

La mamma morta. M'hanno a la porta della stanza mia,
Priva e mi salvava. Per la notte alta, io con Borsi errava,
quando un giorno tutto in lei la vita si sciolse e rischiarò
inanzi a me gli occhi suoi. Bruciava il
cuore di mia culla. Così fui sola. E intorno il nulla, fame
e miseria, il bisogno, il pericolo. Caddi malata. E Borsi,
buona e pura, di sua bellezza ha fatto un mercato, un
contratto per me. Porta sventura e chi non si vuole. Fu
in quel dolore che a me venne l'idea di una
armonia, e mi rivivi ancora. Io son la vita. Ne miei
occhi è il tuo cielo. Tu non sei sola! Le lagrime tue io
le raccolgo. Io sto sul tuo cammino, e ti sorreggo. Sorridi
e spera! Io son l'amore, tutto intorno e sangue e fango?
Io son l'amore, io son l'amore, io son il dio, che sovra
il mondo s'innalza. Il mio dio, fa della
terra un ciel! Io son l'amore, Io son l'amore, l'amore!

Parterre Box. The Underground Queer Opera Newsletter.



The Steppenwolf Theater Company have issued a statement categorically denying the rumor that their upcoming production, *The Rise and Fall of Little Voice*, is based on the career of **Kathleen Battle**. When contacted for comment, Ms. Battle was inarticulate.

The Atlanta Opera has announced that **Plácido Domingo's** *Dinah!* (based on "the life, career, and recipes" of the late **Dinah Shore**) will open their 1996-97 season. Composition is a new field for Domingo, whose operatic interests until now have been limited to singing, conducting, and **Carol Vaness**. Casting for the title role is as yet undecided between sopranos **Mirella Freni** (for her warmth and characteristic vocal "scoop") and **Kiri te Kanawa** (for her golfing prowess). To recreate La Shore's sensational "Bell Telephone Hour" performance of "Lover, Come Back to Me" with **Joan Sutherland** and **Ella Fitzgerald**, Domingo has enlisted **Jane Anderson** and **Jessye Norman**, respectively. **Thomas Hampson** (you're way ahead of me, aren't you?) will sing the role of **Burt Reynolds**.

Overheard: "Back problems? Sure! She had problems singing Norma and Ariadne, so she backed out!"

A note of pride for our readers: informed Palace sources insist it was the influence of avid *Parterre Box* fan **Prince Edward** that led to luscious **Margaret Price's** elevation to knighthood this year. Dame Margaret reportedly celebrated by tossing back a few gin-and-tonics, a ceremony she usually reserves for calming pre-performance jitters.

After dislocating her shoulder rehearsing her climactic leap into the orchestra pit, **Catherine Malfitano** has withdrawn from the role of "Lina Bruna-Rasa" in the upcoming Broadway production of *The Pietro Mascagni Follies*. **Julia Migenes-Johnson** will replace her in the **Betty Comden/Adolph Green** "verismusical."

Baritone **Dmitri Hvorostovsky** has definitely been signed for the role of "Nick" for **Kiri te Kanawa's** upcoming *Funny Girl* CD. The Georgian dreamboat will make an appearance of quite another sort in *Blueboy's* "Kids of the Kirov" pictorial, in which he uncovers everything (except his middle voice.)

La Cieca offers her heartfelt thanks to her colleagues "The Ultimate Arbiter" and "Scott from Astoria" for their invaluable assistance in dishing this month's dirt.

HAVE YOU MET MISS JONES?

I second-acted the new *Otello* (3/25). Or, rather, third-acted; presumably some lunatic wants the curtain down by 11, and screw the singers. This production proves once again that the Met can have only one decent-looking Verdi production at a time. For twenty years, Zeffirelli's *Otello* held the title. Not perfect (those fucking cobblestones!), but handsome and workable. Now they have *Stiffelio*, and we have to make do with this Moshinsky mess. And they love him at Covent Garden. Do you think Londoners demand that every show be solid grey and beige, dimly lit, and without a trace of theatrical flair?

Domingo is reliably excellent, though it's an als Gast performance; no trace of Moshinsky's direction shows. Fine, since he has vast experience in the role. But poor Vaness was all at sea--and something's wrong with the voice, too--the vibrato has become so pronounced there's no real feeling of pitch, especially in middle voice. (There were times she sounded like late-period Bumbry.)

Now, an unglamorous tone doesn't disqualify you for singing Desdemona (Scotto got away with it), but combine that with wooden phrasing and a chilly stage presence (and that scream-o-rama wig), and people start to ask "Who make her do this?"



Gwyneth Jones Credit: Christian Steiner

You remember about twenty years ago when Plácido first started singing *Otello*? When all those learned, learned men foretold his early demise? The same pundits predicted Gwyneth Jones would never last out the seventies. How those two must gloat when they sing *Turandot* or *Parsifal* together!

And Dame Gwyneth was at her stupendous best for her first local *Elektra* (4/1). When her first cry of "Allein!" thundered out, the standees next to me muttered "Shit!" The voice is fucking massive. I have to say was terrified--no way she could keep up that kind of intensity all night. She had to fade, run out of voice.

But she didn't. Do you remember what a big voice used to sound like? How it was more than just a sound, more like a pressure--like a wave of the ocean? Yeah that's what La Jones's voice is like. (Those of you under thirty will just have to take my word for it.)

(more on page 4)

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New

Available:

- #1: "I love my dead gay Wälsung"
- #2: "Sunny von Bülow"
- #3: "Valley of the Divas"
- #4: "A Boy and His Dive"
- #5: "I am Divine! I am Oblivion!"

Parterre Box
174 W. 76th St. #12-G
New York, NY 10023

DMITRI HVOROSTOVSKY
IN HIS FIRST CROSSOVER ALBUM

after dark

JONES

nd she's not just a stand-
here-and-sing singer. She makes
very courageous acting choices:
Elektra is a coward. She runs
like a rat every time one of
gisth's minions approaches. Her
ance is hardly triumphant--
ore like an animal still con-
ulsing after its spine has
napped. And after she recog-
izes Orest? She runs away from
im, retching. Nilsson showed us
he beauty in Elektra's longing
or vengeance; Jones forces us
o see the horror.

ven better, Leonie Rysanek is
o Earth Mother as Klytämnestra.
ore like a spoiled rich-bitch
ocialite. ("I haven't had a
cent night's sleep since I
ordered by first husband.") Or
ybe Chrysothemis gone wrong?
nd what other singer could
reate such a searing character-
ation with no help from her
irector and designer?

bbie Voight repeated her
vishly-sung Chrysothemis (what
luxury those easy high B's
e!), and now she's incorporat-
g the occasional Rysanekism
to her acting-- and what bet-
r model could she choose?
ight as Isolde in 2000-- start
inting the bumper stickers.

d I'm starting to think James
vine has peaked. The sounds
om the pit were loud and ugly,
etty damn close to unmusical.
s gradual withdrawal from the
t may be painless indeed.

PB Competition #2: Call Me Magda! Every opera queen is a diva deep inside. Unfortunately, not all divas can sing. But you can still be veristic. Send us your interpretation of the spoken monologue from Act III of *Adriana Lecouvreur* ("Giusto cielo! Che feci...") Audio cassettes and VHS videos are acceptable; include return postage if you want yours back. Open to everyone, regardless of age, sex, or vocal ability. Tapes must be received by June 1. Campiness counts; judges' whims are final. The winner will receive Magda Olivero's new *Adriana* CD; runners-up get a *Parterre Box* t-shirt. Send it to:

Call Me Magda (c/o

New York, NY 10023

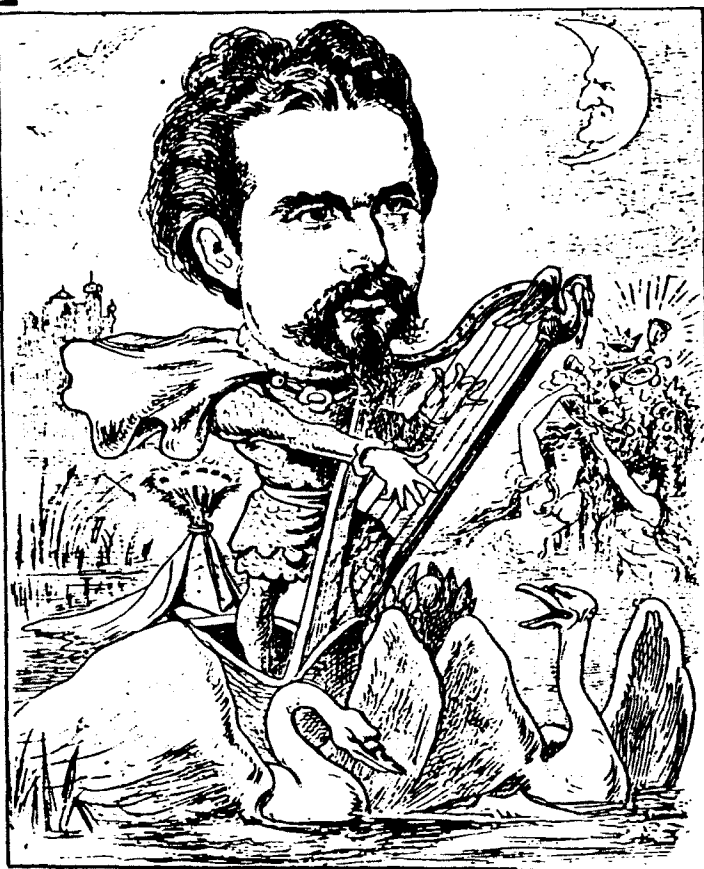
Includes the smash hit
"Sun and Moon"
from *Miss Saigon*
(Aet with
Kiri te Kanawa)

Parterre box is about
remembering when
opera was queer and
dangerous and
exciting and making
it that way again.

YOUR QUEER OPERATIC HERITAGE

PART ONE: LUDWIG II OF BAVARIA

Viennese caricature showing King Ludwig as Lohengrin and Wagner as the Man in the Moon



King Ludwig I 1786-1868

After a series of financial disasters, Lola Montez, the Irish dancer, arrives destitute in Bavaria.

The King receives Lola Montez in his Munich residence.

King Ludwig II 1845-1886

After a series of financial disasters, Richard Wagner, Saxon composer, arrives destitute in Bavaria.

The King receives Richard Wagner in his Munich residence.

She becomes the King's favourite and is showered with valuable presents.

The King puts an imposing Munich house at her disposal.

Lola Montez provokes the resentment of the cabinet, the press and the population.

The King refuses to give her up.

Ministers advocating the dancer's banishment are dismissed.

The King sends her passionate poems.

The press satirizes their relationship.

The King bestows a title on her, Countess von Landsfeld.

The people are so incensed at Lola Montez' privileged position that the King fears an insurrection. She has to leave Munich.

Lola settles in Switzerland.

The King consoles himself by building magnificent castles.

1848: The King abdicates.

He becomes the King's favourite and is showered with valuable presents.

The King puts an imposing Munich house at his disposal.

Richard Wagner provokes the resentment of the cabinet, the press and the population.

The King refuses to give him up.

Ministers advocating the composer's banishment are dismissed.

The King sends him passionate poems.

The press satirizes their relationship.

The King bestows the Maximilian Order for the Arts and Sciences on Wagner.

The people are so incensed at Richard Wagner's privileged position that the King fears an insurrection. He has to leave Munich.

Wagner settles in Switzerland.

The King consoles himself by building magnificent castles.


1886: The King abdicates.

Lola Montez, one of the 19th century's most noted courtesans, was also known for her work in cabaret, music hall and circus. She was portrayed by Martine Carol in Max Ophul's film adaptation of her life.


Richard Wagner is best known as composer of *Tristan und Isolde*, *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, and *Parsifal* and founder of the Bayreuth Festival. Richard Burton portrayed him in Tony Palmer's *Wagner*.

Write to

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Parterre Box congratulates G.W. of San Antonio, TX for his winning entry in the *Soubrette from Hell* competition. For information on Competition #2 ("*Call Me Magda*"), see page 4!



When Kathleen Battle came to San Antonio for a recital, the producer put her up in a luxury hotel right across the street from the theater where she would be singing. It was a 200-foot walk from the hotel entrance to the theater entrance. After being checked into the hotel, Miss Battle asked when the limo would pick her up to take her to the theater. The producer explained that she would not need a limo; two theater personnel would come to the hotel and escort her across the street to the theater at appointed times for both the rehearsal and the performance. Miss Battle announced if no limo was provided, she would not perform.

The producer tried to explain that it would be a 45-second walk across the street. Because of one-way streets and traffic lights, if they went by limo, it might take 10 minutes and one mile to circle the blocks and go to the back of the theater. Miss Battle demanded---and GOT---her limo.



Furthermore, the local classical music station asked if they could do a short interview with Miss Battle. They said they would intersperse the talk among excerpts from any of her CDs she wanted to plug--an hour's worth. Miss Battle agreed, but demanded the services of a make-up artist and hair-dresser before the interview. The radio people explained that this was a RADIO interview, not a TELEVISION one, and that make-up and hair wouldn't matter. Miss Battle then declined the interview, stating that her fans want her to be glamorous, and even on the radio, they need to know that she has had her make-up and hair done.