

L'Incoronazione di Poppea
(Coronation of Poppea)

1997-1998

Saturday, June 13, 1998 8:00 PM

Tuesday, June 16, 1998 8:00 PM

Thursday, June 18, 1998 8:00 PM

Sunday, June 21, 1998 2:00 PM

Friday, June 26, 1998 8:00 PM

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SUMMER 1998

L'INCORONAZIONE DI POPPEA



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



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

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

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

**REID W. DENNIS
CHAIRMAN**

**WILLIAM W. GODWARD
PRESIDENT**

**A MESSAGE FROM
THE GENERAL DIRECTOR**



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

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

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

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

**LOTFI MANSOURI
GENERAL DIRECTOR**

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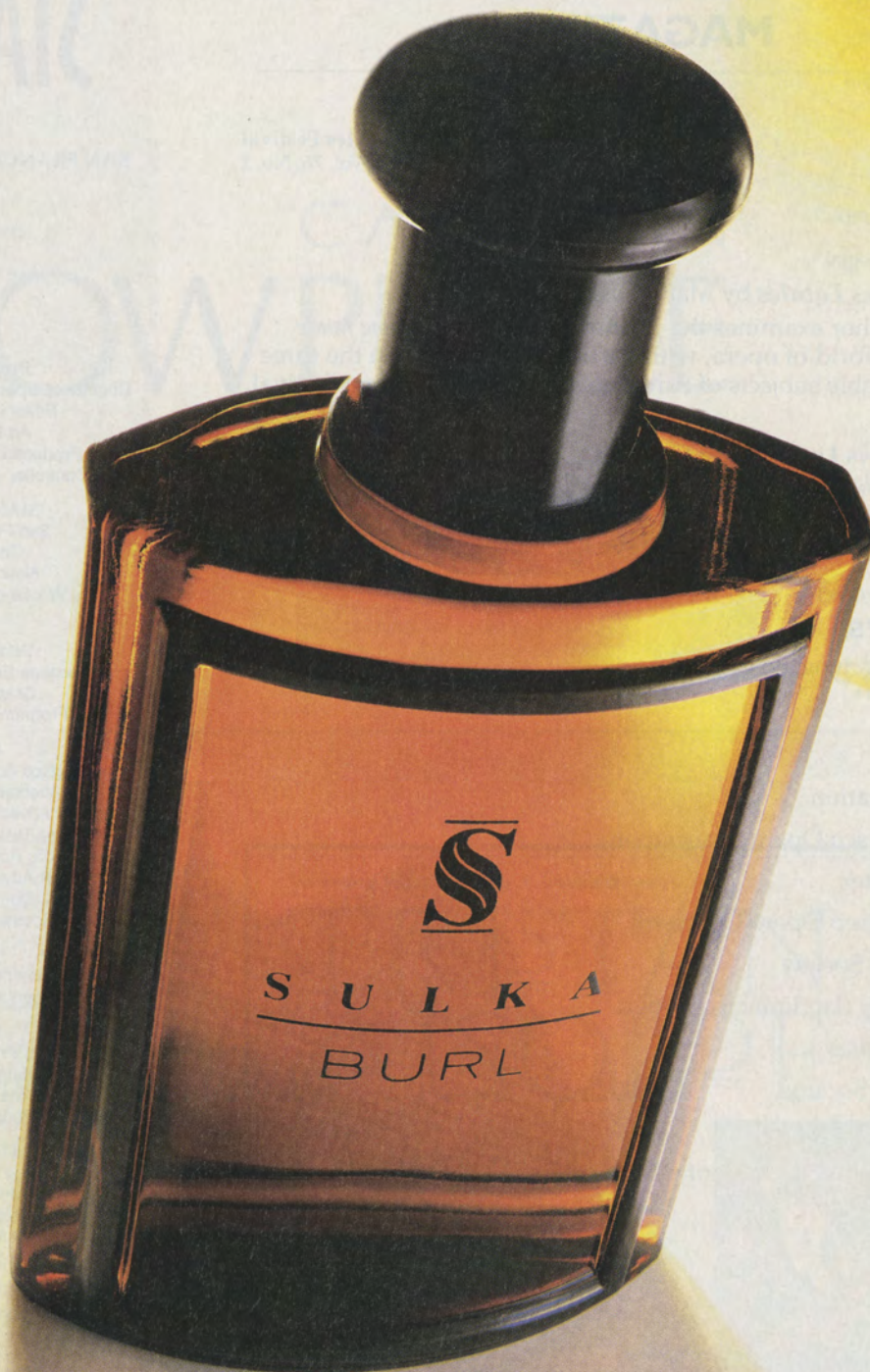
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SAN FRANCISCO OPERA MAGAZINE

L'Incoronazione di Poppea

Femmes Fatales Festival
Vol. 76, No. 2

FEATURES

- 18** The Essential Poppea by Andrew Porter
The famed writer, musicologist, and Monteverdi fan sums it all up.
- 26** The House of Nero by Malcolm Mosher, Jr.
Characters and events depicted in *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* are examined from a historical viewpoint. When compared with the way they appear in the opera, this essay shows that facts can be much stranger (and uglier) than fiction.

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COVER

Anonymous, 16th century, Fontainebleau School
Portrait of Sabina Poppea
Oil on wood; 25¾ x 19½ in.

Musée d'art et d'histoire, Genève
Photo: Lauros-Giraudon

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Turandot

Schnaut, Vassileva*(9/11, 17, 20)/
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Rizzi/Bruce/Hockney/Falconer/Munn
Sept. 11, 17, 20, 22, 25, 30; 10/3
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Arabella

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

World Premiere

A Streetcar Named Desire

Based on the play by
Tennessee Williams

Fleming, Futral*; Gilfry, Griffey
Previn*/Graham/Yeargan/Munn
Sept. 19, 23, 26, 29

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

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

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

Tristan und Isolde

Huffstodt, Urmana**; Schmidt, Fox,
von Halem

Runnicles/Hampe/Pagano/Munn
Production co-owned with Washington Opera
Production sponsored by the L.J. and Mary C.
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Oct. 10, 14, 18, 21, 26, 30; 11/6

Puccini

R. Strauss

Previn Littell

Manon

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

New Production

Don Carlo

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

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Verdi

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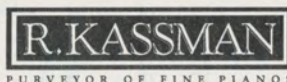


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Norma

Vaness, Antonacci; Sylvester,
Silvestrelli*

Summers/Sinclair*/Varona/Whitfield
Nov. 7, 10, 15, 18, 21, 24, 28

Bellini

Peter Grimes

Riedel, Powell, Cook; Moser*, Held,
Baerg, Lord, Del Carlo

Runnicles/Copley/Toms/Perdziola/
Munn

Nov. 17, 22; Dec. 2, 5, 8, 11, 13

Britten

Company Premiere

Betrothal in a Monastery Prokofiev

Netrebko, Diadkova;
Pluzhnikov, Bezubenkov

Gergiev/Noseda* (12/3, 6, 10)
Pazi*/Kozhenkova*/Androsov*/
Munn

Nov. 23, 25, 27, 28; Dec. 3, 6, 10

Production from the Kirov Opera, St. Petersburg

Turandot

Stottler*, Amsellem*; Bogachov*,
Palatchi*

Armiliato/Bruce*/Hockney/Falconer/
Munn

Nov. 29; Dec. 1, 4, 9, 12

Puccini

Madama Butterfly

Valayre/Kabatu*, Cao/White;
Lima/Cornelison*, Okerlund

Villaume*/Daniels/Yeargan/
Strawbridge

Puccini

** United States opera debut

* San Francisco Opera debut

† 1998-99 Adler Fellow

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language with English Supertitles.

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Made V.P. at 26.

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 Text by GIOVANNI FRANCESCO BUSENELLO
 Performing version by PATRICK SUMMERS

L'Incoronazione di Poppea

(in Italian)

CAST (in order of appearance)

Conductor/Harpsichord
 Patrick Summers

Stage Director
 Christopher Alden

Designer
 Robert Perdziola

Lighting Designer
 Thomas J. Munn

Musical Preparation
 Bryndon Hassman
 John Churchwell*

Jonathan Khuner
 Philip Eisenberg

Harpsichord/Organ continuo
 Bryndon Hassman

Supertitles
 Clifford Cranna

Assistant Director
 Paula Williams

Stage Manager
 Jerry Sherk

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First performance:
 Autumn of 1642, Venice

First San Francisco Opera
 performance: September 13, 1975

<i>La Fortuna [Fortune]</i>	Christina Lamberti†
<i>La Virtù [Virtue]</i>	Nicolle Foland
<i>Amore [Cupid]</i>	Marc Day*
	Michael Denos (5/21, 26)
<i>Ottone [Otho], Poppea's former lover</i>	Mel Ulrich†
<i>First soldier</i>	Dennis Petersen
<i>Second soldier</i>	Matthew Lord
<i>Poppea, noble lady, mistress of Nerone</i>	Ruxandra Donose
<i>Nerone [Nero], Emperor of Rome</i>	David Daniels*
<i>Arnalta, Poppea's nurse and confidante</i>	Barry Banks*
<i>Ottavia [Octavia], Empress of Rome</i>	Lorraine Hunt*
<i>Nutrice, Ottavia's nurse</i>	Martha Jane Howe
<i>Seneca, philosopher, Nerone's tutor</i>	Robert Lloyd
<i>Three followers of Seneca</i>	Stuart Skelton Chris Corley Bruce Baumer
<i>Valletto, Ottavia's page</i>	Norman Shankle*†
<i>Pallade [Pallas Athena], goddess of wisdom</i>	Catherine Cook
<i>Drusilla, in love with Ottone</i>	Zvetelina Vassileva
<i>Mercurio [Mercury], messenger of the gods</i>	John Relyea
<i>Liberto, captain of the guard</i>	Alfredo Daza*†
<i>Damigella, a maid in Ottavia's service</i>	Peggy Kriha Dye
<i>Lucano [Lucan], poet, friend of Nerone</i>	Matthew Lord
<i>Littore [Lictor], officer of imperial justice</i>	John Relyea
<i>Three consuls</i>	Daniel Harper Dan Stanley Richard Walker
<i>Three tribunes</i>	David Kekuwa William Pickersgill Jere Torkelsen

Soldiers, servants, officers and senators of Rome, ladies-in-waiting, etc.

*San Francisco Opera debut †1998-99 Adler Fellow

THE OPERA WILL BE PERFORMED WITH ONE INTERMISSION

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

SYNOPSIS

L'Incoronazione di Poppea

PROLOGUE — *In the heavens* — The rival goddesses La Fortuna (Fortune) and La Virtù (Virtue) contest their supremacy over mortals. Amore (Cupid) arrives to settle the matter, claiming that they will have occasion to observe his powers on this very day.

ACT I — *Outside Poppea's palace* — Ottone (Otho), returning from abroad, anticipates a reunion with Poppea. He arrives to find the Emperor Nerone's (Nero) soldiers asleep outside her house and realizes that Poppea has betrayed him and taken the emperor as her lover. Roused by the sound of his lament, the soldiers curse the love of Poppea and Nerone and gossip about the court. Nerone and Poppea appear, distraught at the thought of parting, but finally bid passionate farewell to one another. Poppea talks with her nurse and confidante Arnalta and reveals her desire to become empress, replacing Ottavia (Octavia), whom Nerone wishes to divorce. But Arnalta warns against trusting great men, Amore or Fortuna.

Rome, the imperial apartments — Ottavia laments Nerone's betrayal. She firmly dismisses her nurse's advice that she distract herself by taking a lover, and vows to remain steadfast in her sorrow. Seneca enters and attempts to console Ottavia, urging her to stand firm. She sees in his counsel only the vanity of philosophy, and Valletto, her page, thoroughly exasperated, ridicules Seneca for his pedantry. Ottavia leaves to pray in the temple. Alone, Seneca reflects on how the glories of this world soon pass away and muses on the pain caused by the trappings of royalty. The goddess Pallade (Pallas Athena) appears to him, foretelling his death but promising that the god Mercurio (Mercury) will warn him in advance. Seneca expresses his willingness to embrace death whenever it comes. Nerone enters and insists, against his tutor's advice, that he will do exactly as he wishes: he will send Ottavia into exile and crown Poppea empress. Seneca tries to dissuade him on moral and political grounds. Losing his patience, Nerone says he will simply do what he likes, right or wrong.

Poppea and Nerone, overheard by Ottone, discuss their happiness. The emperor, enraptured by her beauty, promises to make Poppea his empress. She in turn insinuates that Seneca has been boasting about his power over the emperor. Angrily, Nerone gives orders condemning the philosopher to death. Ottone, observed by Arnalta, approaches Poppea when Nerone has gone, only to be scornfully dismissed. Left alone, Ottone vents his despair and rage against Poppea and even contemplates murdering her.

Drusilla, who is in love with Ottone, appears and complains that he is still obsessed by Poppea. Partly from despair and partly in gratitude for Drusilla's sympathy, he tells her that he will forget Poppea and love only her, a promise he knows he cannot keep.

ACT II — *The garden of Seneca's villa outside Rome* — Mercurio, sent to earth by Pallade, announces to Seneca that the day of his death has arrived. Seneca rejoices in the news. The philosopher receives from a hesitant Liberto, captain of Nerone's guard, the confirmation of the death sentence. Firm in his resolve, Seneca prepares to meet his fate. He consoles his followers when they try to dissuade him from taking his life and orders a bath to be prepared in which he will die.

INTERMISSION

Rome — Nerone, having learned of Seneca's death, is almost delirious in his desire for Poppea and sings a passionate duet in her praise with his friend, the poet Lucano (Lucan).

Valletto and Damigella (a lady-in-waiting) divert themselves in an amorous encounter. Ottavia commands Ottone to kill Poppea and to disguise himself as a woman so as not to be apprehended. When he initially rejects her orders, she threatens him with blackmail. Drusilla rejoices in Ottone's promises of love, while the page makes fun of Ottavia's nurse for wishing to be young and happy again. Ottone reveals to Drusilla what must be done. He asks for her help in supplying him with clothes as a disguise.

Poppea's garden — Poppea exults over the death of Seneca and prays to Amore to make her Nerone's bride. She expresses undying affection to Arnalta, who cautions her mistress against too much ambition. Overcome with fatigue, Poppea repeats her prayer to Amore and falls asleep to a lullaby sung by her nurse. Amore, descended from the heavens to prevent Poppea's death, hides near her. Still plagued with doubt, Ottone enters the garden disguised as Drusilla. Just as he is about to kill Poppea, Amore intervenes. Poppea wakes up at that very moment, and Ottone, taken for Drusilla, flees, chased by Arnalta and the servants. Amore declares that he has saved Poppea and wishes to make her empress.

ACT III — *Rome* — Unaware of the situation, Drusilla rejoices in the hope that her rival Poppea will soon be dead and that Ottone will be hers alone.

Arnalta, the lictor and a number of his colleagues come to seize Drusilla, who recognizes that she must now pay for lending Ottone her clothes.

Drusilla is brought before Nerone and, when questioned about the murder attempt, decides to protect Ottone and pleads guilty. Nerone furiously sentences her to death. Ottone, having heard everything, refuses to allow Drusilla to accept the blame. He confesses to the crime and blames Ottavia for instigating it. This gives Nerone the excuse to repudiate Ottavia, whom he orders to leave Rome in a boat. He spares Ottone's life and commutes Drusilla's sentence, allowing them to go into exile together.

Nerone joyfully tells Poppea that they will be married this very day.

Banished by Nerone, Ottavia bids a sad farewell to her homeland, family and friends. The prospect of becoming an empress's confidante cheers Arnalta tremendously.

Nerone's palace — Nerone invites Poppea to ascend the imperial throne, and in the name of the people and Roman Senate she is crowned by consuls and tribunes. Amore, Fortuna, Virtù and Pallade likewise crown her as goddess of beauty on earth. Nerone and Poppea celebrate their love and their triumph in an ecstatic duet.

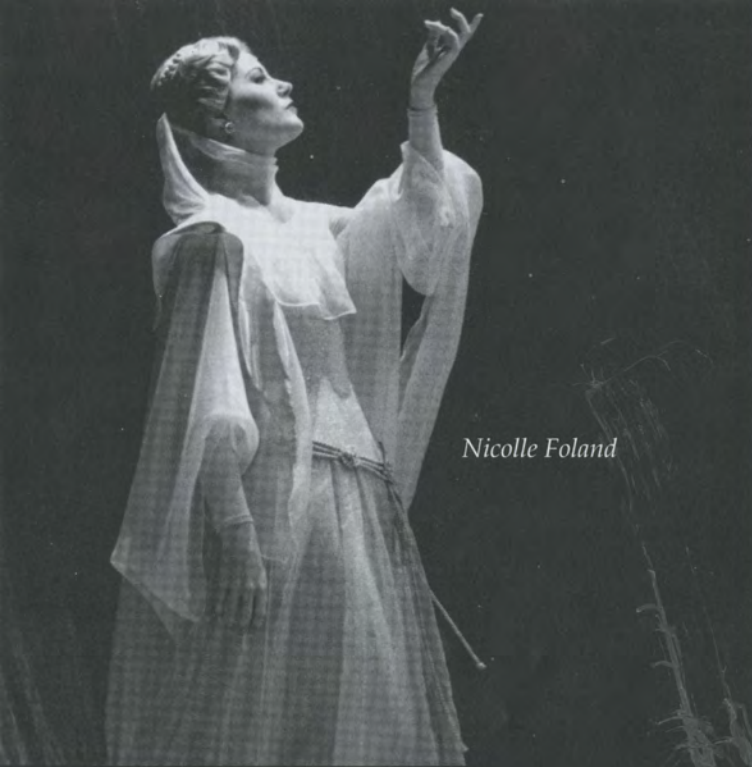
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L'Incoronazione di Poppea

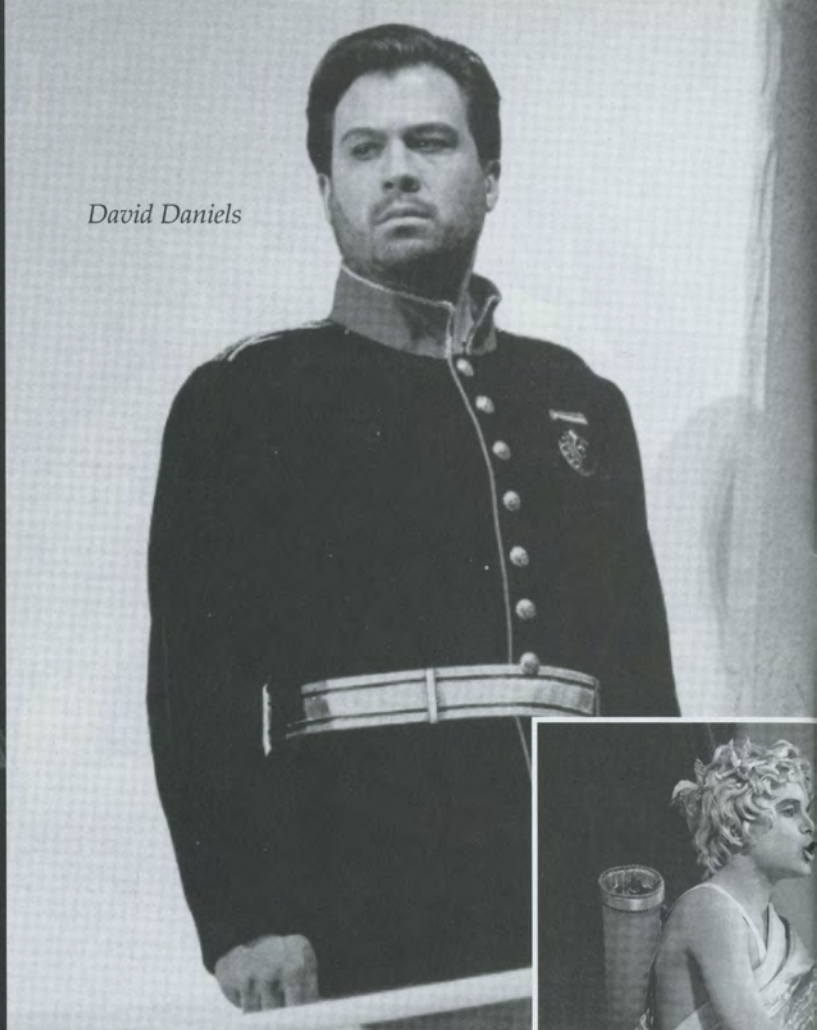
Photos taken in rehearsal
by Marty Sohl



*David Daniels,
Ruxandra Donose*



Nicolle Foland



David Daniels



*Zvetelina Vassileva,
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Bruce Baumer, Chris Corley, Stuart Skelton



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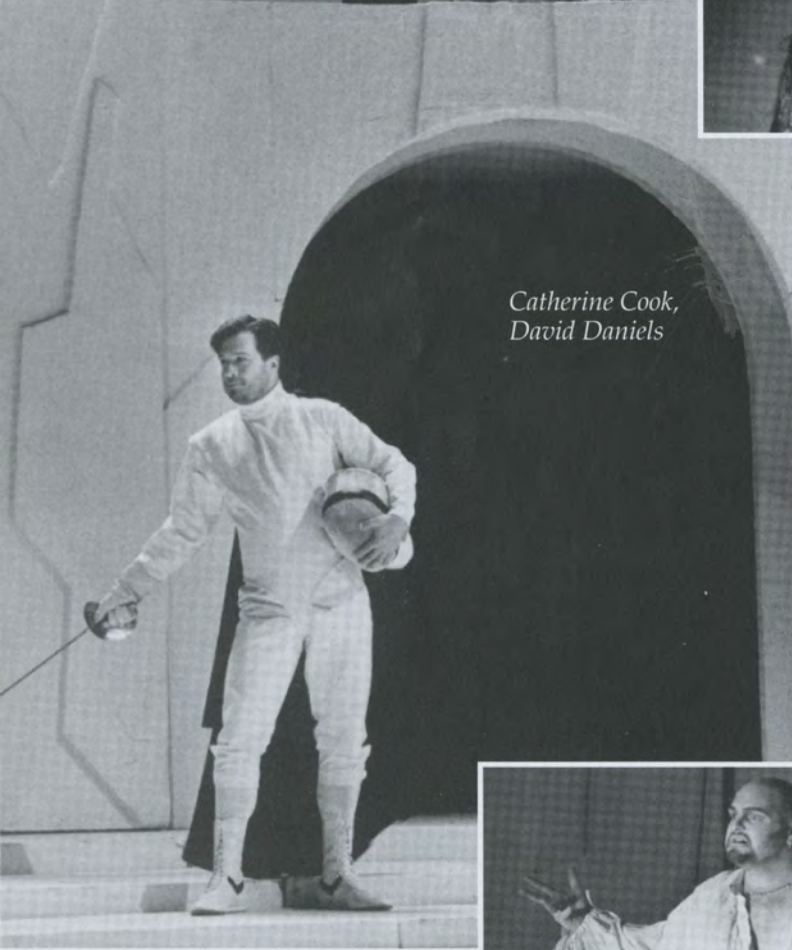
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*Ruxandra Donose,
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David Daniels*



Martha Jane Howe, Lorraine Hunt



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The Essential *Poppea*

By ANDREW PORTER

Claudio Monteverdi's first opera, *La Favola d'Orfeo*, appeared in Mantua in 1607. It was one of the earliest operas ever composed—only the third, fourth, or fifth, depending on how one defines “opera”—and it was a miracle. In the 1902 *Oxford History of Music*, the composer Hubert Parry called *Orfeo* “one of the most astounding products of genius in the whole range of music.” And he had never heard it. Although the score of *Orfeo* was published in 1609, the opera had been unperformed for nearly three centuries. Monteverdi went on to write several more operas, but so far we have complete scores for only two of them, the final masterpieces *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria* and *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*. They were composed for the public opera houses of Venice in the early 1640s, when Monteverdi was in his mid-seventies.

Of his once-famous *Arianna* (Mantua, 1608), only the heroine's great Lament is now known. But rumors of *Arianna*'s full recovery circulate from time to time, and perhaps the twenty-first century will see *Arianna* come to light and take its place in the repertory. *Orfeo*, *Ulisse*, and *Poppea* were all twentieth-century discoveries. Pioneering performances of *Orfeo* began in 1902, in lopped editions by Vincent d'Indy and by Giacomo Orefice. (Acts I and V and most of the hero's central aria, “Possente spirto” were among their cuts.) The novelist Arnold Bennett heard a performance in Florence in 1910, and wrote in his journal, “Astonishing that such a beautiful and obviously attractive thing is not given oftener.” A score of *Ulisse*, found in Vienna, was published only in 1923, and the opera was staged, in an edition by D'Indy, in 1927. *Poppea* was first published in 1904 and was staged, again in a D'Indy edition, in 1913. When *Orfeo* at last reached the stage in something like a full edi-



JONES

Andrew Porter, music critic of *The New Yorker* 1972-92, Bloch Professor at U.S. Berkeley 1980-81, corresponding member of the American Musicological Society, and now writing for the *Times Literary Supplement*, has been Monteverdi-hooked and Monteverdi-attentive ever since he attended a BBC production of *Orfeo* nearly fifty years ago.

tion, given by the Oxford University Opera Club in 1925, the London *Times* critic discerned a composer "to be heard on equal terms with the great musical dramatists from Purcell to Wagner"; and in the *Sunday Times* Ernest Newman wondered "whether finer recitative than Monteverdi's at its best can be found again in opera until we come to Wagner."

Those were startling opinions then but are received opinion today, when *Orfeo*, *Ulisse*, and, above all, *Poppea* are quite often performed. Yet, received opinion is sometimes challenged. Recent attempts have been made to diminish Monteverdi's stature—as if in reaction against the unqualified praise accorded him by people unaware of the Venetian operas by others which display virtues once deemed uniquely his; and unaware perhaps that *Ulisse* and *Poppea* survive only in copies prepared for local revivals, which contain music probably not by Monteverdi. The handwriting of Francesco Cavalli's wife appears in one of the two surviving *Poppea* manuscripts; and its crowning duet, "Pur ti miro," long hailed as a sublime example of Monteverdi's art, has now been variously ascribed to Cavalli, Filiberto Laurenzi, Francesco Saccati, and Benedetto Ferrari. In a recent issue of the *Cambridge Opera Journal*, Andrew Dell'Antonio attacks the "myth" of Monteverdi as "opera's creator" and scorns received opinion as it was formulated in Paul Henry Lang's influential *History of Western Music*:

Here emerges one of those extraordinary individuals who create and organize a new form of art, and whose advent into the domain of thought is analogous to the appearance of a superior species.

Yet the marvel of Monteverdi's greatness, individuality, and enterprise has—or so I've found—been in no way diminished by the discovery that other opera composers of his day could also write poignant and passionate laments, sensuously beautiful love music, canzonettas of playful flirtation, comic scenes, and tender lullabies. Every Monteverdi performance—I'm writing this just after attending a Welsh National Opera production of *Poppea*—brings renewed rapture, and awe at his mastery in bringing together in careful balances all the diverse and potentially jostling

elements that conjoin to make opera the richest, most elaborate (and most costly!) of all artistic manifestations.

At the start of *Orfeo*, the allegorical figure of La Musica steps forward to tell us what opera is about and how it works. "I am Music," she sings, "who in sweet accents knows how to calm every troubled heart, and can inflame the coldest minds now with noble anger, now with love." Opera, the new art form, was barely seven years old. It had been born in simplicity, as a kind of verse drama, the expressive power of whose lines was heightened by recitative declamation (*parlar cantando*, speaking in song), modestly accompanied. Monteverdi lavished on the swift-growing child the other riches that the art of music could provide: madrigals, songs, and dances; formal structures of strophe, variation, rondo, and refrain to throw into relief the free declamation; contrasts of texture between solo voices and ensemble; and the varied colors of a large orchestra.

The Orpheus myth is itself an allegory of music's power; within Monteverdi's opera there are other, small allegories of ways in which that power can be employed. When Orpheus entreats the ferryman Charon to grant him passage to Hades he does so in

several stanzas of increasing brilliance and vocal virtuosity, punctuated by elaborate instrumental displays. But the stern boatman remains unmoved until the singer abandons coloratura and makes a direct, unaffected appeal in melody unadorned, patterned on the natural rise and fall of the words as a suppliant might speak them. There's a moral there. In fact, there is no moral relating to operatic practice that cannot be illustrated from Monteverdi, no operatic device that cannot be deemed a development of something that he discovered, no "abuse" that cannot be viewed as a disturbance of the tensions that he held in equilibrium, no "reform" that does not point a return to the principles that determined his work.

In the succeeding centuries things often went wrong. One element began to assume undue importance: it might be vocal display, scenic magnificence, extravagant attention to a largely irrelevant ballet; "music" sacrificed to the "words," or the other way around; mere tunefulness meagerly accompanied; or perhaps overweening orchestral contributions. Whenever it happened, "reformers" arose—Gluck, Mozart, Wagner, Verdi—to re-establish the Monteverdian ideal with the resources of their own day. They didn't know the operatic Monteverdi

JONES



The late Tatiana Troyanos portrayed Poppea in both previous San Francisco Opera stagings of the Monteverdi masterpiece. In photos from 1975 she is shown alone (left) and with the Nero of Eric Tappy.



In the Opera's 1981 staging of *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, Erie Mills was Damigella and Joseph Frank, Valletto.

Nero is infatuated with the high-born courtesan Poppea and determined to make her his Empress. In *Poppea*, love is at once happy sensuality and an instrument of ambition. In the proud young Empress Octavia (Octavia), it has turned to jealousy and vindictiveness. On both Octavia and Nero, the philosopher Seneca enjoins self-control, but his admonitions are not heeded. A fifth character, Otho (Ottone), dominates the first act. Still desperately in love with Poppea, first his mistress and then his wife, he enters to find Nero's soldiers on guard outside her door. The act mounts to a climax in a great confrontation between Poppea and Otho. Otho attempts to find consolation by turning to another woman, Drusilla, for whom love means joyful self-sacrifice and hang the consequences; but the curtain falls on his powerful line "Drusilla is on my lips, yet in my heart—Poppea!"

Act II in two long sequences depicts the destructive forces unleashed by selfish love: Seneca, ordered by Nero to die, goes nobly to his final bath, amid mourning of his disciples. And Octavia and Otho conspire, with Drusilla's assistance, to murder Poppea. Like an earlier Othello, Otho muses over the sleeping, still cherished woman whom he is about to kill; love, embodied in the allegorical figure of Amor, makes him linger; Poppea wakes and is saved, and at curtain-time Amor sings of his victory. Between the killing and the attempted killing is a playful little scene in which a youth, Octavia's page, and a girl experience the first stirrings of love; and in an exuberant madrigal duet Nero and the poet Lucan (Lucano), Seneca's nephew, celebrate Seneca's death, the end of restraint, and Poppea's beauty.

In Act III, Drusilla and Otho, like another Ilia and Idamante, vie in loving endeavors to save each other's life. The conspirators are exiled; Octavia sings an impassioned farewell to the city; Poppea is crowned Empress, and finally the voices of Poppea and Nero—both soprano, echoing, twining, closing on a unison—ring out to hymn love's triumph. The Venetian audience would have known, but modern audiences may need reminding, that Nero and Poppea did not live happily ever after. Other post-final-curtain footnotes: Octavia, in her island exile, was brutally murdered; Lucan did not remain in favor but was executed in the year 65; and during the civil wars that succeeded Nero's suicide, in 68, Otho for a brief three months became Emperor.

(continued on page 30)

but, like him, they knew what opera at its highest could and should be. Monteverdi's operas then became a more direct source of influence and inspiration on the composers of our day. Let me cite just three of them: Thea Musgrave in her *Voice of Ariadne*; Hans Werner Henze, who scored *Ulisse* for modern performance and whose latest opera, *Venus and Adonis*, is Monteverdian in construction; and Alexander Goehr, whose *Arianna* is a recomposition, to the original libretto, of Monteverdi's lost opera (incorporating the famous Lamento)—not a pastiche, but an opera written as if by a Monteverdi who knows his Schoenberg.

In 1616 Monteverdi received a libretto, *Le Nozze di Tetide*, that did not please him. And he said:

I have observed that the personages of this drama are winds, and moreover that the winds have to sing. And how, my dear Sir, shall I be able to imitate the speech of winds? And how shall I be able to move the passions by such means? Ariadne moves the audience because she was a woman, not a wind, and likewise Orpheus moved the audience because he was a man, not a wind... This tale does not excite my feelings in the least. Ariadne inspired a true lament in me, and Orpheus a true entreaty; but heaven knows what this tale will inspire in me!

Monteverdi's expressed aim was directness, the portrayal of human emotions in a manner that made listeners not just perceive

but sympathetically feel them. With his librettists he could be as exigent as were Mozart, Verdi, Strauss. Myth, romance, comedy (his *Finta Pazza Licori*, the first comic opera ever, is lost, alas), epic, and history he claimed in turn for the lyric stage. For the first two decades of its existence, opera's concern was almost exclusively with Ovidian mythology—Apollo and Daphne, Orpheus and Eurydice, Ariadne, Andromeda—and *La Favola d'Orfeo* its highest achievement. During the next twenty years, heroines of epic romance—Ariosto's Angelica and Alcina, Tasso's Armida—joined the company. Then, in 1640, Virgilian and Homeric subject matter appeared in Monteverdi's lost *Le Nozze di Enea*, followed by his *Ullisse*, and in Cavalli's *Didone*. In 1643, classical history and "real people" were summoned to the lyric stage for the first time, in *Poppea*.

Orfeo, composed for the Gonzaga court, used dances, choruses, and a large, colorful orchestra. *Poppea*, composed some thirty-five years later for a public, commercial theater, is less complicated in build and more modest in instrumental and ensemble resources, but even subtler in construction, bolder in its progress, keener in its communication of varied human passions. A synopsis of the action appears elsewhere in the program, and reams have been written about its social, political, and philosophical implications. More simply, *Poppea* is, like *Figaro*, an opera about varied aspects of love. Here's an account of it along those lines. The prologue promises a demonstration of the thesis that sexual passion exerts a greater influence than either chance or virtue on the conduct of human affairs, and then we move to first-century Rome, where the Emperor

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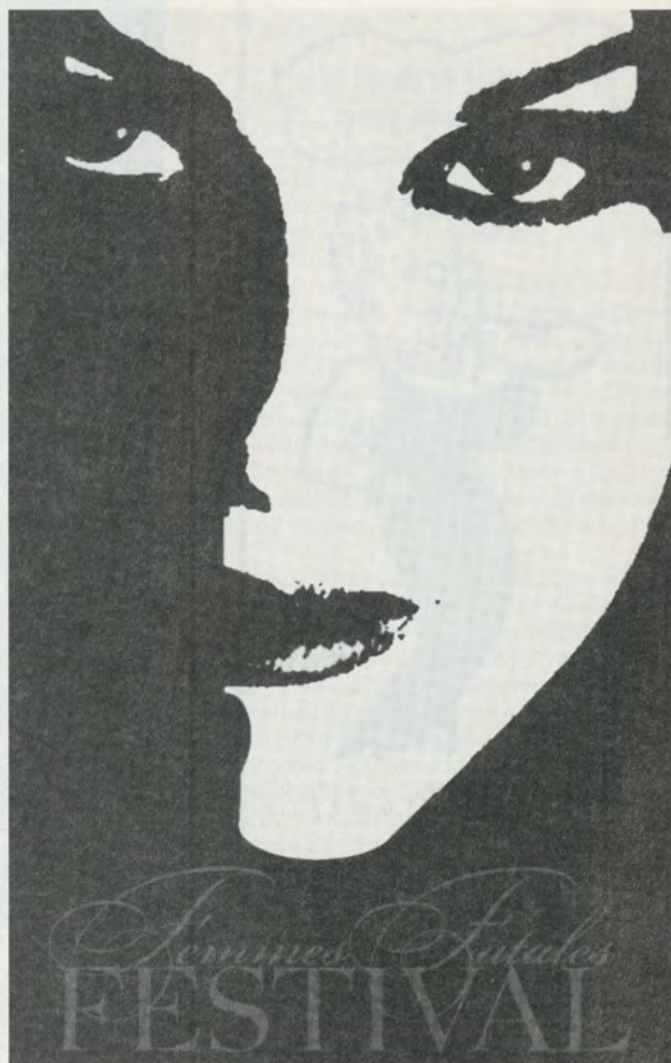
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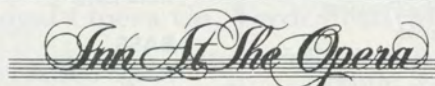
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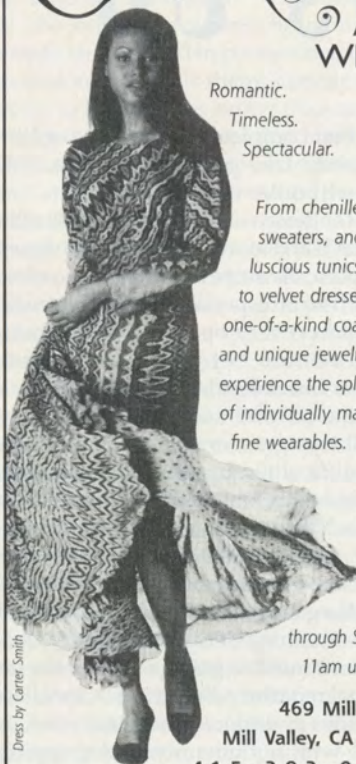
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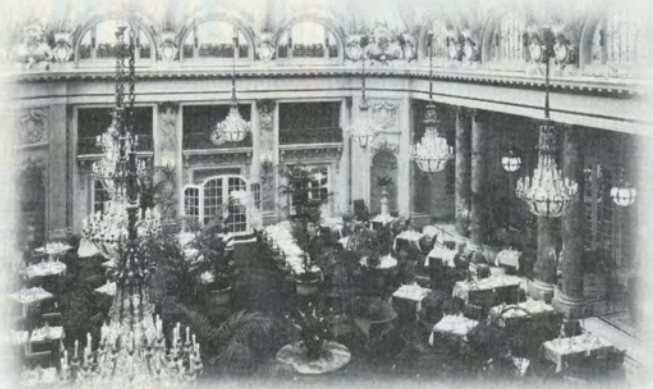
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By MALCOLM MOSHER, Jr.

L'*Incoronazione di Poppea* is set at the court of Nero in the Spring of 62 A.D., and the libretto appears to have been loosely drawn from parts of Books 14-15 of the *Annals* by Tacitus, arguably one of the finest historical works ever written. Most of the characters in the opera were historical figures and the main events did indeed occur, although the personalities of some are distorted and some events were taken out of context. Few today are unfamiliar with the name of Nero, who is rumored to have set fire to Rome and then blamed the Christians for it. The burning of Rome, however, assuming he was responsible for it, is only one incident of many that marked his character as that of a depraved monster. The aim of this essay is to provide you with a more detailed account of Rome under Nero and thereby correct the historical inaccuracies found in the opera.

Nero was born in 37 A.D., the son of Domitius Ahenobarbus and Agrippina, the latter being the great granddaughter of Augustus and sister of the crazed emperor Gaius, known as Caligula. Tacitus relates the rumor of a miraculous infancy, doubtless started by Nero's mother, wherein Nero was watched over by several serpents, stating further that Nero, feigning modesty, used to say there had only been one snake. This tale is ironic in that he certainly surrounded himself with two-legged vipers during much of his reign. The mothering of Nero, however, was left to his aunt Domitia Lepida, because Agrippina was accused of participation in a conspiracy against the throne in 39 A.D., and Caligula banished her.

When Caligula was assassinated in 41 A.D., Claudius, known to many today from the popular novel and television series *I, Claudius*, became emperor. Now on this third marriage, his wife was the sixteen-year-old Messalina who was some 36 years younger than he. Over the course of the next eight years, she would become a notorious sexual profligate, which eventually led to her being executed in 48 A.D. Messalina did, however, bear a daughter and a son to Claudius: Octavia and Britannicus respectively. Britannicus was to be the heir to the throne.

Claudius immediately began the search for a new wife and was persuaded to recall Agrippina from exile and marry her, even though she was his niece. The implication of incest was circumvented by the argument that their union would bring together two different branches of the family tree of Augustus. Furthermore, claiming that one can never have too many heirs, arguments favoring Agrippina were strengthened by her proven fertility—she was already the mother of Nero. Finally, taking the matter in her own hands as it were, Agrippina seduced her uncle, thereby clinching her case. Thus Claudius, now in his

late 50s, married for the fourth time, with his new bride being some 25 years younger than he. Should Claudius have expected better in taking as his fourth wife the widow of his third wife's brother? In a marvelous passage of ominous foreboding and brevity, Tacitus remarked "The vengeance on Messalina was just, but its consequences were grim."

Although Messalina and Agrippina were both promiscuous, the former had meddled in power and politics primarily for reasons of jealousy and revenge, while the latter lusted after supreme power, at any cost, and she determined the ultimate path to power lay not through her husband but through her son. To improve the position of Nero, she had her allies convince Claudius to betroth his daughter Octavia (perhaps 10 years old) to Nero (roughly 12), first by bringing about the complete ruin of the young man to whom she had originally been betrothed.

Next, Agrippina had her allies convince Claudius to adopt Nero. While Britannicus remained the front runner to the throne, Nero became the second in line by virtue of his adoptive father. In fact, Nero's original name had been Lucius Domitius Ahenobarbus, and he only assumed the name Nero when the adoption became official. Having successfully brought Nero into the royal family, Agrippina further enhanced Nero's status by having him appointed as the guardian of Britannicus by virtue of the fact that he was three years older than Britannicus. At the same time, she weakened the position of Britannicus by having all of his loyal tutors and friends dismissed and replaced with those who sought to rise in position through allegiance to her.

She won two further allies in the philosopher Seneca and Sextus Burrus. The former had been recalled from exile in 49 A.D. through her influence and was appointed tutor to Nero. In 51 A.D., she used her influence to have Burrus appointed commander of the Praetorian Guard. The official function of the Guard was to serve as the royal bodyguard, and, as a virtual army in residence at the capital, whoever obtained the loyalty of the Guard commanded real power. By having Burrus appointed, Agrippina won that loyalty for herself.

Nero's position was improved again in 53 A.D. with his actual marriage to Octavia, and, when he reached his 17th birthday in 54 A.D. and was now old enough to hold political office, the stage was set for the final step.



CAPITOLINE MUSEUM, ROME

According to Tacitus, Agrippina summoned a woman named Locusta who was infamous for dealing in poisons. The latter prepared a concoction that was sprinkled over mushrooms, a dish favored by Claudius. This method, however, did not achieve the desired result, for it had only made him ill. A physician in alliance with Agrippina was then summoned who, feigning to induce vomiting, stuck a feather laced with virulent poison down Claudius's throat. Death was immediate. Then, pretending to console Britannicus and keeping him by her side, Agrippina had Nero quietly taken to the camp of the Praetorian Guard where her alliance with Burrus assured that Nero would be proclaimed the new emperor.

Given Nero's youth, Seneca and Burrus acted officially as Nero's advisers, but in fact they essentially ran the government, and under their guidance, Nero attained widespread popularity during the early years of his reign through moderate government, and was even praised for clemency. Agrippina, however, realized very soon that the fulfillment of her dream—putting her son on the throne—did not bring all that she had desired. Seneca and Burrus, fully aware of her lust for power, of how she would ruthlessly exploit that power, and of her past domination of Nero, now exerted a stronger influence over Nero, thereby keeping Agrippina in check.

Free from the burden of having to run the state, Nero began to indulge himself in hedonistic pursuits, attracting a circle of friends

Malcolm Mosher, Jr. has been a frequent contributor of essays on history and opera for San Francisco Opera programs and is the author of *The Egyptian Book of the Dead Tradition at Akhmim During the Late Ptolemaic Period*, to be published by the British Museum Press in the summer of 1998.



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with the same interests. Ignoring Octavia altogether, he became involved with a freed-woman named Acte, an affair that infuriated Agrippina who viewed her son's entanglement with a former servant girl as an insult to her own prestige. She browbeat Nero in an attempt to have him drop Acte, but this only aroused his stubbornness. With Nero listening to Seneca and Burrus instead of her, she saw that she was losing her dominance. Finally, she started to favor Britannicus and let it be known that the latter had a better claim to the throne and that Nero was no more than an adopted intruder.

Nero, easily given to paranoia, reacted to the threat swiftly. Following his mother's precedent, he secretly summoned Locusta to prepare poison for Britannicus. As with Claudius earlier, the first attempt failed, at which point Nero, impatient to dispose of Britannicus as quickly as possible, threatened Locusta with torture. The latter then prepared a second potion. When it was deceptively passed to Britannicus, death was immediate. The other guests looked on with horror, but Nero just lay back and claimed that his stepbrother had always been an epileptic. Few, if any, were deceived.

Shortly thereafter, Agrippina's enemies accused her of plotting against Nero. While she successfully defended herself, she recognized her own position had become so tenuous that she withdrew from the scene for a while.

Nero's debaucheries increased and he found a new thrill. Disguised, he and his friends prowled the streets by night, stealing from shops and beating up the unlucky whom they encountered. On one occasion, he assaulted a

senator who vigorously fought back until he realized to his horror that his attacker was the emperor. The senator apologized, but Nero, to save himself from embarrassment, commanded that the man commit suicide. Commands to commit suicide were all too common and, if the victims wished their family members to survive, these commands were obeyed.

One of the youths who caroused with Nero was Otho, who appears in the opera as Ottone. This young man was married to, by all accounts, a wealthy and beautiful woman named Poppea Sabina whom he had seduced while she was still married to another. Poppea came from an aristocratic family and her mother, bearing the same name, had been forced to commit suicide by Messalina's agents. According to some contemporaries, Otho, with youthful enthusiasm, boasted regularly about his wife's beauty to Nero, while others suggested that he used his wife to gain further favor with the emperor. Whatever the case, Nero became infatuated with Poppea, she became infatuated with her rise in status and power, and Otho found himself the odd man out.

She frequently stayed in the palace, sometimes returning home several days later. Hence, while the first scene of Act I in the opera incorrectly depicts Ottone as merely Poppea's lover, the real Otho, as in the opera, may well have spent nights wondering if and when his wife was coming home. Finally, to get him out of the way, Nero appointed him governor of Lusitania, a region in western Spain. Poppea remained in Rome.

To those who criticized his complete disregard for Octavia, Nero is reputed to have replied "Just being the emperor's wife surely

ought to be enough to make her happy." When he proposed to divorce Octavia and legitimize his relationship with Poppea through marriage, he was opposed primarily by Agrippina, Seneca, and Burrus.

Not satisfied with being Nero's mistress, Poppea incessantly nagged and ridiculed Nero, stating that he was just a puppet, that others ruled the empire and that he was ruled by his mother. Some contemporaries cite a more insidious rival to Poppea. Nero, content with Seneca and Burrus running the empire, had long since abandoned himself to every sort of debauchery that included harlots, married women, men, and boys—Poppea was merely his principal playmate who was happy enough to let him indulge in whatever he fancied. These contemporaries suggest that Agrippina, in

an effort to win back influence over Nero, committed incestuous acts with him. Suetonius, writing several decades later, cites contemporary sources who stated that the two committed incest every time they rode in the same litter together, and that the stains on Nero's clothing as he emerged from the litter were proof enough.

At any rate, Nero gave in to Poppea and decided to murder his mother. His problem, however, was how to do it in such a way that he would not incriminate himself. Enter one Anicetus who had been a boyhood tutor to Nero, who hated Agrippina, and who was now the commander of a naval fleet. Anicetus suggested that a special ship could be constructed that would collapse and sink. Nero invited Agrippina to dine at an imperial residence on the shore at Antium, and he offered to take her home by ship later that night. According to plan, the ship did collapse, but only an attendant was killed by the falling lumber. Furthermore, the ship only sank after sailors deliberately tipped it. A second attendant, now in the water, desperately cried out "I am Agrippina! Help, help the emperor's mother!" and was immediately clubbed to death. Agrippina, seeing this, wisely remained silent and swam ashore.

When news of the fiasco reached Nero, he became desperate and consulted with Seneca and Burrus, who eventually agreed that it would be best to eliminate Agrippina once and for all. Anicetus was ordered to complete the task he had bungled. Reaching the villa later

Above (l. to r.): Lucius Domitius Ahenobarbus, a.k.a. Nero, 37-68 A.D.; Agrippina, 15-59 A.D.; Octavia, 42?-62 A.D.

that night where the shaken Agrippina had taken refuge, Anicetus and his assassins burst in and killed her. To the public, Nero stated that Agrippina had plotted against his life and that she had been executed. Contemporary sources add one more lurid detail to this episode. Nero seems to have thoroughly inspected the corpse of his mother and remarked on its shapely figure.

With Seneca and Burrus still opposed to divorce, Nero and Poppea were no closer to their objective. In 62 A.D., however, Burrus died. The latter had developed a large tumor in his throat and some thought it was the cause of his death. The more popular view was that Nero had Burrus poisoned. To command the Praetorian Guard, Nero appointed two men, one of whom was the infamous Tigellinus, a favorite of Poppea. The choice of Tigellinus, who would become a principal participant in the palace debaucheries, is summarized best by the words of Tacitus — "Nero found his unending immoralities and his evil reputation fascinating."

With Burrus out of the way, Nero's new circle of friends now attacked Seneca, stating that his wealth was vast, his estates grander than those of Nero's, and that he put Nero down while constantly seeking to elevate himself. We hear of similar charges against Seneca in the opera, although some of the accusations voiced there—murdering others to attain their wealth—are unfounded. Indeed, such charges precisely characterize the subsequent conduct of Nero and friends. With his influence completely undermined, Seneca left Rome to live on one of his estates.

The way was now paved for the elimination of Octavia, whose conduct throughout her marriage with Nero appears never to have been sullied with lascivious and criminal activities, and the slurs on her character in the opera are unfounded. Octavia retained enormous popularity among the masses, no doubt because she had remained uncorrupted and because she was the daughter of Claudius. Therefore, getting rid of her required cleverness.

Since Octavia had borne no children, Nero divorced her by reason of sterility, a ludicrous charge in that Nero had had nothing to do with her from the start. Nero married Poppea twelve days later, in the Spring of 62 A.D.. Not content with being empress, Poppea next paid a slave to state that he had had an affair with Octavia, and the latter was banished to an estate in Campania. The Roman populace responded to this with public protests. Nero, alarmed and scared by the demonstrations and riots, at first agreed to remarry Octavia, which caused happy mobs to overturn statues of Poppea. The latter then went to work on Nero, pleading that her own life was in danger. Further, she preyed upon Nero's fears by stating that as long as Octavia lived, rebellion by those loyal to Octavia was possible. Nero was convinced.



Seneca, 4 B.C.?–65 A.D.

Anicetus, the murderer of Nero's mother, was bribed to claim that he had been seduced by Octavia and that Octavia had become pregnant by him—so much for the charge of infertility. As Anicetus was the commander of a fleet, the implication was that this affair threatened the throne. Octavia was then exiled to an island under close military guard. Tacitus's account of her final days is gripping, pointing out that she had witnessed the murders of her father and brother, that her marriage had been an utter farce with Acte and Poppea preferred to herself, that she was falsely convicted of adultery and abortion, and that she was then exiled under tight military guard. Several days later, on June 9th, she was bound and her veins cut open. When she did not bleed quickly enough, although doubtless in excruciating pain, she was placed in an "exceedingly hot" steam bath where she died. Her head was then cut off and brought to Poppea. While the character of Octavia in the opera hardly deserves our respect, the fate of the real twenty-year old Octavia can only provoke deep sympathy.

To go on at length with the various atrocities of Nero's next six years is beyond the scope of this essay, and I direct readers to Tacitus and Suetonius for the most detailed accounts. I shall, however, touch upon three more incidents.

In 65 A.D., a conspiracy to kill Nero was betrayed, resulting in an enormous number of deaths, not only of those involved but also many falsely accused in order to seize their estates and wealth. Seneca was falsely accused of being an accomplice and the command for him to commit suicide arrived while he was dining with friends. He bade them to take courage and opened his veins. His distraught wife insisted on doing the same and dying with him. Given their age and apparently poor

circulation, however, their self-inflicted wounds brought much pain but did not cause sufficient bleeding. To induce more bleeding, he had cuts also made at the ankles and behind the knees, but this only increased his pain. Seeking to spare his wife from having to watch his own suffering, Seneca asked that she be taken to another room, and he tried poison, but, in his weakened state, it too did not bring effect. Finally he was transferred to a steam bath where he eventually died. When Nero heard that Seneca's wife was also attempting suicide, he ordered his agents to bind up her wounds, and she did indeed survive.

The conspiracy to kill Nero brought about the death of the famed poet Lucan, who appears briefly in the opera and whose epic poem *Pharsalia* is still widely admired today. Nero had fancied himself a poet, which made Lucan a rival to the emperor. When Lucan defeated Nero in a public contest, however, Nero forbade Lucan to participate in any future public contests and recitals, thereby eliminating his competitor. Lucan, in his mid-twenties and no doubt still outraged, threw his lot in with the conspirators and two years later was also forced to commit suicide.

Poppea did not actually live long enough to enjoy the fruits of her labors. She bore Nero a daughter in 63 A.D., one year after their marriage, but the child died in infancy. She was pregnant again in the autumn of 65 A.D., but she apparently scolded Nero for coming home too late from one of his revels, and he responded by kicking her in the abdomen, causing internal hemorrhaging and death to both her and the unborn child.

In 68 A.D., the military in the provinces decided that they had had enough. Galba marched his army upon Rome and was supported by none other than Poppea's previous husband Otho. Nero fled to a villa outside Rome. When told that he had been declared a public enemy by the Senate and that his execution, if captured, would be particularly brutal and grotesque, he decided upon suicide. The monster who had ordered the executions and forced suicides of so many, however, had no courage or stomach for such a task. He asked his three companions to go first, but they refused. In the end, his "suicide" was only accomplished by the agency of another.

As a postscript, Galba succeeded Nero as emperor, but he was murdered a few months later by those conspiring to place Otho on the throne. Like that of his predecessor, Otho's reign was also brief. Within three months, legions from the north rose in revolt, defeated Otho's troops, and Otho committed suicide rather than be taken alive.

In the words of a humorous television commercial advertising the History Channel and quoting an inscription at an entrance to the floor of the Coliseum in ancient Rome, "Gladiators faced many problems, but old age wasn't one of them." The same can be said for many during the era of Nero. ♦

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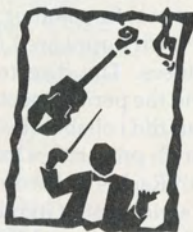
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NOWINSKI

(continued from p. 20)

The libretto, by Francesco Busenello, is a supreme piece of dramatic construction, subtle and searching in its characterization, beautifully controlled, varied but never diffuse. The smaller roles are all vividly drawn, in telling strokes: the grumbling soldiers on sentry duty, with their "Damn love, damn Poppea, Nero, and Rome, and the Army" in a rising sequence of exasperation (the two of them return to enliven *The Trojans*, even though Berlioz did not know *Poppea*); Poppea's bustling, garrulous old nurse Arnalta, so tender while watching over her charge (in an aria that Ezio Pinza once recorded); Octavia's nurse, who seeks to cheer her mistress with Despina-like advice; even the freedman who so reluctantly tells Seneca of Nero's decree. Yes, I know that between the poetic text printed by Busenello in 1656 and the two (divergent) copy-scores that survive there are many differences: passages unset, and passages inserted. There is no definitive authorial text of *Poppea*—no more than of *Don Giovanni* or *Don Carlos*, of *Carmen* or *Candide*. Each performance of the opera is likely to have a somewhat different text; and acclaimed "master-strokes" other than "Pur ti miro" may be due to other hands than Monteverdi's. But that does not reduce the greatness of an opera essentially, and largely, his.

The score must be "realized" before it can be performed. The instrumental *ritornelli* are written out (differently in the two surviving copies), but otherwise we have just the vocal lines above a bass line. Earlier editors devised accompaniments in full and provided modern players with unprob-

lematic, fully written-out parts that, under a conductor's beat, they could play from. Raymond Leppard's sensitive and skillful realizations of Monteverdi operas made them "available" to non-specialist houses, and they played a very big part in bringing these works into the modern repertory. They changed operatic life the world over. (San Francisco Opera used Leppard's *Poppea* in the 1975 and 1981 productions of the opera.) Against them could be argued the international imposition of a set text, with one man's cuts and transpositions "built in," and at times an exuberance and lushness of instrumentation and ornamentation that challenged the primacy of the sung line. Leppard's pioneering *Poppea* and *Ullisse* were initially—and memorably—devised in structure for the Glyndebourne Festival with its long dinner interval, and in *Ullisse* at pitches chosen for Janet Baker's great Penelope. The premieres were conducted by Leppard himself, with freedom and finesse. And they were stunning—opera at its highest.

But in other, less creative hands, the Leppard scores sometimes proved to be strait-jackets, and modern practice has turned toward a freer use of Monteverdi's "raw material"—the vocal lines over bass lines—made specific to the particular performers of the show, the theater in which they sing, and the individual spark of the continuo players who accompany their singing. In that spirit, Patrick Summers has prepared San Francisco's new *Poppea*. Such preparation is needed, of course. On the simplest level, someone must decide in advance whether the chord struck at a cadence over

this or that bass note is major or minor. And changes of clef in the bass line suggest changes of accompanying instrument—but without specifications of what instrument: someone must decide in advance who takes over from whom. Otherwise the singers are free to declaim their lines with maximum eloquence, and the accompanists are free to second them with inspired spur-of-the-moment—but not obtrusive—support.

Monteverdi's musical lines speak directly across the centuries to modern listeners. Like Mussorgsky and like Janáček, he had a dream of a melodic language whose movements would carry a "sense" even when the actual words were uncomprehended. In practice, he employed intricate librettos of verbal distinction, needing to be understood; scenic enhancement of the actions; and all the incidental "trappings" of opera. Because Monteverdi got the essentials right, *Poppea* proved to be a knockout in that Welsh production I've just come from: the staging was cartoon-strip, trendy Eurotrash (by an American, David Alden), and intrusive; but the singers were committed and true, Monteverdian. And *Poppea* also proved a knockout when, in 1982, the New York Lyric Opera played it with a "rock" accompaniment—synthesizers, drums, guitar, and bass—and a cast of directly word-communicative singers.

Monteverdi "speaks"—speaks to us today, more urgently, in each successive performance, with a directness that the centuries haven't dimmed. ♦

Above: San Francisco Opera, 1981 — John Duykers as Lucano and Eric Tappy as Nero.

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RUXANDRA DONOSE made her U.S. opera debut with San Francisco Opera as Nicklausse in the new staging of *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* in 1996. The young Romanian mezzo-soprano has already received critical and popular acclaim in leading opera houses and concert halls throughout the world. As a winner of the 1990 ARD International Vocal Competition in Munich, she made a highly praised Vienna Staatsoper debut in 1992 as Varvara in *Katya Kabanova*. Since that debut Donose has maintained a close relationship with the Staatsoper and Volksoper,

returning every season for roles including Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Nicklausse, Dorabella in *Così fan tutte*, Hänsel in *Hänsel und Gretel* and the title role of *Carmen*. During the 1997-98 season, the mezzo made her debut with the Royal Opera, Covent Garden as Sesto in a new staging of *Giulio Cesare*, and was immediately re-engaged for performances as Annio in a new production of *La Clemenza di Tito*. That same season, she made her debut with the Berlin Symphony Orchestra as Marguerite in *La Damnation de Faust* led by Kent Nagano. Earlier this year she made her debut with the Dresden Staatsoper as Cherubino and portrayed Fyodor in *Boris Godunov* at the Salzburg Easter Festival. In concert, Donose appeared with the Philadelphia Orchestra in Bach's *Magnificat* and at the Salzburg Festival in performances of works by Mozart. Among her upcoming engagements are Sesto in *La Clemenza di Tito* at the Glyndebourne Festival; Giovanna Seymour in *Anna Bolena* with the Finnish National Opera; the Composer in *Ariadne auf Naxos* with the Minnesota Orchestra; and concerts with the Orchestre de Paris and the Cleveland Symphony. Her recordings include Schubert's *Ständchen*, Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*, Bach's B-Minor Mass under Sergiu Celibidache, and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony conducted by Béla Drahos.



Mezzo-soprano **LORRAINE HUNT**, a native of San Francisco, began her musical career as a violinist, performing with numerous Bay Area organizations. She is now widely acclaimed as a recitalist, concert singer and operatic performer. The artist has sung such diverse roles as Charpentier's *Médée*, Mozart's Sesto, Bizet's *Carmen* and Handel's Xerxes. Performances during the 1996-97 season included Charlotte in *Werther* at the Opéra de Lyon; *Giulio Cesare* at the Opéra National de Paris; the title role of *Xerxes* with New York City Opera; *Phèdre* in

Rameau's *Hippolyte et Aricie* at the Palais Garnier in Paris and the Brooklyn Academy of Music (also recorded and winner of a 1997 Gramophone Award); and Triraksha in the world premiere of Peter Lieberson's *Ashoka's Dream* at Santa Fe Opera. On the concert stage Hunt was heard in Bach's *Magnificat* with the San Francisco Symphony; Berg's *Seven Early Songs* with the Berlin Philharmonic; Handel arias with the Handel & Haydn Society at Tanglewood; and in a program of Mozart and Brahms at the Mostly Mozart Festival. Current and future engagements include a performance at the Hollywood Bowl and a European tour with the Los Angeles Philharmonic; an opening night appearance at the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center; a recital at London's Wigmore Hall; Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex*; *Symphony of Psalms* at the Netherlands Opera and Salzburg Festival; and the role of Myrtle Wilson in Harbison's *The Great Gatsby* at the Metropolitan Opera (world premiere) and Lyric Opera of Chicago. In addition to *Hippolyte et Aricie*, her discography includes over six works by Handel, Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, Monteverdi's *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse*, Britten's Grammy-nominated *Phaedra*, Charpentier's *Médée*, Bach's *Anna Magdalena's Notebook*, and a recording of Schumann *Lieder*. She is also featured in videotaped performances of Peter Sellars's productions of *Don Giovanni* (Donna Elvira), *Giulio Cesare* (Sesto), and *Theodora* (Irene).



Soprano **ZVETELINA VASSILEVA** made her United States opera debut with the San Francisco Opera in 1994 as Leonora in *Il Trovatore* and returned the following season to sing the role of Gorislava in the Company premiere of *Ruslan and Lyudmila*. A native of Bulgaria, she received her diploma from the Sofia Musical Academy, where she majored in vocal interpretation. Her studies continued in Italy, where she coached with Evghenia Dundekova and became a winner of the 1992 International "Tito Schipa" Competition. She was also the recipient of a scholarship from the Friends of La Scala, which entitled her to study with celebrated tenor and Verdi specialist Carlo Bergonzi.

Vassileva made her opera debut at the Sofia Opera in the role of Amelia in *Un Ballo in Maschera*, subsequently singing Leonora in *Il Trovatore* and Elisabetta in *Don Carlo* in the Bulgarian capital. During the 1996-97 season Vassileva made an acclaimed debut at the Wexford Festival singing the title role of Fibich's *Šarka*, subsequently singing Liù in *Turandot* in Sofia and Tatyana in *Eugene Onegin* with Palm Beach Opera. She most recently triumphed as Desdemona in *Otello* for her Covent Garden debut, made her first appearance in Toronto as Liù, and performed Judith in *Duke Bluebeard's Castle* at the Monnaie in Brussels. Among the artist's future plans are Mařenka in *The Bartered Bride* at Covent Garden and *Eugene Onegin* for Michigan Opera Theatre. In addition to her operatic activity, the soprano has been heard in concert in Russia, Poland, Bulgaria and the Netherlands. Recordings include *Prince Igor* (Yaroslavna) and a disk of arias and duets with Bulgarian tenor Kaludi Kaludov.



1996-97 Adler Fellow **PEGGY KRIHA DYE** made her San Francisco Opera debut in the summer of 1996 as Musetta in *La Bohème*, subsequently appearing with the Company during the 1996-97 season in *Die Fledermaus* (Adele), the West Coast premiere of *Harvey Milk*, and *Salome*. The soprano most recently portrayed Kate Pinkerton in San Francisco Opera's new staging of *Madama Butterfly* last summer and appeared with the Company during the 1997-98 season in *Death in Venice* and *Le Nozze di Figaro*. Winner of a prestigious scholarship grant

from The Liberace Foundation, Kriha Dye was a participant in the 1993 Merola Opera Program who sang the role of Nannetta in *Falstaff* and her first *Fledermaus* Adele. In 1995, she appeared as Barbarina in the Merola Program staging of *Le Nozze di Figaro*, repeating the part and singing the role of Susanna on the subsequent Western Opera Theater tour of the same production. Additional Opera Center credits include Olympia in the Showcase '96 production of *The Aspern Papers* and Fulvia in the '97 Showcase presentation of Handel's *Ezio*. A native of Brainerd, Minnesota, Kriha Dye received her undergraduate degree in music from St. Cloud University and completed two years of graduate work at the Manhattan School of Music. While in Manhattan, she appeared in many new productions, performing the roles of Charlotte in Ronald Perera's *The Yellow Wallpaper* and Berenice in Rossini's *L'Occasione fa il ladro*. She also spent two years as a member of the Juilliard Opera Center. The young artist will appear with the Company later this season as Stella (second cast) in the world premiere staging of *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

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Since her 1991 debut season in *War and Peace* and *Elektra*, **CATHERINE COOK** has appeared with San Francisco Opera in *Boris Godunov*, *Christophe Colomb*, *The Makropulos Case*, *Ruslan and Lyudmila*, *Faust*, *Die Walküre*, *Prince Igor*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and *Le Nozze di Figaro*. A 1990 Merola Opera Program participant and 1991-92 Adler Fellow, the mezzo-soprano's credits for the Opera Center include the title role of *Ariadante*, Meg Page in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and a highly acclaimed Schwabacher Debut Recital. A native of Chicago, the artist made her 1994 Lyric Opera of Chicago debut as the Innkeeper in *Boris Godunov*, followed by Berta in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, a role which was the vehicle for her 1995 Portland Opera debut as well. Among her most recent engagements are a return to Chicago in *Peter Grimes* and *Le Nozze di Figaro*, her Lincoln Center debut in Poulenc's *Les Mamelles de Tirésias* with L'Opéra Français de New York, and *The Love for Three Oranges* (Fata Morgana) with Portland Opera. Cook has sung in concert (Toledo Symphony, San Francisco Symphony Pops, Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra), and can be heard on a recording of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with the Cincinnati Philharmonia. She will make her Metropolitan Opera debut next season in *Katya Kabanova*.



NICOLLE FOLAND, who recently completed her second year as an Opera Center Adler Fellow, won international praise for her performance as Musetta in San Francisco Opera's 1996 production of *La Bohème* and was applauded last summer as Kate Pinkerton in the Company's new staging of *Madama Butterfly*. Most recently, she scored successes for the Company last season as Tatyana in a performance of *Eugene Onegin* and as the Countess in the January presentation of *Le Nozze di Figaro*, as well as for the Festival Opera of Walnut Creek in the title role of *La Traviata*. She was named the recipient of a 1997 ARIA Foundation Award, a prestigious prize given annually to only three promising singers selected by silent jury. The soprano made her Company debut in 1995 as Kate Pinkerton, also performing that season in stagings of *La Cenerentola* (Clorinda), *Die Walküre* (Gerhilde), and *Rusalka* (First Wood Nymph). During San Francisco Opera's 1996-97 season, she was seen in *Die*

Fledermaus (Rosalinda), *Carmen* (Frasquita), *Aida* (High Priestess) and the West Coast premiere of *Harvey Milk* (First Arrival, Supervisor Silver). In addition, she appeared as soloist in a special concert with Plácido Domingo and recently made her San Francisco recital debut as part of the Opera Center's 1997 Schwabacher Debut Recital series. A veteran of two Merola Opera Programs and two Western Opera Theater national tours, Foland's Opera Center credits include Adele and Rosalinda in the 1993 production of *Die Fledermaus*; Donna Anna in the 1994 staging of *Don Giovanni*; and Tina in the 1996 Showcase production of Argento's *The Aspern Papers*. Earlier this season the soprano made her debut with Los Angeles Opera and with Seattle Opera, both in the role Musetta, and was seen as Micaëla in *Carmen* at Cincinnati Opera. Upcoming performances include Musetta in Bilbao. Foland, a native of Des Moines, received a master of music degree from the University of Northern Iowa.



CHRISTINA LAMBERTI, a second year Adler Fellow, is a native of Phillipsburg, New Jersey, and 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. Maurrant in *Street Scene*. She then studied with Claudia Pinza at Duquesne University and attended Pinza's EPCASO (Ezio Pinza Council for American Singers of Opera) program held in Italy. She has also apprenticed at the Pittsburgh Opera Center and studied 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*). She made her Opera Company of Philadelphia debut in 1996 as the High Priestess in *Aida*. A 1996 Merola Opera Program participant, Lamberti appeared in *Death in Venice* and *Elektra* as part of San Francisco Opera's 1997-98 season, and sang the title role of the Opera Center's 1998 Showcase production of *Iphigénie en Tauride*.



Mezzo-soprano **MARTHA JANE HOWE** has made numerous appearances with many of the leading opera companies in North America. A native of San Diego, she made her professional opera debut in 1979 with San Diego Opera. Since then, she has appeared with the companies of Chicago, Toronto, Montreal, Washington, D.C., Santa Fe, Los Angeles, Baltimore, Long Beach, Portland and Boston, among others. With the Lyric Opera of Chicago she has performed in *The Bartered Bride*, *The Gambler*, *La Sonnambula*, *McTeague* and the *Ring* cycle. In

San Diego she has been heard in *The Rape of Lucretia*, *Boris Godunov*, *Les Dialogues des Carmélites*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Eugene Onegin*, *La Traviata* and, most recently, *Roméo et Juliette*. Additional credits include numerous roles with Long Beach Opera, *Faust* and *Elektra* for Los Angeles Opera, *Der Fliegende Holländer* at the Canadian Opera Company, *Salome* at Arizona Opera, and Fauré's *Pénélope* (title role) with Berkeley Opera. Howe also performs in concert, and has sung with, among others, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Minnesota Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Midsummer Mozart Festival, New York Choral Society, Santa Barbara Symphony and Berkeley Symphony (May 1998, Mahler's *Das Klagende Lied*). She returns to the San Francisco Symphony later this season for Beethoven's Ninth under Nicholas McGegan.



Since singing the role of Nero in *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* at Glimmerglass Opera in 1994 (the part he also sang at the Munich Opera and the Florida Grand Opera), countertenor **DAVID DANIELS** has achieved overwhelming acclaim on the international opera and concert scene. In great demand as a Handel interpreter, he has been seen as Sesto in *Julius Caesar* at London's Covent Garden (a role which will serve as his Metropolitan Opera debut next year), Didymus in *Theodora* at the Glyndebourne Festival, in the title role of *Tamerlano* at Glimmerglass,

and as Arsamene in *Xerxes* at New York City Opera. With London's English National Opera he sang Oberon in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Daniels has appeared in recital at Lincoln Center and London's Wigmore Hall, among others, and has been a soloist with orchestras in San Francisco, New York, the Salzburg Festival, Vienna, etc. His first solo recording of Handel arias will be released later this season. Upcoming engagements include Arsace in Handel's *Partenope* at Glimmerglass Opera, Arsamene with the Canadian Opera Company, the above mentioned Sesto at the Met, Oberon at the Rome Opera, in addition to several concert tours throughout the U.S. and abroad.



1997-98 Adler Fellow **MEL ULRICH** made his first San Francisco Opera appearances in the roles of Sharpless and Prince Yamadori in the 1997 staging of *Madama Butterfly*. He performed in *Death in Venice* and *Pelléas et Mélisande* during the Company's 1997-98 season. The baritone, originally from Puerto Rico, received his bachelor of music and bachelor of arts degrees from the University of Washington, as well as an Artist Diploma from the Oberlin Conservatory. A finalist in this year's International Belvedere Competition, his additional competition victories

are the Seattle Civic Opera Competition, the Brechemin Scholarship, and a two-year fellowship with the Singers' Club of Cleveland. In addition, the young artist was a national finalist in the MacAllister Awards (1994) and a Sullivan Award Winner (1997). His appearances with Seattle Opera include Napoleon's aide in *War and Peace*, Amantio di Nicolao in *Gianni Schicchi* and Brühlmann in *Werther*. Ulrich also performed with Wolf Trap Opera as Prosdocimo in *Il Turco in Italia*, Pantalone in Mozart's *Griffith's The Jewel Box*, and the Speaker in *Die Zauberflöte*. During the 1995-96

season he was a Principal Resident Artist with Opera San José where he performed the title roles of *Don Giovanni*, *Tartuffe* and *Eugene Onegin*, as well as Figaro (*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*), Guglielmo (*Così fan tutte*), Escamillo (*Carmen*), Germont (*La Traviata*), Zurga (*Les Pêcheurs de Perles*) and Dr. Falke (*Die Fledermaus*). A member of the 1996 Merola Opera Program, Ulrich sang Figaro in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and repeated the role on the subsequent Western Opera Theater 30th-anniversary tour of the same production. The baritone most recently appeared as Tarquinius in *The Rape of Lucretia* with the Vienna Kammeroper and as Oreste in the Opera Center's 1998 Showcase production of *Iphigénie en Tauride*. Future engagements include *Carmen* at the Vienna Volksoper and *Faust* (Valentin) for Orlando Opera.



Tenor **BARRY BANKS** has established himself as one of his generation's fine lyric tenors following his appearances in opera and concert. A graduate of the Royal Northern College of Music, his operatic appearances to date include the title role of *Candide* for the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor* for Welsh National Opera, and Tom Rakewell in *The Rake's Progress* for Glyndebourne Touring Opera. Banks was the first British singer in the postwar era to be engaged by the Leipzig Opera to sing Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte*, a role

with which he has enjoyed success at the Salzburg Festival, the Monnaie in Brussels, for Glyndebourne Touring Opera and for Scottish Opera. Additional roles include Aufidio in *Lucio Silla* and Andrés in *Wozzeck* for Frankfurt Opera, as well as Don Narciso in *Il Turco in Italia* in Brussels and Paris. Among his recent engagements are Flute in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for his Metropolitan Opera debut; his first Nemorino (*L'Elisir d'Amore*) and Argirio (*Tancredi*) in Frankfurt; Gianetto in *La Gazza Ladra* for Opera North; *Elixir of Love* for English National Opera; the title part of *Le Comte Ory* at Glyndebourne; and *Lucio Silla* at the Salzburg Festival. In addition to his concert performances, Banks can be seen on videos of *Billy Budd* (ENO production) and *Der Schauspieler* (filmed at Buckingham Palace). Recordings include *La Calisto* under René Jacobs, *La Traviata* with Zubin Mehta, *Un Ballo in Maschera* led by Carlo Rizzi, and *Trial by Jury* under Charles Mackerras.



Bass **ROBERT LLOYD**, born in Essex and educated at Oxford, began his life as an academic historian, turning to a singing career at the age of 28. In 1972, he was appointed principal bass at the Royal Opera at Covent Garden, where he proceeded to portray roles from an enormous range of repertoire, while developing a freelance operatic and concert career which has brought him to most major performing centers of the world. His U.S. debut took place in 1975 with the San Francisco Opera (Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte*), and he has since returned here to

portray Méphistophélès in *Faust* (1986), King Philip in *Don Carlos* (1986) and *Don Carlo* (1992), Banquo in *Macbeth* (1994), Claudius in *Hamlet* (1996), and Arkel in *Pelléas et Mélisande* (1997). Lloyd was the first British bass to sing the title role of *Boris Godunov* at Covent Garden (1983), in the celebrated Tarkovsky production (seen at the War Memorial in 1992) which then traveled to the Kirov Opera in Leningrad (1990) with the same protagonist. Following the international telecast of the same, he returned to the production at the Vienna State Opera in 1991, under the direction of Claudio Abbado. Recent and current engagements include performances and a recording of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Bottom) with the London Symphony Orchestra; *Turandot* at the Opéra National de Paris; *Die Zauberflöte* and *Pelléas* at the Salzburg Festival; *Pelléas* and *Roméo et Juliette* at the Metropolitan Opera; *Don Giovanni* and Massenet's *Chérubin* at Covent Garden; as well as *Pelléas* and *Parsifal* in Amsterdam. The bass has made over 75 audio and visual recordings, ranging from Monteverdi to Mozart to Stravinsky and Wagner. A frequent guest on radio and television, he was the subject of a BBC special on the bass voice, titled *Six*

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Foot Cinderella. Lloyd is President of British Youth Opera and member of the Executive Committee of the Musicians' Benevolent Fund. His awards include the title of Commander of the British Empire (CBE), bestowed upon him by Queen Elizabeth in 1991.



Tenor **NORMAN SHANKLE** continues his association with San Francisco Opera Center as a 1998-99 Adler Fellow after completing the Merola Opera Program in 1996 and 1997. Merola credits include performances in the '96

productions of *The Elixir of Love* and *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, in addition to the 1997 stagings of *La Cenerentola* and *Carmen*. He is a veteran of two national tours with Western Opera Theater—the '96 *Barbiere* (Count Almaviva) and '97's *Carmen* (Remendado). A native of Winchester, Virginia, Shankle received his undergraduate degree in voice from Shenandoah University. Previous engagements include the lead role of The Dwarf in the world premiere of Russell Woollens's *The Birthday of the Infanta*, presented by Opera Americana at the Kennedy Center; *Luisa Miller* with Washington Opera; *Roméo et Juliette* (Benvolio) and *Samson et Dalila* with Washington Concert Opera; as well as the *Messiah* with the Paul Hill Chorale. He has also performed as soloist with the Washington Oratorio Society and Choral Arts Society of Washington, among others. The tenor recently sang the role of Pylade in the Opera Center's 1998 Showcase production of *Iphigénie en Tauride*.



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

in 1994, when he appeared in productions of *The Dangerous Liaisons*, *The Fiery Angel* and *Lucia di Lammermoor*. His engagements during the 1996-97 season included *Elektra* and *Salome* with the Canadian Opera Company; *Salome* for Houston Grand Opera; and Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte* for both Mississippi Opera and Knoxville Opera. Last summer he appeared in Conrad Susa's *Transformations* at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis and sang the role of Curley in Glimmerglass Opera's production of Carlisle Floyd's *Of Mice and Men*. Among his most recent engagements are *The Love For Three Oranges* with Portland Opera and *L'Incoronazione di Pop-*

pea (Nerone) for Utah Opera. In past seasons Lord has performed with San Francisco Opera Center's Western Opera Theater, and at the Spoleto Festival, Dallas Opera, Tulsa Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago and Opera Delaware, among others. His concert appearances have included Hannibal Peterson's *African Portrait* with the Detroit Symphony as well as Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with the Juilliard Orchestra and Santa Fe Symphony. A member of the Juilliard Opera Center for two consecutive seasons, he was heard there as Judge Danforth in Robert Ward's *The Crucible* and in the title role of Vaughan Williams's *Hugh the Drover*. The tenor will be seen as Bob Boles in the Company's staging of *Peter Grimes* later this year.



1997-98 Adler Fellow **JOHN RELYEA** made his 1996 San Francisco Opera debut as Colline in *La Bohème* and went on to sing roles in *Hamlet*, *Lohengrin*, *Harvey Milk*, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* and *Salome* during the Company's 1996-

97 season. He appeared on the stage of the War Memorial last season as Angelotti in *Tosca*, Melthal in *Guillaume Tell* and Figaro in the January performances of *Le Nozze di Figaro*. A member of the 1995 Merola Opera Program, his Opera Center credits include a critically-acclaimed Schwabacher Debut Recital, Barelli in the Opera Center's Showcase '96 production of *The Aspern Papers* and Varo in Handel's *Ezio* for the '97 Showcase. At the age of 26, the bass-baritone has already been engaged by many prominent symphony orchestras. During the 1997-98 season he made debuts with the San Francisco Symphony (title role of *Elijah*), Cleveland Orchestra (Bach's Mass in B-Minor), Philadelphia Orchestra (the Bach *Magnificat*), and Minnesota Orchestra (*Messiah*). Relyea will appear with the Cleveland Orchestra this summer in the Mozart Requiem and again with the San Francisco Symphony for Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. He made his debut at the Hollywood Bowl last summer as Zuniga in concert performances of *Carmen*, and has most recently appeared as soloist with the orchestras of Montreal, Toronto, Quebec and Calgary, and as Colline with Vancouver Opera and Melthal with Washington Concert Opera. Highlights of next season include Rodolfo in *La Sonnambula* with the Opera Orchestra of New York, Basilio in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* with the Opera Company of Philadelphia, and multiple engagements with San Francisco Opera. Relyea studied with Galina Vishnevskaya and Tom Krause while at the Curtis Institute and continues to study with his father, renowned Canadian bass-baritone Gary Relyea. The young artist was recently honored with a prestigious ARIA award.

ARTIST PROFILES



1998-99 Adler Fellow **ALFREDO DAZA** participated in the 1997 Merola Opera Program, performing the role of Le Dancaire in *Carmen*. Originally from Puebla City, Mexico, the baritone began his studies at the Puebla State Conservatory of Music and was a national winner in the Carlo Morelli National Competition in Mexico at the age of 16. Soon after, he received an undergraduate degree in voice from the National Conservatory of Music. A scholarship from the National Foundation for Culture and Arts enabled him to represent Mexico in the

1996 Pacific Music Festival in Sapporo, where he sang Guglielmo in a touring production of *Così fan tutte* throughout Japan. Additional roles performed include the title part of *Don Giovanni*, Figaro in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Marcello in *La Bohème*, Silvio in *Pagliacci*, and Zaretsky in *Eugene Onegin*. In concert, Daza has been heard in, among others, *Carmina Burana*, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, Mozart's Requiem and Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle*, as well as in numerous zarzuela performances in Mexico. Recent Opera Center credits include a Schwabacher Debut Recital and the role of the Scythian Commander in the 1998 Showcase presentation of *Iphigénie en Tauride*.



Tenor **DENNIS PETERSEN** has been applauded in a variety of operatic roles, as well as for his appearances in concerts, recitals and oratorio performances. Since his 1985 San Francisco Opera debut, the 1984 Merola Opera Program graduate has appeared here in over 10 seasons and 20 productions. Roles sung for the Company include Pang in *Turandot*, Vogelgesang in *Die Meistersinger*, Chekalinsky in *The Queen of Spades*, Don Basilio in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, the Marquis in *Lulu*, Pisandro in *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria*, Spoletta in *Tosca*, Harvey in

Anna Bolena, Ovlur in *Prince Igor* and, last summer, Goro in *Madama Butterfly*. Elsewhere, his most recent operatic appearances have included *Capriccio*, *Die Zauberflöte* (Monostatos), *Peter Grimes* (Bob Boles), *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* (Drunken Guest), and *Das Rheingold* (Mime) at the Metropolitan Opera; *Rheingold's* Mime, Missail in *Boris Godunov* and *L'Incredibile* in *Andrea Chénier* at the Lyric Opera of Chicago; Leo in *Antheil's Transatlantic* for Minnesota Opera; the Dancing Master in *Ariadne auf Naxos* with Florida Grand Opera; *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Tannhäuser* and *Fidelio* with New Orleans Opera; in addition to *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* and Donizetti's *Il Duca d'Alba* at the Spoleto Festivals in the U.S. and Italy. Petersen has also been featured in concert with the Boston Symphony, Phoenix Symphony Orchestra, Calgary Philharmonic, New York Choral Society, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, and New Jersey Symphony. Among his future plans are *Turandot* and *Butterfly* for the Company, *Lizzie Borden* at New York City Opera, and *Die Zauberflöte* at the Met.



MARC DAY, a seventh grader at Salt Lake City's Madeleine Choir School, recently toured throughout Italy with the Choir, performing at the Duomo in Florence, as well as at St. Peter's Basilica and St. Ignatius Church in Rome. Additional engagements include a performance at San Francisco's Grace Cathedral as part of World AIDS Day, and being a soloist with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir in their 1997 Thanksgiving Day broadcast. With Utah Opera he has appeared in productions of *Carmen*, *La Bohème* and Britten's *The Prodigal Son*. First place winner of the University of Utah's *Crescendo!* Piano Composition Contest, the 12-year-old's hobbies include golf, baseball, swimming and composing.



Twelve-year-old **MICHAEL DENOS** made his San Francisco Opera debut during the 1997-98 season as Yniold in *Pelléas et Mélisande*, a role he sang earlier this year in Tokyo with the New Japan Philharmonic. He also recently performed in the Broadway production of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Coat* and was heard as soloist at the National Music Educators Convention. In addition to being a member and soloist with the International Childrens Choir since the age of seven, he has recorded and performed throughout Italy, Germany, Hungary,

Austria and the Czech Republic. His young career in opera includes appearing in *Carmen* with the Utah Opera Children's Chorus and singing the role of Miles in Britten's *The Turn of the Screw*, again for Utah Opera. He has also performed in *Babes in Toyland* with Salt Lake City Repertoire Theatre and appeared on an episode of the television series *Touched by an Angel*. The sixth grader, a native of Utah, comes from a family of eleven.



1996-97 Adler Fellow **STUART SKELTON** performed a number of roles for San Francisco Opera during his 1996-97 debut season, appearing in *Hamlet*, *Lohengrin*, *Carmen*, *Harvey Milk*, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, *Die Fledermaus*, *Salome* and *Aida*. Roles performed for the Company last season included Borsa in *Rigoletto* and Rodolphe in *Guillaume Tell*. First-prize winner of last year's prestigious International Belvedere Competition, the tenor made his operatic debut in his native Australia as Alfredo in *La Traviata* with Rockdale Opera Company. The

winner of two of Australia's most important competitions, the Marianne Mathy Award and the McDonald's Aria Award, he made his 1993 Australian Opera debut in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. Skelton completed his master of music degree from the University of Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music where his credits included Sam Polk in *Susannah* and Peter Quint in *The Turn of the Screw*. Concert engagements include Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with the Marin Symphony, the Coronation Mass with the S.F. Midsummer Mozart Festival, as well as Verdi's Requiem with the Lubbock Symphony Orchestra and the San Mateo Masterworks Choral. San Francisco Opera Center credits include Piquillo in *La Périchole* as well as Don Basilio and Don Curzio in *Le Nozze di Figaro* for the 1995 Merola Opera Program; the reprise of his Figaro roles for Western Opera Theater's 1995 national tour; Aspern in the 1996 Showcase production of *The Aspern Papers*; and the role of Massimo in the '97 Showcase presentation of Handel's *Ezio*. Next season, Skelton will return to Opera Australia to sing the role of Alfredo in *La Traviata*.



The 1995-96 season marked **BRUCE BAUMER's** debut with New York City Opera in *La Traviata* and *The Dreyfus Affair*. Other engagements that season included Sparafucile in *Rigoletto* for Opera Memphis, Timur in *Turandot* with Opera Omaha, as well as Fafner and Hunding for Arizona Opera's *Ring* cycle. The following season the bass returned to City Opera for *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, *Der Rosenkavalier* and *Carmen*; made his Pittsburgh Opera debut as Sarastro in *The Magic Flute*; appeared with Eugene Opera as Raimondo in *Lucia di Lammermoor* and Sarastro; and was seen at Santa Fe Opera in productions of *Ashoka's Dream* and *Arabella*. Among his current and future plans are *Madama Butterfly* for Opera Omaha, *Rigoletto* with the Harrisburg Symphony, and *Samson et Dalila* for Opera Memphis. Baumer studied at Indiana University with Margaret Harshaw and at Yale University.

ARTIST PROFILES



PATRICK SUMMERS was recently appointed Music Adviser and Music Director Designate of the Houston Grand Opera. Long associated with San Francisco Opera, he served as Music Director of the Opera Center from 1990-1994 and made his Company conducting debut in 1990 with performances of *Die Fledermaus*. He has since led SFO productions of *Così fan tutte*, *La Traviata*, Rossini's *Ermione* (U.S. premiere) and *Otello*, L'Elisir d'Amore, *Tosca*, *La Bohème*, *La Fille du Régiment*, *La Cenerentola*, *Faust*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, as well as last season's new staging of *Rigoletto* and the revival of *Guillaume Tell*. He also led the Company's 1994 and '95 Opera in the Park concerts. Maestro Summers has numerous credits for the various programs of the Opera Center — Showcase presentations, Merola Opera Program productions, and Western Opera Theater tours. He has traveled extensively for the Center, leading performances of *Carmen* in Guam and Japan, *Tosca* in Shanghai, and *La Bohème* in Japan. Elsewhere, he has been applauded at Lisbon's Teatro Nacional São Carlos (*Tosca*, *Ariadne auf Naxos*), Wolf Trap Opera (*Giulio Cesare*), Rome Opera (*Manon Lescaut*), Calgary Opera (*Lucia di Lammermoor*, *La Cenerentola*), Opera Australia (*La Cenerentola*, *La Bohème*, *Lucrezia Borgia*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Werther*, *Iphigénie en Tauride*), Washington Opera (*La Finta Giardiniera*), Dallas Opera (*L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, *The Tempest*), Opéra de Bordeaux (*Don Pasquale*) and Seattle Opera (*Bohème*), among others. He also recently led concerts at London's Royal Festival Hall, Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris, the Deutsche Oper Berlin, and with the National Orchestre de l'Aquitaine in Bordeaux. A new recording with Summers leading the English Chamber Orchestra features Olga Borodina and Dmitri Hvorostovsky in a program of arias and duets. In the future, the maestro will lead *Norma* and performances of *A Streetcar Named Desire* for the Company; *Die Fledermaus* for his Metropolitan Opera debut; *Giulio Cesare* in Bordeaux; and Handel's *Rinaldo* for Opera Australia. He is also scheduled to conduct the world premiere of Jake Heggie's *Dead Man Walking* for San Francisco Opera during the 2000-2001 season. A native of Indiana, Summers graduated from the Indiana University School of Music.



CHRISTOPHER ALDEN, who staged both *Harvey Milk* and *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* during the Company's 1996-97 season, has enjoyed a long and successful association with San Francisco Opera. He began his directing career with Western Opera Theater's 1975 production of *The Tales of Hoffmann*, subsequently staging a WOT *L'Elisir d'Amore*; the acclaimed U.S. premieres of Reimann's *The Ghost Sonata* for the Opera Center and Henze's *Das Verratene Meer* for the main stage; the West Coast premiere of Argento's *The Aspern Papers* for the Opera Center; the 1993 season-opening production of *I Vespri Siciliani*, and the 1995 revival of *La Cenerentola*. Alden has staged productions for numerous national opera companies as well as in Great Britain, France, Switzerland and Israel. Recent highlights include *L'Italiana in Algeri* for Glimmerglass Opera and New York City Opera; *Cavalleria Rusticana/Pagliacci* for the New Israeli Opera and Opera Zuid; *Turandot* for the Welsh National, English National and Scottish Operas; *Der Fliegende Holländer* for the Canadian Opera Company; "A Celebration of the American Musical" (telecast live on PBS); *Lucia di Lammermoor* for Boston Lyric Opera; *La Cenerentola* for Minnesota Opera; and *La Traviata* for the New Israeli Opera. Among the director's future assignments are a new staging of Virgil Thomson's *The Mother of Us All* for Glimmerglass Opera, *Il Trovatore* for Antwerp's De Vlaamse Opera, *Madama Butterfly* with New Israeli Opera, and *La Traviata* for Houston Grand Opera.



ROBERT PERDZIOLA's designs have been featured in San Francisco Opera's new productions of *Suor Angelica* (1990) and *Hamlet* (1996 Company premiere). In addition to designing numerous productions for Santa Fe Opera, Perdziola has worked at the Hannover Staatsoper, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Skylight Opera Theatre, Glimmerglass Opera, Manhattan School of Music, McCarter Theatre and American Place Theatre, among others. In film, he has worked on the design teams of Woody Allen's *Shadows and Fog* and Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire*. He created the opera and theater settings, and a series of societal portraits for Martin Scorsese's *The Age of Innocence*. For the Juilliard School, he designed costumes for the revival of Christopher Durang's musical *A History of the American Film*. Recent opera assignments include *Così fan tutte* for Skylight Opera Theatre in addition to *La Traviata* and *Ara-bella* at Santa Fe Opera. Perdziola will be designing new costumes for *Peter Grimes* during the Company's 1998-99 season.



Lighting Director for San Francisco Opera since 1976, **THOMAS J. MUNN** has created the lighting and special effects for more than 160 productions for the Company. During our 1997-8 season he designed the lighting for the new productions of *Tosca* and *Pelléas et Mélisande* as well as for the revivals of *Elektra* and *Guillaume Tell*. As scenic adviser, he has designed scenery for SFO productions of *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, *Roberto Devereux*, *Pelléas et Mélisande* (1979), *Billy Budd*, *Nabucco*, *Don Giovanni* and *Christophe Colomb*. In addition to his work for the San Francisco Opera, Munn has designed scenery and lighting for Broadway, Off-Broadway, regional theater, ballet, industrials and films. His television and video credits include San Francisco Opera productions of *La Gioconda*, *Samson et Dalila*, *Aida*, *L'Africaine*, *La Bohème*, *Orlando Furioso*, *Mefistofele*, *Capriccio*, *Turandot* and *The Dangerous Liaisons*. Assignments for other companies include work for the Dallas Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Washington Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Netherlands Opera and Hartford Ballet. Credits include lighting for Dallas Opera's productions of *Elektra* and *La Cenerentola*, scenery and lighting for Ballet Arizona's staging of *Cop-pélia*, 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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For more information, contact Bethany Dickinson, Assistant Director of Corporate & Foundation Relations, at (415) 565-3206.

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The Merola Opera Program is grateful to all donors who have made memorial & honorary contributions between October 1, 1997, and March 12, 1998.

IN MEMORY OF

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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 orchestra, box, grand tier, dress circle and balcony circle levels one hour prior to curtain and during intermissions.

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 Box Office, 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. You may return 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.

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.

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.

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

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

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.

OPERA HOUSE TOURS

Sponsored by the San Francisco Opera Guild, house and backstage tours of the War Memorial Opera House, which last approxi-

mately 1½ hours, will be conducted every 15 minutes from 10 a.m. to 12 noon on the following dates:

Sunday, June 7
Saturday, June 13
Saturday, June 20
Friday, June 26
Saturday, June 27

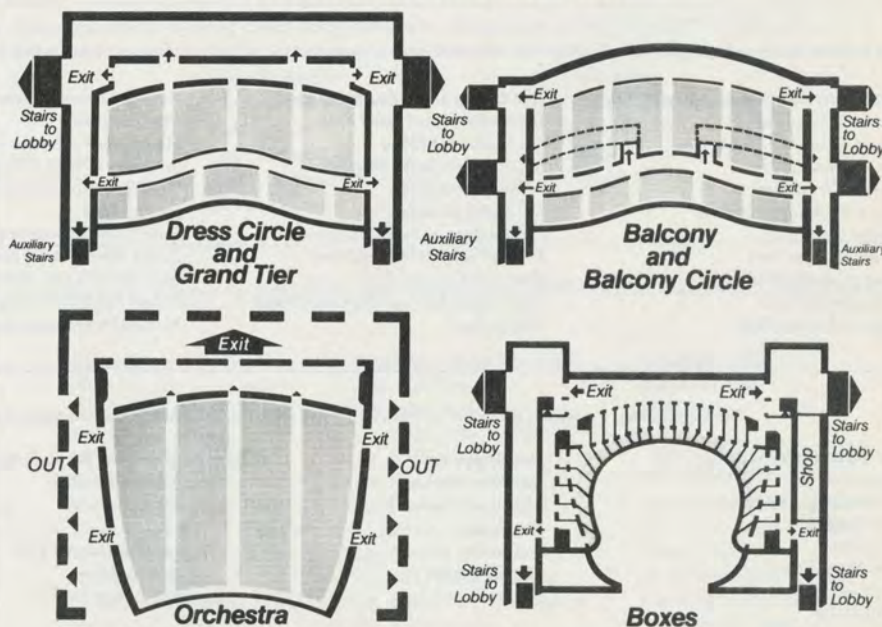
Tickets for Guild members, \$2; non-members \$5. Reservations required. Information: (510) 524-5220.

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).

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 group tours of Davies Hall only may be scheduled on Wednesdays and Saturdays by request two weeks in advance. All tours leave from the Grove Street entrance of Davies Symphony Hall. There are no tours on holidays. General \$5; seniors/students \$3. Information: (415) 552-8338.

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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