earliest success in the role of Antonia in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* with the Canadian Opera. She has been a guest soloist at such major European

opera centers as Hamburg, Zurich, Cologne, Munich, Stuttgart, Bonn, Frankfurt, and London. She began her 1995-96 season as Senta with the Washington Concert Opera, and returned to the Deutsche Oper am Rhein to sing her first Brünnhilde in *Siegfried*, Elisabeth, Tosca, Turandot, and Senta. In the 1996-97 season she made her Metropolitan Opera debut in *Rusalka*, *Die Walküre* and *Götterdämmerung*, and also sang Leonore in *Fidelio* (role debut) in Baltimore, Bern, and Düsseldorf. This summer, she spent her third season at the Bayreuth Festival singing Helmwig in *Die Walküre* and the Third Norn in *Götterdämmerung*. Additional engagements during the current season include the opening of the new National Theatre in Tokyo as Elsa; Senta with Milwaukee's Florentine Opera; *Fidelio* in Düsseldorf; and *Turandot* with the Dallas Opera. In addition to her opera appearances, the soprano has performed as soloist with the Toronto Symphony, Ottawa's National Arts Centre Orchestra, the Edmonton Philharmonic, and the Calgary Philharmonic. She has also recorded for EMI and London/Decca Records. After receiving her bachelor of music degree from the University of Calgary, Miss Ginzer earned her master of music degree from North Texas State University. She has studied with Evelyn Dalberg since 1991.



INGA NIELSEN, a native of Denmark, made her first recording at the age of nine singing Danish folk songs and Christmas carols. After finishing her studies in Vienna, Stuttgart and Budapest, the soprano began her career in the opera houses of Germany and Switzerland, later becoming a member of the Frankfurt Opera. She is now a regular guest performer at the Vienna State Opera, Milan's La Scala, Covent Garden in London, as well as at the houses of Munich, Hamburg, Berlin, Paris, Zurich, New York, and Buenos Aires. Miss Nielsen has also per-

formed at the festivals of Bayreuth, Salzburg, Vienna, Munich, Aix-en-Provence, Edinburgh, Holland, Athens, and New York's Mostly Mozart Festival. Career highlights include new productions of *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (Konstanze) at the Salzburg Festival and at Covent Garden under the baton of Georg Solti (both presentations have been televised internationally and are available on video), as well as the Marschallin in *Der Rosenkavalier* at Copenhagen's Royal Opera. With a new staging of *Salome* led by Jiri Kout in Leipzig in 1994, she began a new direction into the dramatic repertoire. Her first Chrysothemis in *Elektra* was sung in Japan under the baton of Giuseppe Sinopoli, and was followed by performances of the role in Munich, Hamburg, Dresden, Amsterdam, and Paris. Most recently, she has scored successes as Salome in Santa Fe, Ursula in *Mathis der Maler* at Covent Garden, and in the title role of *Tosca* in Copenhagen. Upcoming engagements include three role debuts: the Empress in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* in Dresden, Elsa in *Lohengrin* in Hamburg, and Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth* in Nice. In 1992, Miss Nielsen was honored by the Queen of Denmark with the title of "Ridderkorset," equivalent of the English "Dame."



American dramatic mezzo-soprano **JANE HENSCHEL** commands a repertoire that encompasses roles such as Amneris, Eboli, Ortrud, Erda, Brangäne, Herodias, Carmen, Azucena, Ulrica, Dame Quickly, Venus, Klytemnestra and Fricka. The Los Angeles native completed her studies at the University of Southern California, then moved to Europe and soon started appearing with most major German opera companies. In 1992, she made her debut at the Netherlands Opera as the Nurse in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, a role she

repeated in her triumphant debut at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, under the baton of Bernard Haitink. She returned to Covent Garden for Fricka in *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*, Ulrica in *Un Ballo in Maschera*, and, most recently, her first Klytemnestra in *Elektra*. Other recent successes include *Oberto* and *The Rake's Progress* at the Glyndebourne Festival, Herodias in *Salome* and Cassandre in *Les Troyens* at Milan's La Scala, *Die Frau ohne Schatten* in Munich, *Bluebeard's Castle* in Stockholm, Waltraute in *Götterdämmerung* at Covent Garden, Brangäne in *Tristan und Isolde* at the Orange Festival and the Los Angeles Music Center Opera, and the title role of Goldmark's *Königin von Saba* at the Concertgebouw, Amsterdam. The current season includes Brangäne for the Paris Opera, *The Turn of the Screw* at Covent Garden, *Dialogues of the Carmelites* at Netherlands Opera and her first *Erwartung* for the New Zealand Festival. Also included this season are Herodias and Klytemnestra for the Bavarian State Opera, Munich, Geneviève in *Pelléas et Mélisande* under Seiji Ozawa in Japan, and a new production of *Die Frau ohne Schatten* for the Deutsche Oper, Berlin. No stranger to the concert hall, Miss Henschel has been heard with most of the major orchestras and conductors of Europe. Her recordings include Mahler's 8th Symphony, Krása's *Verlobung im Traum*, and Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress*, the latter led by Seiji Ozawa.

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Soprano **CLAUDIA WAITE** made her 1994 San Francisco Opera debut in *Macbeth* and sang Leonora in three performances of *Il Trovatore*, replacing an indisposed colleague. The 1993-94 Adler Fellow returned the following season to portray Helmwig in *Die Walküre* and the Foreign

Princess in performances of *Rusalka*. A member of the 1993 Merola Opera Program, the young artist's credits for the Opera Center included two tours of the Pacific islands of Guam, Saipan, and Pohnpei, Merola Opera and Western Opera Theater performances as Rosalinda in *Die Fledermaus*, and Hecuba in the North American premiere of Tippett's *King Priam* as part of the Opera Center's Showcase Series. She has also appeared with the San Francisco Symphony, S.F. Gay Men's Chorus, and San Mateo Masterworks Chorale. Miss Waite most recently performed at Des Moines Metro Opera as Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*, as soloist in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with the Tulsa Philharmonic, and in recital in Boston. Upcoming engagements include Beethoven's Ninth led by Seiji Ozawa in Japan (including an appearance at the Opening Ceremony of the 1998 Winter Olympics), the title role of Rossini's *Elisabetta, Regina d'Inghilterra* with Opera Northeast, and Fata Morgana in *L'Amour des Trois Oranges* with Opéra de Lyon as part of Kent Nagano's farewell season as music director of that company. A California native, Miss Waite received her bachelor of music education degree from Angelo State University in Texas and a master of music degree from Florida State University. She was the first place winner in the professional division of the 1996 MacAllister Awards.

ARTIST PROFILES



Mezzo-soprano **JILL GROVE** made her Company bow last season in *Harvey Milk*, appearing in the roles of Anne Cronenberg and a Dyke, parts which she created for the opera's world premiere in Houston. A three-year member of the Houston Grand Opera Studio, she made her debut with the parent company during the 1993 season in *Elektra*, returning to HGO for *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *La Traviata*, *Rigoletto*, *Harvey Milk*, and *La Cenerentola*, a production which was televised and available on video. She created the mezzo roles for Houston's world premiere of Robert Moran's *The Dracula Diary*, which was recorded and is available on CD. At the Opera Theatre of St. Louis, she was seen in the world premiere of *The Vanishing Bridegroom* and as Dorothee in *Cendrillon*. As a member of the 1995 Merola Opera Program, she appeared in the title role of *La Périchole* and as Marcellina in *Le Nozze di Figaro*. Additional roles in her repertoire include Baba the Turk in *The Rake's Progress*, Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly*, and Augusta Tabor in *The Ballad of Baby Doe*. A native of Texas, Miss Grove received her bachelor's degree from Stephen F. Austin State University and attended the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston as well as Santa Barbara's Music Academy of the West. Honored with a 1995 Richard F. Gold Career Grant, she was also a 1996 National Finalist in the Metropolitan Opera Council Auditions and was the recipient of a 1996 Richard Tucker Study Grant.

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ZHENG CAO recently completed a two-year Adler Fellowship with San Francisco Opera. The mezzo made her Company debut when she stepped in for an ailing colleague to sing two performances as Siebel in the 1995 production of *Faust*. She also performed in stagings of *Die Walküre* (Grimgerde), *Rusalka* (Kitchen Boy) and the student matinee performances of *La Cenerentola* (Tisbe) during the Company's 1995 Fall Season. Earlier this year she was featured in *Salome* and most recently received critical acclaim as Suzuki in the Company's new production of *Madama Butterfly*. Opera Center credits include Sonia in the Showcase '96 production of *The Aspern Papers*; Mahler's *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* as part of the Schwabacher Debut Recital series (a work she also performed with the San Francisco Ballet); and Dorabella in the 1994 Merola Opera Program's staging of *Così fan tutte*. Engagements elsewhere include *Butterfly*'s Suzuki for the Opéra de Lyon and New York City Opera, Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro* at the European Opera Center in Ghent, and her recent debut with Los Angeles Opera as Penelope in *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria* and Dimitri in *Fedora*. On the concert stage she has performed as soloist in Bach's *Magnificat*, Duruflé's *Requiem*, Handel's *Messiah*, and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, in addition to the *Requiem* and *Coronation Mass* by Mozart. The Shanghai native holds a bachelor's degree from the Shanghai Conservatory of Music and a master's degree from the Curtis Institute of Music. Among her future engagements are *Le Nozze di Figaro* for the Company, *Madama Butterfly* for San Diego Opera and the Grand Théâtre de Genève, and *Don Giovanni* (Zerlina) in Los Angeles, in addition to participation as one of the soloists in the Opening Ceremony of the 1998 Winter Olympics in Japan.

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ELIZABETH BISHOP was recently applauded as Suzuki in the Company's new staging of *Madama Butterfly*. A 1994-95 Adler Fellow, the mezzo-soprano was featured in four operas of San Francisco Opera's 1994 Fall Season, which included the role of Emilie in the world premiere production of *The Dangerous Liaisons*. In 1995, she was seen on the War Memorial Opera House stage as Flora in *La Traviata*, Tisbe in *La Cenerentola*, Siegrune in *Die Walküre*, and as Suzuki. During the Company's 1996-97 season, she portrayed Mama in *Harvey Milk* and Antonia's Mother in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*. She has numerous credits for the Opera Center, among them the title role of Handel's *Ezio* ('97 Showcase), Helen in Tippet's *King Priam* ('94 Showcase), Meg Page in *Falstaff* ('93 Merola Opera Program), and Prince Orlofsky in Western Opera Theater's national tour of *Die Fledermaus*. Elsewhere, she has appeared in *The Ghosts of Versailles* at the Metropolitan Opera after having made her Met debut in the 1993 production of *Death in Venice*. Additional engagements include *La Traviata* with the Washington Opera, *Ernani* with the Opera Orchestra of New York, and *Carousel* with Virginia Opera. Among the artist's current and future plans are the Marquise de Merteuil in *The Dangerous Liaisons* for the Washington Opera, Suzuki with Opera Memphis, and Ma Moss in Copland's *The Tender Land* with Virginia Opera. In addition to being a featured soloist in the San Francisco Symphony Pops Concerts from 1992-95, Miss Bishop has performed with other prominent orchestras singing repertoire that includes Handel's *Messiah*, Berlioz's *Les Nuits d'été*, Mahler's Second and Eighth Symphonies, as well as Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*. A native of Greenville, South Carolina, Miss Bishop earned a master of music degree from The Juilliard School and is the recipient of two grants from the Singers Development Foundation.

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TERRI MCKAY has had extensive experience in California with Opera San José and San Bernardino Opera. Originally a mezzo-soprano, she sang such roles as Marcellina in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Zita in *Gianni Schicchi*, Berta in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Mrs. Nolan in *The Medium*, and Elizabeth Proctor in *The Crucible*. Since switching to the soprano repertoire, she has performed the roles of Gertrude in *Hänsel und Gretel* and Santuzza in *Cavalleria Rusticana*, among others. She has also appeared in concert with the Utah Symphony, Boise Symphony, and the Israel Chamber Orchestra. A native of Olympia, Washington and currently a resident of Connecticut, Miss McKay received a bachelor of music degree from Brigham Young University.

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1997 Adler Fellow **CHRISTINA LAMBERTI**, a native of Phillipsburg, New Jersey, began her studies after winning a scholarship to the Westminster Choir College, where she appeared in productions of *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges*, *Dialogues of the Carmelites* and *Amahl and the Night Visitors*. The soprano joined the Aspen Opera Theater Center in 1989, singing the role of Mrs. Murrant in *Street Scene*. She then studied with Claudia Pinza at Duquesne University and attended Miss Pinza's EPCASO (Ezio Pinza Council for American Singers of Opera) program held in Oderzo, Italy. She has also been an apprentice at the Pittsburgh Opera Center and a student at Philadelphia's Academy of Vocal Arts where her roles included Mimi (*La Bohème*), Tatyana (*Eugene Onegin*), Donna Elvira (*Don Giovanni*), Fiordiligi (*Così fan tutte*), and Alice Ford (*Falstaff*). A 1996 Merola Opera Program participant, Miss Lamberti made her Opera Company of Philadelphia debut last season as the High Priestess in *Aida*.

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ARTIST PROFILES



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 a major success in the title role of *La Traviata* with the Festival Opera of Walnut Creek. 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 young 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 *Carmen* (Frasquita), *Die Fledermaus* (Rosalinda), *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, Miss 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 Los Angeles Opera debut as Musetta and sang the role of Micaëla in *Carmen* for Cincinnati Opera. Upcoming engagements include Tatyana in *Eugene Onegin* and the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro* for the Company, as well as Musetta in Seattle and Bilbao. Miss Foland, a native of Des Moines, received a master of music degree from the University of Northern Iowa.



In her second year as an Adler Fellow, **ALISON BUCHANAN** made her 1996 San Francisco Opera debut as Mimi in *La Bohème*, returning for the Company's 1996-97 season to appear in *Harvey Milk* and *Aida*. Originally from Bedford, England, she graduated from London's Guildhall School of Music where she won many prestigious awards. She was a winner of the Maggie Teyte Prize in 1991 and sang in recital at the Royal Opera House Crush Bar as a result of the award. Shortly thereafter, the young artist received a Wingate scholarship and a Countess

of Munster Award, enabling her to study at the Curtis Institute of Music, where she completed her master of music degree. Miss Buchanan was also a prize winner of the Mario Lanza Competition, Luciano Pavarotti Competition, Ferrier Competition, and was a finalist in this year's International Belvedere Competition. Her roles include the Countess (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), Rosalinda (*Die Fledermaus*), Helena (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), Madama Cortese (*Il Viaggio a Reims*), Fortuna (*L'Incoronazione di Poppea*), and Musetta (*La Bohème*). As a member of the 1995 Merola Opera Program, the soprano appeared in *La Périchole* and replaced an ailing colleague to sing the role of Mozart's Countess, subsequently repeating this part on Western Opera Theater's national tour of *Le Nozze di Figaro*. Opera Center credits also include a critically acclaimed Schwabacher Debut Recital, the role of Juliana in the '96 Showcase production of *The Aspern Papers*, and the part of the Mother in the Opera Guild's holiday presentation of *Hansel and Gretel*.



ALAN HELD, winner of the 1991 Birgit Nilsen Prize Competition, has made several important debuts and performed in some of the world's most prestigious opera houses in the past few seasons. In his 1992 debut season with San Francisco Opera, the bass-baritone sang three roles: Angelotti in *Tosca*, Rangoni in *Boris Godunov*, and Don Fernando in *Fidelio*. Since his 1989 debut at the Metropolitan Opera in *Billy Budd*, he has returned there to sing in *Rigoletto*, *Boris Godunov*, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, *Die Zauberflöte*, *Die Meistersinger*, *Tosca*, *Rigoletto*, *Götterdämmerung*, *Peter Grimes*, *Fidelio*, *Tannhäuser*, and *Das Rheingold*, among others.

Engagements during the 1995-96 season included a critically acclaimed Royal Opera at Covent Garden debut as Gunther in *Götterdämmerung*, Gunther and Donner in the *Ring* cycle at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Leporello in *Don Giovanni* at the Frankfurt Opera and in Chicago, and Pizarro in *Fidelio* in Rio de Janeiro, in addition to his debut at the Ravinia Festival as Mephistopheles in Schumann's *Faustszenen*. In the 1996-97 season, Held appeared in several roles at London's Royal Opera: Gunther in the *Ring* cycle, Colline in *La Bohème*, Orest in *Elektra*, and Cardinal Borromeo in a new production of Pfitzner's *Palestrina*, a production in which he also sang at Lincoln Center earlier this year. In addition, he made his debut at the Bavarian State Opera in Munich as Leporello, returned to the Met for their *Ring*, and made his Minnesota Orchestra debut as Abimelech in concert performances of *Samson et Dalila*. Among his future assignments are *Götterdämmerung* in Munich as well as *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, *Boris Godunov*, *Samson et Dalila*, and *Roméo et Juliette* at the Met. The native of Illinois is the winner of numerous awards including two Richard Tucker Music Foundation Career Grants, and a Richard Gold Award from the Shoshana Foundation, in addition to grants and continuing support from the William Matheus Sullivan Foundation.



Canadian tenor **JOHN MAC MASTER** began his career with Toronto's Canadian Opera Company, also performing at Niagara-on-the-Lake's Shaw Festival and with Winnipeg's Rainbow Stage. In addition to his operatic and musical theater engagements, he has performed as an actor in drama, film, and television. As resident artist with New York's Amor Artis Orchestra and Choir since 1989, he has performed as soloist in, among others, Berlioz's *L'Enfance du Christ*, Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, the *Stabat Mater* by Rossini and Caldara, the Saint-Saëns

Christmas Oratorio, the U.S. premiere of Donizetti's *Miserere*, Saint-Saëns's Requiem, and Johannes Somary's cantata *A Ballad of God and His People*. The last two works were recorded and released on CD. Recent highlights include Verdi's Requiem and Britten's *War Requiem* in New York with Amor Artis and his European debut singing the title role of Handel's *Judas Maccabeus* with Amor Artis and the Brno State Philharmonic on tour in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, and Hungary. Among his performances last season were a San Francisco Opera debut as the Third Jew in *Salome*, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and *Carmine Burana* at the Brott Summer Festival, Finzi's *Farewell to Arms* with Amor Artis, and a recording of Handel's opera *Berenice* with the Brewer Chamber Orchestra. The tenor's credits also include the role of Ubaldo Piangi in *The Phantom of the Opera*, both on Broadway and in Toronto. Later this season Mac Master will be heard in the Canadian Opera Company's production of *Fidelio*, Mahler's Eighth Symphony with the Edmonton Symphony, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with the Mississauga Symphony, and will make his debut at Toronto's Opera in Concert as Carlo VII in Verdi's *Giovanna d'Arco*.

ARTIST PROFILES



In his second year as an Adler Fellow, **JOHN RELYEA** recently received critical acclaim for his performance as part of S.F. Opera Center's Schwabacher Debut Recital series. He 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 also appeared as Barelli in Opera Center's Showcase '96 production of *The Aspern Papers* and returned to the '97 Showcase series to portray Varo in Handel's *Ezio*. The artist made

his 1991 operatic debut in *Die Zauberflöte* with Opera Atelier of Toronto (the bass-baritone's native city), and subsequently appeared as the Police Sergeant in *The Pirates of Penzance* with Vancouver Opera. He recently received his bachelor of music degree from Philadelphia's Curtis Institute of Music where he performed roles in *Die Fledermaus*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, and *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*. At the age of 25, he has already been a featured soloist with many of Canada's major symphony orchestras including the Toronto Symphony, Orchestre Symphonique de Québec, National Arts Centre Orchestra in Ottawa, and the Calgary Philharmonic. As a member of the 1995 Merola Opera Program, Relyea portrayed Dr. Bartolo in *Le Nozze di Figaro* (the role he also sang on Western Opera Theater's national tour) and was the recipient of the prestigious Schwabacher Family Award at the Grand Finals Concert. He most recently sang the role of Zuniga in a concert performance of *Carmen* with the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra led by John Mauceri. Next year, Relyea will sing the title role of Mendelssohn's *Elijah* with the San Francisco Symphony under Roger Norrington, and will appear as Colline at Vancouver Opera.



Bass-baritone **BOJAN KNEŽEVIĆ** most recently performed with the Company during the 1996-97 season in *Hamlet*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, and *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*. He also portrayed Benoit and Alcindoro in San Francisco Opera's production of *La Bohème* and sang the role of the Painter in San Francisco Opera Center's Showcase '96 presentation of *The Aspern Papers*. A 1995 Adler Fellow, his debut season with the Company was in 1995 when he sang the parts of Marquis d'Obigny in *La Traviata*, Don Magnifico in the student matinee pro-

duction of *La Cenerentola*, and the Hunter in *Rusalka*. A native of Belgrade, he received his bachelor's and master's degrees from the Academy of Music in Novi Sad, and has performed with the National Theatre in Novi Sad, as well as in Zagreb and Belgrade. As a three-year member of the Merola Opera Program (1992-94), he performed in Merola stagings of *La Bohème* (Schaunard), *Falstaff* (Pistola), *Die Fledermaus* (Frosch), and *Don Giovanni* (Leporello). He repeated the roles of Schaunard, Frosch, and Leporello for Western Opera Theater's national tours. The young artist's credits also include Marcello in *La Bohème* and Leporello with Virginia Opera; Carnegie Hall performances of Mozart's *Coronation Mass* and *Great Mass in C Minor*, as well as the U.S. premiere of Mascagni's *Silvano* (available on CD). Last season he appeared as Leporello with the Minnesota Opera and as Escamillo in *Carmen* to inaugurate the new opera house in Fort Worth. Future plans include Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte* for Minnesota Opera, Colline in *La Bohème* in Fort Worth, and Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly* with the Bohème Opera of New Jersey.



A native of Czechoslovakia, **JIRI KOUT** studied at the Conservatory of Music in Prague, and after graduating with distinction continued his studies at Prague's National Academy of Music. After winning several conducting competitions, his first appointment was as resident conductor of the Pilsener Opera and Symphony Orchestra. He subsequently became principal conductor of Prague's National Opera, a post he held for six years. During this time he appeared regularly with the Prague Symphony Orchestra and the National Radio

Orchestra. In 1976 the maestro made his first international guest appearance at the Deutsche Oper am Rhein, Düsseldorf, where he was immediately engaged as resident principal conductor from 1978 onwards. During seven years with that company Maestro Kout increased his repertoire to over 50 operas and led most of the important German radio orchestras. Notable successes have included *Katya Kabanova* in Paris, *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, the *Ring*, and *Tristan und Isolde* at the Deutsche Oper Berlin, *Elektra* at the Paris Bastille, *Bluebeard's Castle* at the Vienna State Opera, *Boris Godunov*, *Fidelio*, *Katya* and *The Makropulos Case* in Los Angeles, *Der Rosenkavalier* at the Florence Maggio Musicale and at the Metropolitan Opera, the *Ring* at Saarbrücken (where he was general director from 1985 until his appointment in 1990 as principal conductor at the Deutsche Oper Berlin), and a highly praised *Jenůfa* at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden. Important recent operatic engagements include *Katya* at the Bastille, *Rosenkavalier* in Los Angeles, and his assumption of the position of general music director of the Leipzig Opera, where in his first season he conducted new productions of *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Eugene Onegin*, and *Don Giovanni*. Kout has also led many of the important symphony orchestras in Europe—the Berlin Philharmonic and other major German orchestras, Vienna Symphony, Radio France, Florence Symphony, City of Birmingham, Venice, and Naples, among others.



ANDREI SERBAN made his 1991 San Francisco Opera debut with this production of *Elektra*. The director was born in Romania and studied at the Theater Institute in Bucharest. His earliest productions included several plays, culminating in an acclaimed staging of *Julius Caesar*, which led to a Ford Foundation grant to work with New York's La Mama Experimental Theater Company. In New York he met Peter Brook, who invited him to work with him in Paris. Serban's productions in the U.S. have included the classical Greek trilogy, *The Trojan*

Women, *Electra*, and *Medea*, as well as *The Good Woman of Szechuan*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg*, and *Agamemnon* in New York, and several plays at Yale University and the American Repertory Theater at Harvard. He is currently director of the Drama Department at Columbia University in New York. Since his first opera production, *Eugene Onegin* for the Welsh National Opera, he has returned to Cardiff for *I Puritani* (a production also staged by the Company in 1993), *Rodelinda*, *The Merry Widow*, and *Norma*. He has also directed productions for Opera North in Leeds, the Netherlands Opera, Paris Opera, Geneva Opera, New York City Opera (*Alcina*), and in Boston (the world premiere of Philip Glass's *The Juniper Tree*). His production of *Turandot* had its premiere at the 1984 Olympic Arts Festival in Los Angeles before opening the 1984-85 season at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden. Recent stagings include *Don Carlos*, *Cavalleria Rusticana/Pagliacci*, and *The Fiery Angel* in Geneva, Enescu's *Oedipe* at the Romanian National Opera, *Fidelio*, *Prince Igor*, and *I Puritani* at Covent Garden, *Lucia di Lammermoor* in Chicago, Los Angeles, and Paris (Bastille), *Eugene Onegin* in Lisbon, *Rigoletto* in Venice, *Don Giovanni* and *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* in Vienna, *Adriana Lecouvreur* in Zurich, as well as *Elektra* and *Thais* in Nice. Next season he will direct *L'Italiana in Algeri* at the Bastille.

ARTIST PROFILES



Greek-born designer/director **YANNIS KOKKOS** created the sets and costumes for this production of *Elektra*, which was originally presented by San Francisco Opera in 1991. A native of Athens, he studied scenic design in Strasbourg and made his professional debut in 1965 with the designs for Goldoni's *La Locandiera* presented at the Comédie de l'Est. Since then he has created designs for over 75 plays, ballets and operas, among them several world premieres. His opera designs include, among others, *Macbeth*, *Lohengrin*, and

Reimann's *Lear* for the Paris Opera, *Die Zauberflöte* for the Vienna State Opera, *Pelléas et Mélisande* for Milan's La Scala, Covent Garden, and in Vienna, *Don Carlo* for Bologna's Teatro Comunale and the Geneva Opera, *La Voix humaine* for the Châtelet in Paris, as well as *Elektra* for Geneva and San Francisco. Kokkos directed his first opera production in 1989: *Boris Godunov* for Bologna and the Paris Bastille. Recent productions as director/designer include *Carmen*, *Don Giovanni*, and *Tosca* for the Chorégies d'Orange; *Tristan und Isolde* for the Welsh National Opera and Covent Garden; *Salome* for the Bordeaux Opera; *Zelmira* for Pesaro's Rossini Festival; Gluck's *Alceste* for Scottish Opera; *Norma* for the Bastille; and *Elektra* for the Opéra de Lyon. Among the plays he has recently designed and directed are Racine's *Iphigénie* and *La Thébaine* at the Comédie Française. The recipient of numerous awards, he won the Prix du Syndicat de la Critique for his designs for *Elektra*; garnered two Molière awards, one for the set designs for Paul Claudel's play, *L'Echange*, the other for the costumes for Yukio Mishima's drama, *Madame de Sade*; and the Gold Medal from Prague's Quadriennale of scenic designers for his lifetime achievements. Last year he was named a Commander of the Order of Arts and Letters by the French Republic.



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 1996-97 season he designed the lighting for *La Bohème* at the Orpheum Theatre, as well as *Prince Igor*, *Lohengrin*, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, *Die Fledermaus*, and *Aida* at the Civic Auditorium. 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*. Credits for other companies include work for the Dallas Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Washington Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Netherlands Opera, and Hartford Ballet. Recent credits include lighting for Dallas Opera's productions of *Elektra* and *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 is the consultant/designer of the War Memorial's newly renovated and computerized lighting system.

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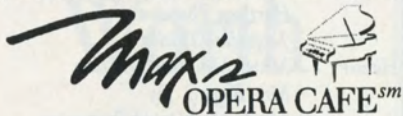
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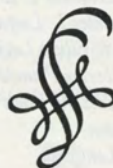


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Revival of L.A. Opera production.

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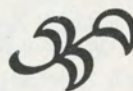
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For more information, contact James K. Sokol, Assistant Director of Corporate & Foundation Relations, at (415) 565-3275.

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War Memorial Opera House
San Francisco, CA 94102
(415) 565-3201

san francisco
OPERA

SERVICES

FOOD SERVICE. The Opera House lower lounge is open one and one-half hours prior to curtain time for hot buffet service. Patrons arriving before the front doors open will be admitted at the carriage entrance. Refreshments are served in the box, grand tier, dress circle, and balcony circle levels.

DIGITAL WATCHES, PAGERS, CELL PHONES. Please switch them OFF before the performance begins.

For **LOST AND FOUND** information, inquire at the cloakroom at the south end of the main lobby or call (415) 621-6600, 8:30 to 11:30 a.m., Monday through Friday.

TICKET INFORMATION. San Francisco Opera's Ticket and Patron Services Center, 199 Grove at Van Ness, open 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Saturday. Opera House Box Office: open 2 hours before each performance through the first intermission on performance days only. Phone charge: (415) 864-3330, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Saturday (VISA, American Express, MasterCard).

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 Box Office 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 the Box Office or call (415) 864-3330, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Unfortunately, we are unable to apply the donations towards membership benefits.

IF YOU DRIVE TO THE OPERA and park in the Performing Arts Garage, remember that you can avoid some of the congestion by using the Gough Street entrance to the facility (between Fulton and Grove).

TAXI SERVICE. Patrons needing a cab at the end of the performance should reserve one with the doorman at the taxi entrance on Grove Street before the end of the last intermission.

OPERA GLASSES are available in the cloakroom at the north end of the main lobby.

For the safety and comfort of our audience, all large parcels, backpacks, luggage, etc., must be checked at the Opera House cloakroom (south end of main lobby). No cameras or tape recorders are permitted in the Opera House. Children of any age attending a performance must have a ticket.

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

PERFORMING ARTS CENTER TOURS

Tours of the San Francisco Performing Arts Center include the War Memorial Opera House, Davies Symphony Hall, and Herbst Theatre and take place as follows: Mondays, on the hour between 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Special tours of Davies Hall only may be scheduled on Wednesdays and Saturdays by request. All tours leave from the Grove Street entrance of Davies Symphony Hall. There are no tours on holidays. General Admission \$5; seniors/students \$3. Information: (415) 552-8338

OPERA HOUSE TOURS Sponsored by the San Francisco Opera Guild, house and backstage tours of the War Memorial Opera House will be conducted every half hour from 10 a.m. to 12 noon on weekdays and Saturdays; from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Sundays on the following dates:

Sunday, October 12
Tuesday, October 14
Thursday, October 23
Wednesday, November 12
Saturday, November 15
Tuesday, November 18
Thursday, November 20
Saturday, November 22
Friday, November 28
Sunday, November 30
Tuesday, December 2
Thursday, December 4
Monday, December 8

Tickets for Guild members, \$2; non-members \$5. Reservations required. Information: (415) 565-6433.

ACCESS FOR DISABLED PATRONS

Wheelchair seating positions are located in the orchestra, mezzanine, and dress circle levels. Aisle seats with swing-up armrests are located in the orchestra, dress circle, balcony circle, and balcony levels. Contact the S.F. Opera Ticket and Patron Services Center (415) 864-3330—for more information.

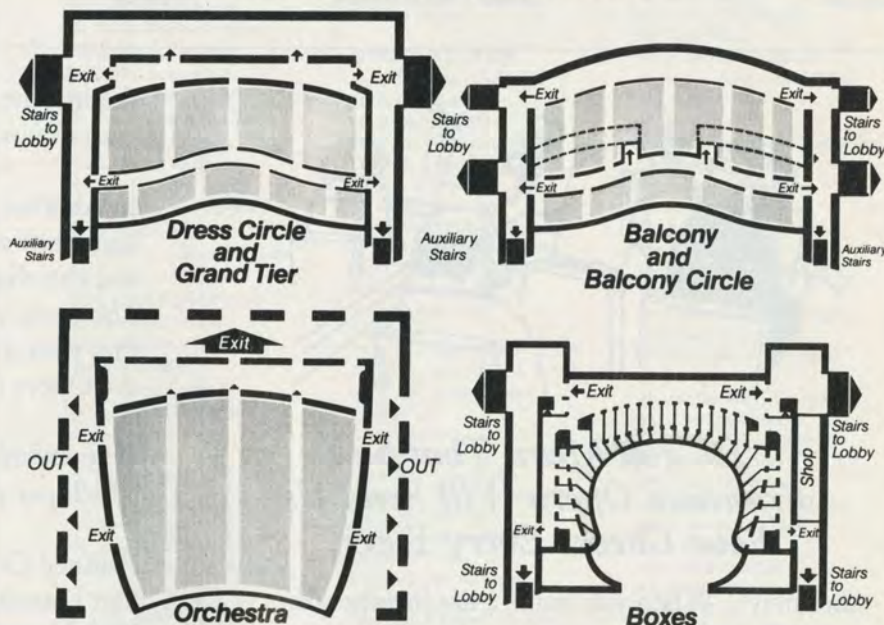
Accessible restrooms are located on all floors except the orchestra (1st floor) and balcony (5th floor) levels.

Accessible public telephones are located on the orchestra, mezzanine, grand tier (2nd floor), and dress circle (3rd floor) levels. Public telephone with "TDD" is located on the orchestra level in the northeast corner of the lobby.

Accessible drinking fountains are located on all floors except the balcony level.

The Opera House is equipped with a Sennheiser Infrared Listening System. Patrons may obtain wireless headphones or induction devices in the cloakroom at the north end of the main lobby.

San Francisco War Memorial and Performing Arts Center War Memorial Opera House



Patrons, Attention Please! Fire Notice: Please note the nearest exit. In an emergency, WALK, do not run, to the nearest exit. Disabled patrons proceed to nearest elevator lobby and await assistance.

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San Francisco Opera
October 31; November 4, 8, 13, 1997

The role of Klytemnestra in these performances of *Elektra*
will be sung by Susan Shafer.



Mezzo-soprano **SUSAN SHAFER** has performed to acclaim with opera companies throughout North America and Europe. Notable roles in her repertoire include Ulrica in *Un Ballo in Maschera* (Paris Opera/Bastille, Teatro Comunale in Bologna); Mamma Lucia in *Cavalleria Rusticana* (New York City Opera); Azucena in *Il Trovatore* (Hawaii Opera Theater); Eboli in *Don Carlo* (Kentucky Opera); and Klytemnestra (Canadian Opera Company). She has also performed with, among others, the opera companies of Houston, Philadelphia, Sarasota and Washington, D.C. As a concert artist, Miss Shafer has appeared with the Cleveland Orchestra, National Symphony, Pittsburgh Symphony, Spoleto Festival U.S.A., Dallas Symphony, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra and the Houston Symphony. She has earned recognition as soloist in Prokofiev's *Alexander Nevsky*, Handel's *Messiah*, the Verdi Requiem, as well as Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* and Ninth Symphony. The American artist with a masters degree from Westminster College is the winner of numerous awards and scholarships, most notably from the Pavarotti Competition, Shoshana Foundation, Metropolitan Opera Regional Auditions, San Francisco Opera Regional Auditions and the Juilliard School.

