

Norma

1998-1999

Saturday, November 7, 1998 8:00 PM

Tuesday, November 10, 1998 8:00 PM

Sunday, November 15, 1998 2:00 PM

Wednesday, November 18, 1998 7:30 PM

Saturday, November 21, 1998 8:00 PM

Tuesday, November 24, 1998 8:00 PM

Saturday, November 28, 1998 1:00 PM

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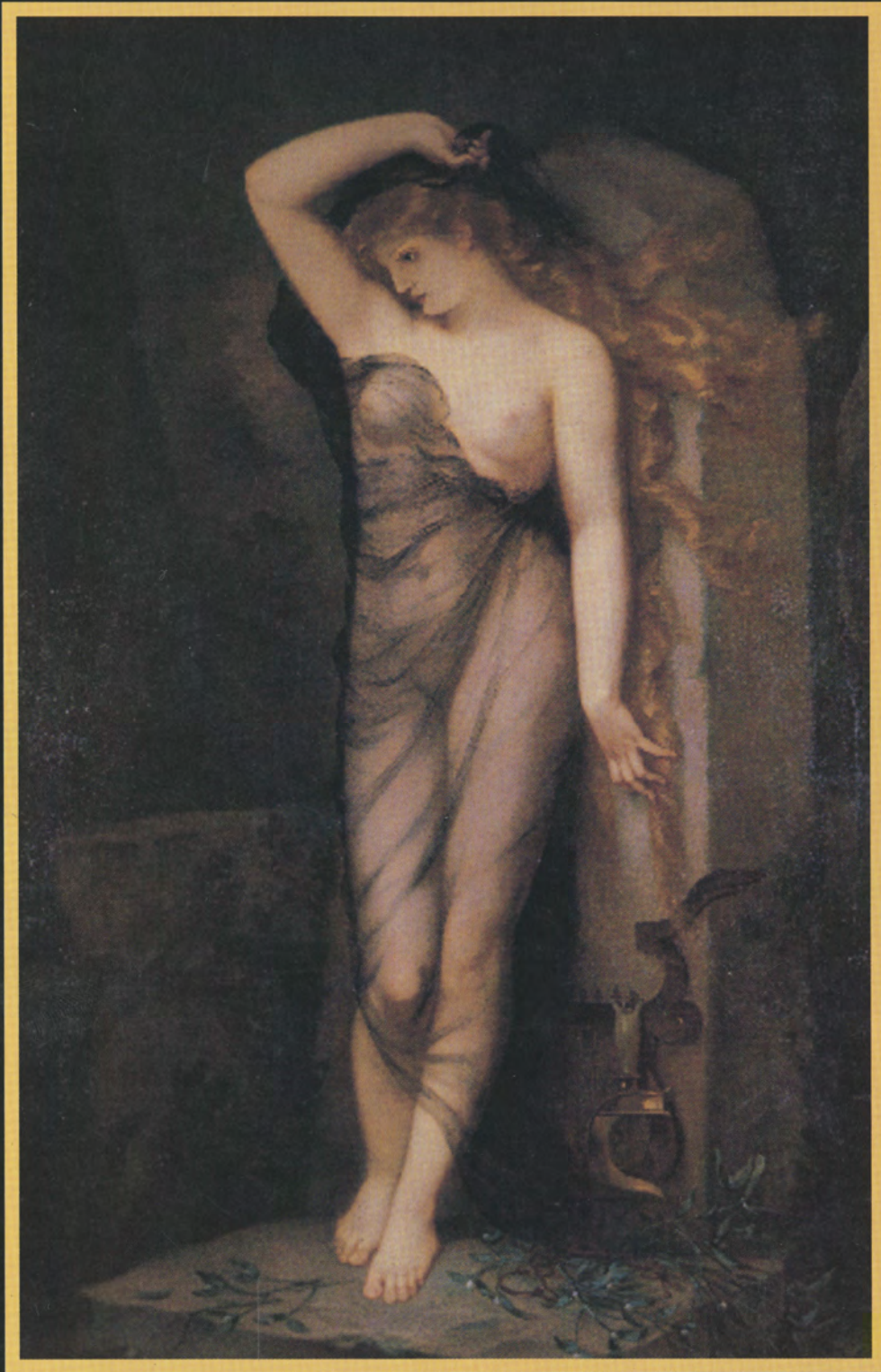
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1998-99 SEASON

NORMA



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SAN FRANCISCO OPERA MAGAZINE

Norma

76th Season, 1998-99

Vol. 76, No. 10

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The author examines the genesis of one of the gems of the bel canto repertoire, in addition to providing many interesting details about its initial and subsequent performances.
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How Alexandre Soumet's *Norma* tragedy provided the story for the Bellini opera of the same title.

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Voillemot, Charles (1823-1893; French)
Druid Priestess Velléda, ca. 1869
Oil on canvas; 7' 6½" x 4' 9"

Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rennes
Photographie Giraudon
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(9/8, 11, 13, 22)/Trussel (9/16, 19m, 25), Bernstein

SEPTEMBER 9, 12M, 15, 18, 23, 26, 1998

WERTHER

Jules Massenet

E. Joel: Joël, Monloup
Vargas, Rasmussen, Rogers, MacKenzie, Travis

OCT. 28, 31, NOV. 6, 8, 11, 14M, 1998

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Giacomo Puccini

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Watanabe, Leech, Atkins, Guzmán, Egerton

FEB. 14, 18, 21, 24, 27M, MARCH 3, 6M, 1999

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APRIL 14, 17M, 21, 24, 27, 30, MAY 2, 1999

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Croft, Bernstein, Schade, Eaglen, Wolf, Cao

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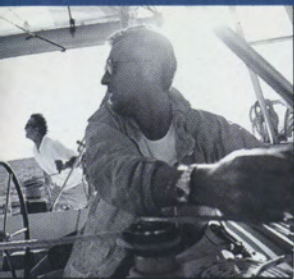
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A MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL DIRECTOR



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 commission 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 made 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.

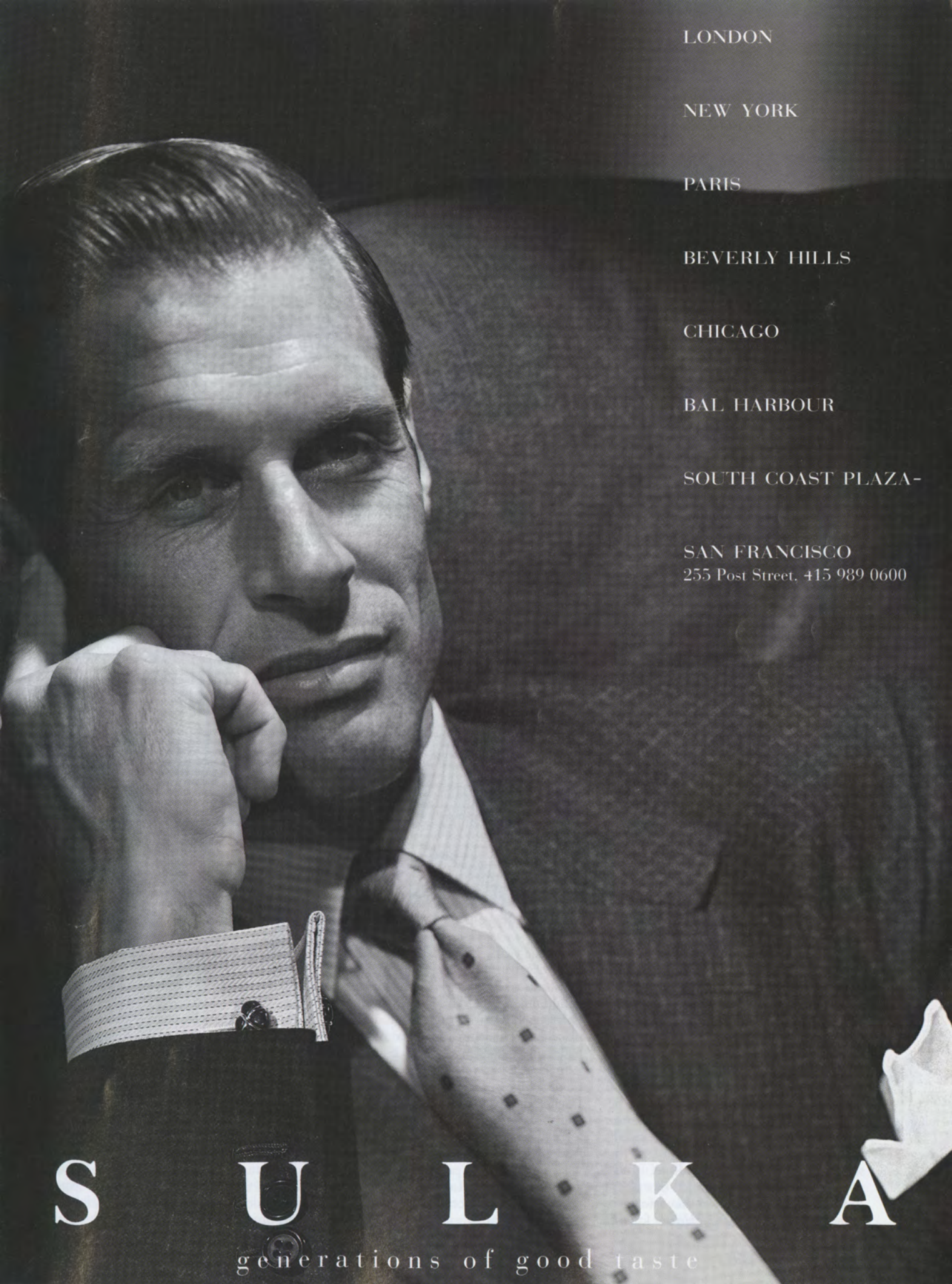
As we move closer towards the millennium, it is our mission to continue our broad programs: to present opera performances of the highest quality to the widest possible audiences, while being a leader in training, arts education, audience development and presentation of new works — new inventory for the 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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NORMA VIENE!!

By JOHN SCHAUER



Joan Sutherland during "Casta Diva" at the San Francisco Opera in 1972.

"Norma viene!" the chorus of Druids sings as they await their priestess in the first scene of Bellini's most celebrated opera. "Norma approaches!" Are there two more exciting words in the Italian repertoire? Has a more magnificent entrance ever been devised for a star's first appearance?

"Norma has always been revered above other Italian operas of the period," we are told in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, and *The Metropolitan Opera Encyclopedia* concurs that it is "Bellini's noblest and most spacious score"; yet a mere telling of the genesis and enduring

appeal of this masterwork conveys neither the mystique that has made the title role the Everest of the bel canto repertoire, nor the inspired musicianship that created a score as compelling in its own right as it is fitting accompaniment to the drama.

Like a tiny handful of other roles — Violetta in *La Traviata* and Isolde spring to mind — Norma stands as a touchstone of the soprano's art, a role so varied in its potential that no one exponent, no matter how brilliant, is ever able to exploit its possibilities fully. That's what keeps us coming back to hear new ones, however infrequent the opportunity may be. The

current production is San Francisco Opera's first since 1982, and the 1996 production at the Lyric Opera of Chicago was that company's first in 28 years.

Dramatically, the role encompasses emotions ranging from tender yearning to nearly infanticidal fury. Take that famous entrance: after all the pageantry preceding Norma's appearance, she must start out the evening with one of the most revered, celebrated and feared arias in the entire soprano repertoire, "Casta diva." Isolde doesn't face the "Liebestod" until the end of her opera, and Violetta at least gets to warm up until the end of the first act before tackling "Semprie libera,"

but Bellini shows Norma no mercy. He does, however, take excellent advantage of the typical two-part scena construction of a slow cavatina followed by a brisk cabaletta. Norma enters as a priestess: noble, aloof and chastising her people for their foolish clamorings for war against the Romans. During the long flute introduction to the aria, she visibly confirms her priestly role, harvesting the sacred mistletoe with a golden, crescent-shaped sickle before she prays to the "Chaste Goddess" of the moon, asking for peace. Yet immediately after this ethereal evocation, her thoughts become carnal as she longs for the illicit love she enjoyed with the Roman proconsul, fully aware that he is the arch-enemy of her own people. From vestal virgin to jilted lover on a dime — and this is all in her first aria. By the end of the first act, Norma's world has been completely upended: the man she loves and for whom she has risked everything has abandoned her, and the woman who was her best friend seems to have betrayed her. Yet she is no pathetically suffering victim like some of Puccini's heroines; at the stroke of the gong that summons the Druids — "Ah! Suon

di morte!" — Norma realizes she now holds the power of life and death over both Pollione and Adalgisa.

The role is described in the *Grove Dictionary* as "one of the most taxing and wide-ranging parts in the entire repertory." And it is enormously long. As Marilyn Horne, who appeared as Adalgisa opposite Joan Sutherland's Norma at San Francisco Opera in 1982, pointed out, after Adalgisa is able to remove her costume and makeup and go home at the end of the first scene of Act 2, Norma still has to go back out onstage and sing the equivalent of *Cavalleria Rusticana*.

"Why is it that Norma has such an attraction for prima donnas?" Richard Bonyngue wrote in *The Metropolitan Opera Encyclopedia*. "Its difficulties are legion, and no great secret has been made of them. Lilli Lehmann declared that it was more difficult to sing one Norma than three Isolde. (She was one of the few who sang both, and she knew whereof she spoke!) Rosa Ponselle told me it was her most beloved and most difficult role, and Zinka Milanov that it was the greatest challenge of all. Even the first Norma, Giuditta Pasta, had problems with 'Casta

diva,' and transposed it down."

It is an almost whimsical comment on the role's difficulty that the singer for whom it was composed could not sing it as composed. One observer of the rehearsals that began in December 1831 wrote how Pasta at first refused to sing "Casta diva," calling it "ill adapted to her abilities. The Maestro [Bellini] used all his wiles to persuade her; but he had little success. They made a pact: she would keep it for a week, going over it again each morning; and if at the end of seven days she still found performing it repugnant, Bellini promised that he would change it." Pasta not only sang it — albeit transposed down a step — but sent the composer a thank-you gift on opening night expressing her desire "to be ever more worthy of your esteem."

Pasta, at the time, was not just another soprano. Born at Saronno, near Milan, in 1797, to a Jewish family named Negri, Pasta in 1831 was at the height of her powers. That same season she had just created the role of Amina in Bellini's *La Sonnambula*, and the previous year the title role of Donizetti's *Anna Bolena*, his first major success. But her meteoric rise



Joan Sutherland and Marilyn Horne during "Mira, o Norma" at the San Francisco Opera in 1982.

was less the result of natural gifts than of superhuman work.

In a delightful book written by Ellen Creathorne Clayton in 1865, *Queens of Song*, she describes Pasta's voice at her 1817 London debut as being "hard and unequal, and she had the greatest difficulty in managing it, while its natural tone was far from being perfect. She had expression, and could descend from the sharp notes of the soprano to the grave tones of the contralto; but she always wanted flexibility, and did not appear to advantage in bravura music: some persons, however, perceived in her the germs of future excellence."

Five years later, according to Miss Clayton, Pasta's vocal skills had grown considerably. "By sheer industry she had extended the range of her voice to two octaves and a half...Her tones had become rich and sweet, except when she attempted to force them beyond their limits; her intonation was, however, never quite perfect, being occasionally a little flat...Her voice, though it had improved wonderfully, never appeared easy and clear in the emission of certain notes, and retained a veiled quality, from which it was only freed after the first scenes. Some of her notes were sharp almost to harshness, but...in passages of profound passion her guttural tones were thrilling."

It is curious that some of Pasta's earliest triumphs were in trouser roles — how many Normas have started their careers by singing Cherubino? — including Rossini's *Tancredi* (she also sang his *Cenerentola*) and Zingarelli's *Romeo*, in which roles she was said to have been without peer. Other signature roles included Rossini's *Semiramide* and *Desdemona* (although she once took on the title role of his *Otello*), and in 1833 she had the honor to create a third Bellini role, the title part of *Beatrice di Tenda*. After 1835, as her voice was showing distressing signs of wear, her appearances became ever more infrequent, and she essentially settled into a long and comfortable retirement from a career that had lasted barely 20 years.

[Pasta was not the only soprano with a limited top range to sing *Norma* with great success; the role was also the vehicle for the Scala debut of Maria Malibran, who today would be considered a mezzo-soprano, while earlier in this century the American soprano Rosa Pon-



San Francisco Opera's first staging of *Norma* took place in 1937 and it boasted the Druid priestess of Gina Cigna.

selle, widely regarded as one of the great Normas of all time, routinely transposed arias down to avoid high C's and D's, and once wrote to a conductor in advance of a production, begging him to keep the orchestra's pitch down to A=435. It is probably largely through the work of Joan Sutherland, who sang the role more often in this century than any other singer (including at San Francisco Opera in 1972 and 1982) and routinely interpolated thrilling high notes that Bellini never wrote, that some people think of *Norma* as a role that requires a stratospheric upper extension.]

Pasta's balking at "Casta diva" wasn't the only problem Bellini faced in the creation of his masterpiece. In the summer of 1830 he had agreed to compose two operas for Milan, the first having been *La Sonnambula*, which received its premiere at the Teatro Carcano on March 6, 1831. It was only then that he and Felice

Romani, his librettist, looked around for a subject for the second opera, which was to be the vehicle of Pasta's debut at La Scala.

Romani had written the libretti for all of Bellini's mature operas, starting with *Il Pirata* in 1827. *Norma* was the sixth of seven Romani libretti Bellini would set; after the seventh, *Beatrice di Tenda* in 1833, composer and librettist had a falling out that broke up one of the all-time great artistic partnerships. Romani wrote over 80 texts, most of which were set by more than one composer. And many of those composers found the poet difficult and unable to meet deadlines or follow a schedule.

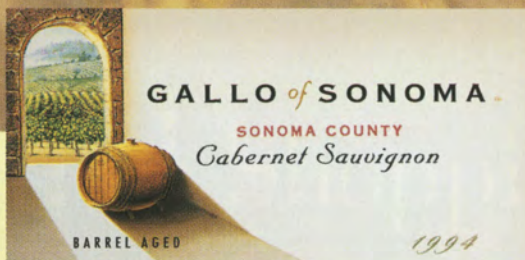
On July 23, Bellini wrote to a friend that it had been decided to base his new opera upon a tragic play by Alexandre Soumet that was being performed in Paris: *Norma, ossia L'Infanticidio*. Bellini received the first text installment at the

Continued on page 16

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NORMA VIENE!!
continued from page 14



MORTON



MORTON

At the San Francisco Opera in 1937, Adalgisa was portrayed by Bruna Castagna; Pollione, by Giovanni Martinelli. Others in the cast included Ezio Pinza as Oroveso.

end of August; since the premiere was set for December 26, it meant that the entire opera had to be written, composed, orchestrated, rehearsed and mounted in less than four months — a staggering task then, and even today, judging from the protracted birth pangs of today's major Broadway musicals.

Yet this was not a rushed and indifferent project; Bellini took great care in helping to mold the libretto, often requiring Romani to write half a dozen or more versions of some sections — it is said that he created eight different texts for "Casta Diva." But the composer's meticulous attention to details paid off, and Bellini became and remained convinced that it was his finest opera.

The cast for the premiere was certainly sufficiently stellar. Pasta was making a somewhat belated debut at La Scala, an event in itself. Though Bellini didn't get his first choice for tenor, Giovanni Rubini, he did get a reasonable facsimile in the almost-as-renowned Domenico Donzelli. The Adalgisa was the legendary soprano Giulia Grisi, whose sister Giuditta had created the role of Romeo in

Bellini's *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* the previous year. Although Giulia never sang in Italy again after 1832 — she had been unhappy with her Milanese contract and left town in order to break it — she became a leading prima donna in London, where she would sing the title role of *Norma*, and Paris, where she created Elvira in Bellini's final opera, *I Puritani*.

Despite everything, unfortunately, the opening night audience was not favorably impressed. A dejected Bellini was prompted to write on the evening of the premiere, "I am writing to you under the shock of sorrow; of a sorrow that I cannot put into words for you, but that only you can understand. I have come from La Scala; first performance of *Norma*. Would you believe it?...Fiasco!!! fiasco!!! solemn fiasco!!! To tell you the truth, the audience was harsh, seemed to have come to pass sentence upon me...I hope to appeal against the sentence [the audience] pronounced against me, and if I succeed in changing its mind, I shall have won my case, and then I'll proclaim *Norma* the best of my operas."

That didn't take long. *Norma* was

staged the following year at Naples, Bergamo and Venice, reaching London and Vienna in 1833, Rome, Madrid, Berlin and Budapest in 1834, Paris, Prague and St. Petersburg in 1835, Mexico City and Havana in 1836, Amsterdam in 1839, Copenhagen and Brussels in 1840 and Stockholm, New York and Philadelphia (in two theaters on the same day!) in 1841. Other than Italian, most performances were in German, but *Norma* was also performed in Hungarian, English, Russian, Czech, French, Danish and Swedish.

Despite the composer's paranoid theories that the premiere had been sabotaged (by an unidentified "powerful personage" who had "enmity toward Pasta," and the Countess Giulia Samoyloff who, being mistress to the rival composer Pacini, was assumed to be his enemy), *Norma* was bound to succeed; it was the right opera at the right time, coming at the crest of the first full flowering of the Romantic period. *Norma* was born seven years after the premiere of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony (and only six years after Bellini's

Continued on page 42



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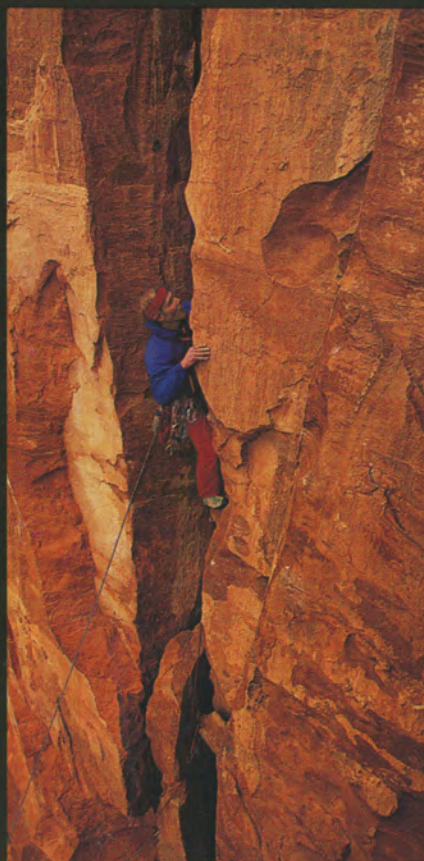
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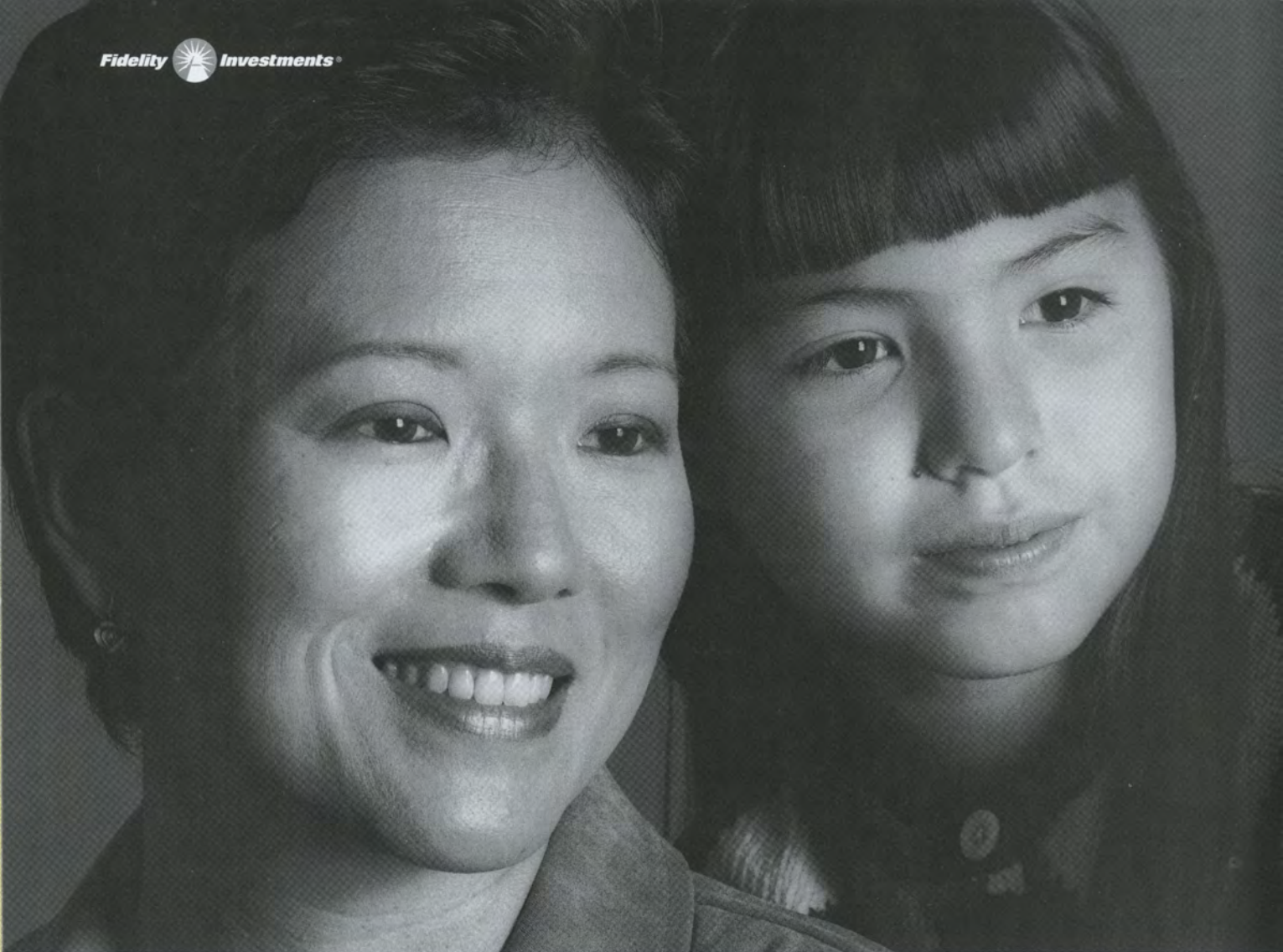




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NORMA: FROM FRENCH PLAY TO ITALIAN LIBRETTO

By ARTHUR KAPLAN



MUSEO DI MILANO

Milan's La Scala, the site of the *Norma* 1831 premiere, in a painting of the period by Inganni.

In March of 1831, the nearly thirty-year-old Vincenzo Bellini cemented his position as the leading young Italian composer of his generation with the triumphant success of *La Sonnambula* at the Teatro Carcano in Milan. He had previously been hailed by the Milanese public and critics for two melodramas, *Il Pirata* (1827) and *La Straniera* (1829), both of which had successful premieres at that Mecca of Italian opera, the famed Teatro alla Scala.

All three operas had librettos by the foremost librettist of his day, Felice Romani, who was more than 13 years Bellini's senior. Following his debut with the texts for Simone Mayr's *La rosa rossa e*

la rosa bianca and *Medea in Corinto* in 1813, Romani had authored no fewer than 45 librettos for Rossini, Mercadante, Pacini, Carafa, Vaccai, Meyerbeer and Donizetti, among others, before teaming up with Bellini for *Il Pirata*.

The relationship with Bellini was to prove the most fruitful of his long career, which counted over 80 opera texts, two thirds of them for La Scala, where he had been engaged as librettist in 1814. From the time of their initial collaboration in 1827, Romani created the texts for all of Bellini's subsequent Italian operas, including *Zaira* (1829), *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* (1830), *La Sonnambula* (1831), *Norma* (1831) and *Beatrice di Tenda* (1833). Dis-

agreements over the last one caused an unfortunate estrangement between composer and librettist. Bellini's final opera, *I Puritani* (1835), written for the Théâtre-Italien in Paris, had a far less accomplished libretto by an Italian aristocrat and refugee in the French capital, Count Carlo Pepoli.

Romani began his professional career as a member of the faculty of the University of Genoa, where he embarked on a series of translations of French literary texts. It is therefore not surprising that nearly seventy percent of his operatic librettos are inspired by French works. *Il Pirata* is based on J. S. Taylor's play *Bertram, ou Le Pirate*, *La Straniera* on

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Giulia Grisi as Norma in 1835, shown in a portrait by Victor Dollet.

V.-C. Prévôt's novel *L'Etrangère*, Zaira on Voltaire's play *Zaire* and *La Sonnambula* after Eugène Scribe and J.-P. Aumer's ballet pantomime *La Sonnambule*.

When Bellini and Romani were casting around for a subject for their next opera, the choice fell on Alexandre Soumet's play *Norma*. The composer made frequent mention of the new work in his correspondence. In a letter dated July 23, he wrote, "I have already chosen the subject of my new opera and it is a tragedy entitled *Norma*, ossia *L'Infanticidio* by Soumet, now being performed with clamorous success in Paris..." To his leading lady, the celebrated soprano Giuditta Pasta, who was to make her belated La Scala debut in the title role of the new work, Bellini wrote on September 1, "Romani gave me the scenario just yesterday. I hope you will find this subject to your liking. Romani believes it to be very effective and precisely because of the all-inclusive character for you, which is *Norma*..."

The Soumet play had, in fact, had its successful premiere at the Théâtre Royal de l'Odéon less than five months earlier, on April 6, 1831. A verse tragedy in five acts, it featured two of the leading actors of the Comédie-Française, Joseph Lockroy as Pollion and Mademoiselle George as Norma.

Norma's author, Alexandre Soumet

(1788-1845), a minor French poet and playwright, was something of a literary Talleyrand. In addition to early poems on the discovery of vaccination, the beautification of Paris and a popular elegy entitled "La Pauvre Fille," he penned a number of pro-Empire circumstantial pieces, including the odes "Le Mariage de Napoléon et Marie-Louise" and "La Naissance du Roi de Rome," which brought him a nomination as important functionary to the State Council. When he lost that position following the fall of the Empire, he curried favor with the Restoration monarchs, receiving the Croix d'Honneur from Louis XVIII, a pension from Charles X, and a post as librarian in the royal palaces of St. Cloud, Rambouillet and Compiègne.

He met and befriended the young Victor Hugo in 1819 and contributed poems to the *Conservateur littéraire* and *La Muse française*, the first organs of the nascent Romantic Movement. Soumet served as a witness at Hugo's marriage to Adèle Foucher and proposed a collaboration with the literary lion-to-be on a dramatization of Sir Walter Scott's novel *Kenilworth*. His own Romantic plays *Saül* and *Chytemnestre* had their premieres within two days of each other in 1822 and were termed by Hugo "the most beautiful tragedies of the epoch." Together with *Cléopâtre*, they helped earn their author election to the august Académie Française in 1824.

Soumet's fame as a poet and dramatist was such in the mid-1820s that he was commissioned to write several opera librettos, among them the French remake of Rossini's *Maometto II*, which reached the Paris Opéra in 1826 as *Le Siège de Corinthe*. He continued writing plays with varying degrees of success, including *Elisabeth de France*, on the same subject as Schiller's *Don Carlos*, and two dramas starring Mlle George, *Jeanne d'Arc* (1825) and *Une Fête de Néron* (1829).

In the transitional period between neoclassicism and romanticism in the French theater, he succeeded in seeming classical to the classicists by preserving the dramatic framework of Racinian tragedy, and romantic to the romantics through his theoretical writings and the lyrical expression of his verses. After *Norma*, which the eminent French poet and critic Théophile Gautier called "an inspired work that is perhaps the last of

Continued on page 43



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NORMA Bellini
Vaness, Antonacci; Sylvester,
Silvestrelli*
Summers/Sinclair*/Varona/Whitfield

Nov. 7, 10, 15, 18, 21, 24, 28

PETER GRIMES Britten
Riedel, Powell, Cook; Moser*, Held,
Baerg, Lord, Del Carlo
Runnicles/Copley/Toms/Moiseiwitsch/
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Opera in two acts by VINCENZO BELLINI
Text by FELICE ROMANI
Based on a play by LOUIS ALEXANDRE SOUMET

Norma

(in Italian)

Conductor
Patrick Summers

Stage Director
Andrew Sinclair*

Set Designer
José Luciano Varona

Costume Designers
Robert Perdziola
José Luciano Varona

Lighting Designer
Michael Whitfield

Chorus Director
Ian Robertson

Musical Preparation
Bryndon Hassman
Marilyn Barnett
Peter Grunberg
William Lacey

Prompter
Jonathan Khuner

Supertitles
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Assistant Stage Directors
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First San Francisco Opera
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SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15 AT 2:00
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 18 AT 7:30
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21 AT 8:00
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 24 AT 8:00
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 28 AT 1:00

CAST

(in order of appearance)

Oroveso Andrea Silvestrelli*

Pollione Michael Sylvester

Flavio Gary Rideout

Norma Carol Vaness

Adalgisa Anna Caterina Antonacci

Clotilde Christina Lamberti†

Norma's children Samantha Seigel
Lauren Sliter

Priests, priestesses, warriors

* San Francisco Opera debut † 1998-99 Adler Fellow

Supertitles provided by a generous gift from A.T. Kearney, Inc.

PLACE AND TIME: Gaul, during the Roman occupation, about 50 B.C.

ACT I Scene 1 The sacred forest of the Druids
 Scene 2 Norma's secret dwelling

INTERMISSION

ACT II Scene 1 Norma's secret dwelling
 Scene 2 A lonely spot near the forest
 Scene 3 The temple of Irminsul

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

SYNOPSIS — NORMA

ACT I

Scene 1 — Oroveso, the Druid high priest, comes into the sacred grove of Irmisul with other Druids and warriors of Gaul. They are waiting for the moon to rise, at which moment Norma, high priestess, will cut the sacred mistletoe and make her prophecies. They all hope she will announce that they can attack the hated Roman oppressor. When the men have gone, the Roman proconsul Pollione enters with his centurion Flavio. Pollione has seduced Norma, who has betrayed her vows and her people and secretly borne him two children. Now, however, he proclaims his love for Adalgisa, a young priestess in the temple of Irmisul. As the Druids are heard returning, Pollione and Flavio leave. Before her people, Norma performs the mystical rites, at the same time trying to suppress the Druids' warlike impulses. After invoking the moon goddess, she utters her secret feelings: about her continued love for Pollione despite the torment caused by his neglect. When the sacred grove is again deserted, Adalgisa enters. Overcome by doubts, she awaits her love. Pollione appears and persuades her to come away with him to Rome.

Scene 2 — At her hidden retreat, Norma reveals to her confidante Clotilde the fear that Pollione, who is about to leave for Rome, will not take her with him. As someone is heard approaching, Clotilde leads the children away. Adalgisa enters and confesses to Norma that she is in love. Norma, recalling her own weakness, forgives Adalgisa and releases her from her vows. When Pollione suddenly appears and Adalgisa innocently indicates that he is her lover, Norma becomes enraged. Once she reveals to the stunned Adalgisa Pollione's former love for her, the young priestess, loyal to Norma, spurns the Roman. The sacred gong of the temple rings out, summoning Norma to the rites.

ACT II

Scene 1 — In desperation, Norma is on the point of killing her children, but her maternal love is stronger than her fury against the faithless Pollione. She sends for Adalgisa and proposes that the young girl go with Pollione to Rome. She must take Norma's children with her. Adalgisa dissuades Norma from suicide and promises to persuade Pollione to return to her. The two swear eternal friendship.

Scene 2 — Near the Druids' grove, the Gallic warriors, still impatient for battle, are reluctantly persuaded by the Archdruid Oroveso (Norma's father) that the time for war has not yet come.

Scene 3 — Norma learns that Adalgisa's entreaties to Pollione have failed. In a rage, Norma summons her people and declares war on the Romans. The Gauls are overjoyed. Norma is about to name the sacrificial victim when a sudden tumult reveals the sacrilegious presence of a Roman in the temple sanctuary. It is Pollione who has followed Adalgisa there. His rash act must be punished by death. Norma announces that a renegade priestess will also be burned on the pyre. Pollione begs her to spare Adalgisa. When Norma utters the victim's name, it is, to everyone's surprise, her own. She confesses her guilt and prepares to ascend the pyre. Her nobility reawakens Pollione's love. Norma's final thought is of her children. She pleads with her father to give them refuge. He finally consents and forgives her, as Norma goes to the pyre.

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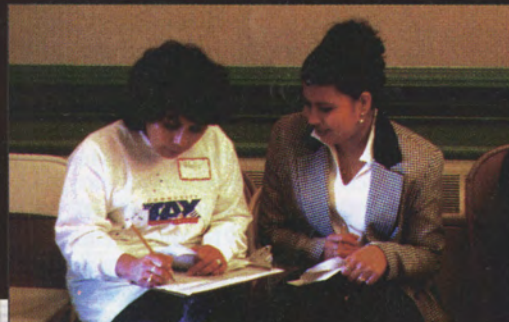
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ARTIST PROFILES



Soprano **CAROL VANESS** enjoys a career that encompasses regular appearances at the world's major opera houses and concert halls, an impressive catalogue of recordings, and frequent television broadcasts in Europe and North America. The American artist, a first-place winner in the 1976 Merola Opera Grand Finals and a former Affiliate Artist with the Company, appeared as Vitellia in Mozart's *Titus (La Clemenza di Tito)* and Cleopatra in *Julius Caesar* for Spring Opera Theater. Since her 1977 debut season with San Francisco Opera, she has been applauded on the stage of the War Memorial as Mimì in the English-language performances of *La Bobème*, Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*, Blanche in *Dialogues of the Carmelites*, Violetta in *La Traviata*, Mathilde in *Guillaume Tell*, Elisabetta in *Don Carlo*, Elena in *I Vespri Siciliani*, and in the title roles of *Anna Bolena* and *Tosca*. Also a leading artist at the Metropolitan Opera (where she appeared during their 1997–98 season in the title role of *Tosca* and as Vitellia), she has been acclaimed at the Glyndebourne, Edinburgh and Salzburg Festivals, Milan's La Scala, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Munich State Opera, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Vienna State Opera, Bastille Opera in Paris, Royal Opera at Covent Garden, and with the companies of Seattle, Rome, Toronto, Madrid, Barcelona, Cologne and Houston, among others. In demand as a concert soloist, she has sung with the major orchestras of the world and is a veteran of numerous television appearances. Her discography includes *Tosca* led by Riccardo Muti, two recordings of *Don Giovanni* (as Donna Anna under Bernard Haitink and as Donna Elvira under Muti), *Iphigénie en Tauride* from La Scala, *Così fan tutte*, *Le Nozze di Figaro* (the Countess) conducted by Charles Mackerras, *Idomeneo* led by James Levine, an album of "Diva Scenes," two solo recordings of Mozart and Verdi arias, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and *Missa Solemnis*, Rossini's *Stabat Mater*, an album of Haydn masses, and the Verdi Requiem.



ANNA CATERINA ANTONACCI made her critically acclaimed San Francisco Opera debut in the title role of *Ermione* during the 1992 Celebration of Rossini Festival. Born in Ferrara, the soprano graduated from the conservatory in Bologna and subsequently won several important competitions: the Verdi Competition in Parma, in addition to the Maria Callas and Luciano Pavarotti International Vocal Competitions. She was soon performing roles from a broad and eclectic repertoire: from Monteverdi (*L'Incoronazione di Poppea*), Handel (*Serse*, *Rodelinda*), Paisiello and Cimarosa to the music of the Italian bel canto, particularly the soprano heroines from Rossini's operas. Her vocal characteristics also enable her to successfully sing such varied roles as Rosina (*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*), Charlotte (*Werther*), Dulcinée (*Don Quichotte*), Cenerentola, Carmen and *Norma's* Adalgisa. Her portrayals of Poppea (Teatro Comunale in Bologna, Teatro alla Scala in Milan, Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires, Bavarian State Opera in Munich) and *Ermione* (San Francisco, Rome, London, Glyndebourne Festival) have been highly praised by critics and the public alike. Her most recent engagements include opening La Scala's 1996–97 season in the title role of Gluck's *Armide*; Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* at the Ferrara Music Festival; *Il*

Barbiere di Siviglia and *Don Quichotte* in Rome; *La Cenerentola* for the Canadian Opera Company; the title role of *Rodelinda* at this summer's Glyndebourne Festival; *Carmen* in Macerata; as well as Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* in Florence. She opened the 1997–98 concert season at La Scala with a recital of songs by Brahms, Liszt and Ravel. Antonacci appears on the Glyndebourne Festival video of *Ernani* led by Andrew Davis. She recently recorded Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* under Riccardo Muti, with whom she also performed at the Ravenna Festival, Vienna's Musikverein, and at London's Covent Garden.



Second year Adler Fellow **CHRISTINA LAMBERTI**, a prize winner of the prestigious 1998 MacAllister Awards, most recently portrayed La Fortuna in *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* as part of the Company's *Femmes Fatales* Festival. A native of Phillipsburg, New Jersey, she began her studies after winning a scholarship to the Westminster Choir College, where she appeared in productions of *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges*, *Dialogues of the Carmelites* and *Amahl and the Night Visitors*. The soprano joined the Aspen Opera Theater Center in 1989, singing the role of Mrs. Maurrant in *Street Scene*. She then studied with Claudia Pinza at Duquesne University and attended Pinza's EPCASO (Ezio Pinza Council for American Singers of Opera) program held in Oderzo, Italy. She has also apprenticed at the Pittsburgh Opera Center and studied at Philadelphia's Academy of Vocal Arts where her roles included Mimì (*La Bobème*), Tatyana (*Eugene Onegin*), Donna Elvira (*Don Giovanni*), Fiordiligi (*Così fan tutte*) and Alice Ford (*Falstaff*). She made her Opera Company of Philadelphia debut in 1996 as the High Priestess in *Aida*. A 1996 Merola Opera Program participant, Lamberti appeared in *Death in Venice* and *Elektra* as part of San Francisco Opera's 1997–98 season, and sang the title role of the Opera Center's 1998 Showcase production of *Iphigénie en Tauride*.



MICHAEL SYLVESTER has won international acclaim as one of the most important tenors of our day. He has appeared at the San Francisco Opera (1992 debut, Cavaradossi in *Tosca*; 1993, Calaf in *Turandot*), the Metropolitan Opera, Chicago Lyric Opera, Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires, Teatro alla Scala, La Fenice in Venice, the Grand Théâtre de Genève, Paris Opera, Royal Opera at Covent Garden, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Vienna State Opera and the Canadian Opera Company. In addition to the roles performed here, he has been praised for a repertoire which includes Radames in *Aida*, Adorno in *Simon Boccanegra* and Samson in *Samson et Dalila* as well as such German roles as Bacchus in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, the Emperor in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* and Florestan in *Fidelio*. Highlights of his 1996–97 season were *Aida* at the Berlin State Opera and the Met, *Die Frau ohne Schatten* in Geneva and Antwerp, and *Tosca* at the Hamburg State Opera. In the 1997–98 season the artist performed *Madama Butterfly* (Pinkerton) at the Met, *Aida* in Berlin and for his debut with the Dallas Opera, *Norma* (Pollione) for a bow at Lisbon's Teatro São Carlos, and *Simon Boccanegra* at the BBC. Upcoming engagements include *Aida* and *Simon Boccanegra* at the Met, *Turandot* in Hamburg and for his Opera Australia debut, *Un Ballo in Maschera* (Riccardo) in Venice, and *Madama Butterfly* in

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Toulouse. In concert, Sylvester has been heard in Mahler's *Das Klagende Lied*, *Das Lied von der Erde* and Eighth Symphony; Beethoven's Ninth Symphony; and the Verdi Requiem, among others. The Indiana native holds degrees from Westminster Choir College and Indiana University, where he studied with soprano Margaret Harshaw. He can be heard on recordings of Mahler's Eighth under Robert Shaw and in the title role of *Don Carlo* led by James Levine.



A graduate of Pesaro's Rossini Conservatory, **ANDREA SILVESTRELLI** won the 1989 A. Belli Competition in Spoleto, Italy, and went on to sing Banquo in *Macbeth* at the Teatro Pergolesi in Jesi and the Commendatore in *Don Giovanni* at the Teatro Comunale in Bologna. Among the winners of the 1992 Pavarotti/Opera Company of Philadelphia International Voice Competition, he also won the 1993

Voci Verdiane Competition in Busseto. The Italian bass has been applauded for his performances of a variety of roles, among them Sparafucile (*Rigoletto*), the Commendatore (*Don Giovanni*), Colline (*La Bohème*), Rodolfo (*La Sonnambula*), the Grand Inquisitor (*Don Carlo*), Sarastro (*Die Zauberflöte*), both Ramfis and the King (*Aida*), Timur (*Turandot*), as well as Oroveso (*Norma*). He has appeared at, among others, Milan's La Scala, Scottish Opera, Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, Paris Opera/Bastille, Teatro San Carlo in Naples, Netherlands Opera and the Opera Company of Philadelphia. Among the artist's most recent engagements are his debut with the Royal Opera at Covent Garden in *Otello* (Lodovico); *Parsifal* (Tituel) in Florence; *Tannhäuser* (Landgrave) in Naples; *Falstaff* (Pistola) in Berlin and Rome; *Don Giovanni* in Bologna; *Norma* in Lisbon; and *Turandot* in China with the Teatro Comunale company from Florence. Upcoming are *Otello* in Amsterdam and for his debut at the Munich State Opera, *Aida* in Florence and Amsterdam, as well as *Rigoletto* at the Lyric Opera of Chicago. Included in his concert repertoire are Puccini's *Messa di Gloria*, Mahler's Eighth Symphony, Rossini's *Stabat Mater* and the Verdi Requiem. Silvestrelli's discography includes the 1995 Grammy Award-winning *Don Giovanni* (Commendatore) conducted by John Eliot Gardiner, and Haydn's *L'Anima del Filosofo*.



Canadian tenor **GARY RIDEOUT** completed his fifth season with the Company during the 1996-97 season singing the role of Yeroshka in *Prince Igor*. Since his 1989 San Francisco Opera debut in *Lulu*, he has also appeared here as Borsa in *Rigoletto* and Dr. Blind in *Die Fledermaus* (1990); Count Hauk-Sendorf in *The Makropulos Case* and Balthasar Zorn in *Die Meistersinger* (1993); as well as Heinrich in *Tannhäuser* (1994). Formerly a Resident Artist with the Canadian Opera Company of Toronto, he has been heard in that house in numerous productions. Elsewhere, he has sung the roles of Rodolfo in *La Bohème* and Bacchus in *Ariadne auf Naxos* for Opera East, and Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* for Calgary Opera. Among his most recent performances are Steva in *Jenůfa* with Montreal Opera; Avito in *L'Amore dei Tre Re* with Victoria's Pacific Opera; Cavaradossi in *Tosca* for Hawaii Opera Theatre and Pacific Opera; his first Loge in *Das Rheingold* for Arizona Opera; and the Witch in *Hänsel und Gretel* with the

Canadian Opera Company. Recent concert engagements include the Verdi Requiem with the Victoria (B.C.) and Edmonton Symphonies, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and the world premiere of Clarke's *Bel and the Dragon* with Kingston Symphony, and Britten's *Prodigal Son* (the Tempter) with Festival Canada at Ottawa's National Arts Centre. The versatile artist, who received degrees from Michigan State University, York University in Toronto, and the University of Toronto, also performs in musicals (Ubaldo Piangi in *The Phantom of the Opera* on Broadway and in Toronto), cabaret, film, and legitimate theater. Rideout will appear with the Company next summer as Mime in the *Ring* cycle.

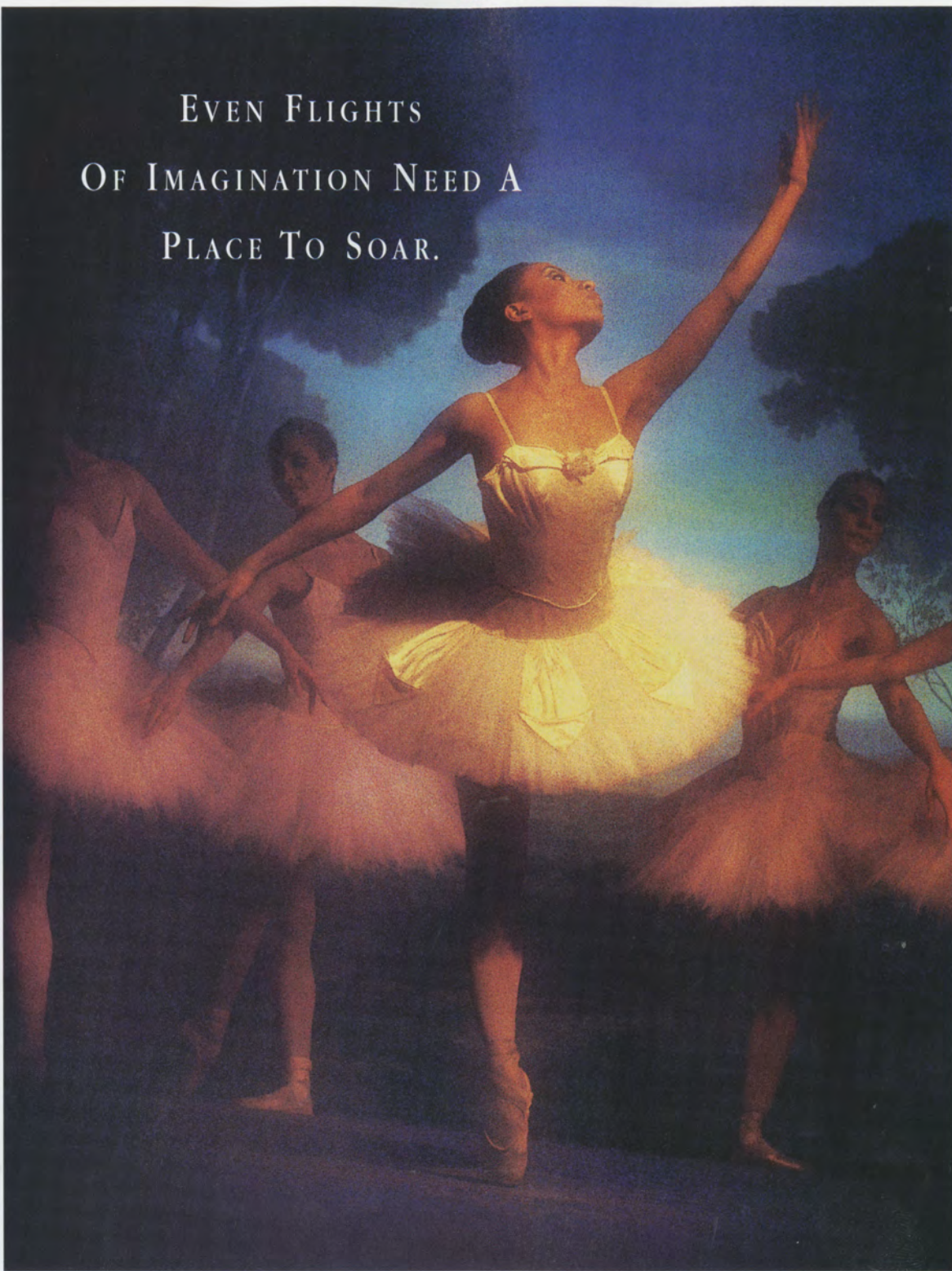


PATRICK SUMMERS was recently appointed Music Director of the Houston Grand Opera, the youngest in that company's history. Long associated with San Francisco Opera, he served as Music Director of the Opera Center from 1990-1994 and made his Company conducting debut in 1990 with performances of *Die Fledermaus*. He has since led SFO productions of *Così fan tutte*, *La Traviata*, Rossini's

Ermione (U.S. premiere) and *Otello*, *L'Elisir d'Amore*, *Tosca*, *La Bohème*, *La Fille du Régiment*, *La Cenerentola*, *Faust*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *Rigoletto*, *Guillaume Tell*, the *Femmes Fatales* Festival's stagings of *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* (in his own realization) and *Carmen*, as well as performances of the world premiere of André Previn and Philip Littell's *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Maestro Summers has numerous credits for the various programs of the Opera Center — Showcase presentations, Merola Opera Program productions, and Western Opera Theater tours. He has traveled extensively for the Center, leading performances of *Carmen* in Guam and Japan, *Tosca* in Shanghai, and *La Bohème* in Japan. Elsewhere, he has been applauded at Lisbon's Teatro Nacional São Carlos (*Tosca*, *Ariadne auf Naxos*), Rome Opera (*Manon Lescaut*), Opera Australia (*La Cenerentola*, *La Bohème*, *Lucrezia Borgia*, *Werther*, *Iphigénie en Tauride*, *Madama Butterfly* — the last named available on video), Dallas Opera (*L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, *The Tempest*), Opéra de Bordeaux (*Don Pasquale*) and Seattle Opera (*Bohème*), among others. Last year, he led a concert tour (London, Amsterdam, Paris, Berlin, Rotterdam) with Russian artists Olga Borodina and Dimitri Hvorostovsky which resulted in a recording of arias and duets with Summers leading the English Chamber Orchestra. In the future, the maestro will lead *Die Fledermaus* for his Metropolitan Opera debut; Handel's *Rinaldo* for Opera Australia; *La Traviata* and the world premiere of Tod Machover's *Resurrection* at Houston Grand Opera; as well as the world premiere of the Heggie/McNally opera, *Dead Man Walking*, for San Francisco Opera. The Indiana University graduate is a two-time winner of the Merola Opera Program's Otto Guth Apprentice Coach Award, was named "Outstanding Young San Franciscan" by the S.F. Chamber of Commerce in 1991, and in 1997 won the Stolicznaya Artist of the Year Award.



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ANDREW SINCLAIR began his career in as a stage manager, joining London's Royal Opera House in 1974. He was soon invited to be assistant director there (*Lobengrin*, the *Ring* cycle) as well as at the Bayreuth Festival, where he assisted Götz Friedrich on his staging of *Lobengrin*. Sinclair began his long association with Opera Australia in 1981 and was principal resident director of that company from

1983 to 1985. Productions directed for Opera Australia include *The Bartered Bride*, *Otello*, *Tosca*, *Die Walküre*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Un Ballo in Maschera* and *La Bohème*, the video of the latter winning a 1989 Emmy Award. Following his U.S. directing debut at Seattle Opera with *Le Nozze di Figaro*, engagements included the world premiere of *Caedmon* in London, *Lobengrin* in Buenos Aires, *Aida* for the Victoria State Opera, *Madama Butterfly* at the State Opera of South Australia, and numerous assignments at Covent Garden. Among his most recent engagements are *Otello* for Opera Queensland, the first staging of *Peter Grimes* in New Zealand for Wellington City Opera, *Le Nozze di Figaro* and *Don Pasquale* in both Adelaide and Brisbane, *Madama Butterfly* in Melbourne, *Adriana Lecouvreur* in Adelaide, *Tosca* for the Royal Opera and New Zealand's Canterbury Opera, as well as *Peter Grimes* in Savonlinna and the Royal Opera's semi-staged *Ring* cycle at the Royal Albert Hall. In addition to his work as a director, Sinclair is actively involved in education and since 1988 has been conducting master classes and workshops at the Royal Academy of Music and the National Opera Studio.



Argentine set and costume designer **JOSÉ LUCIANO VARONA** studied at the Escuela Superior de Bellas Artes in Buenos Aires and made his operatic debut in 1958 with *Il Trovatore* at the Teatro Colón. A series of assignments with that company followed, including *The Love for Three Oranges*, *The Rake's Progress* and *L'Italiana in Algeri*. Then began a long association with the New York City Opera with designs for

Giulio Cesare, *The Golden Cockerel*, *Manon*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Roberto Devereux*, *Anna Bolena* and *Maria Stuarda*. He also designed Handel's *Ariodante* for the opening of the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., in 1971. After designing *Norma* for San Francisco Opera's 50th anniversary season (1972, reprised in '75, '78, '82), he created *Lucrezia Borgia* and *The Merry Widow* for Vancouver Opera, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* for City Opera, *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* for the Paris Opera, *Gianni Schicchi* and *Il Tabarro* for the Holland Festival, and *La Bohème* for the Ottawa Arts Festival. During the 1980s, Varona worked primarily with the Teatro Colón, designing *Roméo et Juliette*, *Die Zauberflöte* for Margherita Wallmann, *Carmen* and *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*. Ballet set and costume creations include the Stravinsky/Christensen *Le Baiser de la Fée* for the San Francisco Ballet, Prokofiev's *Cinderella* for the Berlin Opera Ballet, and the Delibes/Balanchine *Coppélia* in Geneva and Pennsylvania.



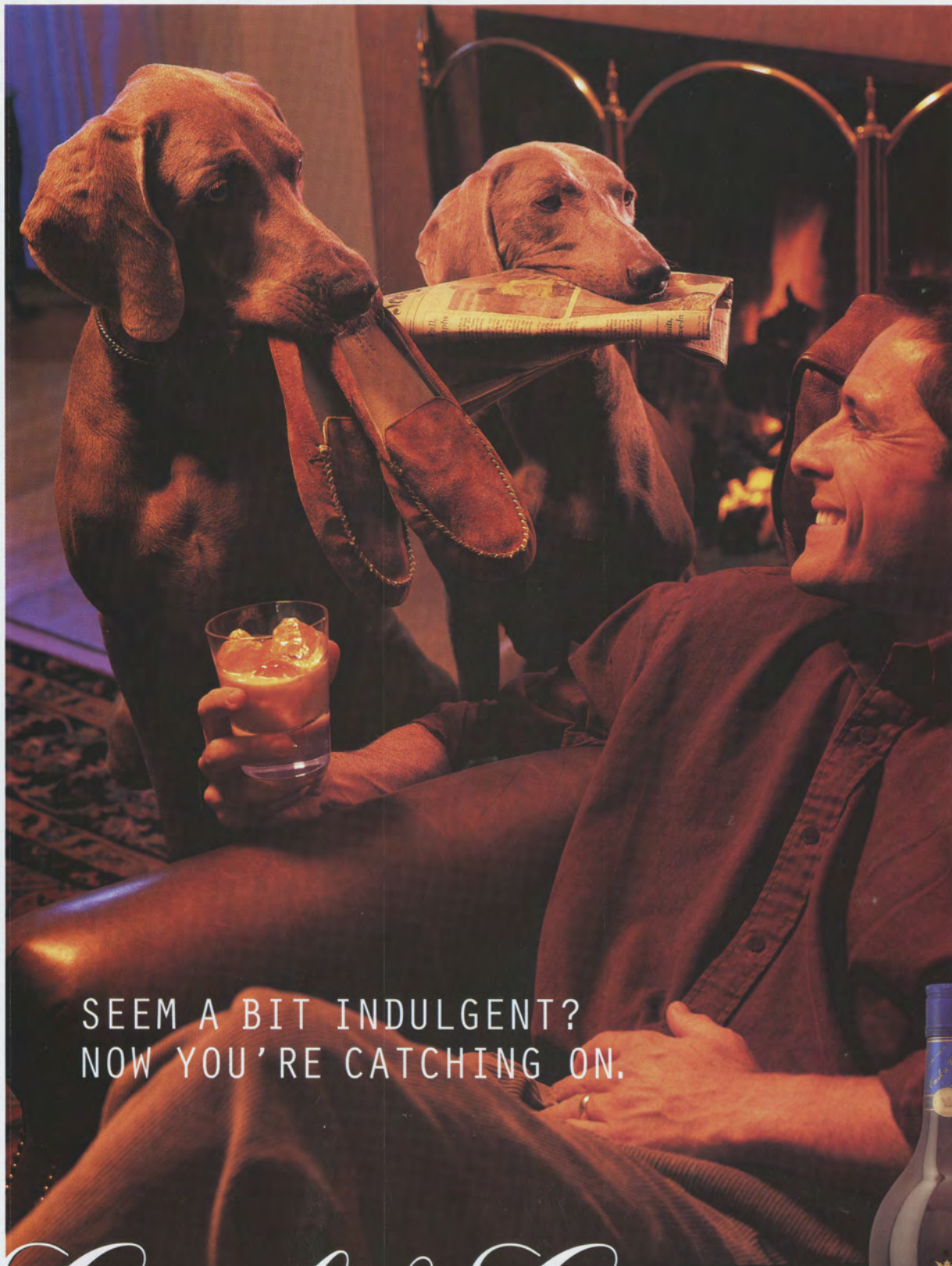
ROBERT PERDZIOLA's designs have been featured in San Francisco Opera's new productions of *Suor Angelica* (1990), *Hamlet* (1996 Company premiere), and *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* (1998). In addition to designing numerous productions for Santa Fe Opera, Perdziola has worked at the Hannover Staatsoper, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Skylight Opera Theatre, Glimmerglass Opera, Manhattan School of

Music, McCarter Theatre and American Place Theatre, among others. In film, he has worked on the design teams of Woody Allen's *Shadows and Fog* and Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire*. He created the opera and theater settings, and a series of societal portraits for Martin Scorsese's *The Age of Innocence*. For the Juilliard School, he designed costumes for the revival of Christopher Durang's musical *A History of the American Film*. Recent opera assignments include *Così fan tutte* for Skylight Opera Theatre in addition to *La Traviata* and *Arabella* at Santa Fe Opera.



MICHAEL WHITFIELD's San Francisco Opera lighting design assignments have been the 1989 (and 1998) presentations of *Lulu*; *Wozzeck* (1990); the new staging of *Macbeth* (1994); *Anna Bolena* and *Don Giovanni* (1995); as well as the new staging of *Carmen* during the 1996-97 season and the Company premiere of *Death in Venice* last year. The Canadian-born artist received his training at the University of Victoria in

British Columbia, and continued at Pennsylvania's Villanova University and the University of Illinois at Urbana. Associated with the Stratford Shakespearean Festival since 1974, he has been resident lighting designer there since 1978. At the Canadian Opera Company in Toronto, he has designed lighting for over 50 productions, including several Canadian premieres, working with an impressive list of stage directors such as John Copley, Jonathan Eaton, Nikolaus Lehnhoff, Brian Macdonald, Lotfi Mansouri and Elijah Moshinsky, among others. Additional opera engagements include those at the Netherlands Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Los Angeles Music Center Opera, New Orleans Opera, Vancouver Opera and Welsh National Opera. Whitfield is also active in the areas of Canadian regional theater, ballet, television production and teaching.



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Norma

Photos taken in rehearsal
by Marty Sohl



Carol Vaness



Anna Caterina Antonacci



Anna Caterina Antonacci, Carol Vaness



Gary Rideout, Michael Sylvester



Michael Sylvester, Anna Caterina Antonacci

*Andrea Silvestrelli,
Carol Vaness*



*Samantha Spiegel,
Lauren Sliter*



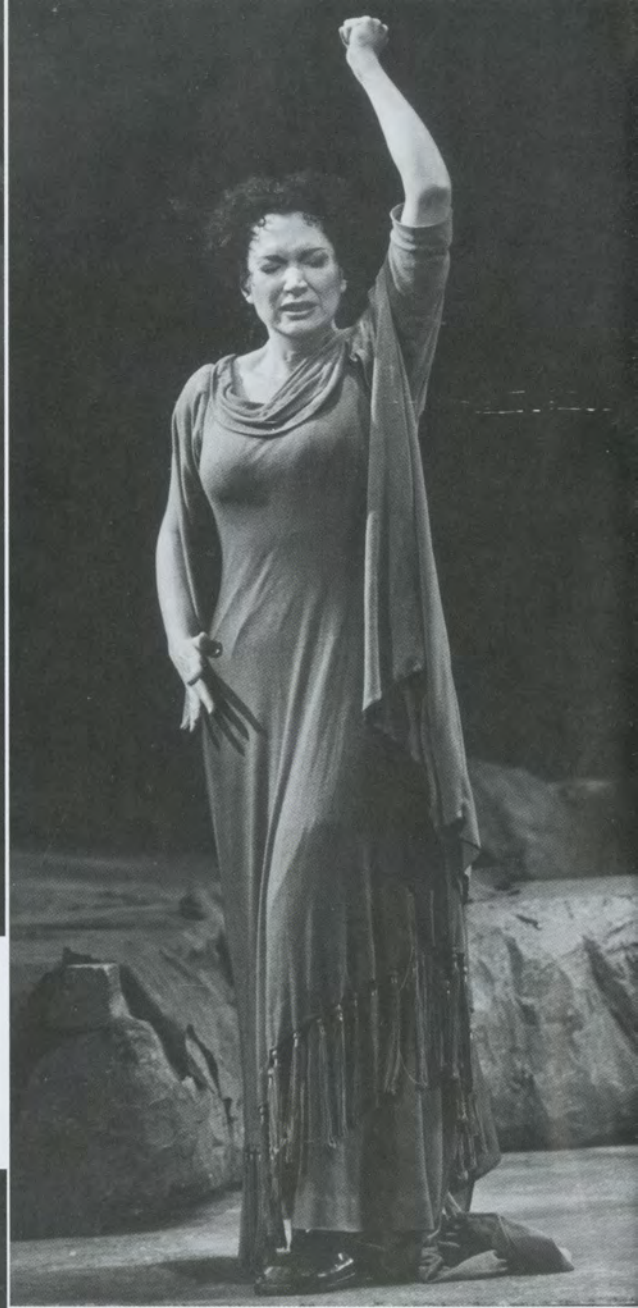
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NORMA VIENE!!

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first student opera, *Adelson e Salvini*; Beethoven had died in 1827, and 1828 saw Schubert's *Winterreise* and death; just two years before *Norma*'s premiere, Rossini wrote his last opera, *Guillaume Tell*, and the year after that marked the premieres of Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique* and Victor Hugo's *Hernani*, revolutions in symphonic music and theater. One year after *Norma* came the first great Romantic ballet, *La Sylphide*, and the year after that, Wagner would compose his first opera, *Die Feen*.

Even more than its fortuitous place in the development of Romanticism, however, is the magnificent score Bellini composed that has made *Norma* the enduring masterwork it is. One woman I know — a professional musician who should know better — once dismissed *Norma* as merely "one adagio chasing another." That assessment, which could hardly be more inaccurate, is probably based equally on over-familiarity with the introduction to "Casta diva" and a lack of familiarity with the rest of the opera. It is also reinforced by the common misconception that Bellini's only significant gift was for long, arching melodies, giving the false impression that his operas are ethereal, long-winded spans of melody, like immense musical jellyfish with no rhythmic backbone.

On the contrary, Bellini's score — though admittedly rich in ravishing melodies — fairly crackles with rhythmic energy and a pulsating drive. Bellini serves musical notice with the first chords of the overture, a four-beat pattern with the second beat subdivided into a trochaic (long-short) rhythm. This rhythmic motto recurs frequently throughout the opera. When the same figure is speeded up, Bellini subdivides the second beat evenly, producing a fanfare-like effect that reappears in the introductions to several sections and is even more prominent in orchestral accompaniments to numerous sections and in the final cadence of many of the opera's set pieces.

Of course, these figures are not Leit-motifs or even reminiscence motives, but their frequent occurrence gives the score a certain sense of unity and vitality. That lively quality is strengthened by the almost relentless march-like rhythm that runs through so much of the score. Only the andante of the trio in the finale to Act I is in a genuine triple meter; the rest of the opera is in duple meters, under-

scoring the sense of urgency and inevitability that permeates the story. If anyone wants to try to make a case that bel canto operas are limp and wimpy, they had better look somewhere other than *Norma* to make their case.

Crowning this entire achievement, of course, is the fact that the story's passions, the words of the text and the sublime music are joined so perfectly, as is the case in all of the best operas, whether by Mozart, Verdi or Wagner. Wagner himself professed, in different portions of his career, high esteem for Bellini's operas. An acquaintance of Wagner's recorded that the composer said, "Bellini is one of my predilections: his music is all heart, closely, intimately linked to the words." During the 1835-36 season at Magdeburg, Wagner conducted *Norma* (along with *I Capuleti*) and in 1837 he chose a production of *Norma* for his own benefit night at Riga. For that event he composed a new bass aria for Oroveso and the chorus, and he later tried in vain to persuade Luigi Lablache to interpolate it in a production at the Théâtre-Italien in Paris.

It was in Paris that Bellini's last opera, *I Puritani*, received its premiere in January of 1835; by the end of the year, Bellini was dead at the age of 33, a victim of amoebic dysentery. In an homage written by Felice Romani, he asserted, "Few composers in Italy, and perhaps no composers other than ours, knew as well as Bellini the necessity for a close union of music with poetry, dramatic truth, the language of emotions, the proof of expression. In Bellini, death snuffed out more than a composer of music; it cut short plans that perhaps will not be carried out so quickly in Italy...I sweated for 15 years to find a Bellini! A single day took him from me!"

Yet if Bellini's premature death robbed Romani — and the rest of the world — of their future collaborations, it was powerless to destroy the manifested fruits of their combined genius. Bellini's Druid priestess may have first walked into the funeral pyre in 1831, but she will continue to live in the great opera houses of the world as long as impresarios can find sopranos willing to accept the challenge. □

Formerly staff writer for San Francisco Opera for over 13 years, John Schauer is currently Publications Editor for the Ravinia Festival in Illinois.



Luigi Lablache as Orovoso; Jenny Lind as Norma in an engraving dating from 1847.

NORMA: FROM FRENCH PLAY TO ITALIAN LIBRETTO

continued from page 22

the tragedies possible in our times," he retired to the country and spent ten years writing his most famous work, *La Divine Epopee*, a religious and philosophical poem in 12 cantos and 12,000 verses telling of Christ's descent into hell and his redemption of humanity.

Despite his initial interest in the Romantic Movement, Soumet remained essentially faithful to the classical aesthetic. For example, *Norma* adheres to the Aristotelian unities of time, place and action dear to the classical dramatists and is written in the classical French verse style of rhymed 12-syllable couplets called *alexandrins*. In creating *Norma*, he was undoubtedly inspired by books IX and X of Chateaubriand's prose epic *Les Martyrs* (1809), in which the Druid priestess Velléda [featured on the cover of this magazine], after publicly confessing to breaking her vows by falling in love with a man from Rome, commits suicide, as well as Euripides' *Medea*. Criticized for modeling *Norma* too closely on the Euripides heroine, Soumet supposedly replied, "Norma resembles *Medea* like Hamlet resembles Orestes, like Lear resembles Oedipus."

Romani, who had previously written the libretto for Pacini's *La Sacerdotessa d'Irminsul* (*The Priestess of Irminsul*, 1820) as well as Mayr's *Medea in Corinto*, discovered Soumet's play, published in Paris by J.N. Barba in 1831. That same year, in addition to his two librettos for Bellini, he supplied texts for melodramas by Generali and Pugni, and a lyrical comedy for Luigi Ricci. Required to furnish six librettos a year for La Scala, he was habitually rushed and often delayed in fulfilling his contractual obligations, to the dismay of his composers. Donizetti frequently complained of Romani's dilatory ways in answering letters and supplying libretto text.

Perhaps this explains why Romani remained extremely close — not only to Soumet's plot, but in many cases to his actual words and images, at least through the first four acts of the play. Although the opera's action is said to take place around 50 B.C., Soumet clearly set his story in a second century A.D. context because Clotilde, Norma's wetnurse and confidante, has embraced the new Christian religion and Norma's father Orovèse mentions two hundred years of Roman domination.

Both play and opera open with a scene between the Roman proconsul Pollione [I shall henceforth use the opera's spelling

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ACADEMY



Before photography supplanted them, magazine articles featured engravings like this one to illustrate their subjects; in this case — Norma.

throughout] and his confidant Flavio. In the play, Flavio is more distressed than his operatic counterpart by Pollione's revelation that he is in love with Adalgisa, a young Druid acolyte, and is ready to risk everything for her. Flavio reminds the proconsul of his promise to take Norma back to Rome and proclaim her mother of his children. Furthermore, he adds, Pollione owes Norma a great debt. She once saved his life (the circumstances are never described, alas) and by her authoritative pronouncements has calmed the warlike Gauls into submission during the seven-year period since the couple returned from Rome. Cursing the bonds that tie him to Norma, Pollione fears that the possessive, proud and passionate priestess, already tormented by feelings of guilt over their sinful union, might

easily strike out at him in a fit of crazed and jealous fury.

In the opera, this fear becomes an acute terror as Pollione describes to Flavio a dream he has had in which Norma interrupted his wedding ceremony to Adalgisa in Rome and punished her faithless lover ("Meco all'altar di Venere"). In fact, an even more terrifying dream occurs in the first scene of Act II in Soumet. However, it is Norma's two sons, both of whom have speaking roles in the play, who experience the horrible nightmare, not Pollione. Agénor, the elder of the two, relates the dream to his mother: during a Roman wedding, a woman in a furious rage covers the bridal couple with her own blood, and two children are found with their throats slit as sacrificial victims on the nuptial altar.

Romani wisely keeps the children mute and transfers the less grisly dream to their father.

The remainder of events in the first two acts of the opera are remarkably similar, if not identical, to those of the play. Soumet is not particularly interested in the druidic ceremonies that Romani uses to great effect for the majestic choral introduction to Norma's entry and her subsequent *gran scena* with chorus as she cuts the sacred mistletoe in the light of the full moon. The rite is mentioned, however, by Flavio in the play's opening scene, and clearly served as inspiration for the sublime Bellini-Romani collaboration in "Casta Diva."

In the opera's next scene, the *seconda donna* gets her obligatory solo as Adalgisa awaits the arrival of Pollione in the

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sacred grove of Irminsul. The ensuing lovers' tryst, which provides a perfect framework for the seduction duet ("Va, crudele, al dio spietato"), follows a nearly identical course as in the play.

Soumet continues with a scene between Norma and Clotilde. The audience has already learned that Norma has spent three years captive in Rome prior to returning to Gaul. She tells her confidante that she reluctantly became a priestess of Irminsul in order to hide her heinous crime and to keep secret "*les fruits d'un criminel amour*." She fears that Pollione will not keep his promise to wed her and foresees herself going mad were she to find out that he loves another.

The playwright divides Adalgisa's confession to Norma of her guilty passion into two separate scenes in Act I and II. With a surer dramatic hand, Romani conflates the two scenes, allowing for the long and moving duet in which Norma, sympathizing with the young virgin, nostalgically recalls her own seduction and releases Adalgisa from her vows. The librettist caps this scene with a stunning *coup de théâtre*. Just as Adalgisa is about to name her Roman lover, Pollione enters, precipitating Norma's stunned and indignant reaction and setting up the dramatic trio ("Oh, di qual sei tu vittima") that ends the act.

In Soumet, Adalgisa inadvertently blurts out Pollione's name *before* he enters. At first taken aback, Norma then feigns approval of the match and dismisses the young girl. The play's ensuing dialogue between the former lovers reveals Norma's abject position. She reminds Pollione that she saved his life, gave up the traditional marriage vows before bearing him two sons, and subdued the Gallic warriors. Unmoved, the faithless lover tries to keep his distance. While Norma uses the familiar "*tu*" form of address to him, he chooses the more formal and aloof "*vous*." He keeps repeating that it is too risky for her to return to Rome with him. Showing no anger at first, she begs him to take her to Rome along with her sons:

...I love you and forgive your crimes...
Wife, lover, slave, slave if you wish...
With your sons take their mother who
implores you
And who will bless you even through her
tears.

Losing all restraint, he defies her to unleash the Gallic forces in an attempt to stop him from abducting Adalgisa. She dismisses him in words echoed by Romani in the trio:

Go ahead, leave, accursed by my wrath!
Tremble...dastardly, unworthy Roman...

The scene in which Norma, like Medea, prepares to kill her children in an act of vengeance against their father provides a pivotal moment in both play and opera. Although Norma's monologue is longer in Soumet and is filled with the guilty thoughts of her *sacrilège* and her own subsequent suicide, Romani's text is distilled nearly word for word from the play.

In play and opera, Norma appears incapable of killing her children. She confides them to Adalgisa to raise in Rome with their father as brothers to her own future children. The opera's scene between Norma and Adalgisa is again a near mirror image of the play, except that in Soumet, Norma is still haunted by the criminal nature of her love for Pollione and three times hints at the crime of infanticide of which she is perhaps capable. Romani utilizes the compassion between the two women to write for Bellini the words of the immortal friendship duet ("Mira, o Norma") that ends the scene.

At this point, Romani inserts a short scene for the Gauls, which allows for the requisite choral number, and a short solo with chorus for the bass. The action of the last scene parallels that of the play. As Norma anxiously awaits Adalgisa's return, hoping that Pollione will have acceded to her plea to return to the mother of his children, Clotilde enters and relates how Adalgisa's tears were in vain and how Pollione swore to abduct her from the temple to which she returned in sadness. At that point, Norma swears vengeance on all Romans. In the opera, Norma's striking of the sacred shield and her bloodthirsty cry for war, slaughter and carnage ("*guerra, strage, sterminio*"), coupled with the chorus's echoing shouts, heighten the bellacose savagery of the Gauls.

The scenic indications in the play at this point call for mysterious wonders of lighting and sound emanating from the sacred forest. Norma mounts the druidic rock and, after a lengthy peroration against Rome, foretells the future glory of France. Soumet set off this most lyrical

passage of the play by using alternating eight- and twelve-syllable lines with a freer rhyme scheme instead of the classical *alexandrins*.

The libretto again takes up the Soumet text rather closely as Pollione is captured entering the Druid sanctuary in search of Adalgisa. For the second time Norma, poised with dagger in hand to avenge her wrongs, cannot bring herself to strike. Ordering the Gauls to leave, she proposes to interrogate the miscreant in secret. The ensuing scene gives rise in the opera to the noble duet "*In mia man alfin tu sei*." Following the Soumet text nearly word for word, Norma, Amneris-like, says to Pollione that in exchange for his oath to forget Adalgisa she will save him from certain death. At that point Pollione, Radames-like, remains calm, brave and dignified, and refuses her plea. Norma then responds:

Don't you know that my fury far outdoes
yours?

Don't you know that in our children's
hearts this dagger —

Yes, I raised its point above them.

Steadfast in his resolve, Pollione asks for the dagger so that he can kill himself. She retorts that the massacre will include hordes of Romans and Adalgisa who, by his refusal, is being condemned to death. Pollione begs Norma to spare Adalgisa's life. Seething with jealous rage, Norma replies:

Through her heart I want to strike you.
I already rejoice in your grief and her
death.

At last I can make you as wretched as I am.

When Pollione again demands the dagger, Norma summons the Gauls, saying the gods require a double sacrifice since a sinful virgin shared the proconsul's crime by luring him into the sacred grove.

Deciding that the sacrificial pyre should engulf both the impious girl and her lover, Norma's father Oroveso, seconded by the Gauls, demands the name of the guilty priestess. Finding it impossible to inculcate Adalgisa for a crime of which she herself was guilty, Norma pronounces the fatal words, "*C'est moi*." She proceeds to confess the full extent of her crimes and asks to join Pollione on the pyre. Dis-

Continued on page 56

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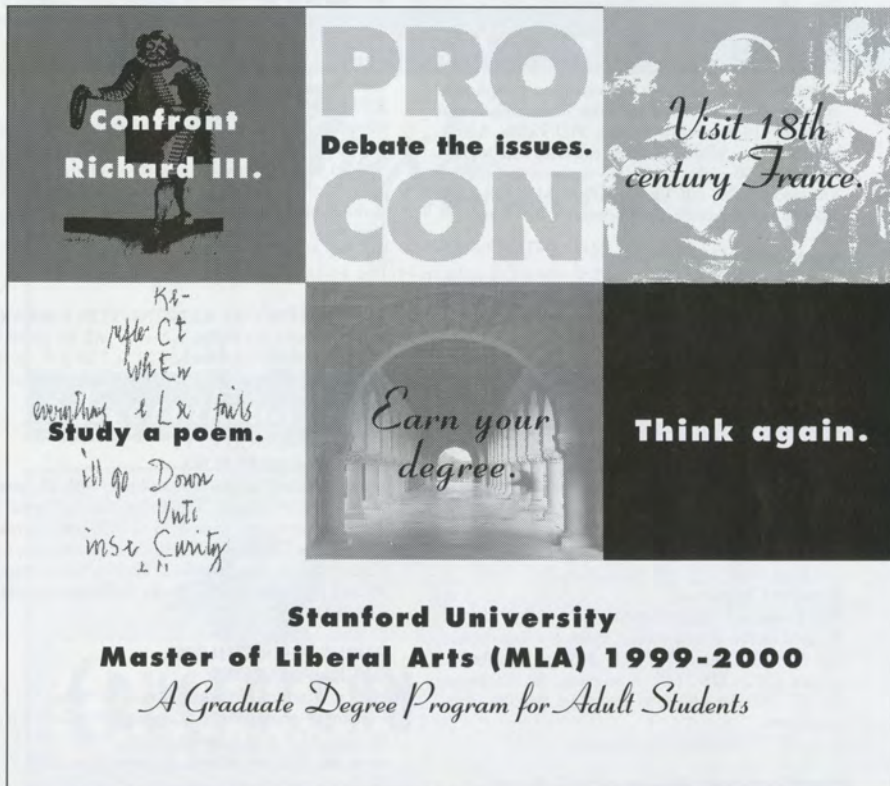


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1998-99 OPERA PREVIEWS

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:

<i>Don Carlo</i> — Oct. 27, 31; Nov. 5, 11	<i>Betrothal in a Monastery</i> — Nov. 27; Dec. 3, 6, 10
<i>Norma</i> — Nov. 10, 15, 18, 21, 24	<i>Turandot</i> — Nov. 29; Dec. 1, 4, 9
<i>Peter Grimes</i> — Nov. 22; Dec. 2, 5, 11, 13	<i>Madama Butterfly</i> — 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

Peter Grimes

November 18

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

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*

NORMA: FROM FRENCH PLAY TO ITALIAN LIBRETTO

continued from page 46

regarding the incredulous Gauls and Pollione's attempt to save her, she redoubles her confession. Soumet, whose poetry elsewhere is often either pedestrian or turgid, here rises to heights of real eloquence. When Norma asks her father to curse her, he not only complies, but forbids any eventual pardon for her crimes.

It is from this point on that — after adhering very closely to Soumet — Romani diverges completely from the text and action of the play. In Act V of the play, Pollione, freed by Roman soldiers, has escaped and Norma has gone mad. Adalgisa tells Oroveso that the proconsul is full of remorse and wishes to return to Rome, marry the mother of his children and make a lasting peace with Gaul. When Oroveso refuses to pardon the guilty couple, Adalgisa, who is horrified by the turn of events, decides to convert to the new religion of repentance and forgiveness. Thinking that Pollione's voice may bring Norma back to reason, Adalgisa sets off to find him. Norma, who has already stabbed her young son Clodomir, does not recognize his older brother, who implores his mother to return to sanity. A remorseful Pollione tries to persuade her to flee with him. A crazed and intransigent Norma remains deaf to his pleas and hints that she has left Clodomir mortally wounded in the cave. As Pollione rushes off to find his young son, Norma seizes Agénor and drags him away to a precipice. With her face distorted in a hideous smile, she waits for Pollione's return with the dying Clodomir before jumping headlong into the abyss with Agénor.

Apparently Mlle George was sublime in this act, according to a footnote in the printed edition of the play. It might therefore seem surprising that Romani and Bellini would not exploit Soumet's fifth act to create an extended mad scene for Giuditta Pasta. The famed soprano had already demonstrated her talents in operatic dementia as Donizetti's Anna Bolena, Bellini's own Imogene in *Il Pirata* and Amina in the sleepwalking scene of *La Sonnambula*.

Why then did the creators of *Norma* decide to take a totally different approach for the finale of their opera? No doubt because Soumet's ending leaves us with a protagonist who is a guilt-ridden, deranged and vengeful monster, the *Infanticide* of the original subtitle of the play. The character should

and does fill the spectator with horror, whatever the histrionic abilities of the actress who portrays the role.

The Romani-Bellini finale to *Norma*, beginning with the stately measures of the reconciliation duet ("Qual cor tradisti") and culminating in arguably the most pathetic ensemble in all opera, is at complete odds with Soumet's horrific Grand Guignol dénouement. It is imbued with the cathartic qualities of great tragedy. Pollione's change of heart is caused not so much by Adalgisa's pleading and Norma's descent into madness, but by the heroine's sublime nobility and humanity. As the reunited lovers prepare to die together on the sacrificial pyre, Oroveso and the Druids beg her to deny her confession of sacrilege. Not only does she refuse, but admits to a further transgression to the assembled Gauls: she is the mother of two children. In accents of the most tender supplication, Norma asks her father to have pity on his own flesh and blood by sheltering the youthful innocence of his grandsons. In tears, Oroveso finally relents and promises to look after them as Norma and Pollione are led to the pyre amidst the imprecations of the Gauls.

Romani, who considered *Norma* "the most beautiful rose in the garland" of operas in his collaboration with Bellini, provided the composer with one of the finest librettos in the Italian repertory. Bellini had an important hand in the final shape of the libretto, however. He demanded continual revisions and he trimmed some of Romani's text, thereby intensifying the action.

In 1837, Richard Wagner, then music director of the Riga theaters, chose to conduct *Norma*. In an eloquent essay on Bellini written that same year, he offered the ultimate praise of the opera: "[Romani's libretto] soars to the tragic heights of the ancient Greeks... All the passions so characteristically ennobled by Bellini's melodies are thereby given a majestic foundation and support... Among Bellini's works, *Norma* is the one with the most melodic vein joined to the most profound reality and interior passion." He might also have thanked Soumet for inspiring Romani and Bellini to their glorious masterpiece. □

Arthur Kaplan, former co-editor of the San Francisco Opera magazine, currently directs opera tours for Dailey-Thorp Travel.

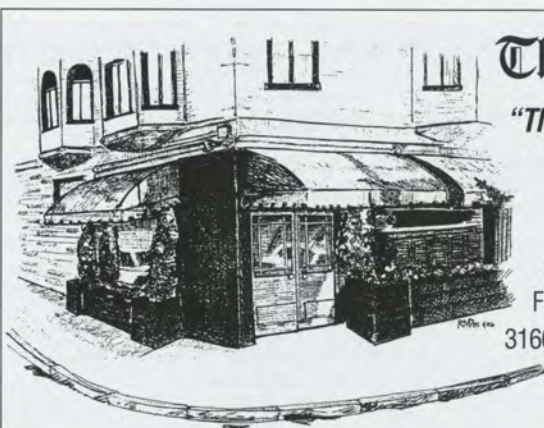


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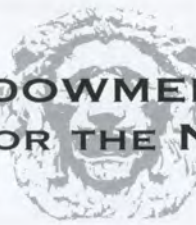
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For more information, contact Bethany Dickinson, Assistant Director of Corporate & Foundation Relations, at (415) 565-3206.

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OPERA

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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:

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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:

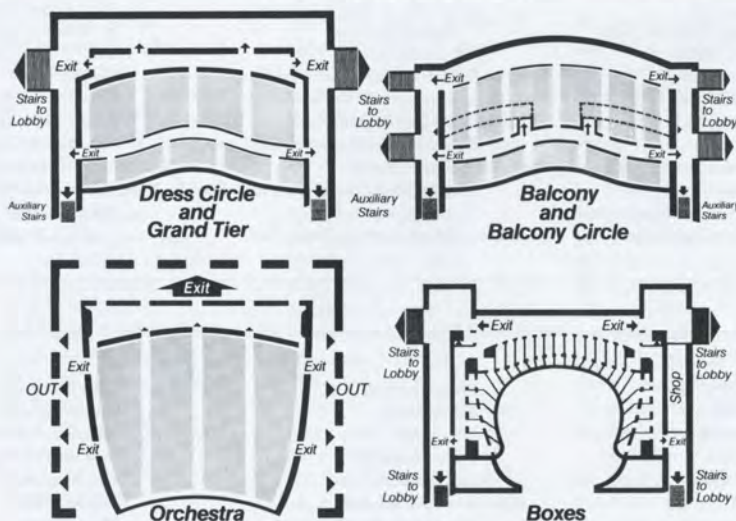
Tuesday, September 22
Tuesday, October 13
Saturday, October 24
Thursday, October 29
Sunday, November 1
Thursday, November 12
Sunday, November 15
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Friday, November 27
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Saturday, December 5
Saturday,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



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