

La Favorite
(La Favorita)

1999-2000

Friday, September 24, 1999 8:00 PM
Thursday, September 30, 1999 8:00 PM
Tuesday, October 5, 1999 8:00 PM
Sunday, October 10, 1999 2:00 PM
Wednesday, October 13, 1999 7:30 PM
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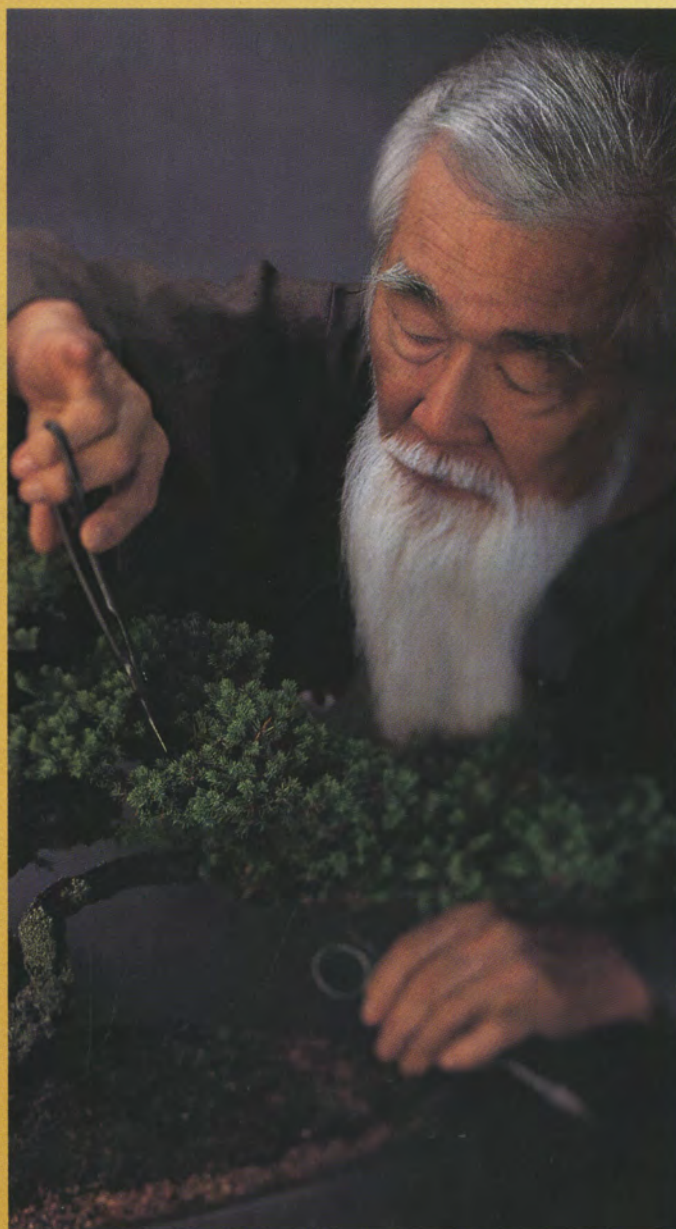
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PERFORMING ARTS®

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA MAGAZINE

La Favorite

1999/2000 Season

Vol. 77, No. 3

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COVER:

Lewis, John Frederick (English, 1805–1876)

Distant View of the Sierra Nevada

Eighth plate in the book *Sketches of Spain and Spanish Character*; 1836

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A MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL DIRECTOR



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Welcome to San Francisco Opera's newly expanded 1999/2000 Season in the War Memorial Opera House. Running from September 11, 1999 through July 2, 2000, our newly scheduled season offers you more performances to choose from over a longer period of time — allowing you to enjoy your San Francisco Opera experience with greater ease than ever before.

We have so much to look forward to this season — a repertoire of 11 brilliant masterworks, five of which are presented in spectacular new productions: Charpentier's *Louise*, Donizetti's *La Favorite*, Verdi's *Nabucco*, Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and Wagner's *Parsifal*. Our 77th Season also features revivals of celebrated San Francisco Opera productions: Verdi's *Un Ballo in Maschera*, Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Mozart's *Idomeneo* (co-owned with Lyric Opera of Chicago), Puccini's *La Bohème*, Berg's *Wozzeck* and Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress*. Additionally, some of the world's finest singers and conductors will join in music to pay tribute to a very special member of the San Francisco Opera family, mezzo-soprano Marilyn Horne.

Music Director Donald Runnicles and the San Francisco Opera Orchestra and Chorus will be on hand all season, joined by an illustrious group of international artists — singers, conductors, directors and designers — who will infuse each production with all the musical glory, vocal brilliance, dramatic fervor and visual splendor that grand opera has to offer.

Enjoy!

Lotfi Mansouri
General Director

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD AND FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE SAN FRANCISCO OPERA ASSOCIATION



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Our 1999/2000 Season ushers in a new era for San Francisco Opera. Great opera is now being presented virtually all year round. This is an advantage for us all. Not only does it give our patrons more flexibility, but it also provides more opportunities to widen our audiences, develop artists, offer arts education, and enliven the operatic repertoire with new commissions and productions, thus helping to secure a vibrant future for the art form.

This season is made possible by our dedicated sponsors and contributors. We would like to acknowledge the contributions of our thousands of individuals whose support, large or small, is vital to our season. Equally important to us is the role of our year-round sponsors: Grants for the Arts/San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund, the California Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Arts, as well as the James Irvine Foundation and our 1999/2000 sponsors: Bank of America, American Airlines, and Kawai Pianos, provided by San Francisco Pianoworks, Inc. Our great thanks also goes to our production sponsors: Friends in memory of Gorham B. Knowles (*Un Ballo in Maschera*), Mr. and Mrs. Edmund Wattis Littlefield and Lorna Talbot (*Louise*), Mrs. Gorham B. Knowles (*La Favorite*), The Bernard Osher Endowment Fund (*Idomeneo*), Fred and Peggy Furth and Wells Fargo (*La Bohème*).

We also wish to acknowledge San Francisco Opera Guild on the occasion of its diamond jubilee year. For 60 years, the Opera Guild has introduced hundreds of thousands of people in the Northern California community to opera, and has helped to support San Francisco Opera both financially and through the efforts of its myriad volunteers.

On behalf of the San Francisco Opera Association, we are pleased to welcome you to San Francisco Opera's 77th Season, and we thank you for joining us.

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BY WILLIAM ASHBROOK



Part of the lobby of the Paris Opéra, as seen in a 19th-century engraving. (Opposite) Gaetano Donizetti in a posthumous painting by Ponziano Loverini.



Gaetano Donizetti (1797–1848) is one of a distinguished handful of composers who were able to write viable, even popular, works to texts in more than one language. There is Mozart, of course, whose Italian- and German-language operas are cornerstones of the international repertory. A number of Rossini's Italian works are old friends but once upon a time *Guillaume Tell*, to give this opera its original title, was a dependable standby in the repertory of the Paris Opéra. Donizetti, who is only too rarely given full credit for his accomplishments, composed not only Italian comedies and romantic tragedies, but also put us in his debt for two French masterpieces: the irresistible *La Fille du*

Régiment and the tragic *La Favorite*.

La Favorite, in its Italian disguise as *La Favorita*, a travesty with a crudely distorted plot, never completely dropped out of sight, but it is only recently that the true lineaments of this noble score have been allowed to emerge in its original French form. It is an opera that had a highly mixed creative period, but even so, it is an extraordinary testimony to Donizetti's stylistic integrity.

In 1839, Donizetti, after making his home for almost a decade in Naples, relocated in Paris, where he had achieved a long-sought prize: a contract to compose three operas for the Paris Opéra. The prolific Donizetti, who was used to the more informal and quicker pace of

Italian opera houses, found himself with so much time on his hands that he allowed himself to be tempted by offers from a number of other Parisian musical theaters. For one of them, the Théâtre de la Renaissance, he concocted a compact French-language version of his greatest success, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, one that differs in some effective ways from the Italian original. The French *Lucie* was first given in August of 1839 and in that form proved a hardy survivor all over France. It enjoyed such an overwhelming success that the manager of the Renaissance, one Antenor Joly, signed Donizetti up to compose a brand new opera for his company. By the end of December 1839, he had completed and consigned to the management a three-act score entitled *L'Ange de Nisida*, but unfortunately Monsieur Joly of the Renaissance was very soon forced to declare bankruptcy and close his theater, with the result that the composer was left with an unperformed score on his hands. Worse yet, the plot dealt with royal dalliance on the shores of the Bay of Naples, a subject sure to infuriate the fastidious Italian censors of those days. How could he salvage it?

A few months passed without any forward motion on the project that would eventually prove to be *La Favorite*. In February of 1840, he brought out *La Fille du Régiment* at the Opéra-Comique, where it was favorably received, but its great vogue, which would have one of its tunes, "Salut à la France" become a sort of unofficial national anthem, lay a few years in the future. In April, his *Les Martyrs* was staged at the Opéra. That summer, Donizetti was in Milan in order to be present at the Italian transmutation of *La Fille du Régiment* from its original opéra comique form into an Italian opera buffa, now called *La Figlia del Reggimento*, with some old music added, some subtracted, and the original spoken dialogue replaced with Italian recitatives. *La Fille* received the composer's personal attention for this adaptation, a service circumstances prevented him from doing for *La Favorite*. Shortly before the premiere of *Figlia*, which would be given on October 3, 1840 at La Scala, Donizetti received an irrefusable summons to return to Paris and prepare a full-scale grand opera with a ballet divertissement. The first performance was scheduled for early December of the same year.

In those days, composers who were



JONES

Maria Luisa Nave in the title role of *La Favorita*, presented by the San Francisco Opera in 1973.

contracted to compose for the Paris Opéra – a group that included Meyerbeer and Halévy as well as Donizetti – were assigned “turns”: an arrangement that allowed for a leisurely three-month rehearsal period during which to develop the spectacular staging, a notable feature at that time of the principal Paris opera house. In the fall of 1840, the “turn” had come around to Meyerbeer, who – waiting for conditions to be perfect according to his notions – decided to postpone it, a permissible move. In any event, Meyerbeer’s “turn” became available to Donizetti, who was eager to take advantage of it. His first work for the Opéra, *Les Martyrs*, had been given in April of 1840, but it had a short run of performances because of a drastic shift in the power structure of the theater.

The previous director, one Duponchel, had been superseded by Léon Pillet, one of his former associates. The crucial factor in the shift from Duponchel to Pillet, however, resided in the person of Pillet’s

mistress, a ferociously ambitious mezzo-soprano named Rosine Stoltz. La Stoltz regarded as one of her primary targets the high soprano Julie Dorus-Gras, who had sung the leading role in *Les Martyrs*. Now, Donizetti was a flexible fellow, used to dealing with a prima donna’s whims and fixations. He had composed the abandoned *Ange de Nisida* for the same high soprano who had enjoyed a huge success in *Lucie de Lammermoor* at the Renaissance, but since it was his custom to tailor the big arias in a new work to fit the vocal strengths of the first cast, this shift in vocal placement from high soprano to mezzo proved no insuperable problem.

Never one to refuse a challenge, the resourceful Donizetti knew that with some strategic adaptation and with its milieu heightened in importance, much of *L’Ange de Nisida* would provide a solid basis for this new context. To relocate that plot from the small island of Nisida to a Spanish monastery as well as to the gardens of the Alcazar, director Pillet

engaged Eugène Scribe, the leading French librettist of the period.

It was always Donizetti’s practice to tailor the principal solos and duets to the vocal strengths of his original cast, hoping thereby to increase the chances for a successful (and profitable) outcome. Besides the intransigent Stoltz, who demanded multiple versions of her solos as well as an interpolation near the end of the rehearsal period, Donizetti had to deal with two known quantities and a noble French institution. The known quantities were the tenor Gilbert Duprez, who had created several Donizetti leading roles, among them Edgardo in *Lucia*, and the baritone Paul Barroilhet, who had sung Donizetti premieres at the San Carlo in Naples, and who would be making his Paris Opéra debut as King Alphonse in *La Favorite*. The noble French institution was the great bass Nicolas Prosper Levasseur, who had participated in every important premiere at the Opéra since 1820. With Duprez, Barroilhet and Levasseur the composer had no problems, and even the temperamental Stoltz came to appreciate that the role of Léonor in *Favorite* did not have to compete for attention with another important female role in the same piece. The great successes at the Opéra during the previous decade had been built around two contrasting female roles, and Julie Dorus-Gras had had a prominence in all of them. She had created such showy parts as Alice in Meyerbeer’s *Robert le Diable*, Queen Marguerite de Valois in his *Les Huguenots* and Princess Eudoxie in Halévy’s *La Juive*, but now Stoltz insisted on having a vehicle that allowed her to shine without a soprano rival and, even better, to die under moving circumstances.

The final months of 1840 were a hectic time for Donizetti as he composed and borrowed some things he had already written to put together the score of *La Favorite*. When it was performed on December 2, 1840, it enjoyed a great success and it would long remain very popular, not only in Paris, but with audiences in the many opera houses of the French provinces. Its vogue in France, however, did not survive much after World War I. The only place in the United States where the original French version of *La Favorite* echoed its Parisian popularity was New Orleans.

Given Donizetti’s nationality and reputation throughout the Italian peninsula, it was inevitable that this opera would be translated into Italian, and that its Italian version, or more properly versions, would prove to be successful too. There are,

Continued on page 41



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WHAT'S IN A TITLE?

(A LOT, IF IT'S A SUPERTITLE...)

BY C.S. WHITE



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of an opera's text, as in the classic foreign films he so admired. His solution: Supertitles. In short, a series of slides with the opera's text (broken down into appropriate segments) shown on a border above the stage. The result? If a person could read, they could understand what was happening on stage.

The effort was a success. Soon, New York City Opera employed a similar system; San Francisco Opera saw its first titled opera for the student/family matinee performances of *La Traviata* in 1983.

Francesca Zambello, then a young opera director staging the *Traviata*, who now enjoys a busy international career, approached the Opera's stage manager, Jerry Sherk, and the two devised a system for use in the War Memorial Opera House. Audiences and critics alike

(Left) Steve White as himself and (below) as the operator of San Francisco Opera's Supertitles.

In the not too distant past, when one was planning an evening at the opera, it was common to purchase a recording of the opera in question on LPs (remember those?). Repeated hearings provided familiarity with the music; it was a good idea to pore over the libretto, too, to gain a clearer idea of what was being said, by whom, to whom and for what reason. People often memorized great chunks of the text in order to savor and appreciate the action on stage. In short, if someone wanted to understand what all the shouting was about, a night at the opera required diligence and hard work.

But life at the end of the twentieth century ill affords the average person enough time to deal with a busy day's necessities, much less the luxury of thorough study of an opera.

One of the earliest excuses I can remember hearing from people who didn't attend the opera was that they didn't understand what was going on. And that's a very reasonable excuse, indeed. Few people are well-versed enough in several languages to comprehend what they were hearing. Today's large performing spaces (in sizes unimaginable to composers of opera's standard repertoire) further increase the likelihood of a text being garbled. Add to this the distorted and often drawn-out syllabic

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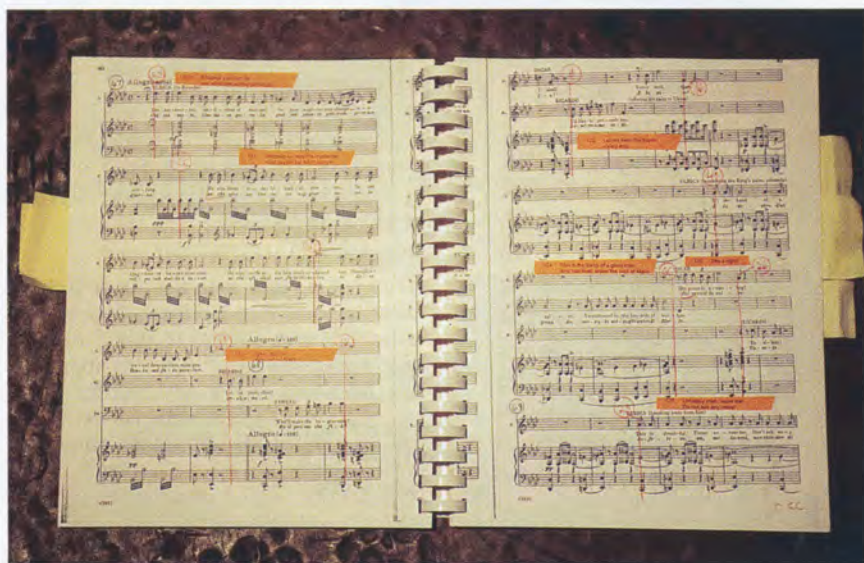


contortions involved in the music, and it's probably no surprise that even native speakers of the opera's language would be hard-pressed to understand every word.

But all that changed in 1982. Lotfi Mansouri, then General Director of the Canadian Opera Company and a great fan of cinema, wondered why it wasn't possible to add a subtitle-like translation

applauded the innovation, which then spread to other North American opera companies.

The truest test of Supertitles' permanence on our stage came during 1985's summer *Ring* festival. The new translation process seemed tailor-made for Wagner's complex and lengthy music dramas where the composer's rich,



Score for *Un Ballo in Maschera* marked up for Supertitles.

layered language was so vitally important. Two of the four Wagner cycles were to be titled. When announced, those were the first to sell out.

Many purists sniffed, vowing never to take part in such a low-brow event. But the resulting success of the translated operas was so overwhelming, even some of these veteran *Ring*-goers were completely won over.

Every season since that summer, San Francisco Opera has provided Supertitles for each opera production, to the joy, and sometimes, wrath, of its patrons.

This writer grew up listening to classical music and developed the sometimes-bothersome habit of never fully relishing the activity unless a score of the piece was at hand. Though irksome, the process equipped me with a solid ability to follow the labyrinthine turns a serious musical work affords. Little did I know that a childhood quirk would thus prepare me for a future in Supertitles.

As the audience settles into their places before the conductor gives the downbeat, very few can imagine the countless hours of preparation and the sometimes near pandemonium that occurs, not just backstage, but all around them in the unseen areas of the opera house. It takes a lot of individuals to assist the conductor, orchestra, spear carriers, chorus and singers to create the magic of opera.

Among those of us who labor behind the scenes to produce opera, there exists a kind of unspoken understanding that our audience has some idea of what we do, but the details are probably a little hazy. In fact, the better we do our jobs, the more easily we might be taken for granted.

And so it is with Supertitles. We live in an age when our lives are computerized;

everything from our bank account to our restaurant bill is governed by the sometimes mystical workings of these cyberdictators, so it is no surprise that nearly all of the operagoers who ask about titles assume that all we do is push a button, then sit back and let the wonders of silicon and microconnections feed them the translated wonders of Verdi and Mozart.

Well, that's partly correct.

Buttons are pushed — many, many buttons. Here's what really happens in Titleland:

Months before an opera's opening night, the translator must carefully study the piano/vocal score, deciding the best way to break down the vocal utterances into manageable portions, easily digestible by the audience.

Every opera company's title style is different, but there are a few guidelines that seem to work best for all. For instance, San Francisco Opera decided from the very first titled show that people are coming to *hear* and *see* opera, not read, so, no matter how chatty an opera is (and there are some staggeringly verbose librettos out there), it's the Supertitle translator's job to transmit the gist of the sung words accurately, while refraining from creating a slide by slide version of *War and Peace* to be shown on the screen in characters 14 inches high.

Next, the translator must prepare the cueing score, the key to presenting the slides during a show — a tedious job, since each title requires two cues, one to indicate where and when the line will appear, and one to remove it from the screen.

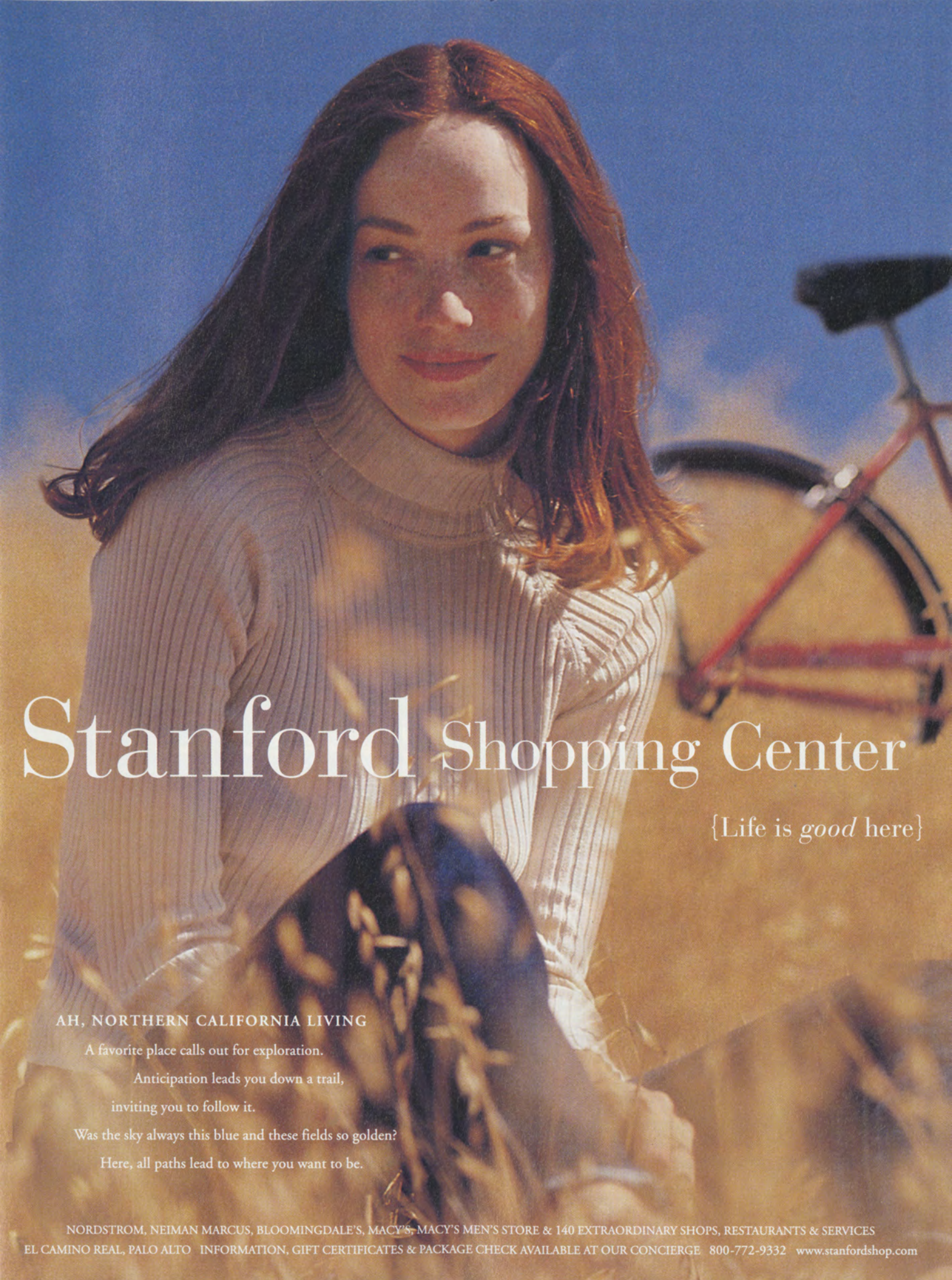
Once the opera is chopped up into pieces, the translated text is entered into a computer. Until quite recently, each title seen has been an individual slide placed in a carousel atop a high-powered projector

and shown from the lighting booth at the back of the Dress Circle. Creation of the slides involved the time-consuming process of using a film recorder (a 35-millimeter camera attached to a computer) which allowed each title to be shot on film at an extremely slow speed to insure the crispest, cleanest image possible. Each slide, or each photo of the typed title, took up to six minutes to complete its exposure (it took approximately 3½ hours to complete a roll of 36 exposures). With the developed film turned into negatives (the once-black letters are now in white), each individual title was placed into slide mounts, numbered to correspond to the carousel number and sequence shown in the score. To insure that conductor, singers, slide and cue caller are all at the same place at the same time, the appropriate Supertitle text is glued into the music just above the sung line, a fail-safe routine that has come in handy more times than we would like to admit. Few things are more alarming than to look up and find the wrong slide being shown.

Therefore, the slide numbering is extremely important. Live theater offers quite a few opportunities for something to go amiss. Despite regular pre-show checks, mechanical problems pop up with enough frequency to keep everyone on their toes. Singers have been known to forget words and to stop singing until a convenient spot in the music affords them a smooth re-entry. Any of these mishaps, and many others, are cause for a bit of a hot-footing in the titles booth. But more on this later.

Each carousel can hold up to 80 slides, but a carousel is rarely full. The average opera utilizes five or six carousels. Wagner's *Siegfried* holds the distinction for the most carousels: 14, all of them full. That's 1,120 slides and 2,240 verbal cues. By comparison, *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* requires a mere 12 carousels, as does Prokofiev's monumental *War and Peace*. *Madama Butterfly* needs only five partially full slide trays, while *Rigoletto* demands a hefty seven.

Earlier, it was mentioned that an opera score is broken into sections to facilitate titling. Due to the physical limitations of a projected slide system, the carousels must be changed at a convenient time in the musical fabric when none of the important text will be lost and where there is enough time to allow the change. Balancing the musical requirements against the



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need to change carousels is sometimes like a circus act. For a change, there can be anywhere from several minutes (during an entr'acte, interlude or scene change) to a mere five seconds.

The average audience member may never have noticed it, but the slides just don't suddenly pop up on screen like they did in your junior high school history class. Early on, it was decided that this type of presentation would be too distracting. Instead, a fade unit is called into play. Connected to the projector, the unit is a small electronic box peppered by buttons and switches, each corresponding to varying speeds for a slide's appearance and removal from the screen. Our box utilizes increments of 1, 2, 4, 8 and 16 seconds.

In fact, these numbers are the cues we call during the performance. Here in San Francisco, only a union electrician may operate the Supertitles equipment itself. The system is simple: the Supertitlist calls cues which are then acted upon by the electrician. Though technical problems or breakdowns are rare, they do happen, and it is a calming thing to know that, should a glitch occur, the fully trained person operating the equipment is amply able to deal with any problem. These people also have the responsibility to change the slide carousels several times during a performance. If the space for a change is limited, a warning for a quick change is given and the electrician readies the replacement carousel and hovers above the projector, waiting for the change cue. Once "go" is given, the operator must slide the carousel around to its exit position (to prevent slippage, a release button is engaged only when a single notch is aligned properly), the carousel is removed, set aside and the subsequent carousel is put in place and the next slide dropped into its waiting position. Though we've done this literally thousands of times, there is still a little twinge of angst during a change; the gods of art are fickle.

As the music proceeds, just a few seconds before a slide's "moment of fame" arrives, a verbal "ready cue" is given — for example, "Ready 2," which means "get ready for a 2-second fade" — that being the most common time cue, which seems to work in 90% of the cases. Here's where a little finesse comes in. It's preferable for a title to appear exactly when the line is sung — never, horror of horrors, before, though this happens from time to time.



Steve White and board operator Norris Fong at the Supertitles console.

An orchestra pit video camera feeds an image of the conductor to the booth to minimize early cues.

If a two-second fade up is desired, the "go" cue is called, just a hair ahead of the downbeat, due to "lag" time, or the amount of time it takes for the cue to be heard and a resultant action taken. The operator hears the cue "Go," presses the appropriate button and the slide "blooms" into place in a two-second fade-in — we hope exactly as the singer begins the line. To remove the slide, a similar sequence of events takes place.

If the music is fast, then, of course, the slides appear and disappear very quickly, often as quickly as the equipment will allow. That's why, sometimes, it seems next to impossible to read a slide's entire text before the next one appears. When those composers got going, they trusted, wrongly or rightly, that their audience could comprehend the rapidly expressed words and never could have imagined that people would one day have to read what was being sung.

At other times, during leisurely or slow passages, a gentler bloom is appropriate, often a 4 or 6-second cue. Rarely, but to wonderful effect, an 8 is called for. Especially rare and impressive is a 16-second fade; this cue is particularly suitable in Act I of *La Bohème*, during the final duet, "O soave fanciulla."

Many of the union crew members here enjoy opera, but it would be fair to say that they could live without hearing it at every

performance, so sometimes the projectionist turns off the music feed and hears only the endless string of cues that must be given. I pity these stalwart souls, having to listen to me drone on and on all night long giving thousands of lamentably similar cues. People have often been puzzled by a few common practices we follow. It seems to annoy some individuals that we don't present every single word in the opera, verbatim. Perhaps they're afraid we're not telling them everything. Instead, we're trying to save their eyes; every vital portion of a libretto is, indeed, provided. Typical omissions would include superfluous exclamations or repeated sections. In the matter of repeated text (a standard practice of composers from Handel to Rossini to Verdi), to allay fears that something is being omitted or that there are technical problems, we often repeat the first line of a recurring text as a gentle reminder to the viewer.

Laugh lines in comic scenes require extra attention. Of course, it's preferable to have the audience react to the humorous statement at the appropriate moment. To assist this, a feeling for how long it takes a large group of people to read and react to a line is needed (after tens of thousands of cues have been called, one acquires a knack for these things). Nothing can distract a singer more than having a title come up too early so that the audience reaction steps on his/her big line, even if the audience would not have

Continued on page 42

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Swenson (10/24, 29, 11/3)/Richardson*
(10/30); Vargas/Beltrán (10/23, 26,
30, 11/6), Michaels-Moore/
Robertson (10/23, 11/3, 6),
Hagen/Relyea (10/23, 11/6)/
Coliban (10/26, 30)

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Nov. 3, 6

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Dec. 4, 7, 9, 11

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Lima/Todorovich** (1/8, 11, 13, 15),
Okerlund/Westman (1/9, 12, 14, 16),
Relyea/Ames (1/15, 16), Daza/
Gama (1/9, 12, 14, 16), Trempont
Joel/Feldman/Yeargan/Mahoney/
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Jan. 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16

Volkwijn, Jenkins; Geer, Westman,
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Lacey*/Feldman/Yeargan/Mahoney/
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Jan. 15mat

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DON GIOVANNI Mozart
Colonna**/Foland (6/17, 28), Vaness,
Netrebko/Kriha Dye (6/17, 28);
Hvorostovsky/Okerlund (6/17, 28),
Bros*/Shankle (6/28), Antoniazzi
Beckwith*/Mansouri/Sciutti/
Bosquet/Coyne/Whitfield

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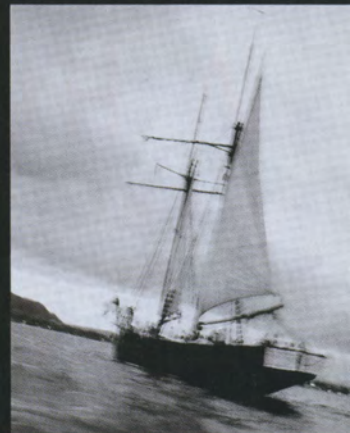
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(in French)

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Chorus Director
Ian Robertson

Choreographer
Lawrence Pech

Musical Preparation
Adelle Eslinger
John Churchwell
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TUESDAY, OCTOBER 5 AT 8:00
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 10 AT 2:00
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 13 AT 7:30
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 16 AT 8:00

CAST

(in order of appearance)

*Balthazar, abbot of a monastery and
representative of the Pope*

Kevin J. Langan

Fernand, a novice

Marcello Giordani

Inès, confidante to Léonor

Tammy Jenkins†

Léonor de Guzman, mistress to Alphonse

Sonia Ganassi*

Alphonse XI, King of Castile

Vladimir Chernov

Don Gaspar, the king's minister

Todd Geer*†

A knight

Richard Walker

Monks, ladies-in-waiting, courtiers

Solo Dancers

The Shepherdess

Cynthia Drayer

The Queen

Summer Lee Rhatigan

The Soldier

Michael Kruzich

The King

Danny Furlong

Corps de ballet

*San Francisco Opera debut †1999–2000 Adler Fellow

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PLACE AND TIME: Spain, about 1340

ACT I Scene 1 The monastery of St. James of Compostela
 Scene 2 The island of St. León

INTERMISSION

ACT II The gardens of the Alcazar palace
ACT III The great hall of the palace

INTERMISSION

ACT IV The monastery

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The performance will last approximately three hours and fifteen minutes.*

SYNOPSIS — *LA FAVORITE*

ACT I

As members of the order affirm their faith, their abbot, Balthazar, notices that the novice Fernand does not join in. The young man explains that he is unable to because he has fallen in love with a mysterious woman he has seen in church but knows nothing about. Balthazar tries to restore Fernand's thoughts to piety, but the novice remains stubborn and decides to leave in spite of Balthazar's imprecations.

Inès and her friends sing a lighthearted song while waiting for Fernand's boat to arrive. He comes ashore, asks Inès about her mistress, but learns nothing. When Léonor arrives, Fernand impulsively asks her to marry him, but she informs him that would be fatal to the destinies of them both. She urges him to leave her. In despair, Fernand claims he would rather die. After learning from Inès that the king will soon arrive, Léonor gives a letter to Fernand and leaves after a last farewell. Fernand asks Inès if the person arriving is indeed the king, and from her answer is led to believe that Léonor is a woman of noble bearing. How can he deserve her? When he looks at the paper he is delighted to discover it is a commission as military captain. He decides to win glory in battle, and, with it, the woman he loves.

ACT II

Now that he has defeated the Moors, King Alphonse confides his dreams to Don Gaspar. But the major part of the glory, he says, should go to Fernand, who led the army to victory at the point of defeat. The king wants to honor publicly the young hero in Seville. Gaspar mentions that a message has come from Rome and withdraws. Alone, Alphonse swears to defend Léonor — the mistress he loves — against the enemies who threaten her, intending to consolidate his love by marrying her. After ordering Gaspar to organize a great victory celebration, Inès arrives with Léonor, who learns of Fernand's heroic deeds and is ashamed at seeing him because of her past. The king notices her distress and asks the cause. Guilty at the thought of her secret love for Fernand, Léonor reproaches Alphonse for deceiving her — she had been led to believe he would marry her. He tries to calm her and orders the celebration and the dancing to begin. At its conclusion, Gaspar informs the king that Léonor has another lover, and shows Alphonse a letter addressed to her. Furious, the king demands to know from Léonor the identity of his rival, but she would rather die than name him. They are interrupted by the entrance of an angry Balthazar who carries a papal edict. He demands that the king banish Léonor and

restore his wife to her rightful position. When Alphonse refuses, Balthazar delivers an anathema, causing general consternation.

ACT III

Returning to Seville to receive recognition for his military exploits, Fernand can only think of the prospect of seeing Léonor again. Alphonse greets Fernand as his benefactor and urges him to ask whatever favor he pleases. Fernand asks only to be allowed to marry the woman he loves. Astounded to discover that Fernand is referring to Léonor, Alphonse restrains himself and ironically gives his consent to the couple. While Léonor is overcome with anguish, Fernand blissfully rejoices in his ignorance. Alone, Léonor confronts her shame and weighs the chances of Fernand's forgiving her when he learns the truth. She entrusts Inès with the delicate task of revealing her situation to Fernand before the ceremony. But unknown to Léonor, Gaspar has Inès arrested before she can deliver the message. As the courtiers gather for the wedding, Fernand express his gratitude to the king, who confers upon him various titles. But the courtiers gossip with Gaspar and speak of their contempt for Fernand. Léonor arrives and — because she is warmly welcomed by Fernand — believes that he has decided to accept her in spite of her past. Immediately after the wedding, the outraged courtiers openly turn their backs on Fernand, believing him to be an unscrupulous opportunist. Confused, Fernand is about to fight them when Balthazar intervenes, urging everyone to keep calm and explain what has happened. On hearing that Fernand has married Léonor, the abbot tells Fernand that he has been disgraced. Alphonse enters with Léonor, and Fernand, blinded by rage and grief, rejects all the honors that have been bestowed on him and breaks his sword, which he hurls at the king's feet. Alphonse, although overcome with remorse, recognizes Fernand's innate nobility. The bewildered Léonor is beside herself as the courtiers finally show their respect for Fernand.

ACT IV

Balthazar leads the monks and novices in evening prayer as Fernand is about to take his final vows. Fernand's thoughts return to Léonor, whom he loves in spite of her past, and enters the chapel to join the brotherhood. Disguised as a novice, Léonor, fatally ill, comes to seek Fernand's forgiveness. Fernand is outraged when he discovers the newcomer is Léonor. Finally, deeply moved by her plight, he suggests they leave together but she urges him to remember his vows. As he forgives her, she gives him her blessing and dies. Balthazar asks the monks to pray for her soul, and Fernand is convinced that tomorrow they will repeat their prayers for him.

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ARTIST PROFILES



After winning the 1990 Spoleto Competition, **SONIA GANASSI** made her debut at the Rome Opera as Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*. Since then, the mezzo's career has rapidly advanced, bringing her to such major houses as Milan's La Scala, the Metropolitan Opera, La Fenice in Venice, Royal Opera at Covent Garden, Paris Opera/Bastille and Geneva Opera. She has been particularly acclaimed as a leading interpreter of additional Rossini heroines: Isabella (*L'Italiana in Algeri*), Angelina (*La Cenerentola*), Sinaide (*Mosè in Egitto*), Emma (*Zelmira*), and the title role of *Sigismondo*. The versatile artist has also appeared as, among others, Romeo (*I Capuleti e i Montecchi*), Adalgisa (*Norma*), Giovanna Seymour (*Anna Bolena*) and Nicklausse (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*). Ganassi also frequently performs on the concert platform where her credits include *Acis and Galatea*, *Juditha Triumphans*, Rossini's *Stabat Mater* and Stravinsky's *Pulcinella*. Recent operatic highlights include Donizetti's *Dom Sébastien* (Zaida) at Bologna's Teatro Comunale; *Zelmira* in Paris and Lyon; *Werther* (her first Charlotte) in Reggio Emilia and Parma; *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* at La Scala; as well as *Norma* at the Orange Festival. Among her future engagements are *Barbiere* in Tokyo and at the Met; *Werther* and *Cenerentola* at La Scala; *Norma* at the Bastille; *Cenerentola* at Covent Garden and Pesaro's Rossini Festival; in addition to concerts throughout Europe. The mezzo can be heard on recordings of *Linda di Chamounix*, *Sigismondo*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and the Rossini *Stabat Mater*. The native of Reggio Emilia graduated from the Parma Conservatory of Music and continued her studies with Alain Billard, her current teacher.



TAMMY JENKINS, currently in her second year as an Adler Fellow, made her bow with San Francisco Opera as Frasquita in *Carmen* during the 1998 *Femmes Fatales* Festival and performed here last season in *Manon*, *Don Carlo* and *Peter Grimes*. 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 Encouragement Award from the Met Auditions in 1997. A 1997 Merola Opera Program participant, she sang the role of Frasquita in the summer staging of *Carmen* and went on to repeat the role and also sing Micaëla in Western Opera Theater's national touring production. Additional credits include a Schwabacher Debut Recital as well as Showcase presentations of *Iphigénie en Tauride* (First Priestess, 1998) and *Così fan tutte* (Despina, 1999).

Since his professional debut at Spoleto in 1986 as the Duke in *Rigoletto*, **MARCELLO GIORDANI** has been in great demand at most of the world's leading opera houses. The Italian tenor made his 1991 San Francisco Opera debut as Alfredo in the opening night *La Traviata* and has subsequently appeared here as Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor* (1994) and Rodolfo in *La Bohème* (1996). Additional noteworthy engagements from past seasons include *Simon Boccanegra* (Gabriele Adorno) at the Royal Opera at Covent Garden; *Lucrezia Borgia* (Gennaro) at Milan's La Scala; *Manon* (Chevalier des Grieux) at the Metro-



politan Opera and Paris Opera; *L'Elisir d'Amore* (Nemorino) for the Dallas Opera; a new staging of *Traviata* in Munich; *Rigoletto* in Lucerne; in addition to *Lucia* at the Deutsche Oper Berlin and the Lyric Opera of Chicago. Foremost among his most recent engagements are a new staging of *Attila* (Foresto) in Zurich, *Lucia di Lammermoor* for his debut in Geneva, *Boccanegra* at the Washington Opera, *Bohème* in Paris, a critically acclaimed *Traviata* at the Met, as well as his first performances of Berlioz's *La Damnation de Faust* with the Munich Philharmonic (under James Levine) and the Orchestre National de Lyon. Future highlights include his debut at the Los Angeles Opera in the title role of *Faust*, his first Cavardossi in *Tosca* for Michigan Opera Theatre, Raoul in *Les Huguenots* for the opening of the new opera house in Bilbao, and a return to the Met for *Rigoletto*. Giordani is featured singing the "Brindisi" from *Traviata* in the recent film, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and can be heard as Gaston on the first studio CD of Verdi's *Jérusalem*, the tenor's first full-length opera recording.



Trained in both Moscow and Milan, and already a featured performer at the Kirov Opera in St. Petersburg, **VLADIMIR CHERNOV** made auspicious early appearances during the 1989-90 season in Los Angeles (Posa in *Don Carlo*), Seattle (Andrei in *War and Peace*), Glasgow (Carlo in *La Forza del Destino*) and Rome (Miller in *Luisa Miller*). During the following season there came acclaimed debuts at Covent Garden (the title role of *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*), the Metropolitan Opera (in *Luisa Miller*) and San Francisco Opera (Ezio in *Attila*). The baritone has also been applauded at other major centers: as Ford in *Falstaff* at the Vienna State Opera, in *Barbiere* in Brussels and Buenos Aires, as Renato in *Un Ballo in Maschera* in Chicago, Stankar in *Stiffelio* at Milan's Teatro alla Scala, in the title role of *Simon Boccanegra* at the Paris Opera/Bastille, as Count di Luna in *Il Trovatore* in Berlin and in *Forza* in Munich. Additional highlights include a return to the Company in *Forza* (1992) and *Trovatore* (1994), *Eugene Onegin* (title role) at the Met, *Beatrice di Tenda* (Filippo) at the Deutsche Oper Berlin, as well as new productions of *Giovanna di Arco*, *I Due Foscari* and *Un Giorno di Regno* at Covent Garden. An active recitalist, Chernov has appeared in concert throughout Europe and North America, often performing a repertoire that emphasizes the important works of Russian composers such as Glinka, Borodin and Dargomizhsky. His most recent engagements include *La Traviata* (Germont) at the Met, *La Bohème* (Marcello) in Bologna and *Un Giorno di Regno* (Belfiore) for London's Royal Opera. The artist's audio and video recordings include *Trovatore*, *Luisa Miller*, *Don Carlo*, *Rigoletto*, *Simon Boccanegra*, *Stiffelio*, *The Queen of Spades* and *Un Ballo in Maschera*. He most recently collaborated on a recording with the TEREM Quartet, a world-music group (balalaikas and accordion), which will be released next year.

In his 17th season with San Francisco Opera, **KEVIN J. LANGAN** has appeared in over 30 different productions here, beginning with the telecast presentation of *Samson et Dalila* in 1980, through performances as Timur in *Turandot*, Colline in *La Bohème*, Ramfis in *Aida*, Henry VIII in *Anna Bolena*, Zoroastro in



Handel's *Orlando*, Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte*, Astolfo in *Orlando Furioso*, Padre Guardiano in *La Forza del Destino*, Elmiro in Rossini's *Otello* (the former Merola Opera Program participant celebrated his 250th performance with the Company during the 1994 *Otello* presentation), the Ghost in *Hamlet*, and Sparafucile in *Rigoletto*. The bass is also a favorite at many leading North American companies including the Metropolitan

Opera, Los Angeles Music Center Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, and at the houses of Houston, Toronto, Seattle, San Diego, Santa Fe, St. Louis, Philadelphia and Washington, D.C., among others. The artist's most recent engagements include *Turandot* in Antwerp and Dallas; *Die Zauberflöte* and *Ariodante* (King of Scotland) in Dallas; *Peter Grimes* (Hobson) and Levy's *Mourning Becomes Electra* (Ezra Mannon) in Chicago; Picker's *Emmeline* (Henry Mosher) at New York City Opera; *Don Giovanni* (Leporello) in Seattle and *La Gioconda* (Alvise) in Miami. A noted recitalist, Langan has presented solo programs at London's Wigmore Hall and the Carnegie Recital Hall in New York. In addition to his discography (*Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Emmeline*), Langan appears in SFO videos of *Samson et Dalila*, *Turandot* and *Orlando Furioso*, as well as in *Emmeline*, co-produced by Santa Fe Opera and NYCO.



TODD GEER, a 1999–2000 Adler Fellow, participated in the 1998 Western Opera Theater national tour of *La Traviata*, in which he sang the role of Alfredo. Prior to that he appeared as Don José in the 1997 WOT tour of *Carmen*. After his professional opera debut with Syracuse Opera as Ralph Rackstraw in *H.M.S. Pinafore* and Ferrando in *Così fan tutte*, the tenor was named a resident artist with Tri-Cities (Binghamton,

N.Y.) Opera where he appeared as Nemorino in *L'Elisir d'Amore*, Rodolfo in *La Bohème*, Almaviva in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, the Duke of Mantua in *Rigoletto* and in the title role of *Faust*. Additional credits include Tom Rakewell in *The Rake's Progress*, Ernesto in *Don Pasquale*, Pollione in *Norma* and the title role of *Albert Herring*. In concert, the young artist has been heard in *Carmina Burana*, *Messiah*, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, Haydn's *Lord Nelson Mass* and Bruckner's *Te Deum*. Among his most recent engagements are a debut with the Lyric Opera of Chicago in *Salome*, his European debut in Paris and Geneva as Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte*, and the Opera Center's Showcase production of *Così fan tutte* in which he sang the role of Ferrando. Geer holds degrees from the Eastman School of Music and Binghamton University and is a former voice instructor at Cornell University.



MARCO ARMILIATO has been a much sought-after conductor since his 1996 San Francisco Opera debut with *La Bohème*, his concert work with Luciano Pavarotti, and an international tour with the "Three Sopranos." The maestro studied piano at the Paganini Conservatory in his native Genoa, and began his conducting career in 1989 with *L'Elisir d'Amore* in Lima, Peru, with subsequent engagements throughout Spain and Italy. In 1992, he was appointed principal conductor of Bilbao's Teatro Arriaga where he led, among others, *Bobème*,

Carmen, *Tosca*, *Rigoletto* and *La Traviata*. There soon followed *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* in Venice, *Carmen* in Tokyo, *Andrea Chénier* in Mexico City and for his Vienna State Opera debut, as well as *Turandot* in Cincinnati and Toronto. Other highlights include a return to the Company for *Madama Butterfly* (1997) and *Turandot* (1998); *Tosca* in Barcelona; *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* in Toulouse; and *La Traviata* in Santiago, Chile. Among his most recent engagements are his Metropolitan Opera debut with *Bobème* (returning to the Met for *Il Trovatore*, a revival of *Bobème* and the Domingo Gala); his first appearances with the Hamburg State Opera (*La Traviata*) and the Rome Opera (*Aida*); in addition to *Turandot* at the Stadio di Roma. Upcoming are engagements at the Vienna State Opera (*Tosca*, *Fedora*, *Traviata*), in Toulouse (*Falstaff*, *Rigoletto*), and at the Deutsche Oper Berlin (*Aida*). Maestro Armiliato's recordings include Boccherini's *Stabat Mater*, a concert with Luciano Pavarotti with the Orchestra Filarmonica of Turin, the premiere recording of Pergolesi's *Olimpiade*, and a CD of the "Three Sopranos" concert.



Internationally renowned director **COLIN GRAHAM** made his 1994 San Francisco Opera debut staging the world premiere of *The Dangerous Liaisons*. He returned the following year to stage the Company premiere of *Hamlet* and during our 1997–98 season he directed the new production of *Pelléas et Mélisande*. Last season he staged the world premiere presentation of Previn and Littell's *A*

Streetcar Named Desire for the Company. Now a U.S. citizen, Graham began his career in his native England, where he worked extensively in all branches of legitimate and music theater. During his long association with the stage works of Benjamin Britten, he directed all of the composer's operas and, since 1957, staged all Britten world premieres except *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. His own production of that opera, however, was the one that introduced him to S.F. Opera audiences in 1971, at which time he toured the United States with The English Opera Group, Britten's own company, of which he was artistic director. By now, Graham has staged well over 400 productions worldwide, including 55 world premieres. He has served as artistic director of the Aldeburgh Festival, as director of productions for the English National Opera, and was appointed artistic director of the Opera Theatre of St. Louis in 1985. Foremost among his recent assignments are *Liaisons* in Washington, D.C.; Ingvar Lidholm's *A Dream Play* (using Graham's English translation) at Santa Fe Opera; the world premiere of *The Golden Ass* by Randolph Peters in Toronto; and *Otello* in St. Louis. Next year he is scheduled to direct *Streetcar* in New Orleans. The artist has a deep love and knowledge of the Japanese classical theater, and he commissioned Minoru Miki's kabuki operas, *An Actor's Revenge* and *Joruri*, both of which he also directed. His several libretti include the latter.

The revised set designs for the four operas of this summer's Ring cycle were created by **JOHN COYNE** in his San Francisco Opera debut. In his relatively short career in professional theater, he has designed sets for over 40 productions including *A Little Night Music*, *First Lady*, *Tartuffe*, *'night Mother*, *Fallen Angels*, *Godspell*, *The House of Bernarda Alba*, *As You Like It*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *Hamlet*. His designs have been seen at theaters across the country such as Dallas Theatre Center, Santa Fe Stages, Yale Repertory Theatre, Capital Rep, Syracuse



Stage and the Juilliard School. A recent graduate of the Yale School of Drama and a recipient of the Donald M. Oenslager award for excellence in design, Coyne studied under Ming Cho Lee and Michael Yeargan and has assisted the latter on numerous opera designs including *Carmen* (San Francisco Opera), *Madama Butterfly* and *The Ballad of Baby Doe* (Dallas Opera), in addition to *Cavalleria Rusticana/Pagliacci*

(Welsh National Opera). Prior to his work for the stage, he established himself as a licensed architect, designing buildings, residences, interiors and furniture on projects as diverse as the Milwaukee School of Architecture and the interior of a 125-ft. custom yacht. He has been honored with a number of awards for his architectural work including a prize from the American Academy in Rome.



Internationally recognized costume designer **JANE GREENWOOD** has extensive credits in the areas of theater, opera, film, television and ballet. The Liverpool native's designs were first seen here in the Company premiere of *La Favorita* in 1973, and her costume creations were featured in our 1982 presentation of *Dialogues of the Carmelites*. She has also designed for the Metropolitan Opera (*Andrea Chénier*, *Ariadne auf Naxos*), English National

Opera (*Orpheus and Eurydice*) and the Lyric Opera of Chicago (*Nabucco*). With 12 Tony nominations to her credit, Greenwood's many Broadway ventures include *Anna Christie* (with Liv Ullmann), *Caesar and Cleopatra* (Rex Harrison), *A Delicate Balance*, *Hamlet* (Richard Burton), *The Iceman Cometh* (Jason Robards), *Master Class*, *Medea* (Zoe Caldwell), *Passion*, *70 Girls*, *70*, *The Sisters Rosensweig*, *Tartuffe* and *A Touch of the Poet*. She has also designed the costumes for over 50 off-Broadway and regional theater presentations, as well as for numerous productions at Stratford's American Shakespeare Festival. Her creations for film can be seen in, among others, *Tender Mercies*, *Sweet Liberty*, *Other Voices*, *Other Rooms*, *Glengarry Glen Ross*, *The Four Seasons* and *84 Charing Cross Road*. Currently associate professor at the Yale School of Drama, she created the costumes for John Harbison's *The Great Gatsby*, which will receive its world premiere at the Metropolitan Opera later this season.



Choreographer/dancer **LAWRENCE PECH**, in his third year as San Francisco Opera's Ballet Master, staged the dances in the 1997 production of *Guillaume Tell* for his first Company assignment. He has subsequently been featured as the solo dancer in *Carmen* during the 1998 *Femmes Fatales* Festival and served as ballet master for the recent stagings of *Turandot*, *Don Carlo* and *Das Rheingold*. A long-time favorite of dance critics nation-

wide, he received his formal training from American Ballet Theatre and was subsequently invited by Mikhail Baryshnikov to join the company in 1980. During his seven-year association with ABT, Pech worked with such choreographers as George Balanchine, Martha Graham, Antony Tudor, Agnes de Mille, Jerome Robbins, Twyla Tharp and others; and danced with such luminaries as Baryshnikov, Natalia Makarova, Ivan Nagy, Cynthia Gregory, Fernando Bujones and many more. In 1986, Pech left American Ballet Theatre to join San Francisco Ballet, where he

was promoted to principal dancer in 1989. Two years later, he was the subject of a KQED special entitled *Blue Lair*, a ballet about his successful struggle with cancer. He co-founded Diablo Ballet in 1993, also serving as the artistic director of the Diablo Valley's first year-round professional ballet company. The artist soon established his own troupe, the Lawrence Pech Dance Company, which has received popular and critical praise since its inception. In addition, Pech has taught at St. Mary's College, Pacific Ballet Academy, Marin Ballet, Marin Dance Theater, California Academy of the Performing Arts and Brady Street Dance Center. He is also an accomplished composer, having created works for arrangements as varied as chamber ensembles, piano solos and a cappella groups.



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 our 1999 *Ring* Festival and last season added 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*.

Design credits for our 1997-98 season included the 75th Anniversary Gala (stage and television), *Tosca*, *Pelléas et Mélisande* and *Eugene Onegin*, in addition to the *Femmes Fatales* Festival's *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* and *Carmen*. 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*. His television credits for the Company include *A Streetcar Named Desire* (nominated for an Emmy Award), *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, Dallas Opera, Washington Opera (*Dangerous Liaisons*), New York City Opera (*Emmeline*, also televised on PBS), New York's Mary Anthony Dance Theatre and Ballet Arizona. Lighting system consulting projects include San Francisco's renovated War Memorial Opera House and Het Muziektheater in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

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9th Annual Christmas and Opera in Baroque Prague, Salzburg and Vienna December 13th to 26th

...you are invited to join Sherwin for some carefully selected sightseeing and to see some wonderful opera. In Prague at the State Opera we will see *Eugene Onegin* and *Robert Le Diable* by Meyerbeer. At the National Theater *Rigoletto* and at the Estates Theatre where Mozart conducted we will see *Così fan tutte* and the ballet *The Sleeping Beauty*. In Salzburg a concert at the castle Hohensalzburg and in Vienna at the Staatsoper will see Verdi's *Ernani*, *Die Frau ohne Schatten* and the ballet *Cinderella*, and at the Volksoper *Hänsel & Gretel*. There will be an optional opera at the Slovak National Theater in Bratislava on Christmas day with a private reception with the Director. A total of 7 operas and 2 ballets.

6th Renaissance Italy Opera Program Cernobbio – Venice – Milan – Bologna – Florence – Rome March 22nd to April 8th

This is a tour of the great opera houses of Italy. We request Category One seating to all performances including La Scala. This opera program combines the most remarkable sightseeing and walking tours to the greatest museums, cathedrals and villages along with some excellent cuisine. As of this writing the performance in March at La Scala will be *Tosca*.

Spectacular Spring & Opera at the Metropolitan Opera in New York & the New York City Opera April 9th to 16th

Spring in New York with walks through Central Park to the Metropolitan Museum of Art staying in our charming hotel on Central Park West and only 3 blocks to Lincoln Center. We will attend performances at the Metropolitan Opera of *Rigoletto*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *Pelléas et Mélisande* and *La Bohème*. At New York City Opera, *Platée* and the New York Philharmonic, Bach's *St. John Passion*. A total of 5 operas, 1 concert and a Broadway play to be announced. Also, backstage visit with the artists.

13th Ring Program Der Ring des Nibelungen at the Metropolitan Opera in New York April 30th to May 7th

Spring in New York with walks through Central Park to the Metropolitan Museum of Art staying in our charming hotel on Central Park West and only 3 blocks to Lincoln Center. There will be special events planned by Sherwin including after-the-performances parties. A chance to see many friends from previous Ring programs as well as new Wagner friends. The cast includes James Levine conducting and Plácido Domingo, Jane Eaglen, James Morris and Deborah Voigt. The remainder of the cast will be announced.

Spring and Opera in the Royal Town of Dresden and Berlin, the new monumental capital of Germany May 9th to 20th

...you are invited to join Sherwin for our spectacular Spring in-depth opera vacation to the Royal Town of Dresden and the incredibly beautiful and monumental Semper Opera House, perhaps the most lovely of them all and the Renaissance that is taking place in the new capital of Germany, Berlin. At the Semper Opera in Dresden we will see *Die schweigsame Frau*, *Die Csardasfürstin*, *Un Ballo in Maschera* and *Fidelio*. In Berlin we will see the ballet *Giselle*, *Faust*, and *Der fliegende Holländer* at the Deutsche Oper Berlin and *Orfeo ed Euridice* at the Staatsoper Berlin. Other special events will be arranged by Sherwin as he does each year. And only the most spectacular sightseeing and walking tours will be done.

14th Ring Program Der Ring des Nibelungen in Helsinki June 5th to 17th

...you are invited to join Sherwin for this first ever performance of the Ring at the all new Helsinki Opera House and see friends among past Ring Alumni and reminisce about our many shared experiences. This is the first time the Ring cycle will be produced at the ultra-modern Finnish National Opera, which sits in a lovely park setting. The opera's cutting-edge stage technology provides set and lighting designers with everything they could conceivably need to create visually stunning productions. There will be spectacular sightseeing and day trips from Helsinki based on the experience of our groups since 1989. There will be 4 after-the-performance parties.

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SAINT-SAËNS
Foster: Joël, Schmidt, Robbins
Graves, Domingo/ Lakes, Yurisich, Bernstein

SEPTEMBER 11, 14, 17, 19M, 22, 25, 1999

THE ELIXIR OF LOVE

DONIZETTI
Keenan: Lawless, Engels
Swenson, Vargas, Gilfry, Allen, Ireland

OCTOBER 13, 16M, 20, 23M, 28, 31, 1999

THE CAPULETS AND THE MONTAGUES

BELLINI
Hickox: Steingraber, Israel
Claycomb, Mentzer, Miller, Halfvarson, MacKenzie

DECEMBER 8, 11M, 12, 14, 15, 17, 19M, 21, 1999

HANSEL AND GRETEL

HUMPERDINCK
Vendice: Robinson, Conklin, Oliver
Rasmussen, Gormley, Christin

JANUARY 19, 22M, 25, 28, 30, FEBRUARY 2, 5, 2000

FAUST

GOUNOD
Auguin: Corsaro, Harlan, Colavecchia, Brown
Giordani, Ramey, Vaduva, MacKenzie

MARCH 1, 4M, 7, 9, 12, 15, 18M, 21, 2000

RIGOLETTO

VERDI
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APRIL 15, 18, 22M, 25, 29, MAY 2, 5, 2000

LA RONDINE

PUCCINI
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Vaness, Haddock, Parcher, Fedderly, Offenbach

JUNE 3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 17M, 2000

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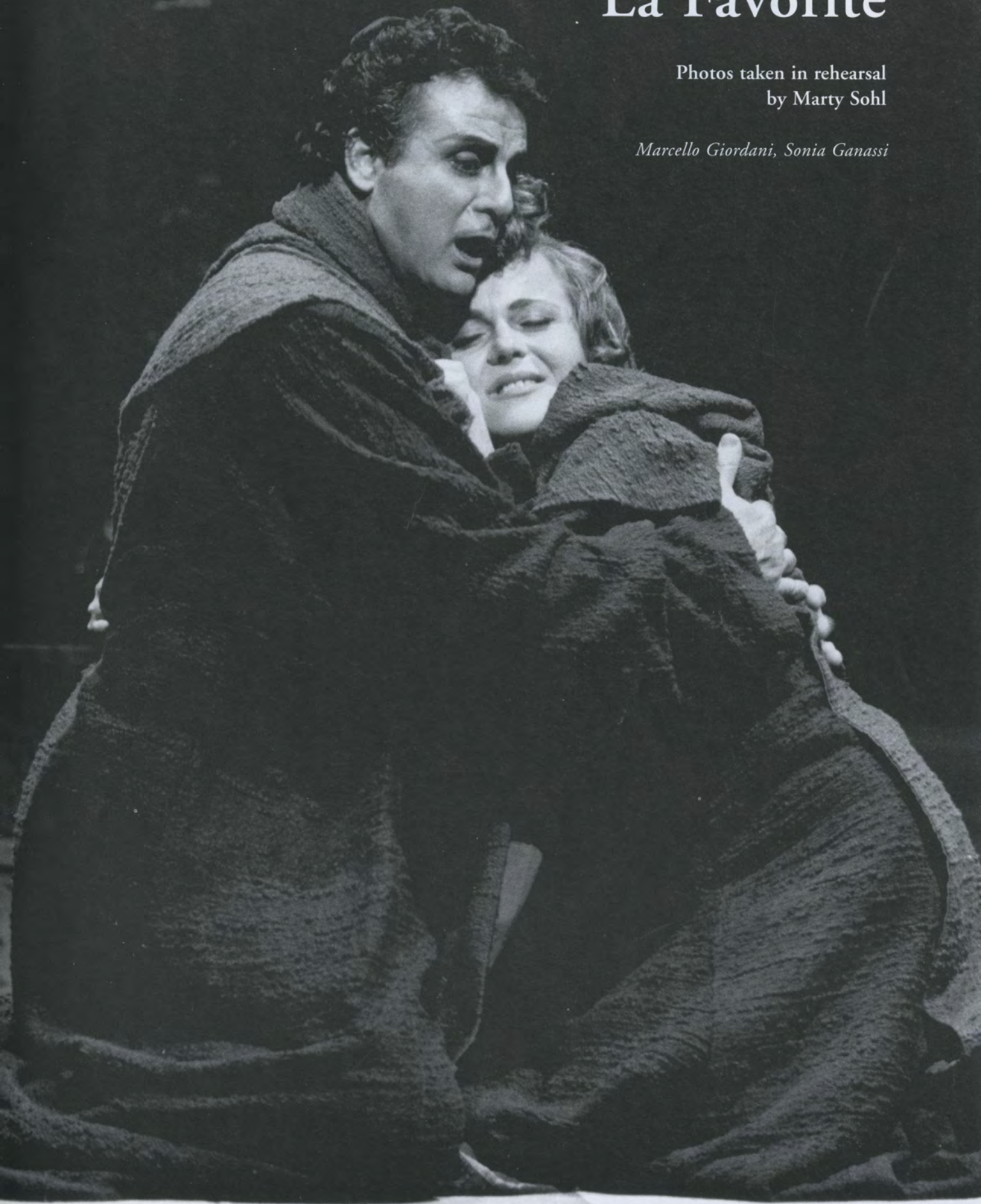
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La Favorite

Photos taken in rehearsal
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Sonia Ganassi, Marcello Giordani, Vladimir Chernov



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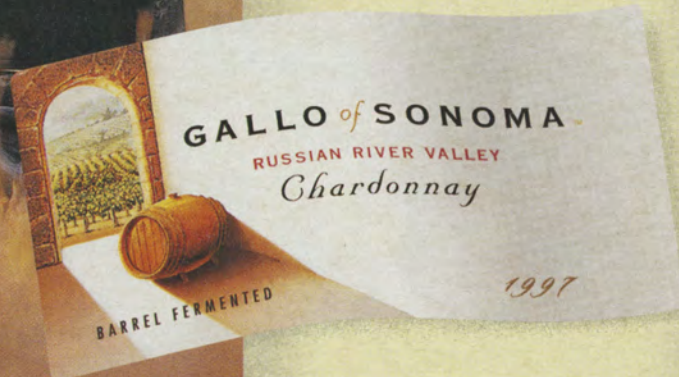
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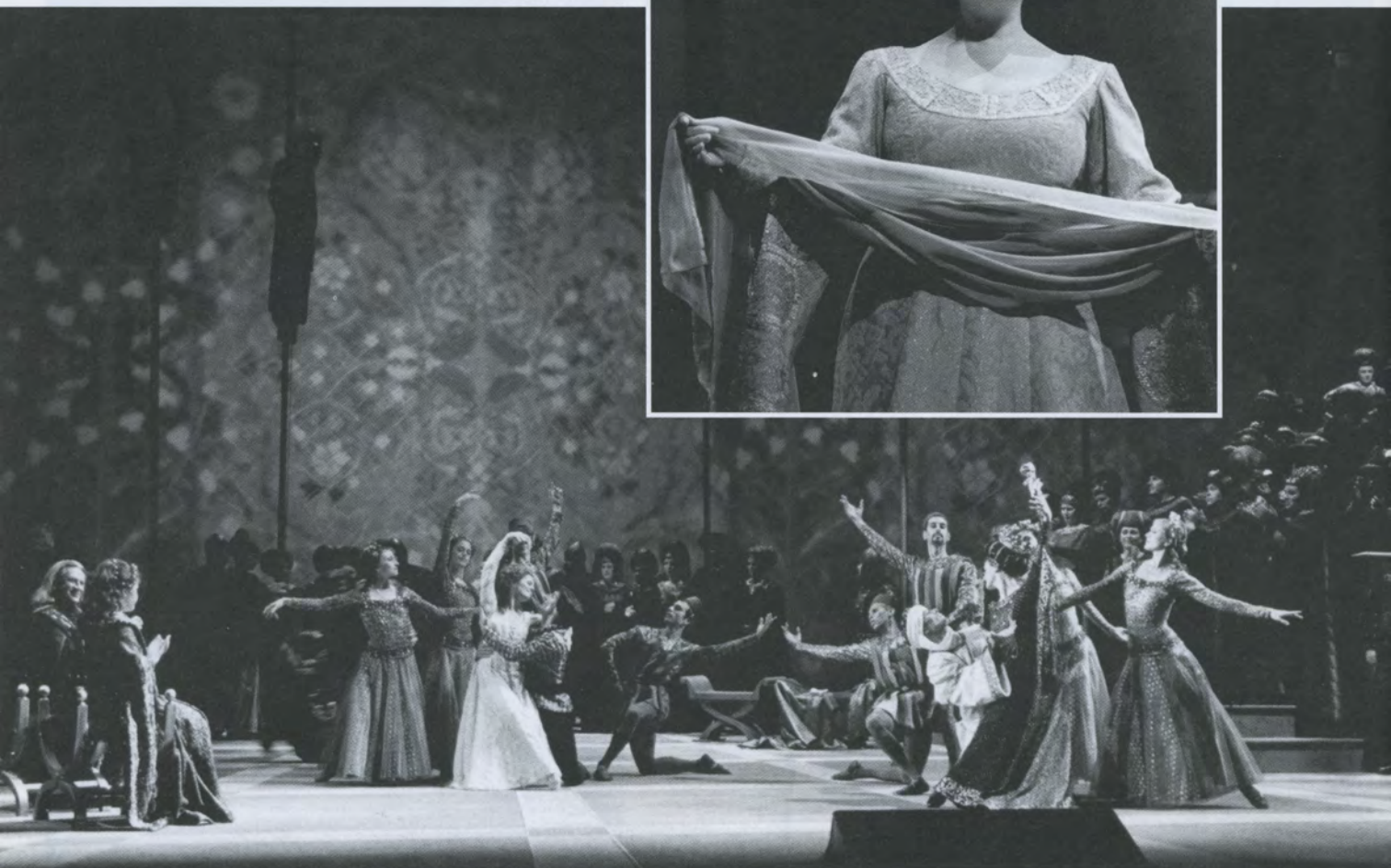


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A FAVORITE RESTORED

continued from page 12

however, several major problems with *La Favorita* in contrast to the original French *La Favorite*. First of all, Donizetti had no hand in making all the changes. French and Italian are radically different in verbal rhythm and accent; therefore, the passages of recitative and heightened declamation were re-composed by hands other than Donizetti's, as he was busy in Paris and Vienna when *La Favorita* was put together in Italy. Adding to the illegitimacy of *La Favorita* is the fact that the plot depended on two subjects that the mid-19th-century Italian censors were most exercised about: the Catholic religion and royalty. To the censors, presenting a religious figure, someone other than a hermit, meant exposing a holy figure in a profane environment: the wicked stage. Also, to show a king in a morally compromising position could be interpreted as a threat to royal authority and dignity.

Since the plot of *La Favorite* begins and ends in a monastery and, making it even more shocking, its principal female character is a reigning king's mistress, obviously there was much here to offend censorial sensibilities. The most drastic compromise occurred at the work's Italian premiere, when its title was changed to *Elda* and the whole action was transferred to a Moslem country. While such a transfer might appease the censors, it seriously diluted the dramatic conflict for European audiences. Other Italian solutions that involved shifting the relationships of the characters were less than faithful to the original *La Favorite*. Until recently, in spite of its problems of rewritten music and a distorted plot, the Italian *La Favorita* proved harder in the long run than the French original.

One of the most significant shifts of emphasis in the performance of classical music, but particularly of opera, has been the move toward authenticity. The use of original texts, even Russian and Czech, in these days of projected translations, is one indication of this move, so that the sung sounds are those the composer set his melodies to. Another symptom is to revert to the composer's original orchestration, getting rid of some conductor's or some misguided editor's emendations, a common intrusion in many scores from the first half of the 19th century, and again, to get rid of musical changes that have become "traditional." In each of

these ways the Italian *Favorita* is demonstrably inauthentic.

On the whole, Donizetti has been unfairly treated by critics and misunderstood by the general public. He is accused of having written too much, and certainly nearly seventy operas is a huge total. He lived at a time when Italian opera composers were regarded in much the same way as composers for film are regarded today, and besides, they were paid little and had insufficient copyright protection. Donizetti wrote a lot in order to be able to survive. That he became successful, spectacularly so in his day, made others envious and disparaging. That he became ill with venereal disease, had to be committed to a sanitarium, and died paralyzed and mindless at the age of fifty, were facts that surrounded his reputation with an aura of scandal. It is only recently that Donizetti's true values have become appreciated.

Above all else, Donizetti was a man of theater. He wanted striking, powerful plots, and in that regard, he prefigures Puccini. Not surprisingly, he frequently ran afoul of the censors. He had longed to get to Paris, because there the censorship was far less stringent than in Italy; furthermore, in France, composers were well paid for their services and their rights were better protected than they were in Italy at that time. In *La Favorite*, he had a subject full of powerful situations and imbued with emotion, just the sort of thing that inspired his most expressive vein.

The restoration of this masterpiece to its original luster involves a good deal more than editorial scrupulousness. The tradition of French grand opera, the spectacular genre to which *La Favorite* belongs, is one that has not survived, but to do the work justice, some equivalent has to be found. In these days, when opera has become so internationalized in its performance practices, to the extent that the idiosyncratic national styles have all but disappeared, *La Favorite* presents an irresistible challenge. That challenge is to find a contemporary equivalent to the romantic sensibilities of 1840, to make the specific seem universal. At last, though, you will be hearing the opera in the form Donizetti intended it to have.

William Ashbrook has been writing on opera topics for 50 years. He has written books on Donizetti and Puccini, among other subjects. He has contributed to many periodicals and reference works. Until recently, he edited the journal Opera Quarterly.



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WHAT'S IN A TITLE

continued from page 18

understood the joke without the slide. As a sung line with a punch at the end begins, we hold the title for an extra beat or two and then show it. If the timing is right, the audience laughs exactly on cue. A good example of this is in Act I of *Tosca*, when our heroine jealously admonishes Cavaradossi to paint a saint's eyes dark, like her own. Every soprano's interpretation of this line is wildly different, so it's always a challenge to nail the laugh each night. It's usually the small details that are enhanced by titles; I could cite dozens of examples, but here's just a few. In *Le Nozze di Figaro*, people now react enthusiastically to the Act I name-calling cat fight between Marcellina and Susanna. The devilishly coiling plots of *Der Rosenkavalier* or *Meistersinger* are not nearly as daunting as they once were. By Act III of Verdi's *Falstaff*, the merry wives of Windsor have plotted their revenge on the portly and randy titular character. His appearance, right on schedule, prompts a usually unheeded wry comment from Alice Ford, one of the affronted women. "Viene il pezzo grosso," she says, sharply. We've translated it as "Here comes Big Belly!" and it got a laugh every time.

Over the years, experience has taught us that there are certain words that should be avoided at all costs. The most culpable of these words: mother. No one has been able to explain it, but, even in the most heart-wrenching onstage situations, seeing "mother" up on the screen has the insidious ability to rouse laughs from an audience. Of course, the most troublesome opera in this context is *Carmen*, especially when you have a less-than-macho hero such as Don José, who seems to break down with the sheer mention of the "m" word.

Another mysterious phenomenon concerns the misspelling of a word. By the time the completed translation is spell-checked via computer, passed around to several musical staffers, the director, and a language coach or two, then viewed by dozens of pairs of eyes at rehearsals prior to an opening, you'd think that someone would catch a rare typo. But sometimes, a misspelling slips through and the Opera receives a phone call or letter from an observant patron or two, some snide in their detection, some delighted at their attention to detail, informing us about the oversight. One of the most peculiar typo detections occurred several years back when, after the final performance of *Elek-*

tra, a patron called, pointing out the omission of an "e" somewhere in the text. This after approximately 23,800 pairs of eyes had seen the production.

San Francisco has its true opera devotees who are extremely serious about the art form and have firm opinions about each aspect of what they see and hear, including Supertitles. In one ill-fated Verdi *Otello* performance, one of the slide mounts jammed during Iago's famous "Credo." The villain had stormed about the stage, voicing his dark view of God and life, at last asking the philosophical question "after all this, death. And then what is left?". The chilling answer is, of course, "Nothing," which is where the projector decided to jam, so the famous answer was not shown. At the following intermission, a man hovered outside the booth window, looking decidedly upset. As the orchestra began tuning for the next act, the man suddenly appeared in the booth and angrily threw a folded piece of paper at us before racing back for the remainder of the opera. The note was a program page, upon which he had scrawled his manifesto of anger and loathing of us (in the booth) and the Company, disgusted at our "political agenda" to keep "Truth from the People." It turns out he thought our unfortunate projector jam was a calculated act and that the omission of "Nothing" was part of some global conspiracy. At least he had a definite opinion.

The projection booth is home not to just Supertitles, but from time to time also hosts two giant spotlights for various shows. During the June 1998 *Femmes Fatales* Festival, these lights were in action during *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*. The lights get extremely hot and each has its own exhaust system to help keep it cool. The huge 1,600-watt light bulbs cost approximately \$1000 each and the xenon gas inside the bulb is under enormous pressure. One night, nearing the end of the opera, there was a tremendous explosion. First impressions were that someone had thrown a brick through one of the plate glass booth windows ("Everyone's a critic," I thought). But suddenly the booth began to fill with smoke. The spotlight operator nearest me leapt to the other side of the room in one deft move; his light bulb had exploded. The exhaust system quickly carried the small amount of smoke from the room and it was evident

Continued on page 51

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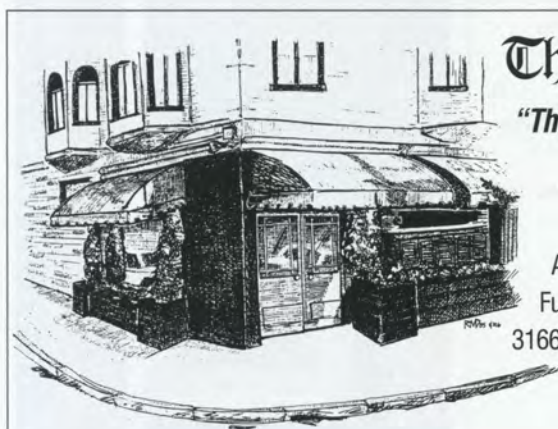
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1999-2000 OPERA PREVIEWS

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 is as follows:

Un Ballo in Maschera — Sept 14, 19, 23, 25, 28; Oct. 6
Louise — Sept. 16, 18, 22, 26, 29; Oct. 2
La Favorite — Oct. 5, 10, 13, 16
Lucia di Lammermoor — Oct. 15, 17, 21, 23, 29; Nov. 3
Wozzeck — Nov. 5, 7, 9, 13, 17
Idomeneo — Nov. 16, 19, 23; Dec. 1, 5
Nabucco — Nov. 27, 30; Dec. 3, 6, 10, 12
La Bohème — Dec. 7, 9; Jan. 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16
Don Giovanni — June 11, 17, 22, 28; July 1
The Rake's Progress — June 16, 20, 23, 25, 29
Parsifal — June 21, 24, 27, 30; July 2

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.

September 1	<i>Louise</i>
September 16	<i>La Favorite</i>
November 9	<i>Idomeneo</i>
June 13	<i>Parsifal</i>

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD — PREVIEWS

Opera Guild previews are scheduled in communities throughout the greater Bay Area by local Guild chapters (East Bay, Marin, San Francisco, Sonoma, South Peninsula and the San Jose Opera Guild). 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.

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.

Sept. 9	<i>Louise</i>
Sept. 22	<i>La Favorite</i>
Oct. 6	<i>Lucia di Lammermoor</i>
Oct. 27	<i>Wozzeck</i>
Nov. 10	<i>Idomeneo</i>
Nov. 17	<i>Nabucco</i>

Marin Chapter —

San Francisco Opera Guild

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

Sept. 8	<i>Louise</i>
Sept. 20	<i>La Favorite</i>
Oct. 4	<i>Lucia di Lammermoor</i>
Oct. 25	<i>Wozzeck</i>
Nov. 8	<i>Idomeneo</i>
Nov. 15	<i>Nabucco</i>

San Francisco Chapter —

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 Esther Jennings, (415) 751-7732.

Sept. 8	<i>Louise</i>
Sept. 22	<i>La Favorite</i>
Oct. 6	<i>Lucia di Lammermoor</i>
Oct. 27	<i>Wozzeck</i>
Nov. 10	<i>Idomeneo</i>
Nov. 17	<i>Nabucco</i>

San Jose Opera Guild

Lectures held at 10:00 a.m., followed by no-host luncheons on 9/9 and 11/18 (\$7.00). Los Gatos History Club, 123 Los Gatos Blvd., Los Gatos. Admission: \$8.00 (free to San Jose Opera Guild members). For information call Joy Hulme (408) 741-1331 or Margaret Boddy (408) 354-7525.

Sept. 9	<i>Louise</i>
Sept. 23	<i>La Favorite</i>
Oct. 7	<i>Lucia di Lammermoor</i>
Oct. 28	<i>Wozzeck</i>
Nov. 11	<i>Idomeneo</i>
Nov. 18	<i>Nabucco</i>

Sonoma Chapter —

San Francisco Opera Guild

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

Sept. 10	<i>Louise</i>
Sept. 20	<i>La Favorite</i>
Oct. 7	<i>Lucia di Lammermoor</i>
Oct. 28	<i>Wozzeck</i>
Nov. 8	<i>Idomeneo</i>
Nov. 15	<i>Nabucco</i>

South Peninsula Chapter —

San Francisco Opera Guild

Lectures held at 8:00 p.m. at the Palo Alto Senior Center, 450 Bryant Street, Palo Alto. Admission \$7.00. For information call Ramona Rockway (650) 941-3890.

Sept. 7	<i>Louise</i>
Sept. 21	<i>La Favorite</i>
Oct. 5	<i>Lucia di Lammermoor</i>
Oct. 26	<i>Wozzeck</i>
Nov. 9	<i>Idomeneo</i>
Nov. 16	<i>Nabucco</i>

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

MERRITT COLLEGE OPERA LECTURE SERIES

Held on Tuesday evenings in Room A-117, 7 to 10 p.m., *Introduction to Opera* (Music 13A) is based on the operas of the 1999-2000 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 7:30 to 10 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.

Sept. 21	<i>La Favorite</i>
Oct. 11	<i>Lucia di Lammermoor</i>
Oct. 25	<i>Wozzeck</i>
Nov. 8	<i>Idomeneo</i>
Nov. 15	<i>Nabucco</i>
May 15	<i>La Bohème</i>
May 22	<i>Don Giovanni</i>
June 5	<i>The Rake's Progress</i>
June 12	<i>Parsifal</i>

FRIENDS OF THE KENSINGTON LIBRARY

A free lecture on Mozart's *Idomeneo* will be given by Michael Barclay on November 10 at 7:00 p.m. at the Kensington Library, 61 Arlington Avenue, Kensington. Information: (510) 524-3043.

SAN FRANCISCO CITY COLLEGE PREVIEW SERIES

A music course will deal with all operas of the 1999-2000 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 26th and continue for 15 weeks. Information: (415) 239-3641.

ROBERT GOODHUE'S OPERA PREVIEW SERIES

Held at Crowne Plaza Hotel, 480 Sutter St. (corner of Powell), San Francisco, mostly Monday evenings at 6 p.m. (5/30 at 5:45 p.m.) Series began August 30. Lectures are \$15 per session or \$50 for any five previews. Information: (415) 956-1271.

Oct. 4	<i>Lucia di Lammermoor</i>
Oct. 25	<i>Wozzeck</i>
Nov. 8	<i>Idomeneo</i>
Nov. 22	<i>Nabucco</i>
Nov. 29	<i>La Bohème</i>
May 30	<i>Don Giovanni</i>
June 5	<i>The Rake's Progress</i>
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WHAT'S IN A TITLE

continued from page 42

that no one was injured and there was never any danger to the audience, artists, staff or crew. But we kept the titles coming on cue and finished the opera without further mishap. No one, not even Lighting Director Tom Munn, had ever known a xenon bulb to explode.

Other than wayward visitors and exploding equipment from time to time, our greatest worry has always been the inevitable slide jams, which were taken in stride. But perhaps the worst disaster to befall Supertitles was during the 1990 *Ring* cycle. As stated above, *Siegfried* is the most title-intensive production. During one of the *Siegfried* evenings, Carousel 7 had a jam. Despite the operator's expert attention, the problem persisted until he resorted to removing the tray's protective ring (which prevents the slides from falling out) in order to remove the offending slide. In doing so,

the tray bottom shifted, displacing the slide drop slot. Tilting the tray to solve this new mishap, all 80 slides tumbled to the floor as the singers sang on.

My stomach dropped at this development; I, myself, had too often been an audience member and been distracted at the sudden disappearance of titles and, though we initially rushed to try and salvage some of the carousel, those pesky slides had gone everywhere and, in the dark booth, were impossible to find. We had to wait for the music to catch up with us in the next carousel. My sincere apologies to the audience members that night; I feel your pain.

But, at least for San Francisco Opera, the troublesome days of old-fashioned slides are over. Today, we are lucky to have a custom-made computerized video system created by Tod Nixon, tailored especially to our very specific and indi-

vidual needs. This system affords extreme ease of operation and greatly improves our ability to modify the text should the need arise, without having to develop film into slides. The images are now crisper and more legible, as well as brighter than ever before, making the titles effortlessly readable, even during the most brightly lit scenes (a source of most frequent former complaints).

So now you know that behind every line of text you read (or, for you diehard purists, choose not to read), a lot of people have taken the greatest care to make sure that every title is in its place when you need them. You shouldn't notice us. If you don't, then we've done our job.

Opera librarian Steve White enjoys a varied career as a writer, composer and artist. This year marks his 11th season in the Supertitle booth, with a total of approximately 47,000 slides used and 95,000 cues called.

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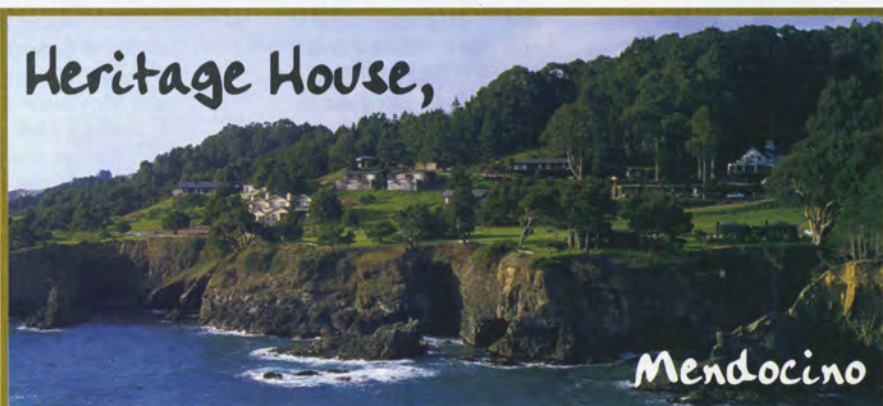
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For more information, contact our Corporate Council Hotline at (415) 565-3264.

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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).

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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 south end of the main lobby.

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.

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).

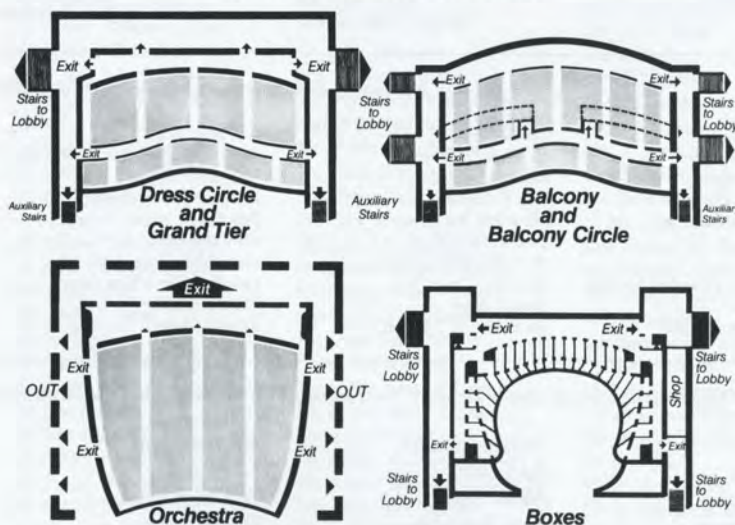
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Sunday, January 9
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Saturday, January 15
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Wednesday, June 7
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The role of the Shepherdess in *La Favorite*
will be danced by Galina Alexandrova,
replacing the indisposed Cynthia Drayer.

san francisco OPERA

Welcome to this evening's rehearsal of Gaetano Donizetti's *La Favorite*.

This rehearsal is of the type called "OA" in San Francisco Opera parlance, meaning "Orchestra/Artist". This is the first type of rehearsal at which the orchestra and the singers combine. Another name for this kind of rehearsal is *sitzprope*; literally a "sitting" rehearsal, in which the staging is not rehearsed, only the music.

Seated behind the conductor, at the music stands, you may notice the assistant conductor taking notes for the maestro about things that need to be corrected later, and advising him on the balance between singers and orchestra. On the other side sits the language coach, making notes about the singers' diction for future correction.

The rehearsal is scheduled to last until 9:30 with 2 breaks. In order to make maximum use of the rehearsal time, we ask that there be no applause.

LA FAVORITE SYNOPSIS

ACT I

As members of the order affirm their faith, their abbot, Balthazar, notices that the novice Fernand does not join in. The young man explains that he is unable to because he has fallen in love with a mysterious woman he has seen in church but knows nothing about. Balthazar tries to restore Fernand's thoughts to piety, but the novice remains stubborn and decides to leave in spite of Balthazar's imprecations.

Inès and her friends sing a lighthearted song while waiting for Fernand's boat to arrive. He comes ashore and asks Inès about her mistress but learns nothing. When Léonor arrives, Fernand impulsively asks her to marry him. But she informs him that would be fatal to the destinies of both of them. In despair, Fernand claims he would rather die. After learning from Inès that the king will soon arrive, Léonor gives a letter to Fernand and leaves after a last farewell. Fernand asks Inès if the person arriving is indeed the king, and from her answer is led to believe that Léonor is a woman of noble bearing. How can he deserve her? When he looks at the paper he is delighted to discover it is a commission as military captain. He decides to win glory in battle, and, with it, the woman he loves.

ACT II

Now that he has defeated the Moors, Alphonse confides his dreams to Don Gaspar. But the major part of the glory, he says, should go to Fernand, who led the army to victory at the point of defeat. The king wants to honor publicly the young hero in Seville. Gaspar mentions that a message has come from Rome and withdraws. Alone, Alphonse swears to defend Léonor—the mistress he loves—against the enemies who threaten her, intending to consolidate his love by marrying her. After ordering Gaspar to organize a great victory celebration, Inès arrives with Léonor, who learns of Fernand's heroic deeds and is ashamed at seeing him because of her past. The king notices her distress and asks the cause. Guilty at the thought of her secret love for Fernand, Léonor reproaches Alphonse for deceiving her—she had been led to believe he would marry her. He tries to calm her and orders the celebration and the dancing to begin. At its conclusion, Gaspar informs the king that Léonor has another lover, and shows Alphonse a letter addressed to her. Furious, the king demands to know from Léonor the identity of his rival, but she would rather die than name him. They are interrupted by the entrance of an angry Balthazar who carries a Papal edict. He demands that the king banish Léonor and restore his wife to her rightful position. When Alphonse refuses, Balthazar

delivers an anathema, causing general consternation.

ACT III

Returning to Seville to receive recognition for his military exploits, Fernand can only think of the prospect of seeing Léonor again. Alphonse greets Fernand as his benefactor and urges him to ask whatever favor he pleases. Fernand asks only to be allowed to marry the woman he loves. Astounded to discover that Fernand is referring to Léonor, Alphonse restrains himself and ironically gives his consent to the couple. While Léonor is overcome with anguish, Fernand blissfully rejoices in his ignorance. Alone, Léonor confronts her shame and weighs the chances of Fernand's forgiving her when he learns the truth. She entrusts Inès with the delicate task of revealing her situation to Fernand before the ceremony. But unknown to Léonor, Gaspar has Inès arrested before she can deliver the message. As the courtiers gather for the wedding, Fernand expresses his gratitude to the king, who confers upon him various titles. But the courtiers gossip with Gaspar and speak of their contempt for Fernand. Léonor arrives and—because she is warmly welcomed by Fernand—believes that he has decided to accept her in spite of her past. Immediately after the wedding, the outraged courtiers openly turn their back on Fernand, believing him to be an unscrupulous opportunist. Confused, Fernand is about to fight them when Balthazar intervenes, urging everyone to keep calm and explain what has happened. On hearing that Fernand has married Léonor, the abbot tells Fernand that he has been disgraced. Alphonse enters with Léonor, and Fernand, blinded by rage and grief, rejects all the honors that have been bestowed on him and breaks his sword, which he hurls at the king's feet. Alphonse, although overcome with remorse, recognizes Fernand's innate nobility. The bewildered Léonor is beside herself as the courtiers finally show their respect for Fernand.

ACT IV

Balthazar leads the monks and novices in evening prayer as Fernand is about to take his final vows. Fernand's thoughts return to Léonor, whom he loves in spite of her past, and enters the chapel to join the brotherhood. Disguised as a novice, Léonor, fatally ill, comes to seek Fernand's forgiveness. Fernand is outraged when he discovers the newcomer is Léonor. Finally, deeply moved by her plight, he suggests they leave together but she urges him to remember his vows. As he forgives her, she gives him her blessing and dies. Balthazar asks the monks to pray for her soul, and Fernand is convinced that tomorrow they will repeat their prayers for him.

This presentation of *La Favorite* is made possible, in part, by the generous sponsorship of Mrs. Gorham B. Knowles.

New Production

Opera in four acts by GAETANO DONIZETTI

Text by ALPHONSE ROYER and GUSTAVE VAËZ,
with additions by EUGÈNE SCRIBE

Critical edition by Rebecca Harris-Warrick

(Materials furnished by Casa Ricordi-BMG Ricordi S.p.A., Milan, with the contribution
and cooperation of the Comune di Bergamo; Hendon Music, Inc.,
a Boosey & Hawkes company, sole agent in the U.S.A.)

La Favorite
(in French)

CAST
(in order of appearance)

*Balthazar, abbot of a monastery and
representative of the Pope*

Kevin J. Langan

Fernand, a novice

Marcello Giordani

Inès, confidante to Léonor

Tammy Jenkins+

Léonor de Guzman, mistress to Alphonse

Sonia Ganassi*

Alphonse XI, King of Castile

Vladimir Chernov

Don Gaspar, the king's minister

Todd Geer*+

A knight

Richard Walker

Monks, ladies-in-waiting, courtiers

Solo Dancers

The Shepherdess
The King's Mistress
The Soldier
The King

Cynthia Drayer
Summer Lee Rhatigan
Michael Kruzich
Danny Furlong

Corps de ballet

*San Francisco Opera debut +1999-2000 Adler Fellow

PLACE AND TIME: Spain, about 1340

ACT I	Scene 1	The monastery of St. James of Compostela
	Scene 2	The island of St. León
		INTERMISSION
ACT II		The gardens of the Alcazar palace
ACT III		The great hall of the palace
		INTERMISSION
ACT IV		The monastery

The performance will last approximately three hours and fifteen minutes.