

Don Carlo

1998-1999

Saturday, October 24, 1998 7:00 PM

Tuesday, October 27, 1998 7:00 PM

Saturday, October 31, 1998 7:00 PM

Thursday, November 5, 1998 7:00 PM

Sunday, November 8, 1998 1:00 PM

Wednesday, November 11, 1998 7:00 PM

Saturday, November 14, 1998 7:00 PM

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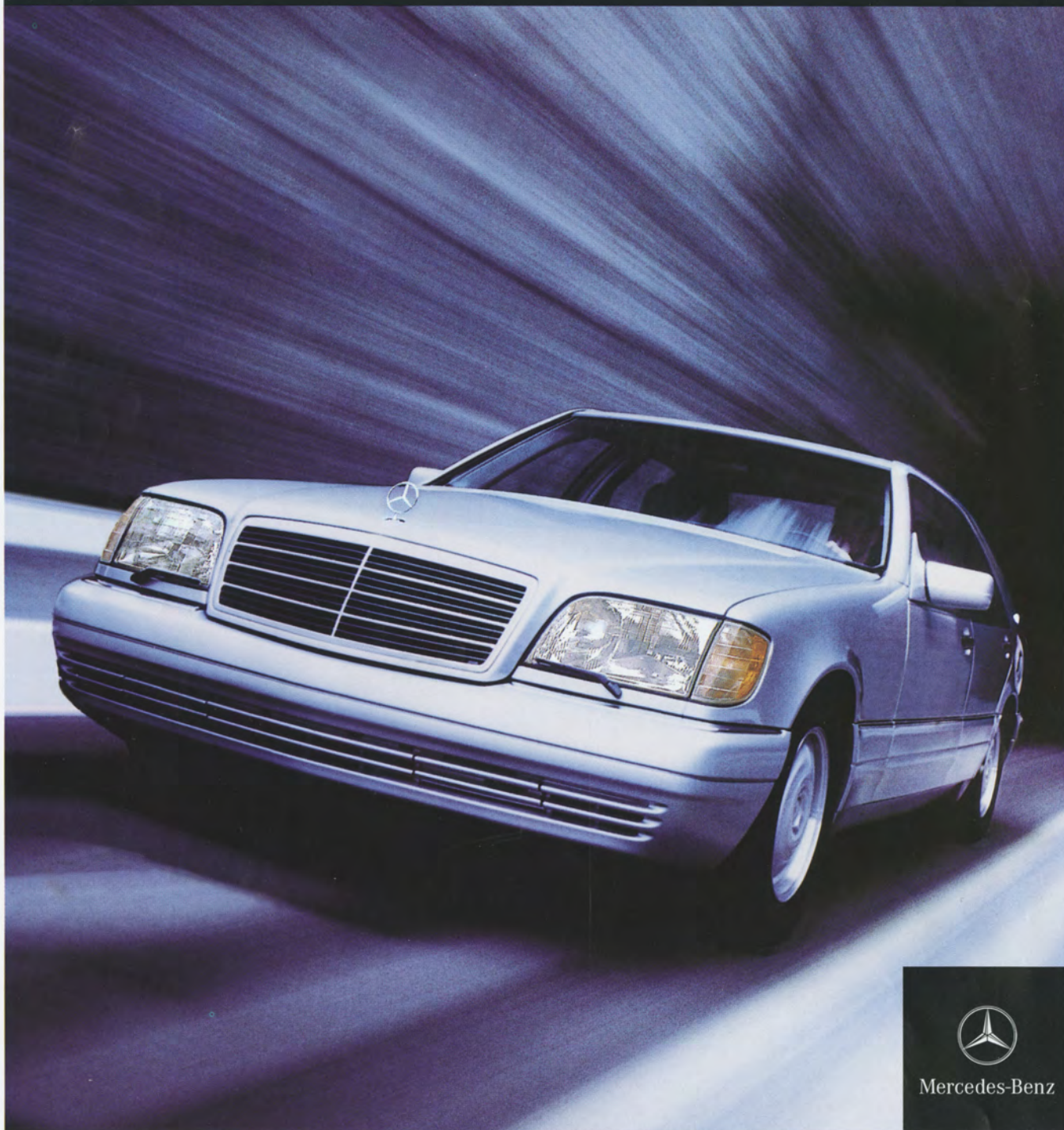
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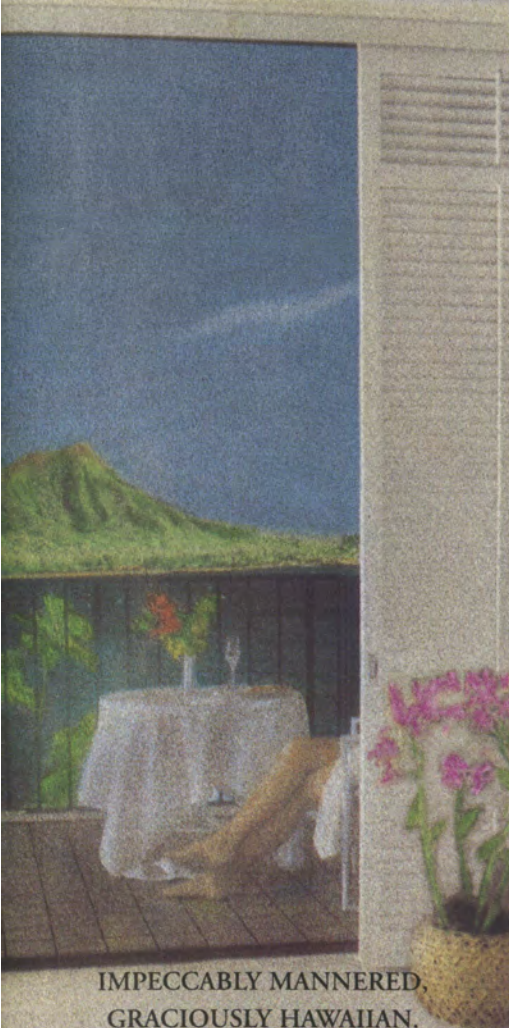
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Don Carlo

76th Season, 1998-99

Vol. 76, No. 9

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Vincente Joanes (attributed to), 1556-1621, Spanish
Four Fathers of the Church
Oil on wood panel, 23 1/4 x 29 1/2 inches

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Koraljka Lockhart, Editor
Robert M. Robb, Publications Associate

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A MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL DIRECTOR



McCARTHY

It is my great delight to welcome you to San Francisco Opera's 1998/99 Season in the War Memorial Opera House. This season is quite exceptional, particularly because it contains the world premiere of an opera that has been a dream of mine for nearly 20 years: *A Streetcar Named Desire*, based on the Pulitzer Prize-winning play by Tennessee Williams. *Streetcar* was composed by the internationally renowned composer-conductor-pianist André Previn (who conducts the first four performances), with a libretto by Philip Littell, who also wrote the libretto for the Company's commissioning of *The Dangerous Liaisons*. The production is staged by acclaimed director Colin Graham, who celebrates his 50th world premiere production with *Streetcar*; and designed by Michael Yeargan, whose wonderful sets and costumes we've enjoyed in the recent productions of *La Bohème*, *Carmen*, *Madama Butterfly* and *Rigoletto*.

We've assembled a dream cast of singers to create *Streetcar*'s iconic characters: the great soprano Renée Fleming, alternating with Susannah Glanville in her U.S. opera debut (Blanche), baritone Rodney Gilfry (Stanley), soprano Elizabeth Futral in her Company debut (Stella) and tenor Anthony Dean Griffey (Mitch). Alternate artists, as well as conductor Patrick Summers, will also be featured in *Streetcar*, which has been commissioned as part of San Francisco Opera's Pacific Visions program. This program is dedicated to creating new American operas, making the Company a fertile ground for new and lasting works while reinvigorating the existing operatic repertoire. Our 1998/99 Season not only illustrates this goal, but also includes a treasure-trove of beloved and bold operas, each brought to life in spectacular productions.

We begin the season with Puccini in legendary China, and finish with Puccini in turn-of-the-century Japan. In between, we will experience the great operas of Strauss, Wagner, Massenet, Verdi, Bellini, Britten and Prokofiev. In addition to *Streetcar*, we will present a new production of *Don Carlo*, and our dynamic collaboration with the Kirov Opera continues with the West Coast premiere of *Betrothal in a Monastery*.

The season, which contains 10 operas and will again extend through January, showcases the artistry of some of the finest singers, conductors, directors and designers in the world — some in auspicious debuts. Our distinguished music director, Donald Runnicles, will lead performances of *Arabella*, *Tristan und Isolde* and *Peter Grimes*, with the Grammy-nominated San Francisco Opera Orchestra and Chorus on hand all season long. Additionally, the San Francisco Opera Ballet will perform in two productions this year: *Manon* and *Betrothal in a Monastery*.

"I want magic!" sings Blanche DuBois in *A Streetcar Named Desire*. San Francisco Opera provides just that in each performance of our 1998/99 Season. Enjoy!

Lotfi Mansouri
General Director

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND PRESIDENT SAN FRANCISCO OPERA ASSOCIATION



SOHL

On behalf of the San Francisco Opera Association, we are pleased to welcome you to San Francisco Opera's 1998/99 Season. As our general director illustrates, a highlight of the 1998/99 Season is the world premiere of André Previn and Philip Littell's *A Streetcar Named Desire*. The commissioning of *Streetcar* could not have been without a grant from Meet The Composer/Arts Endowment Commissioning Music/USA, with additional support from The Helen Whitaker Fund. We also acknowledge with great appreciation the sponsors of the world premiere production: Mrs. Paul L. Wattis, the Carol Franc Buck Foundation, Arthur Andersen and the National Endowment for the Arts. The much-anticipated unveiling of *Streetcar* has greater implications for San Francisco Opera, for it serves as a model of our vision to add new American works to the repertoire every year.

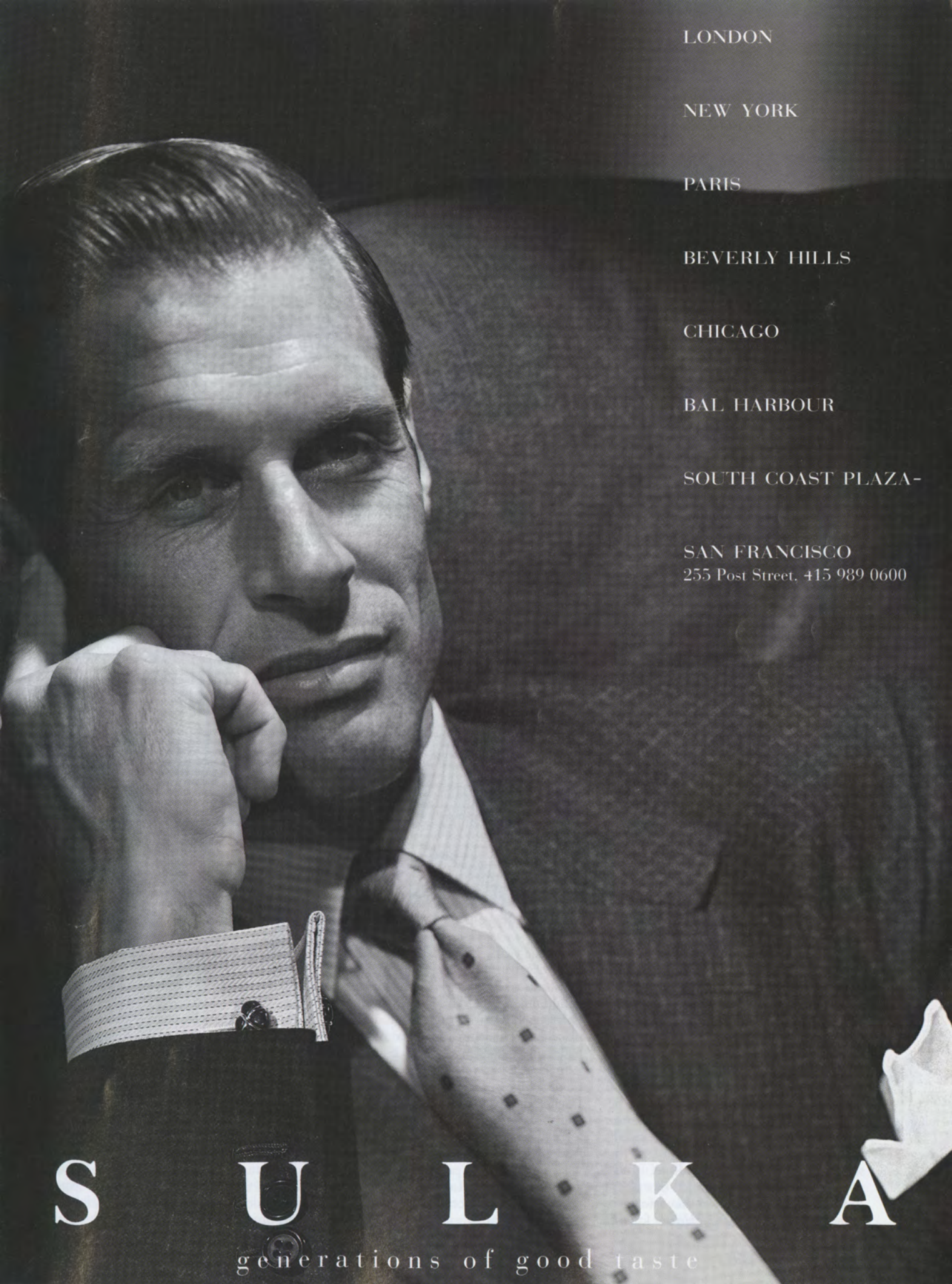
As we move closer towards the millennium, it is our mission to continue our broad programs: to present opera performances of the highest quality to the widest possible audiences, while being a leader in training, arts education, audience development and presentation of new works — new inventory for the opera world. We achieve these goals with significant support from our sponsors: Grants For The Arts/San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund, California Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Arts, as well as our season sponsors: American Airlines, Arthur Andersen, Bank of America and R. Kassman Pianos.

We also thank our production sponsors, who give so generously to San Francisco Opera: Madeleine Haas Russell and the Madeleine H. Russell Fund of the Columbia Foundation (*Turandot*); The L. J. and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation (*Tristan und Isolde*); Medallion Society Gold Circle members (*Manon*); and the Bernard Osher Endowment Fund and an anonymous donor (*Norma*).

Additionally, we extend our thanks to the San Francisco Opera Guild for its continued financial and volunteer support of the Opera, and for its efforts to cultivate a new generation of opera lovers by taking opera out into the schools. We also thank BRAVO! CLUB for its efforts in developing a younger audience, and the War Memorial Board of Trustees for its ongoing support and assistance.

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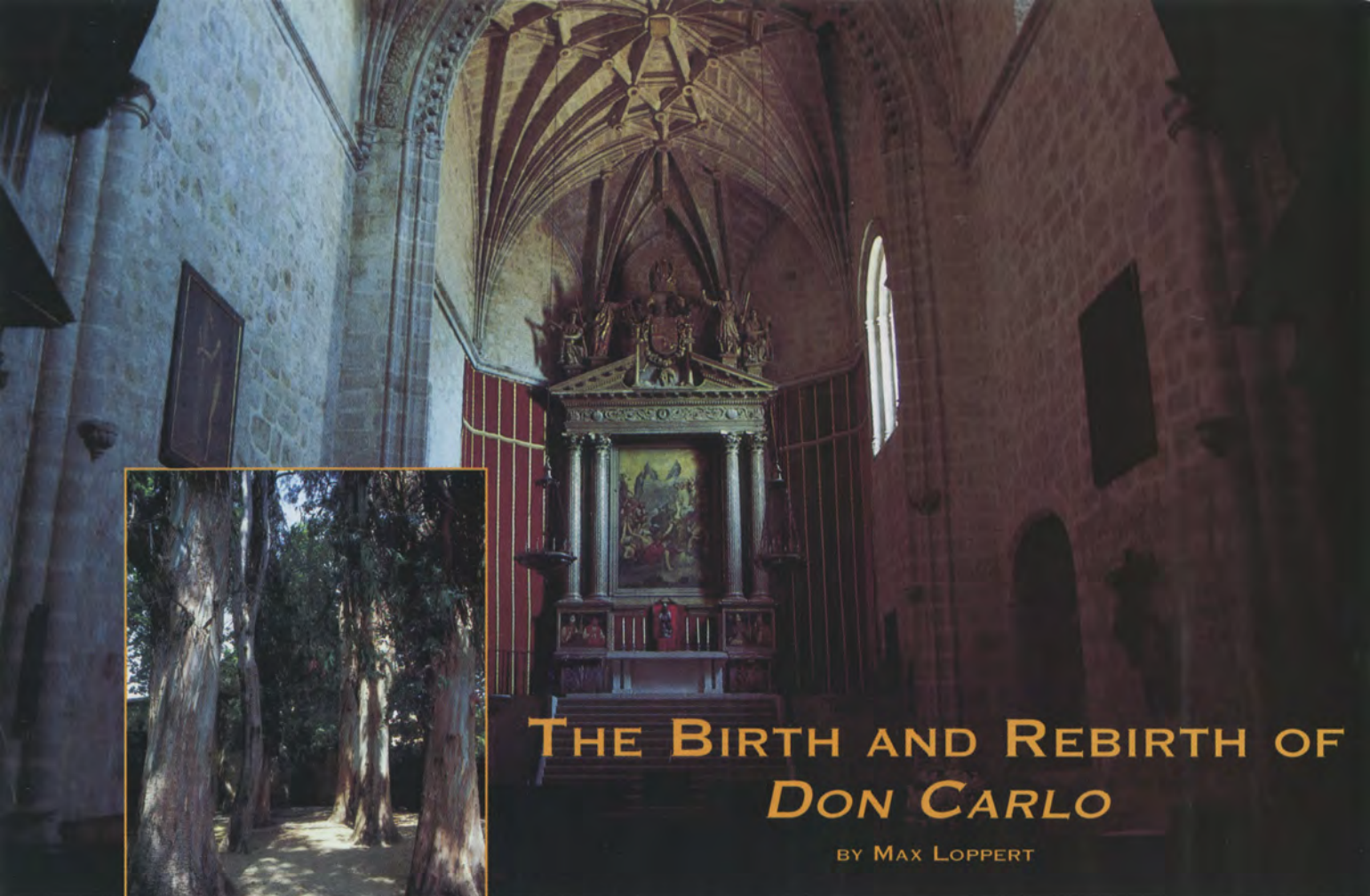
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THE BIRTH AND REBIRTH OF DON CARLO

BY MAX LOPPERT

Above: *The Chapel of Charles V, located on the grounds of the Monastery of San Yuste.*

Left: *The road leading to the entrance of the Monastery of San Yuste, an important location in the Don Carlo plot.*

Don Carlo (*Don Carlos* in its original language) — is Verdi's grandest opera, by far (in its original form) his longest and, even in the forms more familiarly encountered, his largest in musico-dramatic aim, ambition, and scale. Nowadays — and this marks a notable change of opinion from previous eras — many people believe it to be his greatest opera; yet of all his mature works it is the one with the most complex history, pre- and post-premiere, existing as it does in more than one authentic version and offering numerous variants of number and scene. On March 11th, 1867 at the Paris Opéra, the theater which commissioned it, it was not a success — in a letter written the following day Verdi admitted as much; so — first in minor form in 1872, later by means of the thoroughgoing overhaul and condensation undertaken in 1882–3 — he attempted to redress what he sensed were weaknesses in musical and dramatic unfolding. One may feel that, in spite of determined and assiduous efforts, he never wholly put right certain imbalances inherent in the chosen dramatic material; yet the work touches the highest level of greatness that opera can

reach, not just in spite of its flaws, but perhaps even because of them.

Of all the most important Verdi operas it is the one furthest from the ideal of the “fixed” theatrical masterpiece — the work dashed off in the white heat of pure inspiration, perfected in time for its first performance, and (as it were) set in stone ever after. But in truth, that ideal should probably be considered pretty much a Romantic myth. In the field of opera, certainly, few among the canon of works occupying the world's stages correspond to the set-in-stone ideal. Perhaps Wagner's mature operas — gestated over so long a period by a composer-librettist determined to sit it out, if necessary, until he could have them performed exactly as he saw fit, or at least in some degree of co-ordination with his original vision — are the source of the Romantic myth; they can be reckoned the “fixed” masterpiece exceptions that prove the operatic rule. (But even in the Wagner oeuvre there is *Tannhäuser*, one of the most editorially thorny operatic cases of the 19th century.) In general, one discovers, if one looks, a high degree of “version-variability” in many of the operas of the art-form's leading composers — Monteverdi, Handel, Gluck,

Mozart, Bizet, Mussorgsky, Massenet, Puccini; in many by Offenbach, king of the operatic entertainers, likewise. Even in the 20th century, when in the serious lyric theater the notion of the “fixed” ideal has held perhaps undue sway, works as different as Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*, Britten's *Billy Budd*, and Barber's *Antony and Cleopatra* offer fascinating alternatives — numbers cut before opening night, re-workings and/or abridgements of whole scenes after it.

So do most Verdi operas. This is true, though to a relatively insignificant degree, even of *Otello* and *Falstaff*. Among the later works only *Un Ballo in Maschera* seems — musically, at least — to have hit the bull's-eye first time, and even that, because of changes to the libretto forced by censorship, reached its premiere in a form unintended by its creators. In the matter of *Don Carlo* — two sources of artistic pressure acted at once creatively and, as it turned out, detrimentally on the form the opera was to take: the choice of material itself, and the demands and peculiar difficulties of a Paris Opéra commission.

Schiller's celebrated “dramatic poem,” published in 1787, finalized in its 1805 edition, was the fourth and last play of

his to inspire a Verdi opera (the others are *Giovanna d'Arco*, *I Masnadieri*, and *Luisa Miller*). In 1850, when it was being mooted that the composer should produce a second work for the Paris Opéra to follow *Jérusalem*, the 1847 French reworking of his 1843 *Lombardi*, the suggestion of *Don Carlos* as raw material came from the *Jérusalem* librettists, Alphonse Royer and Gustave Vaëz: the subject would, they said, supply "all the emotional power you need." But Verdi did not take the bait. His next French opera was the 1855 *Vêpres Siciliennes*; and an unpleasant incident involving an unwilling orchestra and an incompetent conductor during rehearsals for the 1863 *Vêpres* revival caused him to storm out and vow to break all ties with the Opéra. Nevertheless, a new approach eventually came from the Opéra which caused him not only to moderate his hostility but to re-consider the Schiller play. Emile Perrin, the Opéra's director at that time, had sent Verdi a treatment of the Biblical tale of Judith, originally written for Meyerbeer, which he rejected in a manner that nevertheless left the door open to further negotiation: "If I should one day write for the Opéra, I could do so only to a libretto that pleases me completely and one that, above all, makes a great impression on me." Eventually it was his French publisher, Léon Escudier, who passed on to him a scenario for a *Don Carlos* opera — by the poet Joseph Méry and Camille Du Locle, Perrin's son-in-law — which prompted Verdi to comment that "it [is] a magnificent drama, but maybe a little lacking in spectacle." He went on to praise two of the treatment's elaborations not in Schiller ("it's an excellent idea to make Charles V appear, likewise the scene at Fontainebleau") and he laid down a condition which would both help define the type of opera he wanted *Don Carlos* to be and result in crucial problems of form and content: "I should like a little scene, as in Schiller, between Philip and the Inquisitor, who should be blind and very old ... I should also like a duet between Philip and Posa."

As always, Verdi's instincts were strikingly acute. For all its depth and intricacy of characterization, profundity of political and psychological perception, and exploration of themes — such as the battle at the heart of the state between forces of liberal and conservative thought — betokening a remarkable modernity of viewpoint, the play is uneven: "overlong and over-complicated," in the words of the Schiller translator Hilary



Above: Two images from past San Francisco Opera productions of *Don Carlo*: Claire Watson as Elisabetta de Valois and Jon Vickers as Don Carlo in 1966.

Right: Giacomo Aragall as Don Carlo in 1979.

Collier Sy-Quia, "very shapeless," in those of the Verdi scholar Julian Budden. It is very much an indoor drama, mainly conducted in the form of intimate dialogues between two characters; so for a Grand Opera it would indeed seem "lacking in spectacle." The term Grand Opera is here used to signify the type of opera, usually in five acts, that became representative of the Paris Opéra in the 19th century and, above all, of the French-operatic output of Meyerbeer, whose typical product tended to assemble state-of-the-art stage effects, climactic coups de théâtre, and, midway through the work, vast public gatherings in which two opposed groups come to a confrontation. Verdi could be scathing about the negative aspects of Paris Opéra practice: the intrigues, the deeply-entrenched conservatism and bureaucratization of theatrical life, the subjection to committee fiat. In a letter to Escudier he had made contemptuous reference to the "precedent set by Mme Meyerbeer, displaying tie-pins, snuffboxes, bracelets, medallions, marshal's batons, and all the rest. What a business! Even Art becomes a matter of Banking, and being a millionaire a sine qua non to success!" The *Vêpres Siciliennes* incident would never be forgotten; and during the long, often tediously protracted *Don Carlos* rehearsals, Verdi's wife Giuseppina Strepponi was to bemoan the way "they argue for 24 hours before deciding whether [a particular singer] is to raise a finger or a whole hand." In a letter to Du Locle two years after the premiere, Verdi looked back to articulate his complaints about the Opéra: "In your musical theaters ... there are too many Savants! ... Everyone wants to offer an opinion, raise a doubt,



and any author who lives for a long time in that atmosphere of doubts can hardly avoid ... being somewhat shaken in his convictions, and ending up by correcting, adjusting, and — to put it better — crippling his work: in this way you find at the end not an opera cast in a single throw but a *mosaic*, a fine one if you like but still a *mosaic*. You'll counter this by saying that at the Opéra there's a string of masterpieces created in this fashion. They may well be masterpieces; but let me say that they'd be still more perfect if one didn't from time to time sense in them the process of chipping and tinkering."

None of this means that Verdi had not aimed hard at Paris success. The city was important to him. In the late 1840s and early 1850s he and Strepponi, still unmarried, had found peace and freedom from prying eyes there. Even if his *mot* for the Opéra — *la grande boutique* — would one day become a phrase parroted by opera-students whenever the

subject of the leading Paris lyric theater came up, he knew that, because of its unique resources, human and financial, and many-faceted approach to *mise-en-scène*, it remained necessary to his advancement as an operatic dramatist. He believed in Grand Opera — as Roger Parker has written, “he had from at least mid-career been constantly shaping his Italian operas towards a style nearer that commonly seen in Paris, whether or not the works in question were written specifically for the French stage” — and he also believed that an opera should entertain an audience.

Furthermore, he had behind him the recent experience of writing not just *Les Vêpres Siciliennes*, *Un Ballo in Maschera*, and *La Forza del Destino*, works in which the Grand Opera model was treated to vital modes of renewal (the latter two, not written for Paris, and without the dance elements traditional in Grand Opera, must count among opera’s most inspired stylistic fusions, between Italianate lyricism on the one hand and Paris Opéra forms on the other), but also *Simon Boccanegra*, a work in which, more fully than ever before, the political side of Verdi finds outlet. I use the epithet in the sense elucidated by Paul Robinson in his 1985 *Opera and Ideas* when he writes that “Of all the great opera composers, Verdi is the most political. Issues of power and authority figure more centrally in his operas than they do in those of any of his artistic peers. Moreover, the political ethos of the Verdi operas is not merely a question of subject matter: Verdi also developed a musical vocabulary admirably suited to the expression of political ideas. He not only chose political themes, he also wrote what can fairly be called political music. ... When the curtain goes up on a Verdi opera, we can expect to find ourselves in a political landscape and often in the midst of a struggle for power. We are made intensely conscious of the state and its reasons. Most often the action transpires on a piece of real political geography, in a real period of history, and with dramatis personae who either enjoy or aspire to political authority. Counts, dukes, kings, emperors, high priests, grand inquisitors, doges, governors, and generals — these are the figures who populate the Verdian universe.” The entanglement of Verdi’s own artistic

achievements and the aspirations of the Italian freedom movement of the 19th century has often been noted; but whether or not the political insights of his art were fostered by his position and involvement in Italian public life or vice versa, the “political landscape” revealed in *Simon Boccanegra* even in its first (1857) form, which lacks the tremendous Council Chamber scene Verdi and Boito wrote for its 1881 revision, is depicted with unprecedented vividness, urgency, and passion.

Grand Opera as exemplified by Rossini in *Guillaume Tell* and, for all his calculated crowd-pleasing, by Meyerbeer in *Les Huguenots* and *Le Prophète* had already shown itself a uniquely well-equipped lyric medium for treating history, society, and conflicts of private and public interest. Schiller’s *Don Carlos* seemed to offer Verdi the vehicle in which he might advance his explorations of Grand Opera and of political opera, while entertaining an audience as never before with the panoply of Paris Opéra stage spectacle. His feeling that added spectacle was needed resulted in the massive *auto-da-fé* scene of Act 3, with its processions, contrasted choruses, stage bands, and concluding Heavenly Voice; and, at the opera’s close, in the elaboration of Schiller’s chillingly understated last line — Philip to Grand Inquisitor, handing over Carlos: “Cardinal, I have done my part, now do yours” — into an Inquisition scene climaxing, in many stagings, in the entry of Charles V, who steal Carlos away. The addition suggested by the librettists, of an opening act set in Fontainebleau showing Elisabeth and Carlos finding the love they then have to sacrifice, enriches the emotional life of the drama; and the addition requested by Verdi, of dialogues for Philip with the two characters who represent its opposite ideological poles, creates not just an enlarged sense of that Verdian “political ethos” of which Robinson writes, but a special kind of topicality: for, as Andrew Porter has pointed out, three years before the opera’s premiere “Pius X had proclaimed his deeply reactionary Syllabus of Errors, which unequivocally denounced much of what Posa so eloquently urges ... One should not minimize the contemporary, symbolic roles assigned to the Inquisitor and to Posa. It seems to me fair to find in their scenes Verdi’s denunciation of the Pope’s Syllabus.”

The librettists imposed operatic order on Schiller’s “very shapeless” play by drawing additionally on Eugène Cormon’s *Philippe II Roi d’Espagne*, an 1846 Paris play — from which they took, for instance, the model for their Fontainebleau first act; many subsidiary figures in Schiller were cut back. Even so, the result of their opening Schiller’s *Don Carlos* cut was that as the opera took shape it grew enormously long. Verdi was aware of this before rehearsals began, in September 1866: in a letter to Escudier two months earlier he said of Act 2, at the end of which had been placed the Philip-Posa duet he had asked for, “It isn’t an act, it’s half an opera! Then the genre is extremely difficult. The scene between the King and Posa has made me spit out my lungs.” There were cast problems — the inadequacies of the Carlos, the tenor Morère, caused his role to be abridged and simplified, and that of Eboli, written for the mezzo-soprano Rosine Bloch, was considerably re-fashioned when the soprano Pauline Gueymard-Lauters came to be chosen instead. (Rivalry between her and Marie-Constance Sasse, the Elisabeth, soured the atmosphere.) By the end of 1866 large items had been cut, an Act 4 duet for the two leading women, a duet-ensemble for Philip and Carlos mourning the death of Posa (on a theme Verdi would eventually employ for the “Lacrimosa” of his Requiem); but after the dress rehearsal, on February 24th, 1867, the opera was found to last 3 hours and 47 minutes, more than the maximum allowed by the Opéra: it was feared that the opera would go on well beyond midnight and audience members would miss their last trains. So finally Verdi cut 15 minutes from the very opening of the opera, a short solo for Posa in Act 2, and a small section from the Philip-Posa duet. (Since all this music was believed destroyed, the degree of loss was not known before 1969–70, when a group of leading Verdi scholars — notably Andrew Porter, who in 1970 in the library of the Paris Opéra discovered parts for the missing music — was able to reconstruct the opera much as it existed before cuts, and in the process to show the high quality of the music Verdi was forced to sacrifice.)

Post-Paris, cuts did not stop there.

Continued on page 16

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BIRTH AND REBIRTH

continued from page 14

Verdi was the most stringently self-protective of Italian opera composers — in the score Ricordi prepared for Italy five months before the Paris premiere, with Italian translation by Achille de Lauzières, he inserted a demand insisting on uncut performances, a brave but futile condition — but he plainly soon realized that conditions in the theaters where *Don Carlo* was being performed were proving even less favorable to very long operas than those prevailing in Paris. In London, where the opera's second production (and first in Italian translation) took place, Michael Costa had without Verdi's permission dropped the Fontainebleau act and Act 3 ballet, and made many truncations elsewhere. Notwithstanding fairly complete stagings in Bologna (where the opera enjoyed genuine success), Rome, and Milan, *Don Carlo* was elsewhere in Italy soon played in slashed, re-arranged versions, with Fontainebleau a regular, predictable casualty. For a 1872 Naples production, Verdi re-wrote (with new Italian verses by Ghislanzoni, reviser of the original, St. Petersburg libretto for *La Forza del Destino*) the Philip-Posa duet — he said it was now “shorter and more vivid from the theatrical point of view” — and sanctioned cuts in the Act 5 Carlos-Elisabeth duet. Still, the opera did not really prosper. Then in 1882, now that a Vienna production was in prospect, and in the knowledge that (as Verdi put it) “operas that are too long are ferociously amputated” in that city, he set about pruning an opera whose proportions he had come to realize were unmanageable for most theaters of the time. He removed the Act 3 ballet and its introductory scene, the Inquisitorial finale to Act 5, and — most substantial excision of all — Act 1 in its entirety (Carlos's aria “Je l'ai vue,” — “Io la vidi” in Italian translation, was lodged at the start of what became Act 1); and elsewhere undertook much revision and re-composition, not least with the purpose of getting right what in a letter he himself termed the “black spot” that the Philip-Posa duet had “always” proved to be. On completing this four-act opera, in 1883, he wrote to a friend that it was “more practicable, and, I believe, also better from an artistic point of view. *Più concisione, e più nerbo* (more concision, and more sinew); it had been worked on in French but was first performed in Italian — not in Vienna but at La Scala,

Milan, the following year. But then, in December of 1886, a longer version of the opera, in which the Paris Act 1 was added to the beginning of the 1883 score (and Carlos's aria returned to its original place), was with his apparent consent performed (in Modena) and later published. It is this 1886 Modena version, also in Italian translation, that the San Francisco Opera is currently performing.

So what was Verdi's final preference — for the *concisione e nerbo* of the Act 4 revision or for the longer expanse of “Modena,” with Fontainebleau reinstated? If in Paris he had held out for what we now think of as Wagnerian performing length, and if he had had more committed, enthusiastic executants, might he have needed to cut the original, 1867 *Don Carlos* at all? (A few months after that disappointing premiere he had contrasted the successful Bologna production, first in Italy, rehearsed for only a month, with that at the Opéra, where “they rehearsed for eight months, and ended up with a bloodless, cold interpretation.”) Unqualified answer to these questions is impossible; but, since in 1973 the BBC mounted a radio performance of the full, uncut 1866–67 *Don Carlos*, in French, and including all the “Andrew Porter” passages, several productions of the opera, in both Europe and the US, have stirred some of those passages into “1883” or “1886” texts; in addition, Ricordi has issued its many-layered *Don Carlos* score, and in Claudio Abbado's 1985 French-language studio recording, much of the cut music, alongside other episodes (e.g. the original Act 3 introduction and ballet) from the 1867 score, are offered in the form of appendices. We are now in a position to get to know all versions and permutations of the opera — and may therefore form our own personal judgment on exactly how much Verdi lost, how much he gained, by re-thinking his original conception.

For myself, I am in no doubt that the noble aim of making a Grand Opera out of Schiller's noble but rambling and essentially “internalized” drama of ideas was directly responsible for the imbalances in the material on which I have already touched: the excessive length, particularly of Act 2, and the sense one gains of a relative failure to mesh Verdi's forward-looking, psychologically acute approach to the duets and personal exchanges — so often exactly where he

put pressure on his librettists to bring the drama as close as possible to Schiller, and where his blend of harmonic, thematic, orchestral, and vocal skilfulness is at its most subtle and flexible — and the slightly stiff, “generic” character of his public scenes. (In his next opera, *Aida*, undoubtedly the most successful Grand Opera he wrote, if not necessarily the most admirable, the mesh of private and public is uniformly assured.) In this sense, the opera is something of a “mosaic,” Verdi's own charge against Paris Opéra products; and while in the four-act version so much of the musical working does indeed display more *concisione* and more *nerbo* — a point swiftly made in any comparison of the quartet for Philip, Eboli, Elisabeth, and Posa in its 1867 and 1883 versions, the first nobly expansive and rather episodic, the second at once tauter, more urgent, and inexpressibly more radiant — this “mosaic” quality never really disappears. The characters themselves are unevenly assorted. Philip and Eboli, whom the composer himself named the opera's most important, are among the most ripely and fully fleshed, musically the most precisely illuminated, in all Verdi, indeed all opera; and by the end Elisabeth — a young girl at the start, a grand queen at the close — achieves the same stature. But Posa, with mellifluous *baryton noble* music to sing, is a throwback: in Massimo Mila's description the “one character that one could believe has escaped from an old Verdi opera, faithful friend, generous patriot, frank and superficial man of arms, furnished with a summary and conventional psychological makeup.” How much the weaknesses of the tenor Morère determined the somewhat elusive portrait of Carlos the neurasthenic prince, morose, vacillating, tending to be overshadowed or dominated by those around him, can only be guessed (and unlike those others, he has only a single short solo). In the four-act *Don Carlo*, the scene showing him at his most attractive, as he woos Elisabeth and opens his heart to her, is removed, and the whole work suffers grievously from its absence.

And then there is the matter of the two “political” duets — the first (between Philip and Posa) twice re-written during the years of *Don Carlo* revision, the second (between Philip and

Continued on page 42



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IRENE DALIS AT FORTY

BY ROBERT COMMANDAY

To hear Irene Dalis tell it, Lady Luck has to be a mezzo soprano. Except that the extraordinary Dalis career is based on a lot more besides being born into a greatly supportive family and happening to be in the right place at the right time, again and again. She's made her own destiny. Listening to her recall her career and discuss her mission today, you feel in her words and conviction the strength, expres-



sive focus and purpose that defined her dramatically persuasive art. The dynamic lady who is receiving the coveted San Francisco Opera's Gold Medal on October 24th, 40 years after her Company debut, lets you know right away that while she retired from the stage 21 years ago after 25 glorious years on it, she's really still on it, and at the top of her game. Not singing, but on stage all the same as the potent creator and *force majeure* of her own company, Opera San José.

San Francisco Opera patrons first felt Dalis's energy and intensity in the role of Princess Eboli in the 1958 production of Verdi's *Don Carlo*. This was the role that had launched her career five years earlier when she was thrust on the stage in Oldenburg and was an instant success. The tone of her voice was dark and rich, her delivery fiery and vivid — an Eboli of proud emotion. In 1958, she also stepped into the role of Klytemnestra in *Elektra*, without rehearsal, replacing Claramae Turner, who had become indisposed after the first performance. In 1959 here, she sang a stirring Amneris in the *Aida* that featured Leontyne Price and Jon



Part of the San Francisco Opera Irene Dalis gallery:
Above: 1962: *Santuzza* in *Cavalleria Rusticana*.
Far left: 1973: *Klytemnestra* in *Elektra*.
Left: 1969: *Kostelníčka* in *Jenůfa*.
Below: 1964: *Kundry* in *Parsifal*.
Right: 1971: *Ulrica* in *Ballo in Maschera*.



Vickers, and more importantly gave her first performance of a part she prizes as her favorite, the Nurse in Strauss's *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. That was Kurt Herbert Adler's historic U.S. premiere of the work. It was repeated the following year with Dalis and again in 1964. In the 1960 *Frau* however, Dalis was singing with Leonie Rysanek, one of the three women colleagues, along with Birgit Nilsson and Price, she calls her favorites.

"They were the ones I sang with the most. Rysanek was a *dream* on stage because she was a real actress," she said during our conversation last month. "Whenever I did anything with Rysanek, I felt at ease about the whole thing."

In the *Lobengrin* of the 1960 season here, she sang her first Ortrud; two years later she returned as Eboli. When she sang *Kundry* here in the *Parsifal* of 1964, she was already famous for the role. In

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Irene Dalis sang the role of the Nurse in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* at the opera's San Francisco Opera U.S. premiere in 1959. This photo was taken in the same role in 1964.



The role of Princess Eboli in *Don Carlo* marked Irene Dalis's San Francisco Opera debut in 1958. This photo was taken backstage while on tour in Los Angeles.

1961, as Kundry, she had been the first American-born singer to open a Bayreuth Festival. She received rave reviews for it — “overall phenomenal possibilities of expression,” “highlight of the production” and the like, and won the *Grand Prix du Disque* for the recording of the live performance, under Hans Knappertsbusch. That was her first pairing with Jess Thomas, whom she remembers to this day as one of her favorite people.

It was “really for Jess,” she says that she succumbed to Kurt Herbert Adler’s urgings and agreed to sing her first *Isolde* here. “Kurt Herbert Adler I considered a genius and I had a love-hate relationship with him. He could charm you. Wieland Wagner wanted us to do *Tristan und Isolde* together right after we did the *Parsifal*. That’s why, when Kurt Herbert Adler called and asked me to do *Isolde*, I said ‘Why would I refuse it in Bayreuth and then do it in San Francisco?’ (In Bayreuth) I would have those hour-long intermissions and the orchestra’s under the stage. It’s so easy to sing



Irene Dalis as *Isolde* in *Tristan und Isolde* at the San Francisco Opera in 1967.

Wagner in Bayreuth. You can sing pianissimo and it’s heard. But, with his charm, Adler finally talked me into it.”

That sparked an amusing exchange with her other boss, Rudolf Bing, general director of the Metropolitan Opera on whose roster Dalis served as principal singer for 20 years, from 1957 until her retirement. “You have to remember I was never really a superstar,” she remarked with her realistic self-assessment. “I wasn’t a big recording artist. I was a principal artist, but I was never a household word. There wasn’t much in me that was hysterical or demanding. I was so grateful to be at the Met and to have the roles. I had every role I would want to perform. [Bing] and I had an agreement that I wouldn’t accept anything, not even San Francisco Opera until I let him know and talked to him about it. When Kurt Herbert Adler talked me into doing *Isolde*, I called [Bing] and I said ‘I want to tell you something, so you’re going to laugh. I want to be the one you hear this from, I just agreed that I was going to do *Isolde* at the San Francisco Opera,’ and he said, ‘Wait a minute, wait a minute. Is this a news report or are you calling me for advice?’ And I said ‘No, I’m telling you that I’ve agreed.’ And he said ‘Why on earth would you agree to do an *Isolde* when you have people like Birgit Nilsson out there? Why would you want to be the second of anything when to me you’re the greatest mezzo soprano,’ and on and on and on. Before our conversation was over he said ‘Irene, I’m disappointed in you. Why didn’t you ever let me know that you would consider doing *Isolde*. I would have had you do it at the Met.’”

Her first *Isolde*, in San Francisco, though sung under trying circumstances — her father had died a few days before the opening — was impressive. There was a radiance and lyricism that set it apart from her dramatic roles, and a

Continued on page 44

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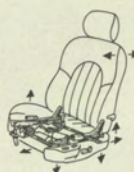
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And the rest of the**

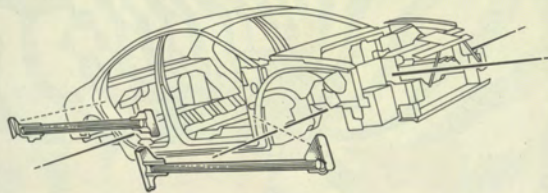
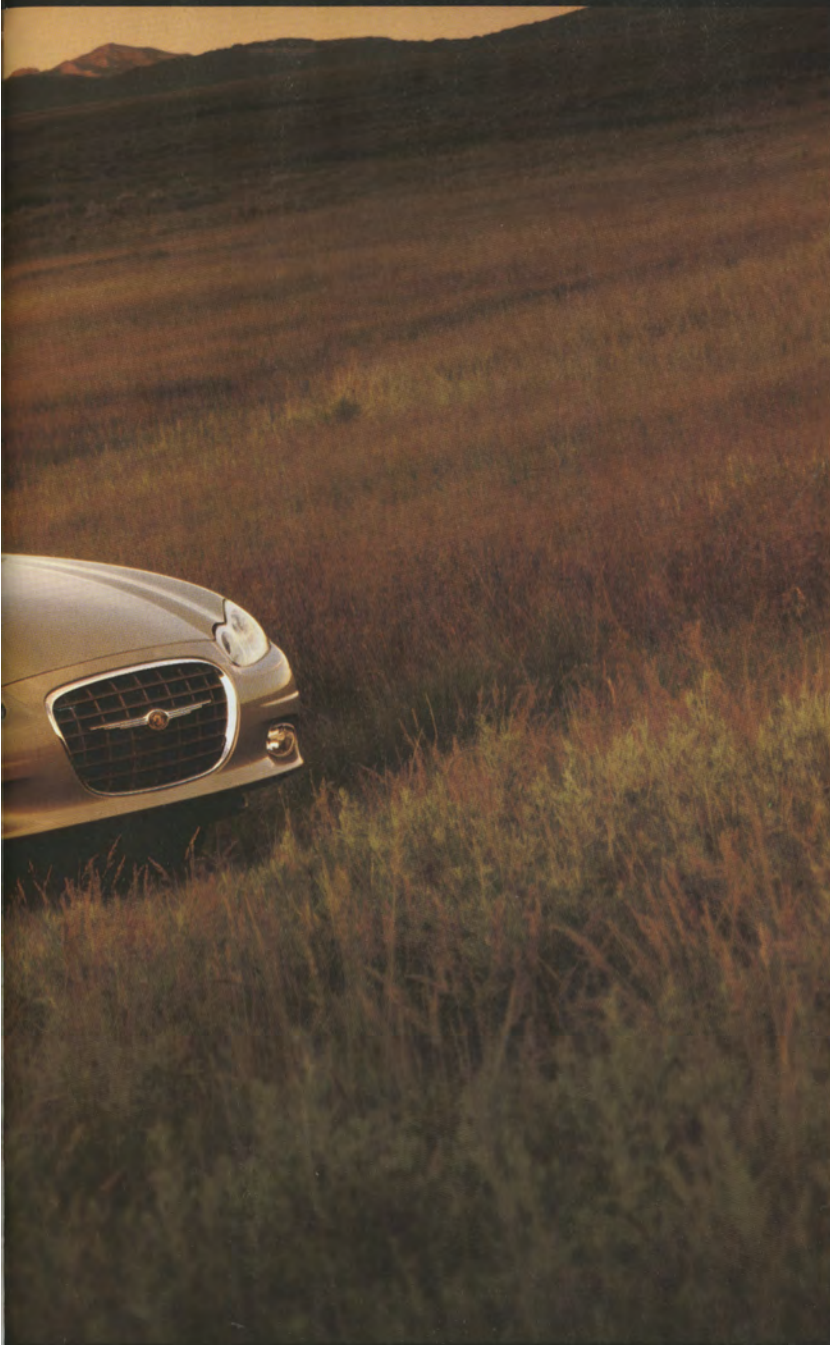


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Opera in five acts by GIUSEPPE VERDI

Original French text by JOSEPH MÉRY and CAMILLE DU LOCLE, after the play by FRIEDRICH VON SCHILLER

Italian translation by Achille de Lauzières and Angelo Zenardini.

Additional text translated by Piero Faggioni

Don Carlo

(in Italian)

Conductor
Emmanuel Joel

Production
Emilio Sagi*

Designer
Zack Brown

Lighting Designer
Thomas J. Munn

Chorus Director
Ian Robertson

Musical Preparation
Susanna Lemberskaya
Adelle Eslinger
Jonathan Khuner
Susan Webb
Philip Eisenberg

Prompter
Philip Eisenberg

Supertitles
Paul Moor

Assistant Stage Directors
Brad Dalton
Gina Lapinski

Movement Choreographer
Lawrence Pech

Stage Manager
Theresa Ganley

Scenery constructed in
San Francisco Opera Scenic Studios

Costumes executed by San Francisco
Opera Costume Shop

First performance (in French):
Paris, March 11, 1867

First performance (in Italian):
Milan, January 10, 1884

First San Francisco Opera
performance: September 16, 1958

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24 AT 7:00
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 27 AT 7:00
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 31 AT 7:00
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5 AT 7:00
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8 AT 1:00
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 11 AT 7:00
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14 AT 7:00

CAST

(in order of appearance)

<i>Don Carlo</i>	Sergei Larin
<i>Elizabeth (Elisabetta) of Valois</i>	Nina Rautio*
	Marina Mesheriakova* (11/14)
<i>Tebaldo</i>	Cassandre Berthon**
<i>Count Lerma</i>	Matthew Lord
<i>A monk</i>	Reinhard Hagen**
<i>Rodrigo, Marquis of Posa</i>	Anthony Michaels-Moore
<i>Philip II</i>	James Morris
<i>Princess Eboli</i>	Markella Hatziano*
<i>A royal herald</i>	Norman Shankle†
<i>A celestial voice</i>	Tammy Jenkins†
<i>The Grand Inquisitor</i>	Victor von Halem
<i>Countess of Aremberg</i>	Kathleen Jepsen

Inquisitors, courtiers, Flemish deputies, pages, soldiers, magistrates, monks

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

TIME AND PLACE: 1559-1568; France and Spain

ACT I	The forest of Fontainebleau in France
ACT II	Scene 1 The monastery at Yuste in Spain
	Scene 2 The monastery grounds

INTERMISSION

ACT III	Scene 1 The Queen's gardens in Madrid
	Scene 2 The square before the Cathedral of Our Lady of Atocha in Madrid

INTERMISSION

ACT IV	Scene 1 The King's study in Madrid
	Scene 2 A prison
ACT V	The monastery

(Materials for "Carlo, il brando ormai riprendi" furnished by
Casa Ricordi-BMG Ricordi S.p.A., Milan, Italy; Hendon Music, Inc.,
a Boosey & Hawkes company, sole agent in the U.S.A.)

*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 four and one-half hours.*

SYNOPSIS — DON CARLO

A state of war persisted between France and Spain from 1521 to 1559. In the peace negotiations between the two countries, a political marriage was proposed between Elizabeth (Elisabetta in the opera), daughter of Henry II of France, and Carlo, only son and heir of Philip II of Spain. However, Philip had growing doubts about his son's psychological stability, and took steps to prevent his succession to the throne. His decision to marry Elizabeth himself could well have been part of this policy. In the fictional framework of the opera, Don Carlo, like Tamino in The Magic Flute, has fallen in love with an idealized vision of his predestined bride. His father refuses him permission to join the Spanish delegation, whose purpose is to conclude the peace treaty and return to Spain with Princess Elizabeth. Carlo, defying his father, accompanies the delegation in disguise.

ACT I — Don Carlo sees Elizabeth offering comfort and hope to poor French peasants afflicted by the war. This confirms the image he has of her. She soon returns with her page, having become lost in the forest. Carlo reveals his true identity and they fall in love. At this moment, the peace treaty is concluded, and the Spanish Ambassador and his entourage arrive, proclaiming Elizabeth Queen of Spain: Don Carlo's stepmother, not his wife. Reminded of the sad state of the poor peasants, she consents. Don Carlo sees his vision of happiness destroyed.

ACT II — Scene 1 — Monks pray for the repose of the soul of Charles V, Carlo's grandfather, who had abdicated and retired to the monastery. A mysterious monk warns Don Carlo that happiness is not to be found on earth and Carlo is convinced that the figure is Charles V himself. Rodrigo, Marquis of Posa, seeks Carlo in the monastery. They have been companions since boyhood, and their friendship is Carlo's only emotional support. Posa has allied himself with the cause of political freedom for Flanders, at that time a Spanish colony ruthlessly persecuted for its Protestantism. He sees a vital role for Carlo in the struggle. When Carlo confesses his love for his stepmother, Posa feels that now, more than ever, is the moment for Carlo to leave for Flanders and lose himself in political activity. He suggests Carlo should seek the Queen's help in persuading the King to send him there.

Scene 2 — While the King and Queen pray at the tomb of Charles V, the court ladies wait outside. Princess Eboli relieves the tedium by singing a mischievous song about a man who makes love to his wife by mistake. The Queen's return is followed by the arrival of Posa, who hands her letters from her mother and a secret note from Carlo, begging her to listen to Posa. He tells the Queen of Carlo's disturbed state of mind, which Eboli privately believes to be out of a suppressed passion for herself. The Queen grants her stepson an audience and Posa draws all her ladies away from the scene, thus breaking the Spanish court etiquette. Carlo, unable to control himself in the presence of Elizabeth, grows delirious and declares passionate love to her. For a moment, she is drawn into sharing his vision of what might have been, but remembers her situation and refuses to give him any hope. When the King finds her unattended, he exiles her only French lady-in-waiting. The court sees this as a public humiliation for the Queen, while the King resents her open display of sorrow. The King asks Posa why he has never sought royal favor and is told it is because of Philip's abhorrent policy in Flanders, which Posa describes as a tomb. The King is unrepentant, but recognizes in Posa a man of truth and honor, and commands his service as a counselor. When the King voices suspicion of a liaison between the Queen and Carlo, Posa accepts the position of confidant, since it will help him to protect his friend. He recognizes signs of humanity in Philip who warns him, in turn, to beware of the Grand Inquisitor.

ACT III — Scene 1 — Eboli has sent an anonymous note of assignation to Don Carlo, who arrives to declare his passionate love, as he thinks, to the Queen. Eboli at first accepts his decla-

ration for herself, but rapidly realizes the error. In a fury of humiliation and jealousy, she swears to reveal all to the King. Posa's threats fail to move her. Realizing that Carlo is now in mortal danger, Posa obtains from him incriminating papers which reveal his collusion with the Flemish freedom movement.

Scene 2 — The coronation is to be celebrated by an auto-da-fé, at which several heretics are to be burned alive. Don Carlo interrupts the ceremony at the head of a delegation from Flanders, with a public plea against persecution. The King dismisses them abruptly, at which Don Carlo draws his sword against his father and sovereign. No one in the shocked assembly will disarm him until Posa steps forward and does so.

ACT IV — Scene 1 — King Philip ponders the desolation of his life. His wife does not love him, and never did. The only sleep he can look forward to is the sleep of death. He summons the Grand Inquisitor, the supreme spiritual authority in Spain, to ask his advice about his son Carlo — should he take the ultimate sanction against him? God sacrificed his Son for the greater good and will absolve the King, says the Inquisitor. He adds that the Inquisition has noted the King's favor for Posa, whom it regards as a radical and heretic. The King protests and refuses to turn him over to the Inquisitor, but senses that eventually he will have to yield. Meanwhile, Eboli has been active against the Queen, stealing her jewel casket which contains a miniature of Carlo, and showing it to the King. A confrontation between Philip and Elizabeth eventually brings Posa and Eboli onto the scene. Eboli, full of remorse, confesses to Elizabeth the theft, her unrequited love for Carlo, and her previous adultery with the King. This last fact the Queen cannot forgive, and she dismisses Eboli from the court. Eboli curses her own fatal beauty which has led her so terribly astray.

Scene 2 — Posa visits Carlo, who is now in prison. He explains that by allowing the Flemish papers to be found in his possession, he has transferred suspicion to himself. He knows death awaits him, but adds that dying for his friend is a worthwhile sacrifice. An unseen assassin shoots, and the dying Posa tells Carlo that Elizabeth will see him one last time at Yuste. King Philip arrives with the full court to rehabilitate his son, only to find him more unrepentant than ever following his friend's death. In removing protection from Posa, Philip has forever lost his only friend and his only son.

ACT V — Elizabeth calls on the spirit of Charles V to intercede for her in heaven. She recalls a happier time in France and expresses her affection for Carlo. All she longs for now is death. Carlo arrives. Elizabeth demands that he should forget their love and remember Posa's death, and all it signifies. Carlo is now ready to sacrifice everything to the cause of Flemish liberty. The Inquisition is moving fast, however, and even as they say goodbye, the Grand Inquisitor and King Philip arrive. Philip demands a double sacrifice and hands Don Carlo over to the Inquisitor.

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ARTIST PROFILES



NINA RAUTIO first performed in the West in 1991, when she appeared with the Bolshoi company at the Metropolitan Opera and at the Edinburgh Festival. The following year she was engaged to sing (and record) the title role of *Manon Lescaut* at Milan's La Scala. The success of both the recording and her performances on the Scala stage launched the young soprano's international career. Past highlights have

included the title part of *Aida* (one of her signature roles) at the Savonlinna Festival; *Don Carlo* (Elisabetta) at La Scala; a debut at the Paris Opera/Bastille as Lisa in *The Queen of Spades*; a bow with the BBC in the television and video production of *The Maid of Orleans*; her first Desdemona in a new staging of *Otello* at the Orange Festival; *Aida* for the opening of the Rome Opera season; *Un Ballo in Maschera* (Amelia) and *Aida* for the Royal Opera at Covent Garden; and a debut at the Vienna State Opera in *Manon Lescaut*. Among the Russian artist's most recent engagements are *Simon Boccanegra* (Amelia) in Florence; *Aida* in New York (Metropolitan Opera debut), Dallas, Berlin, Florence, Naples, Verona and Tokyo; and her role debut as Abigail in *Nabucco* in London. Her current season includes Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*, the title role of *Tosca*, Leonora in *Il Trovatore*, and Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* in theaters throughout France, Switzerland, Germany and the United States. Rautio has also been acclaimed in concert with numerous leading orchestras including the ensembles of Amsterdam, Milan, Rome, Tel Aviv, Munich, Salzburg, London and Pittsburgh. Included in her repertoire are Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, Mahler's Second Symphony and Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass*.



MARINA MESHERIAKOVA, one of the leading artists with Moscow's Bolshoi Opera, studied at the Tchaikovsky Conservatory and won a number of competitions throughout her country. In 1991 she joined the Bolshoi where she sang and continues to sing such roles as Antonida in Glinka's *A Life for the Tsar*, Marfa in Rimsky-Korsakov's *The Tsar's Bride*, Agnes in *The Maid of Orleans*, Violetta in *La Traviata*,

and the title part of *Iolanta*. She continued her studies with famed soprano Licia Albanese and in 1994 sang the role of Tamara in Anton Rubinstein's *The Demon* at the Wexford Festival to much critical acclaim. After winning a prize at Vienna's prestigious Belvedere Competition in 1995, Mesheriakova sang Elisabetta in *Don Carlo* for the Helsinki Opera in 1996 and made a debut at the Vienna State Opera in the same role. Shortly thereafter, she sang Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* at the Schönbrunn Mozart Festival in Vienna; the title role of *Madama Butterfly* in Tallinn; the title part of *Luisa Miller* for the Canadian Opera Company; and *The Demon's* Tamara at the Bregenz Festival. Among the soprano's most recent engagements are the title role of *Norma* in Stockholm, Toronto and with the Deutsche Oper Berlin; *Madama Butterfly* in Minneapolis and Toronto; *Simon Boccanegra* (Amelia) in Monte Carlo; *Don Carlo* for her acclaimed 1997 Metropolitan Opera debut; and *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Countess) at the Opéra de Nantes. Forthcoming are *Butterfly* in Detroit, as well as *Simon Boccanegra* and *Il Trovatore* (Leonora) at the Met. Concert engagements have included *The Demon* and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony in Vienna, in addition to Britten's *War Requiem* in Strasbourg and Brussels. She has made a number of recordings including *A Life for the Tsar* and *The Demon*, the latter taken from the 1994 Wexford production.



A native of Greece, mezzo **MARKELLA HATZIANO** has appeared at several important opera companies and with many of the world's prestigious orchestras. Her extensive operatic repertoire ranges from Gluck's *Alceste* to Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex*, from Donizetti's *La Favorita* to Schoenberg's *Erwartung*, from Bellini's *Norma* to Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia*, and it includes roles as diverse as Amneris in *Aida*,

Mélisande in *Pelléas et Mélisande* and Kundry in *Parsifal*. In recent seasons she has performed on the stages of Covent Garden (*Samson et Dalila* and *Aida*), Milan's La Scala (*Les Troyens*), Salzburg Festival (*Bluebeard's Castle*), Teatro Comunale in Florence (*Aida*) and with orchestras such as the London Symphony, Boston Symphony, BBC Symphony, the Royal Philharmonic, Madrid's Orquesta Nacional de España, Orquesta Sinfónica de Bilbao, Orquesta de Valencia and the Orchestre de Paris. In concert, she regularly sings works by Mahler (*Kindertotenlieder*, *Rückertlieder*, *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*), Berlioz (*Les Nuits d'Été*, *Cléopâtre*) and Wagner (*Wesendonck Lieder*). Among the mezzo's most recent engagements are a debut at the Hollywood Bowl in *La Damnation de Faust* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic; a bow at the Edinburgh Festival with Mahler's Second Symphony; her first appearance at the Festival de Radio France in Montpellier as Lady Macbeth in Ernest Bloch's rarely performed *Macbeth*; the Verdi Requiem and Mahler's Second in Oslo, Vienna and Athens with the Oslo Philharmonic; concert performances of *Don Carlo* at the Norwegian Opera; *Samson et Dalila* at the New Israeli Opera; and Berlioz's *Les Troyens à Carthage* at Lisbon's Teatro Nacional de São Carlos.



Soprano **CASSANDRE BERTHON**, a native of Marseille, began musical studies at the age of four with the violin, and at an early age studied chamber music at the Conservatoire de Marseille. Her interest in music led her to begin vocal training in 1990. After winning several important vocal competitions, the young artist made an acclaimed 1996 debut at the Frankfurt Opera as Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro*.

This led to her immediate re-engagement in Frankfurt for both *Nozze di Figaro* and Fyodor in *Boris Godunov*. Appearances since then have included *Orphée aux Enfers* (Cupid) in Geneva and Lyon; *La Clemenza di Tito* (Annus) at the Opéra de Saint-Etienne; *Boris Godunov* at the Théâtre du Capitole in Toulouse; and the French five-act *Don Carlos* (Thibault) with London's Royal Opera at the Edinburgh Festival. In concert she has sung Handel's *Rinaldo* in Beaune and Mozart's Requiem at the Festival d'Auvers-sur-Oise. Among her future engagements are Rameau's *Platée* (Clarine/Amour) for her debut at the Opéra National de Paris, *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* (Amore/Damigella) at the Aix-en-Provence Festival, and *Faust* (Siebel) at the Opéra de Marseille.



1998-99 Adler Fellow **TAMMY JENKINS** made her bow with the Company as Frasquita in *Carmen* during the *Femmes Fatales* Festival. A native of Las Cruces, the soprano attended New Mexico State University and has performed in productions of *Tartuffe* (Marianne), *Amahl and the Night Visitors* (the Mother), and *Carmen* (Micaëla). She has also appeared in concert presentations of Schubert's Mass in G and

Omnipotence with Vos Vaqueros. Jenkins was a Metropolitan Opera Southwestern Regional Finalist in 1996 and received an

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VERSACE



Encouragement Award from the Met Auditions in 1997. A Merola Opera Program participant last year, she sang the role of Frasquita in the summer staging of *Carmen*. She went on to repeat the role and also sing Micaëla in Western Opera Theater's national touring production. Additional Opera Center credits include a Schwabacher Debut Recital (with Adler Fellow colleagues) and the role of the First Priestess in the Showcase production of Gluck's *Iphigénie en Tauride*.



With his outstanding success in the title role of *Don Carlo* at this summer's Salzburg Festival, **SERGEI LARIN** once again established himself as one of the world's leading tenors. He made his U.S. opera debut as Cavaradossi in San Francisco Opera's 1992 staging of *Tosca* and was seen here in 1995 as the Prince in the Company premiere of *Rusalka*. He most recently appeared with the Company during the 1996-97 season as Don

José in *Carmen*. The Russian artist studied at the Lithuanian National Conservatory in Vilnius and made his operatic debut with the Vilnius Opera as Alfredo in *La Traviata*. After two years of singing solo roles at Bratislava's National Theatre, he made a highly acclaimed 1990 debut at the Vienna State Opera as Lensky in *Eugene Onegin*. Since then, his career has taken him to many of the world's important opera centers, including Milan's La Scala, the Royal Opera at Covent Garden, Metropolitan Opera, Netherlands Opera, Bregenz Festival, and the opera houses of Bologna, Monte Carlo, Stockholm, Frankfurt, Berlin and Zurich. Recent highlights include Calaf in *Turandot* with the Teatro Comunale of Florence company in Beijing; *La Fanciulla del West* (Dick Johnson) in Florence; *Tosca* in Zurich; *Boris Godunov* (Grigory) at the Met; *Eugene Onegin* in Turin; *Fedora* (Loris) at Munich's Bavarian State Opera; *Eugene Onegin* and *Norma* (Pollione) at the Opéra National de Paris; *Pagliacci* (Canio) at Berlin's Deutsche Staatsoper; *Carmen* at the Chorégies d'Orange; and *Aida* (Radames) at the Vienna State Opera. He has also performed on the concert stage with many of the world's prestigious orchestras led by such prominent conductors as Claudio Abbado, Riccardo Chailly, Gianandrea Gavazzeni, Neeme Järvi, Zubin Mehta and Riccardo Muti. Among Larin's recordings are *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* (Sergei), *Boris Godunov* (Dimitri), *Mazeppa* (Andrei), Scriabin's First Symphony, and a disk of Russian songs. The artist is the recipient of the coveted Verdi Prize from Parma's Giuseppe Verdi Society.



ANTHONY MICHAELS-MOORE made his critically acclaimed 1997 San Francisco Opera debut in the title role of *Eugene Onegin*. The baritone studied at Newcastle University, at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, and currently with Neilson Taylor. Since his Royal Opera at Covent Garden debut in 1987 as the Watchman in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, his roles there have included Kothner in *Die*

Meistersinger, Marcello in *La Bohème*, Scarpia in *Tosca*, Belcore in *L'Elisir d'Amore*, Lescaut in *Manon Lescaut*, Stankar in *Stiffelio*, in addition to the title characters of *Simon Boccanegra*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and *Macbeth*. He has sung with all the major British companies in parts such as the title roles of *Hamlet* and *Eugene Onegin*, Germont in *La Traviata*, Escamillo in *Carmen*, and Posa in *Don Carlo*. The British artist has also performed at the Vienna Staatsoper (Rossini's Figaro, Belcore, Lescaut); the Paris Opera/Bastille (Onegin, Orest in *Elektra*, Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly*; and Milan's La Scala (the Speaker in *Die Zauberflöte*, Antonio in *Linda di Chamounix*, *Carmina Burana*).

Additional engagements include *Andrea Chénier* (Gérard) in Buenos Aires, *Il Trovatore* (Count di Luna) in Toulouse, *La Bohème* and *Pagliacci* (Silvio) at the Metropolitan Opera, *Don Carlo* in Pittsburgh, and *Eugene Onegin* at the Deutsche Oper Berlin. The baritone's future plans include *La Bohème* and *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Enrico) at the Met, in addition to the title role of *Rigoletto* in Pittsburgh and Brussels. Michaels-Moore, already with an impressive discography (his most recent release is *Lucia di Lammermoor* led by Charles Mackerras), will soon be in the studio to record *Falstaff* (Ford) and *Aroldo* (Egberto).



Master of a remarkable repertoire that spans the opera stage, festivals, concert and recital halls, **JAMES MORRIS** made his 1981 San Francisco Opera debut as Assur in *Semiramide*. The American bass has since appeared here as Wotan in the 1985 Ring Festival (singing the *Rheingold* Wotan for the first time), Scarpia in *Tosca* (another career first) and Claggart in *Billy Budd* (1985), the four villains in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* (1987),

the Ring cycle again in 1990, in the title role of *Boris Godunov* in 1992 (singing the part in Russian for the first time), Procidia in *I Vespri Siciliani* (1993), in the title role of *Macbeth* (1994), Wotan in *Die Walküre* (1995), and in the title role of *Der Fliegende Holländer* (1997). He returns here next summer as Wotan/Wanderer in three cycles of the Ring Festival. Born and educated in Baltimore, Morris became the youngest male singer on the Metropolitan Opera roster at the age of 23 and at 27 was on the Met stage as Don Giovanni, a role he has sung in numerous seasons there and in other opera centers of the world. His Metropolitan Opera record consists of over 50 roles, sung since his debut there in 1971 (he celebrated his 25th season at the Met in 1996 singing his first Iago in *Otello*). He most recently performed at the Met in *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Figaro), *Billy Budd* (Claggart), *Die Walküre* (Wotan), *Siegfried* (Wanderer) and *Der Fliegende Holländer*. The artist is in constant demand internationally for his opera roles, which range from Mozart to Wagner to Britten, as well as for concert appearances and recitals. His extensive discography includes two complete Ring cycles, *Der Fliegende Holländer*, *Maria Stuarda*, *Le Roi de Lahore*, *I Vespri Siciliani*, *Così fan tutte*, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, *Aida*, *Parsifal*, *Salome*, Berlioz's *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Beggar's Opera*, Haydn's *The Creation*, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, the Requiems of Mozart and Fauré, as well as a recording of arias by Wagner and Verdi.



Internationally acclaimed bass **VICTOR VON HALEM** made his 1994 San Francisco Opera debut as the Landgraf in *Tannhäuser* and returned the following season to sing Hunding in *Die Walküre* and the Commendatore in *Don Giovanni*. Born in Berlin and raised in Italy and Portugal, he began his career in 1966 when Herbert von Karajan engaged him for the Deutsche Oper in Berlin, chose him for many recordings,

and invited him to perform at the Salzburg Festival numerous times. He has since appeared in concert and opera throughout the world with other prominent conductors (Sinopoli, Mehta, Abbado, Ozawa, Maazel, Chung), and at important musical festivals (Salzburg, Edinburgh, Spoleto, Orange, Tanglewood, Athens, Barcelona). The versatile artist's repertoire includes more than 90 roles (from Sarastro to Philip II to Rocco to Gurnemanz, Hagen and many others), some of which are featured on a long list of recordings, the most recent of which are *La Roche in Capriccio* and Brander in *La Damnation de Faust*. He received a Grammy Award for his recording of *Parsifal* led by Herbert von



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Karajan and sings on the popular *Humor im Lied* CD. During the past several seasons, his performances of the role of Hans Sachs in *Die Meistersinger* and the title character of *Der Fliegende Holländer* have been praised at the Spoleto Festival, Dallas Opera and Michigan Opera Theatre, among others. Recent highlights include *Capriccio* at the Glyndebourne Festival; a performance and recording of *Fidelio* (Rocco) in Bonn; a successful debut at the Paris Opera/Bastille as Arkel in *Pelléas et Mélisande*; Jokanaan in *Salome* with Opera Colorado; and Gurnemanz in *Parsifal* with the Cologne Philharmonic. Among his future plans are Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte* at Catania's Teatro Bellini, *Turandot* and *Zauberflöte* at Berlin's Deutsche Oper, and a return to Dallas Opera as Hunding in *Die Walküre*.



Bass **REINHARD HAGEN**, now in his U.S. debut season with the San Francisco Opera, is quickly becoming a regular guest artist at many of Europe's leading opera houses and with numerous leading orchestras. Following studies in Karlsruhe, the young German artist won several important international singing competitions and began his professional career in Dortmund. Since 1994, he has been a regular member of the

Deutsche Oper Berlin, where he has appeared in such roles as Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte*, Pogner in *Die Meistersinger*, Gremin in *Eugene Onegin*, Ramfis in *Aida*, and the Watchman in Enescu's *Oedipe*. Elsewhere, Hagen has performed with, among others, the Hamburg and Munich State Operas (*Zauberflöte*), in Seville (the Landgraf in *Tannhäuser*), Geneva (Friar Laurence in *Roméo et Juliette*), Venice (his first Rocco in *Fidelio*), and at the Aix-en-Provence Festival (Cadmus in Handel's *Semele*). Equally at home on the concert platform, he has appeared with such orchestras as the Bavarian Radio Symphony under Lorin Maazel, Gewandhaus Orchestra Leipzig led by Herbert Blomstedt and Marek Janowski, and the Berlin Philharmonic conducted by James Levine. Works he has performed include Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and *Missa Solemnis*, Shostakovich's Fourteenth Symphony, and Haydn's *Creation*. Forthcoming engagements include his San Diego Opera debut as King Heinrich in a new staging of *Lohengrin*, a concert tour conducted by Neville Marriner, and concerts with the Bavarian Radio Symphony under Maazel.



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*. Earlier this year, he performed in the Company's stagings of

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

concert 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*.



NORMAN SHANKLE, who made his San Francisco Opera debut during the *Femmes Fatales* Festival as Valletto in *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, was recently honored as first prize winner of the prestigious 1998 MacAllister Awards. The tenor continues his association with S.F. Opera Center as a 1998-99 Adler Fellow after completing the Merola Opera Program in 1996 and 1997. He was seen earlier this year as Pylade in Opera Center's 1998 Showcase production of *Ippigénie en Tauride*. 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 *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.



EMMANUEL JOEL made his U.S. opera debut leading San Francisco Opera's production of *Carmen* during the 1996-97 season. After studies at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique in Paris, he conducted extensively with the opera companies of Lyon, Nantes, Montpellier, Toulouse, Strasbourg, Nancy and at the Aix-en-Provence Festival, specializing in the French, Italian and Slavic repertoire. After his acclaimed 1993 debut at the Paris Opera/Bastille with Offenbach's *Les Brigands*, there soon followed engagements at the Wexford Festival (Boieldieu's *La Dame Blanche*), in Utrecht with Opera Zuid (Chabrier's *L'Étoile*), and in Dublin (Delibes's *Lakmé*). Significant past highlights include a debut at London's English National Opera with a critically acclaimed new production of *Don Quixote* and a return to the ENO for *Les Pêcheurs de Perles* and *La Bohème*; *Carmen* at the Jerusalem Festival; *Semele* and *Pêcheurs de Perles* with Melbourne's Victoria State Opera; as well as a new staging of Offenbach's *La Belle Hélène* with Scottish Opera. Among Maestro Joel's most recent engagements are *Werther* in Los Angeles, Tel Aviv and Toulouse, *Eugene Onegin* in Toulouse, *La Traviata* for his New York City Opera debut, *Samson et Dalila* with Opera Australia, as well as *Samson et Dalila* and Chausson's *Le Roi Arthus* with the Montpellier Opera. Current and forthcoming assignments include *Aida* for Scottish Opera, *Werther* with the New Israeli Opera, as well as *Faust* and *Samson et Dalila* in Marseille. In concert, the maestro has led the Orchestre de Chambre de Lausanne at the Montreux Festival, Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse, the Orchestre Symphonique de la Monnaie in Brussels, and the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France in Paris.



In 1990, **EMILIO SAGI** was appointed Director of the Teatro de la Zarzuela in Madrid, the house in which he made his 1982 debut with his staging of *Don Pasquale*. Subsequent operas and zarzuelas he has directed there include *Mefistofele*, *Adriana Lecouvreur*, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, *Tristan und Isolde*, *I Puritani*, *Idomeneo*, *Pagliacci*, *La Cenerentola*, *Die Zauberflöte*, *El Gato Montés*, *Marina*, *La*

Verbena de la Paloma, *El Bateo* and *La Montera*. In addition to working at all the major theaters and festivals in his native Spain, Sagi has directed productions for Bologna's Teatro Comunale, the Teatro la Fenice in Venice, Rome Opera, São Carlos in Lisbon, Monte Carlo Opera, Los Angeles Music Center Opera, Teatro Municipal in Santiago, Chile, Nissei Theater in Tokyo, Hong Kong Opera Festival, Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires and the Washington Opera. Among his most recent engagements are *La Fille du Régiment* in Monte Carlo, *Idomeneo* in Madrid, *Un Ballo in Maschera* in Santiago, *Doña Francisquita* in Buenos Aires, Madrid and Washington, and *I Puritani* in Bologna. His future projects will take him to Geneva, Düsseldorf, and the Teatro Real in Madrid.



Designer **ZACK BROWN** made his 1979 San Francisco Opera debut with the sets and costumes for *La Gioconda*. That nationally telecast, Emmy Award-winning production was repeated on the stage of the War Memorial in 1983 and '88. Additional Company credits have been *Le Nozze di Figaro* ('82, '86, '91, '97), *La Forza del Destino* ('92), Rossini's *Otello* ('94), and, during the 1996-97 season, *Prince Igor*

(sets/costumes), *Lohengrin* (sets) and *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* (selected principal costumes). As resident designer for the Washington Opera, Brown has created the sets and costumes for over 40 productions, including *Otello*, *La Bobème*, *L'Italiana in Algeri*, *Un Ballo in Maschera*, *The Merry Widow*, *Der Fliegende Holländer* and D'Albert's *Tiefeland*. He has also created designs for, among other companies, the Metropolitan Opera (*Rigoletto*), Houston Grand Opera, Santa Fe Opera, New York City Opera, Michigan Opera Theatre, New Orleans Opera, Wolf Trap, and the Hamburg Staatsoper. On Broadway, Brown designed scenery and costumes for the Tony Award-winning revival of *On Your Toes*. Among his 14 productions for New York's Circle in the Square Theater, his scenery for Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* and his costumes for *Saint Joan* won nominations for Tony and Drama Desk awards, respectively. Classical dance designs include *Gaîté Parisienne* and *Jardin aux Lilas* for the American Ballet Theatre and a full evening of Ravel, *Trilogie*, for the Hamburg Ballet. In addition, his costume designs were seen in a five-part television mini-series of O'Neill's *Mourning Becomes Electra*. Much of his work has been seen at the Arena Stage in Washington, D.C., including *Of Thee I Sing*, *Candide*, *Twelfth Night* and *On the Town*.



THOMAS J. MUNN continues to serve as lighting director for San Francisco Opera, a position he has held since 1976. He most recently created the lighting for *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* and *Carmen* during our *Femmes Fatales* Festival, and this season adds new designs to productions of *A Streetcar Named Desire* (projection and lighting design), *Don Carlo*, *Peter Grimes* and *Betrothal in a Monastery*, as well

as for revivals of *Turandot* and *Tristan und Isolde*. During his tenure with the Company, he has created the lighting and special effects for over 180 productions. Scenic design credits include productions of *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, *Roberto Devereux*, *Pelléas et Mélisande* (1979), *Billy Budd*, *Nabucco*, *Don Giovanni* and *Christophe Colomb*. Lighting design credits for our 1997-98 season included the 75th Anniversary Gala (stage and television), *Tosca*, *Pelléas et Mélisande* and *Eugene Onegin*. His television credits for the Company include *The Dangerous Liaisons*, *Turandot*, the Emmy-award-winning *La Gioconda*, *Aida*, *Samson et Dalila*, *La Bobème*, *Mefistofele*, *Orlando Furioso*, *L'Africaine* and *Capriccio*. Munn has also designed productions for the Netherlands Opera, Opéra de Nice, Sendai Opera, Houston Grand Opera and Dallas Opera. Recent assignments include work for the Washington Opera (*Dangerous Liaisons*), New York City's Mary Anthony Dance Theatre, the PBS television production of *Emmeline*, and Ballet Arizona (scenery and projections for a new staging of *Nutcracker*). Lighting system consulting projects include San Francisco's recently renovated War Memorial Opera House and the Het Muziektheater in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

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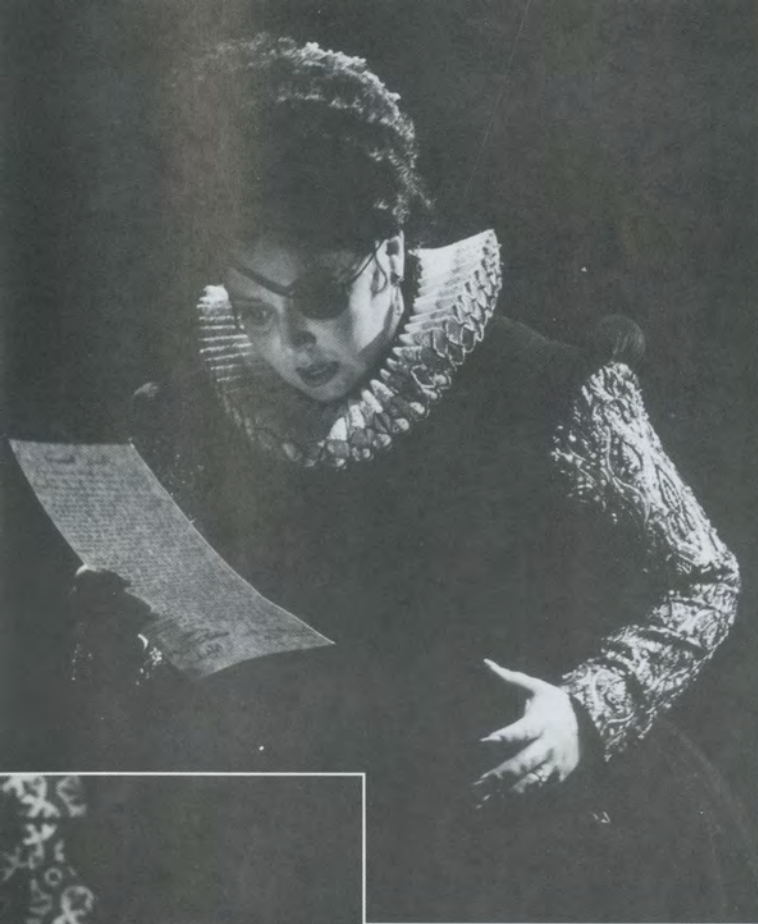
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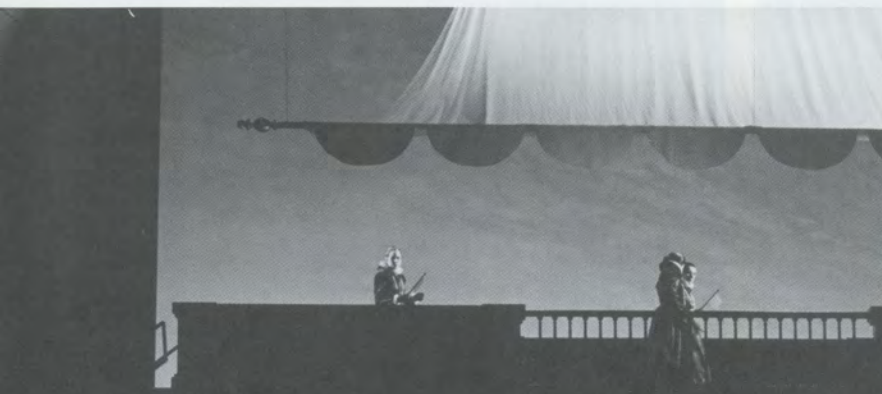


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BIRTH AND REBIRTH

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the Inquisitor) one of the greatest triumphs of the whole enterprise, and preserved unchanged in all versions — and Verdi's failure to achieve equal, balanced impact with both. In his magisterial three-volume Verdi study, Julian Budden has attempted to explain the stiffness of the first even in its final (1883) form by suggesting that it was beyond the composer's capacity to let his characters "philosophize in music ... This is because to the end his art remains vocally oriented; he could never contrive the kind of orchestral discourse that for instance makes the debates of (Wagner's) Mastersingers musically interesting." Yet in the introduction to the Philip-Inquisitor scene, where the lowest layers of the orchestra — bassoons and contrabassoons, trombones, cellos and double basses, escorted by stomach-churning *pp* stutters and thuds on timpani and bass drum — are set heaving and shuddering, one senses in the music an absolute balefulness of import which certainly sets the "philosophical" context for the following dialogue (and here Verdi's gift of working up a dialogue of swiftest dramatic pace and timing out of apparently unassuming conversational exchanges, evident throughout the opera, reaches an astonishing peak of compact expressivity). Maybe the difference in impact between the duets can be ascribed to the simple fact that in opera, as in art in general, it is easier to portray malign thoughts and beliefs, like the ancient Inquisitor's steely, unbending approach to his fellow man, than something like Posa's compassion, generosity, and openness.

For all that, it is just as much Posa's contribution to the work's "political" discourse as the Inquisitor's that has helped to make this opera one of the most loved and widely appreciated of all — and, since this establishment of *Don Carlo* among the elect of the medium is entirely a post-World-War-II phenomenon, fueled by famous productions of the opera at Florence and the New York Metropolitan, both in 1950, and (perhaps most influential of all) at London's Covent Garden in 1958, we may speculate about what it is in the opera that has so chimed with the postwar Zeitgeist. The fact that it exists in more than one version and, therefore, contains more — and different — aspects of itself than can be revealed in any one rendition seems somehow to reflect the hugeness of the

subject matter, the seriousness and courage of Verdi's treatment of it, and, finally, its startling modernity. A mighty unfolding of potent personal beliefs, passions, prejudices, loves, losses, disappointments, griefs, and despair is spread out at the heart of a powerful but unjustly ordered and profoundly unhappy state, wrapped in oppressive ceremonial and led by a ruler whose personal flaws mirror the injustices of national governance. The opera dares to take a wider, more socially inclusive world-view than any other by Verdi, in a tone and style that aim for, and more often than not achieve, a very special kind of truthfulness.

Just as the Spain of Philip II portrayed in Verdi's music is, except for the flashes of Iberian color provided by Eboli and her "Veil Song," unremitting in its sobriety and, often, darkness, so is the pessimism of that world view. It is the pessimism that underlies all of Verdi's mature operas, and it may be summed up in the line of *Simon Boccanegra's* Fiesco near that opera's end: "Ogni letizia in terra/ È menzognero incanto,/ D'interminato pianto/ Fonte è l'umano cor?" ("All happiness on earth is a lying enchantment, and the human heart is a fountain of interminable grief"). Without the balm of Verdian melody such as heals and irradiates the sufferings of Carlos and Elisabeth in their final duet, it would make experience of those mature operas, and *Don Carlo* in particular, intolerably bleak. As it is, this combination of pessimism and lyricism seems to speak to us directly, clearly, without exaggeration or pretense, in a way that it did not to our forebears. For, in the words of Paul Robinson, the opera's "refusal to indulge in wishful thinking speaks directly to the hardened sensibilities of a world that has seen two global conflicts as well as heretofore inconceivable atrocities," and that this world — our world — "appreciates the essential wisdom of Verdi's political judgments in the opera, and ... finds solace in the extraordinary beauty with which those judgments are rendered." □

Max Loppert, chief music critic of the London Financial Times 1980–1996 and Associate Editor of *Opera* 1986–1997, has contributed to *The New Grove Dictionary* and *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, and the journals *International Piano Quarterly*, *International Classical Record Collector*, *BBC Music Magazine*, *Gramophone*, and the theater monthly *Applause*; he is currently writing a study of Gluck.

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IRENE DALIS AT FORTY

continued from page 20

great expressive range. In that 1967 season, in a grand *Das Rheingold*, she also sang Fricka, striking me in that performance as imbuing Wotan's wife with "uncommonly absorbing facets of womanly appeal, showing maternal emotional concern, not merely shrewish qualities."

She only recalled one other contretemps at the Met, after she heard from Bing that Karl Böhm didn't want her to sing the Nurse in the *Die Frau ohne Schatten* he was to conduct there. But Böhm had never heard her in the role. "I said [to Bing] you decide, because I'm going to be on the Merv Griffin Show and if I'm not doing *Die Frau ohne Schatten* there's no reason for my staying at the Met and I'd like to announce [on the show] that I'm leaving," she said, in a voice as firm as if it were yesterday. "And I *meant* it, it was not an act on my part. I said 'I don't think it's correct for any conductor to refuse a singer before they've heard that person in the role. At least in a room.' I thought that was just plain unfair and I thought I don't need the Metropolitan Opera. I had been there at least 10 years. Apparently Bing went and told Böhm because I

did the role and with great success.

"My first Kostelníčka (in Janáček's *Jenůfa*) was in Berlin without an orchestral rehearsal. I hadn't performed the role before but I had learned it and I had a staging. (Later, as the Kostelníčka in the San Francisco Opera's *Jenůfa* of 1969, her interpretation of the role on whom the opera centers, "rose to great heights," as I experienced it, "in acting and in projecting the alternating manic currents with tremendous vocal thrust.") In 1971, she stepped into the role of Ulrica in *Un Ballo in Maschera* in San Francisco without rehearsal, replacing Claramae Turner who became indisposed after the first performance. "I did the broadcast of *Samson et Dalila* at the Met with no orchestra rehearsal," she recalled. "There are some things in my life that were so stupid that I wonder what I was thinking when I did them. I took a lot of chances and I *never* would have been able to do those things if I were not a musician — because I knew the orchestration."

Her final San Francisco Opera performance was in 1973 in an *Elektra* which she helped drive to a feverish pitch with her "explosive, tortured portrayal of the diseased, conscience-wracked queen. The tone poured out,

the words were spat out like acid darts."

She accepted just the roles she thought she should. She refused Rosina in *The Barber of Seville* because she considered herself (physically) "too big." It wasn't the coloratura that put her off. "I've always felt that any voice, *any* well-trained voice has to have coloratura. I don't find it that amazing. I mean everybody should have coloratura. It's a *style*. So many roles I didn't do because (I felt), 'Oh, no, no, no I'm not the type.' How many times was I offered *Carmen* all over the world? Wasn't for me. Never, never! People think, and always ask me 'Aren't you sorry you didn't do a *Carmen*?' No, I don't think I ever would have been a good Carmen, unless the opera started with the card aria. If it started there I could probably handle it." She wasn't afraid to tackle certain soprano roles, Isolde for one, and Lady Macbeth for another, when she became the first mezzo soprano to sing that role at the Met.

Dalis could in fact think of only two roles that she would liked to have sung, and they were also soprano roles. Sieglinde — "Sieglinde is in the right range for a dramatic mezzo" — and Tosca. "Tosca I almost did do at the Met if I had agreed to do the Abigaille



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(*Nabucco*). I learned the Abigaille but then I went in and said 'You know really, this is *not* a role for a dramatic mezzo. Not at all.' Abigaille for me demands a dramatic soprano, not a dramatic mezzo. Tosca, I think, could be done very well by a dramatic mezzo and I think it needs an *acting* ability, the histrionic ability a mezzo's required to have."

Given such self-assuredness, frank self-evaluation and intelligence, where does luck come into it? Being born into such a family as hers, for starters — if that can be called luck. "I was the youngest of five children and it was an absolute blessing because I had the whole family behind me," the San Jose native said. "It was my brother and my sisters that really encouraged me to go to New York to study. My father and mother never did understand that. My sister was my first piano teacher. She taught me to read music before I could read English. My sister was fifteen years older than I was." Her parents, Mamie and Peter Dalis, were musical but not musicians. Her mother, born in Sacramento of Italian parents, played the harp as a young girl, and her father, a Greek immigrant at the turn of the century, had a natural voice but never studied music.

Her San Jose schooling took her

through an A.B. in music from San Jose State College (not yet a university) after which the family sent her east to Columbia University's Teachers' College. "I never planned to be an opera singer," she insists. "I was a pianist and my degrees were in music education. I didn't really start studying voice until after my master's degree (earned at the age of 19.) Even then, when I studied it was only because my family insisted. When I first went to New York I studied with someone recommended by somebody from here and came home and when I sang, my sister said 'You sounded better before you started studying.' So, all I did was become self-conscious. That's when they said 'Now go back and study with a master or don't study at all.'" (Her brother-in-law gave her the money to do it.)

Three leading New York vocal coaches told her that the best teacher was Edyth Walker, a great American dramatic mezzo-soprano, then 81, but "she won't take you." Of course she did, insisting that Dalis take three lessons a week as did all her students. Dalis cherished Walker's predictions that she would sing Isolde, and both Kundry and Lady Macbeth at the Met. After Walker died, two years later, Dalis studied for a third year in New York with the major

American tenor Paul Althouse and won the Fulbright grant that would take her to Milan.

Did luck lead her to the great coach Otto Mueller? No, she checked out all the famous voice teachers at the Verdi Conservatory and "by instinct knew that they really did not know voice technique." She found Mueller, who was not even at the Conservatory. He was the maestro that all the great singers coming to sing at La Scala would work with. After two years of two-a-day lessons with Mueller, "the first in the morning and the last in the afternoon, *every day*," she was heard in his studio by Rudolf Bing.

Bing and Mueller laid out her next career step, first deciding that her names, Yvonne Patricia, were wrong ("A singer of this stature can't bear the name of a French coquette," Bing pronounced), and then choosing over dinner the more poetic and Greek name of Irene. Directed by them to a small, fine German opera house, the Staatstheater Oldenburg, she began giving the multiple performances that she learned were essential in the building process. The very first of these, her initial role at Oldenburg, was her first triumph.

"The first time I walked out on stage

Continued on page 56



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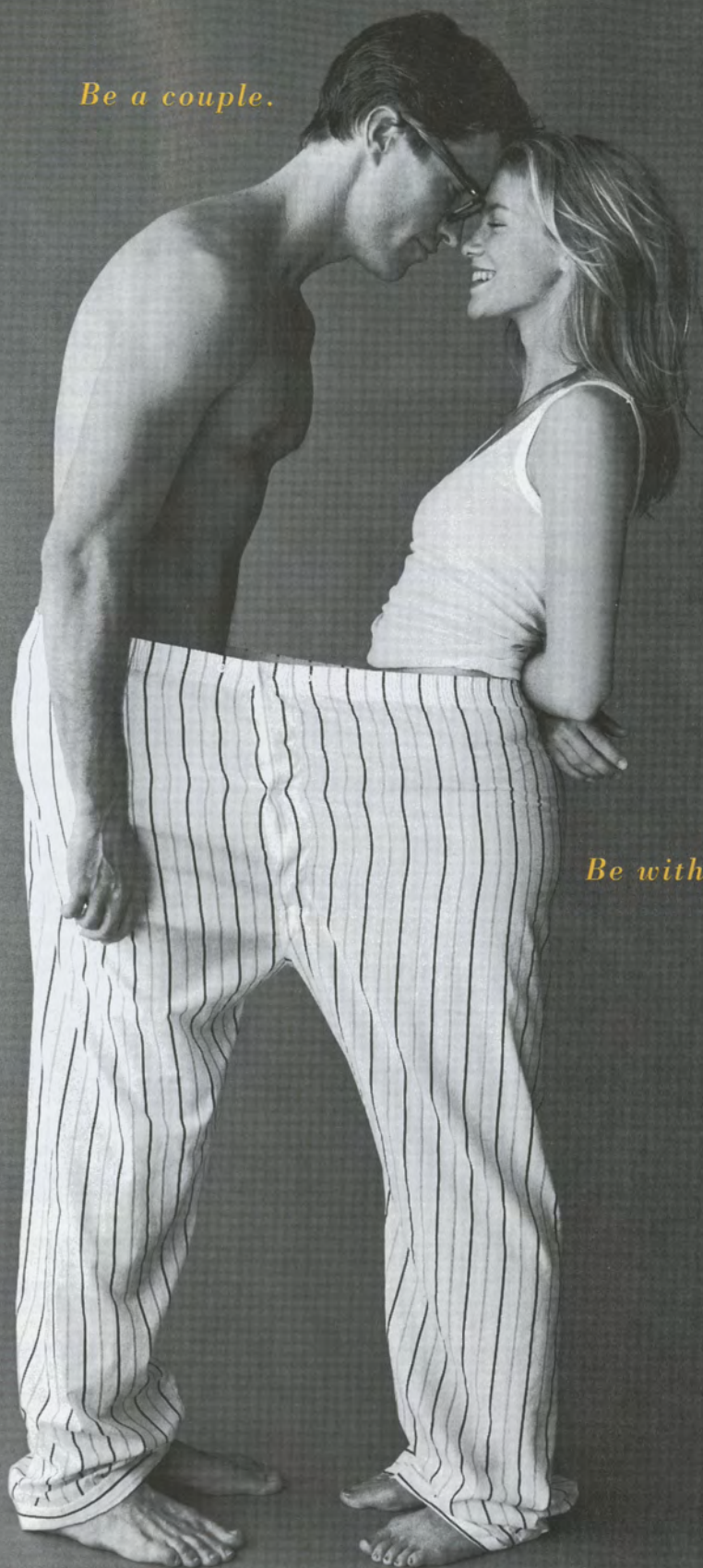
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1998-99 OPERA PREVIEWS

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

PRE-PERFORMANCE LECTURES

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

Don Carlo — Oct. 27, 31; Nov. 5, 11

Norma — Nov. 10, 15, 18, 21, 24

Peter Grimes — Nov. 22; Dec. 2, 5, 11, 13

Betrothal in a Monastery — Nov. 27; Dec. 3, 6, 10

Turandot — Nov. 29; Dec. 1, 4, 9

Madama Butterfly — Jan. 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD — INSIGHTS

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

November 16

November 18

Peter Grimes

Betrothal in a Monastery

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD — PREVIEWS

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

Topic

Peter Grimes

Betrothal in a Monastery

Speaker

Perry Lorenzo

Richard Taruskin

East Bay Chapter —

San Francisco Opera Guild

Lectures held at 8:00 p.m., preceded by complimentary refreshments. St. Mark's Methodist Church, 451 Moraga Way, Orinda. Admission: \$8.00. Series: \$24.00. Reservations required. For reservations or information call Annette Clute (510) 527-1846 or Silvia Lin (925) 838-9255.

Nov 18 *Betrothal in a Monastery*

Marin Chapter —

San Francisco Opera Guild

Lectures held at 12:00 p.m., preceded by complimentary refreshments. Mt. Tamalpais United Methodist Church, 410 Sycamore Avenue, Mill Valley. Admission: \$7.00 — adults, \$6.00 — students and seniors. Series: \$35.00 — adults, \$30.00 — students and seniors. For information call Verna Parino (415) 388-6789.

Nov 16 *Betrothal in a Monastery*

San Francisco Opera Guild

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

Nov 18 *Betrothal in a Monastery*

San Jose Opera Guild

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

Nov 19 *Betrothal in a Monastery**

Sonoma Chapter —

San Francisco Opera Guild

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

Nov 20 *Betrothal in a Monastery*

South Peninsula Chapter —

San Francisco Opera Guild

Lectures held at 8:00 p.m. at Palo Alto Senior Center, 450 Bryant Street, Palo Alto. Admission \$6.00 — adults, \$5.00 — students; Series: \$30.00 — adults, \$15.00 students. For information call Ramona Rockway (650) 941-3890.

Nov 17 *Betrothal in a Monastery*

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

MERRITT COLLEGE OPERA LECTURE SERIES

Held on Tuesday evenings in Room A-117, 7 to 10 p.m., *Introduction to Opera* (Music 13A) emphasizes the operas of the 1998-99 season. The College is at 12500 Campus Drive (off Redwood Road in the Oakland hills). Information: (510) 436-2430

OPERA EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL PREVIEW SERIES

Given by Michael Barclay, director of OEI. Lectures are held from 7:15 to 9:30 p.m. at 400 Yale Ave. (at Vassar) in the Kensington section of the Berkeley hills. Series began on September 7; lectures are \$15 at the door. Information: (510) 526-5244

Nov 9 *Peter Grimes*

Nov 23 *Betrothal in a Monastery*

Dec 14 *Season Review*

FRIENDS OF THE KENSINGTON LIBRARY

A free lecture on Bellini's *Norma* will be given by Michael Barclay on October 22 at 7:00 p.m. at the Kensington Library, 61 Arlington Avenue, Kensington. Information: (510) 524-3043

SAN FRANCISCO CITY COLLEGE PREVIEWS

A music course of previews will deal with all operas of the 1998-99 season. Taught by Marvin Tartak on Thursday evenings from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m., it takes place at the College's Castro/Valencia campus, 450 Church St., in San Francisco. Classes began August 20 and continue for 17 weeks. Information: (415) 239-3641

ROBERT GOODHUE'S OPERA PREVIEWS

Held at Marines Memorial Club, 609 Sutter St., San Francisco, mostly Monday evenings, 6:00-8:30 p.m. (9/28, 5:45-9 p.m.) Series began August 31. Lectures are \$15 per session. Information: (415) 956-1271

Nov 9 *Betrothal in a Monastery*

Jan 4 *Madama Butterfly*

IRENE DALIS AT FORTY

continued from page 45

was for Princess Eboli (in Verdi's *Don Carlo*, 1953) and that's the way I started. I knew *nothing*. So maybe because I started out with such major roles, and I realized the responsibility of these roles, (from then on) I was always there an hour early, all finished, dressed and everything, *always*. All during my career I would write out the role in longhand because it was always in a foreign language that I didn't quite know. I didn't even *speaking* German, and there I was in Germany singing Eboli in German with a German stage director when I could hardly understand what he was saying. He'd say 'verstehen Sie,' [you understand?] and I'd say 'Ja, ja.' "

In two years she was at the Staatliche Oper Berlin (later to become Deutsche Oper) singing small roles until she stepped in to the Kostelnicka role in *Jenifa*. (She was chosen to replace the great Margarete Klose who had broken her contract and gone off to the Staatsoper in East Berlin.) A little later, the morning after she sang her first Eboli at Berlin, she received the cabled invitation from Bing to make her New York and Met debut in the role. "When you realize he took me to the Met *without* an agent!" she exclaimed. "I figured out that somebody must have been in the Berlin theater the night I did the Eboli and had the standing ovation. Carl Ebert (the internationally distinguished opera director, then active in Berlin) came back to me after that Eboli that night and said 'It may sound very *kitschisch*, but a star is born tonight.' I feel that he called Bing and said, 'Hey, if you need an Eboli here she is.' " Luck? Not really. Bing had his eye on Dalis four years earlier in Mueller's studio.

She returned to New York, married George Loinaz, an editor at McGraw-Hill who had charmed her several years earlier. From then on, her career is history: 20 more years and 44 roles at the Met and on other great opera stages of the world. She still attributes much of that success to being fortunate. "Somehow I was always surrounded by the best artists of my day. When I made my debut (at the Met as Eboli), for instance — as a *debutante* — my tenor was Jussi Bjoerling, my bass was Cesare Siepi, the baritone, the Posa, was Ettore Bastianini. These were all the best you could possibly put on that stage in *Don Carlo*. I really attribute such a big success to the fact that I was surrounded by these giants. I didn't even have an agent. I didn't have any pre-publicity because I didn't have a p.r. person. I mean, I just

arrived. Hermann Uhde was the Grand Inquisitor. It was just a cast made in heaven. When you're surrounded by those kind of people, you give more than you know you *have* to give."

All of that experience she has brought to her second career, building and running her own company, Opera San José. She has called it a role she was destined to play, even calling her singing career "a detour." After retiring from the Met in 1977 and returning to her home town, San Jose, she accepted a professorship to run the San Jose State University's opera program. (She still does.) It was developed eventually into Opera San José. Her company has grown impressively, to the point where on a \$2 million budget, her singers give over 200 performances a year, 44 of them full performances of 4 productions, the rest consisting of various kinds of community outreach performances.

If that outreach aspect is specifically American, Opera San José was otherwise modeled by Dalis after the small German ensemble houses, Oldenburg in particular. It is unique in this country in having seven or eight full-time principal artists paid a 12-months salary for up to four years, plus health benefits and housing. They live in a company-owned apartment house building and in the home where Dalis was born and raised, now protected with landmark status. As reviews attest, Opera San José has done well artistically. For her administration, Dalis can point to 14 consecutive seasons ending in the black, the last four sold out, and outright ownership of a handsome production and administrative facility and the apartment house. The 520-seat theater does limit the productions and the orchestra (up to 27 musicians). While working on the long term goal of a bigger house, Dalis happily accepts the benefit of the intimacy that her audience has taken to.

Dalis, the major reason for the company's success and credited with playing a big role in the city's cultural and downtown revival, concentrates on running the company, not coaching, not teaching voice. "Because I am *not* a voice teacher and I *hire* coaches," she explained. "I still do teach in this way at the University. I was a performer and I think I was a natural performer. I don't consider myself a *teacher*. However, I do offer my advice, my critique after the performances. I don't miss important rehearsals. I *am* there. What I do is that I talk to the coaches and I talk to the conductor. We

Continued on page 59

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IRENE DALIS AT FORTY

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have a wonderful coaching staff. I couldn't coach and run the company.

"Frankly, I don't think I could play the piano that well any more, not like I used to. What I *really* want to concentrate on is to get them more performances because I'm from the old school that says you learn by performing. You can't learn in the studio. If they're doing Azucena, I give some advice... (she left the thought unfinished) — but I certainly don't want young people to start emulating me, what I was, or what I did. I want each one to become what each of them is supposed to be.

"Styles have changed. I'm from the old-fashioned school. I think I overacted. I don't think that would be accepted any more. And I try to analyze that and I think it's because I sang in big houses so all the gestures were grand and overdone. That's not *done* any more. It's a lot of just standing still — which we also did in Wagner. Things are far more subtle. Because of the TV, I think, they're all better actors and actresses now."

Dalis insists that her company is "for the singer." "Remember, *this* company is run by a singer," she states. "Voice comes first. Part of the [principal artists'] contract is that they have to continue with their vocal teacher. You'll never walk away from one of our performances talking about the great production, the great sets or the great costumes or the outstanding lighting. You will walk away with some kind of impression about our *singers*. I *am* a singer and we protect these voices as much as we possibly can."

Irene Dalis today seems gratified and fulfilled by playing what may be her biggest role: giving back to the art form perhaps even more than it gave her; building a future. She's called helping young people today, "the reason I was allowed to have an international career in past years." When you hear her talk about it, the consistency or continuity between her first and second careers becomes apparent. She speaks always directly, frankly, convinced, with strong rhetorical rhythm. You hear the underlined words, the emphasis at the climax or crux of each sentence, the point of it. She puts the expressiveness on the key word and idea just as she did unerringly for 25 years while singing her roles, projecting the interpretation. The performance is as real today. □

Robert Commanday, former music and dance critic of the San Francisco Chronicle, is editor of the new weekly web site journal of music criticism, San Francisco Classical Voice, www.SFCV.org.

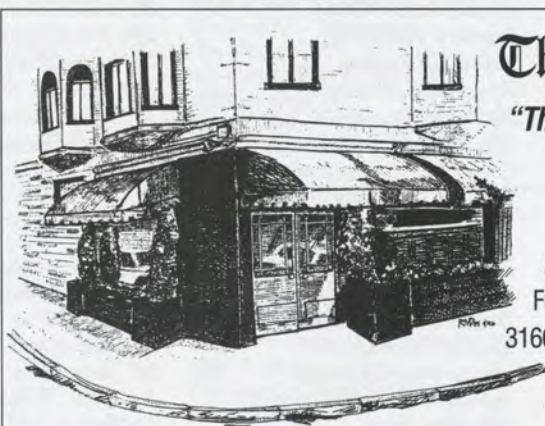
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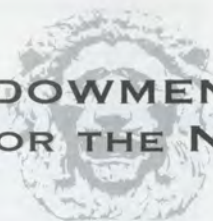
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For more information, contact Bethany Dickinson, Assistant Director of Corporate & Foundation Relations, at (415) 565-3206.

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SERVICES

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

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

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

TICKET INFORMATION. Opera 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 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 Box Office — (415) 864-3330 — for more information.

On permanent display in the Opera House lower bar:

A CELEBRATION OF SINGERS

Great artists at San Francisco Opera, 1962-1997

Stage photography by Robert Cahen

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.

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.

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).

OPERA HOUSE TOURS

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

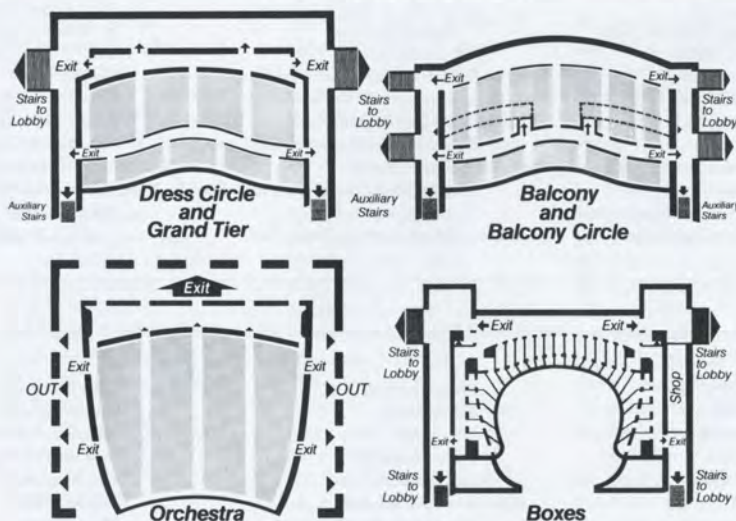
Tuesday, September 22
Tuesday, October 13
Saturday, October 24
Thursday, October 29
Sunday, November 1
Thursday, November 12
Sunday, November 15
Thursday, November 19
Friday, November 27
Sunday, November 29
Saturday, December 5
Saturday, January 9
Saturday, January 16

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

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: There are sufficient exits in this building to accommodate the entire audience. The exit indicated by the lighted "EXIT" sign nearest your seat is the shortest route to the street. (Refer to Diagrams.) In case of fire please do not run—walk through that exit.



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have always ridden with

to help save the day. And sometimes, that means just picking up a carton of milk on the

a trusty companion.

way home from the office. The Toyota Camry. After all, even heroes need a car.



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ATTENTION PATRONS OF THE SYMPHONY HALL AND OPERA HOUSE

We are employees who work in the Food and Beverage Concession Stands in both Symphony Hall and the Opera House. We are members of the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Union, Local 2.

In September Restaurant Associates (RA), a company based in New York, took over the operation of these concession stands and catering events in both facilities, including the Herbst Theatre. In a short period of time before the season opening, we were in heated contract negotiations with Restaurant Associates and city representatives stepped in to help Local 2 with the contract negotiations. Ultimately, in a good faith effort, we thought we reached an agreement with RA. Promises were made by the company, but not kept.

As of October 12th, ten workers were fired who were employees of other past catering companies and some of whom had worked in Symphony Hall and the Opera House as long as seven, ten and eighteen years. Many other long-term employees continue being subject to humiliation and harassment by Restaurant Associates. These terminations were unjustified and without documentation to support their accusations and now RA has gone on record to deny us the right to a fair process to defend ourselves against these unfair accusations. If you are a season ticket subscriber, you have probably noticed our faces are missing from these facilities.

AN APPEAL FOR YOUR SUPPORT

We want you to be aware of our current struggle to gain respect and justice with Restaurant Associates and request you support our effort in asking the War Memorial Board to dismiss this company immediately! **Their anti-union attitude along with high pricing and their un-responsiveness to patron complaints is not good for San Francisco.**

We urge you to contact the War Memorial Board and/or the San Francisco Board of Supervisors with your complaints. Thank you for taking the time to read this information.

**THE COMMITTEE TO WIN
RESPECT ON THE JOB**

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